Course Description:- Credited with inaugurating the Harlem Renaissance and inspiring the *Negritude* movement, Claude McKay is best known as America’s most important protest sonneteer. McKay’s storied literary career documents the life of a black expatriate modern and his sense of the Black Atlantic experience during the first half of the twentieth century. Born in Jamaica in 1889, McKay is often limited to his work in the United States in the 1920s. According to the received story, McKay only develops his true poetic voice and political impulses in the United States, not as a product of the Black Diaspora, the sphere of English colonialism and American influence abroad, or international socialism. This St. Louis Seminar seeks to expand the borders of McKay’s poetry by examining key portions of McKay’s oeuvre to illuminate not only the nostalgic immigrant protest sonneteer of Harlem but also the young Jamaican anti-colonial nationalist, free-thinker, immigrant, radical, world traveler, and convert to Catholicism—a modern poet who employed traditional forms to deal directly with specific places and events, specific political and social conditions. This course will also explore the nuances of American identity and cultural influence outside an exclusively Anglo-American configuration. While the class will focus primarily on McKay’s poetry, it will also deal with his most important journalism, novels, and memoir.

Learning Outcomes:
1. Read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions;
2. draw on relevant cultural and/or historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts;
3. perform critical, formal analyses of literary texts;
4. write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatical prose;
5. employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments;
6. employ primary and secondary sources with proper acknowledgement and citation, as they contribute to a critical essay’s thesis.

Required Texts:

Regular access to CANVAS.

Check your UO email account daily.

On Reserve at Knight Library:
All course books

Recommended: A good dictionary and a guide to MLA format. Active reading will require marking significant passages. Plan to access texts accordingly.
Assignments and Grading:

Poem Kit 10%
Recitation & Presentation (10 minutes) 10%
Close Reading Essay (3-5 pages) 25%
Research Proposal 10%
Annotated Bibliography 10%
Research Paper (8-10 pages) 35%

A- (90%-93.99%), A (94%-96.99%), A+ (97%-100%)
B- (80%-83.99%), B (84%-86.99%), B+ (87%-89.99%)
C- (70%-73.99%), C (74%-76.99%), C+ (77%-79.99%)
D- (60%-64.99%), D (65%-67.99%), D+ (68%-69.99%), F 59.99% or below

Attendance and Participation: Punctual, regular attendance is a requirement for success in this class: plan to arrive on time and remain for the full class period. You must be prepared to discuss the reading assignment on the day it is due and to participate in a respectful and lively discussion. Be prepared to read assigned texts closely, share your ideas and ask questions of your peers and your instructor.

Assignments:

Reading Assignments: All readings are due by the beginning of the class time indicated on the course schedule attached to this syllabus. Bring assigned texts to class on the assigned days. All course books are on reserve in Knight Library.

Recitation & Presentation: Your task for this assignment is to choose a poem from the course’s reading list for your assigned recitation date that is at least 14 lines long, recite it during class, and provide a brief explication to help begin a class discussion. Notify me of your poem choice the Monday before your scheduled recitation and presentation. More guidelines and suggestions are posted on Canvas (“Preparing Recitations”).

Writing Assignments: All writing assignments are due on the due date listed in the course schedule attached to this syllabus. I am happy to help you in advance of the due date on any assignment. All written work will be graded for form as well as content, so be sure to get help on writing and essay form (including grammar) in plenty of time if you need it. English classes are writing intensive and expect you to write at your best and use writing assignments to demonstrate and improve your writing skills. Refer to the “Essay Checklist” at the end of this document for formatting guidelines.

Poem Kit: See Poem Kit Instructions on Canvas.

Essays: You will write two literary analysis essays this term: a 3-5-page Close Reading Essay (25% of final grade) and a 10-12-page Research Paper (35% of final grade). See Close Reading Assignment and Research Paper Assignment on Canvas.

Research Proposal: You will compose a research paper proposal (200-250 words) that attempts to answer a research question about Claude McKay’s poetry, journalism, novels, memoirs, or critical reception. See Research Proposal Assignment on Canvas.

Annotated Bibliography: You will research, compile, and annotate a bibliography of 8 pieces of recent scholarship related to your final paper topic; these critical texts will serve as basic research for your final paper. Your primary resource for this research should be recent scholarly journals or books. See Annotated Bibliography Assignment on Canvas.
Policies:

Preparation Time: From the UO Catalogue: “In planning a term’s studies, students should anticipate that each credit requires at least three hours a week for class meetings or homework.” This is a 4-credit senior seminar, so plan to spend nine hours out-of-class-preparation each week as a minimum. Your research project will take you beyond these minimum hours. You should schedule your time accordingly.

Accommodation: If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please arrange to meet with me soon, and request that an AEC Advisor send a letter outlining your approved accommodations. Accessible Education Center: uoaecc@uoregon.edu, (541) 346-1155, http://aec.uoregon.edu.

Observation of Religious Holidays: Students who observe their religious holidays at times when academic requirements conflict with those observances must inform instructors in advance of the holiday. Students are responsible for making up missed work according to a schedule determined with the teacher.

