

ENG 360: AFRICAN AMERICAN WRITERS: BLACK SUPERNATURAL

CRN 32051

MEETINGS M/W 12:15-1:45pm
Via Zoom (link on Canvas)

DR. FAITH BARTER

SHE/HER/HERS

Dept. of English

**BEST WAY TO
REACH ME**



Email: fbarter@uoregon.edu or email through
Canvas (allow 48 hrs for responses)

Office Hours: M 2:30-4:30pm
Th 12:00-1:00pm

Sign up at <https://dr-barter.youcanbook.me/>

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Working from the 19th century to the present, this course will consider African American and Caribbean literature that troubles our notions of the “natural” and the “real.” Exploring narratives of hallucination, prophecy, and divination, we will study the ways that Black writers have documented political resistance and claimed Black identity through the language of what we will provisionally call “the supernatural.” Rather than reading the supernatural solely as forms of ghost stories, psychosis, and horror, we will take seriously narratives of hallucination and prophecy in order to unsettle dominant colonial norms of knowledge, literature, and sanity.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Through reading, written assignments, and in-class discussion, this class will help you:

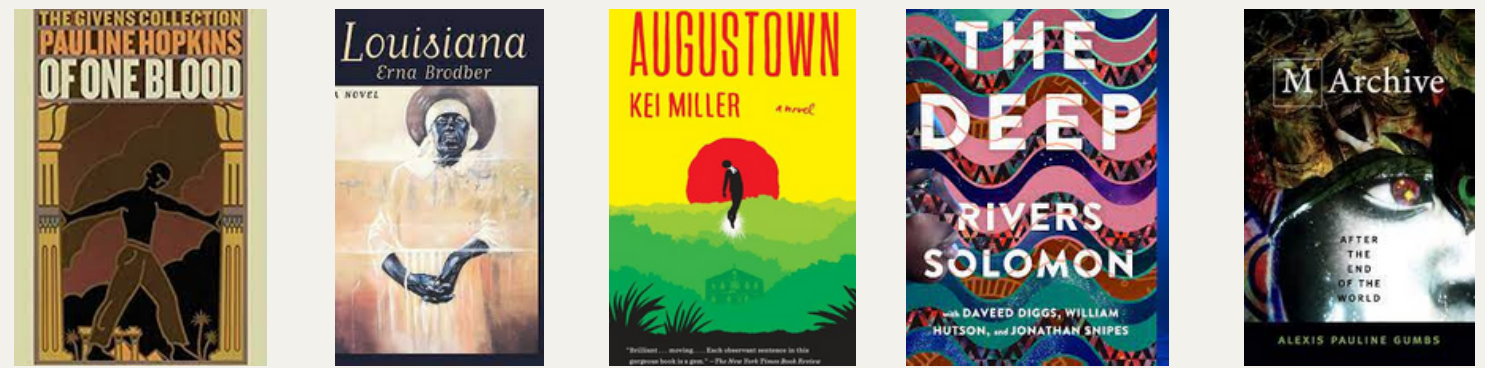
01 Arrive at a deeper historical, legal, cultural, and literary understanding of Black writing through a deep study of the slave narrative genre and how it has evolved over hundreds of years

02 Refine, through written expression, close reading skills, critical thinking, and critical argumentation skills

03 Practice forms of scholarly engagement in both archival research methodologies and peer engagement and interaction

04 Identify other places in which to use the skills and the knowledge you acquire from the class—other coursework, daily life, personal reading, etc.

COURSE TEXTS

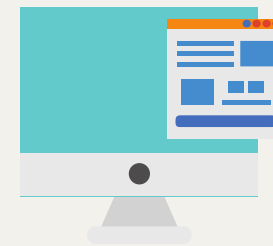


These five books are the only books you are required to purchase. They have been ordered via The Duck Store, but you are welcome to buy different editions or use other vendors. There are free ebook versions of *Of One Blood*, which is old enough to be outside of copyright protection -- you are welcome to use one of those if you prefer not to buy that book. Apart from these books, all other required readings will be posted to our course Canvas site. You will also be required to watch a film that is available for free through Kanopy (accessed through library.uoregon.edu).

Please note: There are a number of readings that will be provided to you via Canvas. If you have a hard time reading on screens or prefer hard copies, you are welcome to print those readings or buy your own copies from any vendor.



