Course Description
This course is a survey of writings by African American authors. Studying fiction, essays, and poetry, we will read representative texts to consider whether there are specific formal and thematic elements that characterize an African American literary tradition. We will consider how these texts fit into or defy ideas about race, gender, and class on the one hand and classifications of genre, period, and literary style on the other. We will study relationships among these works to uncover how they reflect on, depend on, or revise one another. We will look for relationships between these works and other art forms such as music and visual arts. This means that as we read each text closely, we may also listen closely to a relevant speech, poetry reading, or piece of music. This class requires substantial reading and writing and vigorous participation.

Goals
The goal of this course is to help you engage with African American literature, improving your writing, reading, and critical thinking skills in the process. To that end, you will:
1. read literary and cultural texts with comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions;
2. draw on relevant information to situate texts within their cultural, political, and historical contexts;
3. write focused analyses of literature in clear, correct prose;
4. employ logic, creativity, and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments;
5. employ primary and secondary sources with proper acknowledgment and citation.

Required Texts
There is one required texts for this course: the *Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, third edition, volumes one and two (2014), edited by Henry Louis Gates Jr. and Valerie Smith. The *Norton Anthology of African American Literature* is available at the UO Bookstore and at the Knight Library reserves desk. Handouts marked with an asterisk on the schedule below are in the Files section of the Canvas website for our class.

Course Requirements and Policies
Reading, participation, and attendance are mandatory. Bring the assigned readings to class and be prepared to discuss them. Your participation grade is based on your work in class including discussion, in-class writing, and group work.

Missing class more than twice in the term will result in reduction of your final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade (B becomes B-) for each absence beyond the two permitted. There is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. If you will miss more than two classes due to a university obligation, such as athletics, or due to religious observation, please see me as soon as possible in office hours with relevant documentation if applicable. If you miss class for any reason, it is your responsibility to get notes for that day from a classmate and otherwise catch up on any material you have missed.
We will discuss each assignment in detail as it approaches. Please print and consult the assignment sheet posted in the Files section of the Canvas website for this class. Assignments must be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class on the due dates listed below and formatted according to current MLA guidelines, including 1 inch margins, single-side printed, stapled, correct citation and quotation, and a works cited page. Consult the *MLA Handbook* if you are uncertain of correct format. I will mark late assignments down by 1/3 of a letter grade (B becomes a B-) for each day they are late.

If you anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please meet with me soon. Please request that the Accessible Education Center (aec.uoregon.edu/) send me a letter outlining your approved accommodations.

The University Student Conduct Code (dos.uoregon.edu/conduct) defines academic misconduct. Students may not commit or attempt to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. Students should acknowledge and document all sources of information. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, see me.

UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender-based stalking. If you have experienced or experienced gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are not alone. UO has staff trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, getting academic and housing accommodations, getting legal protective orders, and accessing other help. If you tell me about harassment or assault, I am not required to report this information to anyone unless you request that I do so. I am required to consult with a confidential UO employee (someone with legal confidentiality, such as a counseling professional or a crisis center advocate) to ensure that you are supported. If you decide to make a report, I and other UO employees will help you to do so. My goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available and that you have access to the resources you need. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO’s 24-hour hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options or visit the SAFE website at safe.uoregon.edu.

In this class, we are studying literature of the United States in its historical and political contexts. This means that we will read about and discuss racial and sexual violence. There are incidents of both in our readings, some of which include explicit language and graphic sexual acts, both consensual and not. If you wish to select another class to take instead of this one, I will be happy to meet with you in office hours to help you select a suitable course.

**Grading:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close Reading #1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close Reading #2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close Reading #3</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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**Week One**

T 9/26  Phillis Wheatley, "On Being Brought from Africa to America" (1773) (Volume 1, pages 143-144)  
Syllabus*

Th 9/28  Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845) (Vol 1, p 330-362)  
Assignment Sheet*

**Week Two**

T 10/3  Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845) (Vol 1, p 362-393)  
Close Reading Handout*

Th 10/5  Frances Harper, all poems (1853-1900) (Vol 1, p 448-459)  
Meter Handout*

**Week Three**

T 10/10  Booker T. Washington, "Chapter XIV: The Atlanta Exposition Address" (1895/1901) (Vol 1, p 572-579)  
Passive Voice Handout*

Th 10/12  Ida B. Wells, from *A Red Record* (1895) (Vol 1, p 670-679)  
**Close Reading #1 Due (2-3 pages)**

**Week Four**


Th 10/19  Paul Laurence Dunbar, all poems (1893-1903) (Vol 1, p 896-915)

**Week Five**


Th 10/26  **Midterm Exam**

**Week Six**


Th 11/2  Langston Hughes, all poems (1921-1949) (Vol 1 1304-1320)  
**Close Reading #2 Due (2-3 pages)**
Week Seven
T 11/7   Sterling Brown, all poems (1927-1975) (Vol 1, p 1271-1290)
Th 11/9  Sterling Brown, all poems (1927-1975) (Vol 1, p 1271-1290)

Week Eight
Th 11/16  Larry Neal, "The Black Arts Movement" (1968) (Vol 2, p 784-787)
          Jayne Cortez, "How Long Has Trane Been Gone" (1969) (Vol 2, p 771-773)

Week Nine
          **Close Reading #3 Due (4-5 pages)**
Th 11/23  Thanksgiving, no class

Week Ten
T 11/28  Toni Cade Bambara, "Gorilla, My Love" (1972) (Vol 2, p 842-846)
          Alice Walker, "Everyday Use" (1973) (Vol 2, p 1188-1194)

Exam Week
Th 12/7  12:30pm-2pm Final Exam in 185 Lillis