Academic Honesty: Please review the University policy regarding academic honesty (in Schedule of Classes), which will be strictly enforced in this class. If you plagiarize or cheat, you will automatically fail the course.

Use of Electronic Devices: Cell-phone use during class is prohibited. Turn off cell phones and music during class. Laptops and tablets for note taking are permitted. Students using laptops and tablets must sit in the front of the lecture hall or next to the instructor during discussions. Texting or surfing the web during class time is distracting and disrespectful to your instructor and your classmates. Students who violate this policy will be asked to leave lecture.

Late Work & Incompletes: No late assignments will be accepted (unless you’ve made arrangements with me well in advance of the due date). Incompletes will be given for documented medical emergencies only.

Broken Printers & Computer Crashes: These things happen. However, you should always back up your files. If your computer crashes and you are unable to produce a copy of your work before the beginning of class, your paper will be late. If your printer breaks and you are unable to produce a copy of your work before the beginning of class, e-mail it to me. Do not submit it via attachment; simply paste it into the body of the e-mail. This will not take the place of a hard copy. You must produce a hard copy and deliver it to my office no later than the next day. Remember, your e-mailed paper must arrive before the beginning of class or it will be considered late.

Course Schedule:
Note: All writing and reading assignments are due on the day listed. This schedule is subject to change.

Week 1: “If We Must Die”: Icon and Myth of Claude McKay’s Poetry
R 4/5 Course introduction
Read: Day one poems (Canvas)
In-class: Recitation sign-up, distribute and discuss Poem Kit assignment, discussion

Week 2: Beginnings: Claude McKay’s Anti-Colonial Nationalist Poetics
R 4/12 Read: CP: Walter Jekyll’s Introduction to Songs of Jamaica (283-85), Songs of Jamaica (19-85);
F 4/13 DUE: Poem Kit (by 4:00pm 4/13 in 375 PLC)

Week 3
R 4/19 Read: CP: Claude McKay’s Introduction to Constab Ballads (295-96), Constab Ballads (86-129)
### Week 4

**R 4/26**  
**Read:** Canvas: “A Negro Poet”, “Socialism and the Negro”, “A Black Man Replies”, “He Who Gets Slapped”, “Birthright”; *CP:* Early English and American Poetry (130-51), Max Eastman’s Introduction (311-14), Claude McKay’s “Author’s Word” (314-15), *Harlem Shadows* (152-69);  
*Attend lecture* by Jean-Christophe Cloutier and Brent Hayes Edwards, the editors of the new of *Amiable With Big Teeth*, at 4pm about McKay's novel, the discovery of the manuscript, and the editing process.  

**Optional:** Students are welcome to attend a small reading group with Profs. Cloutier and Edwards and ENG faculty about McKay’s novel from 10-12 in PLC 159 (the OHC conference room). Copies are available in the DuckStore.

**F 4/27**  
**DUE:** Close Reading Essay *(by 4:00pm in 375 PLC)*

### Week 5

**R 5/3**  
**Read:** Canvas: “Speech to the Fourth Congress of the Third Communist International, Moscow”, “Soviet Russia and the Negro”; *CP:* *Harlem Shadows* (169-96), “The Clinic” (197-207)

**F 5/4**  
**DUE:** Research Paper Proposal *(by 4:00pm in 375 PLC)*

### Week 6

**R 5/10**  
**Read:** Canvas: “A Nero Writer to His Critics”, “Letters to James Ivy”; *CP:* “The Years Between” (208-16); *Banjo*, (3-165)

### Week 7

**R 5/17**  
**Read:** Canvas: “Letters to W. E. B. Du Bois”, “Letters to Max Eastman”; *CP:* “The Years Between” (216-22); *Banjo* (166-326)

**F 5/18**  
**DUE:** Annotated Bibliography *(by 4:00pm in 375 PLC)*

### Week 8

**R 5/24**  
**Read:** Canvas: “Letters to Max Eastman”, “For Group Survival”, “Negro Extinction or Survival”, “A Reply to Ted Poston”; *CP:* “Cities” (223-236); *A Long Way from Home* (9-130)

### Week 9

**R 5/31**  

### Week 10

**R 6/7**  
**Read:** Canvas: “Letters to Max Eastman”; *CP:* “The Cycle” (241-69), Final Catholic Poetry (270-280)

### Finals Week

**M 6/11**  
**DUE:** Research Paper *(by 12:30pm in 375 PLC)*
Essay Checklist

The following list is meant to assist you in formatting your essays to my specifications. Failure to comply with these specifications will result in lost points from your final grade for that essay.

Your essay must be:
1) Typed and of the appropriate length for the assignment
2) Double Spaced with one-inch margins
3) Stapled
4) In Times or Times New Roman 12-point font
5) Upper left corner of 1st page:
   a) Name
   b) Dr. Upton
   c) ENG 407
   d) Close Reading Essay
6) Last name and page number in upper right corner of following pages (e.g. Your Last Name 4)
7) Document your sources & use correct citation form (MLA format for this course)
8) Proofread and spell-check