REQUIRED TECH



Computer/Tablet



Internet Access
for Zoom and
Canvas



Suggested:
Headphones

ACCESSIBILITY

The Accessible Education Center (uoac@uoregon.edu) handles requests for accommodation of disabilities. I and the University want this class to be an inclusive learning environment. Please notify me as soon as possible if aspects of the course are creating barriers to your participation or if you need to share an accommodations letter from the AEC.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Take handwritten notes during Zoom sessions and while you read for class

Take care of your emotional, physical, and mental health

Seek help with concepts during class meetings, in office hours, or via Canvas

Put important dates in your calendar and keep track of your assignments & submissions

COURSE FORMAT

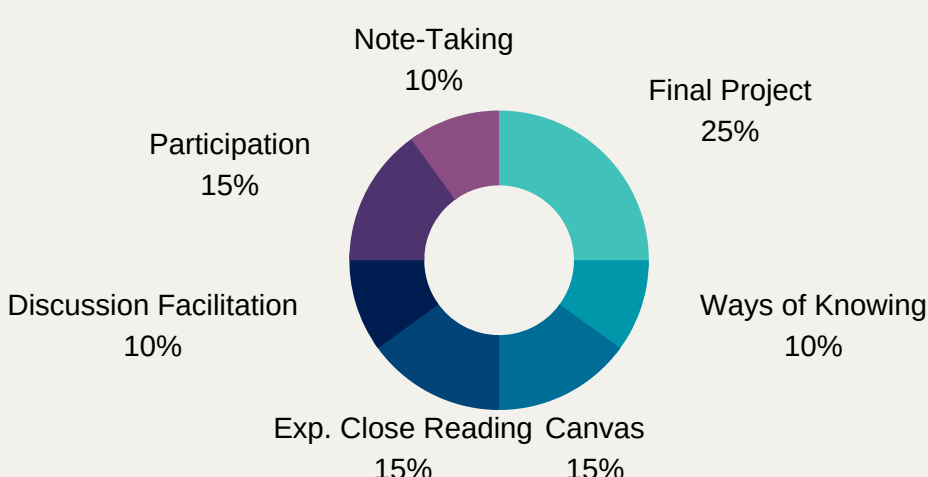
We will have class meetings during the scheduled time as live, synchronous Zoom sessions. Our class meetings will be a combination of large group discussion, small group activities, and structured "practice time" and "writing time" for upcoming assignments. Zoom sessions will not be recorded. If you miss a class, please arrange to get notes from a classmate and/or consult the class notes on Canvas.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADES

ASSIGNMENT 1	CANVAS POSTS (6 TOTAL) & EXPANDED CLOSE READING In lieu of reading quizzes, we will use the Canvas Discussion Board to practice close reading skills before class most days in Weeks 2-9. Posts are due by 11:00am the day of class. You must complete 6 posts in total. Based on feedback you receive, you will revise one of these posts into a (separately graded) scaled-up mini essay of approximately 3 pages.
WAYS OF KNOWING PAPER Toward the beginning of the term, you will write a short paper in which you consider a way of knowing/being that you practice in your own life (religion, meditation, astrology, higher education, etc.).	ASSIGNMENT 2
ASSIGNMENT 3	NOTE-TAKING Once this term, you will serve as a designated note-taker. You will take notes during class and work with note-takers assigned to the same session to turn those notes into a detailed infographic-style document to share with the full class.
DISCUSSION FACILITATION In a small group, you will facilitate discussion for the first 20 minutes of a class meeting. It is up to you whether you want to present a lecture-style presentation and/or lead some other group activity or discussion.	ASSIGNMENT 4
ASSIGNMENT 5	FINAL PROJECT Your final project will be on a topic and in a format of your choice but should be the equivalent of a 6-8 page paper and should be clearly connected to our course materials. You will also submit a separately graded proposal/outline.
PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE Your regular participation is a required component of your enrollment in this course. Your participation grade will be based on: 1) verbal participation (on mic or in chat); 2) active listening; 3) encouragement of peers; 4) citing course texts; and 5) using relevant terminology. Your regular attendance is expected. You will not be able to pass the course unless you attend at least 50% of our synchronous class sessions (I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences).	ASSIGNMENT 6

Full assignment details and rubrics are on Canvas

GRADING



AVERAGE	GRADE
93-100%	A
90-92%	A-
87-89%	B+
83-86%	B
80-82%	B-
77-79%	C+
73-76%	C
70-72%	C-
67-69%	D+
63-66%	D
60-62%	D-
0-59%	F

COURSE POLICIES (THE FINE PRINT)

THE STATE OF THE WORLD

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge upfront that this academic term poses specific challenges, some of which we may not even yet anticipate. Our immediate context includes Covid, ongoing state-sanctioned anti-Black violence, anti-Asian violence, and mass gun violence. This context means that we may be meeting and working through conditions that encompass physical and mental stress or crisis, economic crisis, family and childcare responsibilities, unstable or chaotic living conditions, and more. These conditions are likely to be in flux, and they will require all of us to extend compassion, grace, and flexibility to each other. Please know that I want you to succeed in this class, but I also want you to stay as safe, healthy, and secure as you possibly can. I am working hard to make the class space accommodating, flexible, and generous while maintaining the rigor and content coverage that you need and deserve, and/but I will modify and adjust as needed. If you find that you need additional support, please reach out to me. I will never ask you to divulge more information than you are comfortable sharing, but I will do whatever I can to lead with generosity and flexibility.

CONTENT



This course will examine texts that document, describe, and grapple with issues of racial and sexual violence. The material may be graphic, and class discussions will frequently take up issues that many people consider controversial. Please consider whether this content will be disturbing or triggering to a degree that will interfere with your learning in the course. If so, I will be happy to help you select an alternative course.

LANGUAGE

The functionality and integrity of our classroom space, even and maybe especially on Zoom, depend on the care we give to our language. We should strive for generosity with each other, allowing for the possibility of mistakes and disagreement but remaining accountable for our own language. Mindful of the ways that language itself can do harm, there are a few important bright-line rules. First, respect is mandatory; hate speech is prohibited. Second, absolutely no one in this course will use the N-word, even if it appears in a text we are reading. You need not pretend like you don't see it; instead, merely say "N" or express it in writing as "N****". For a more thorough discussion of why I have adopted this policy in every classroom, please refer to Dr. Koritha Mitchell's excellent podcast on the subject: <https://soundcloud.com/c19podcast/nword>. Finally, please take some time to read "Writing About Slavery," the document curated by Dr. Gabrielle Foreman and available on the Canvas site. I encourage you to adopt its practices wherever possible. We will discuss this document and these policies in class.

ZOOM BEST PRACTICES

I recognize that none of us expected to be in each other's homes for class. You may see a cat in my space, and please do not worry if you have children, housemates, family members, or pets who make a cameo in yours. You can help make Zoom less awkward for all of us by leaving your camera on whenever possible. I know you may need to turn it off sometimes, but having cameras on goes a long way in establishing trust and engagement. Students who leave their cameras on report that their engagement is higher; I have also noticed anecdotally that these students tend to earn higher grades on average. Please leave your microphone on mute when you are not speaking. You are welcome to use the chat function in Zoom to participate in class discussion in addition to turning on your microphone to speak.

MESSAGING ME

Whether emailing me or messaging me through Canvas, please allow 48 hours for responses. Please consult the syllabus and the Canvas site for information contained there *before* contacting me. I do not respond to emails over the weekend. Treat emails as professional communications. You may address me as Dr. Barter or Professor Barter. I frequently communicate through Canvas announcements. Make sure you check your UO email and Canvas dashboard every day.

PARTICIPATION

I know that attendance and participation have been made more difficult in the remote learning era. I have striven to balance flexibility with equity for the labor that all of us must do to co-create our class space. This is a remote class that meets synchronously, and as such, your participation is an essential part of your success in the course. It is also labor that needs to be shared. Occasional absences are expected, and you do not need to tell me why you are missing any given class. **However, in order to pass the course, you must attend at least 50% of our synchronous sessions.** I know it can be intimidating to speak up in class, but almost everyone at the end of the term says they wish they'd spoken up more. Try it - it ultimately feels good to show up for and with others.

DUE DATES & EXTENSIONS

Assignments are due by the date/time listed in the syllabus. I know that sometimes things happen that interfere with your ability to complete assignments. You have 7 days of "credit" to use at your discretion, no questions asked, to submit an assignment after it is due. To use your credit, simply email me to let me know that you're using x days of credit and how many days of credit remain. Otherwise, late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day that they are late; assignments will not be accepted more than one week past the due date except with prior permission in extreme circumstances. See Canvas for full details on the credit policy.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Academic dishonesty in any form undermines your integrity, mine, and that of this course. If you have particular questions or concerns about an issue of academic honesty, please contact me. I take very seriously our shared obligation to academic integrity, and all of your work in this class--including informal writing and annotations--should be entirely your own.

Check Canvas for more details and for extra credit opportunities/policies.

COURSE SCHEDULE

AN ASTERISK (*) = A CANVAS POST IS AVAILABLE THAT DAY

**MAR.
29**

Week 1 - Introductions

Before class: Read syllabus and Canvas site

After class:

- Sign up for note-taking date
- Make sure you've added all important dates to your calendar!

**MAR.
31**

Week 1 - Afro-Caribbean Spirituality

Before class:

- Read Zora Neale Hurston, *Tell My Horse* (excerpts on Canvas)

**APR.
5**

Week 2 - Folklore and Conjure*

Before class:

- Read Charles Chesnutt, "Po' Sandy" and "The Conjuror's Revenge," from *The Conjure Tales* (links on Canvas)

**APR.
7**

Week 2 - The Color Line*

Before class:

- Read Chapter 1-7 of Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood*

**APR.
12**

Week 3 - The Color Line*

Before class:

- Read Chapters 8-15 of Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood*

**APR.
14**

Week 3 - The Color Line*

Before class:

- Read Chapters 16-the end of Pauline Hopkins, *Of One Blood*

**APR.
19**

Week 4 - Time, Memory, & Diaspora*

Before class:

- Watch *Daughters of the Dust* (available on Kanopy)

**APR.
21**

Week 4 - Time, Memory, & Diaspora*

Before class:

- Read the first 1/3 of Erna Brodber, *Louisiana*

To Do: Plan your expanded close reading - it's due May 7!

**APR.
26**

Week 5 - Time, Memory, & Diaspora*

Before class:

- Read second 1/3 of Erna Brodber, *Louisiana*

**APR.
28**

Week 5 - Time, Memory, & Diaspora*

Before class:

- Read final 1/3 of Erna Brodber, *Louisiana*

**MAY
3**

Week 6 - "Geographies of Domination"*

Before class:

- Read Introduction ("Geographic Stories") of Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and The Cartographies of Struggle* (on Canvas)

**MAY
5**

Week 6 - Embodied Knowledge*

Before class:

- Read first 1/3 of Kei Miller, *Augustown*

**MAY
10**

Week 7 - Autoclaps*

Before class:

- Read second 1/3 of Kei Miller, *Augustown*

**MAY
12**

Week 7 - Disembodied Knowledge*

Before class:

- Read final 1/3 of Kei Miller, *Augustown*

**MAY
17**

Week 8 - Speculative Futures*

Before class:

- Read first 1/2 of Rivers Solomon, *The Deep*
- Listen to "The Deep" (3-song single, with "Aquacode Databreaks" and "Drownt") by clipping (available on Spotify)

**MAY
19**

Week 8 - Afrofuturism and the Future Past*

Before class:

- Read second 1/2 of Rivers Solomon, *The Deep*

Make sure you mark the date you're signed up for for note-taking!

Which close reading post will you expand for your upcoming assignment?

Start thinking about your final project - your proposal is due May 21!

COURSE SCHEDULE CONTINUED

Start working on your final project!

MAY 24 Week 9 - Speculative Futures*
Before class:
• Read first 1/2 of Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *M Archive*

MAY 26 Week 9 - Speculative Futures*
Before class:
• Read second 1/2 of Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *M Archive*

MAY 31 NO CLASS - MEMORIAL DAY

JUN. 2 Week 10 - Reflections and Wrap-up
Before class:
• No reading assignment
• Complete your participation self-evaluation



Final project: Due June 7 at 11:59pm

Check Canvas site for assignment details and rubric

IMPORTANT DUE DATES

CANVAS POSTS FLEXIBLE! You are responsible for keeping track, but you must submit 6 total. If you submit more than 6, I will only count your 6 highest scores. Don't leave them all until the last minute - it is to your benefit to get feedback early.

DISCUSSION FACILITATION It depends! Check Canvas --> People -> Discussion Facilitation to see who else is in your group, and which date you're assigned to.

WAYS OF KNOWING ESSAY Due by 8:00pm on Friday, April 16

EXPANDED CLOSE READING Due by 8:00pm on Friday, May 7

FINAL PROJECT PROPOSAL Due by 8:00pm on Friday, May 21

FINAL PROJECT Due by 11:59pm on Monday, June 7

NOTE: In order for me to submit grades on time, if you plan to use any of the days in your "credit account," know that all finals and other outstanding assignments MUST be submitted to me by 11:59pm on JUNE 10. NO ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THIS DATE, FOR ANY REASON

Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

I am so excited to read and learn with you this term!