

The Harlem Renaissance

Professor: E.L. Gibson III
ENGL 364 (Spring 2013)
Kennedy Hall 104: MWF ~ 11:00-11:50am
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Office: 302 Palmer Hall, 901.843.3445
Office Hrs: MW ~ 12:15-1:30pm / By Appointment

Teaching Philosophy

- Pedagogical Creed: *I am convinced that the act of learning can be likened to that of travel. If the student is in the same position at the end of the semester as where he/she began at the beginning, the professor has failed to lead, the student has failed to follow or the material has failed them both.*
- Student Objective: *To become **SOPHISTICATED READERS** of text, culture and experience!*

Course Description

- This is a **READING INTENSIVE** course that seeks to highlight important concepts and themes identifiable within the Harlem Renaissance. This course will survey the African American cultural movement spanning from the late 1910s to the early 1930s. Particular attention will be devoted to those figures and ideas most central to this historical moment, which witnessed, as James Weldon Johnson proclaimed, the “flowering of Negro literature.” Authors may include: Alain Locke, W.E.B. Du Bois, Jessie Fauset, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, Nella Larsen and Zora Neale Hurston. This course will also situate this period of fecund black artistic expression within a historical context.

Required and Supplementary Texts

- Hurston: *Their Eyes Were Watching God (TEWWG)*
- Larsen: *Passing*
- Lewis: *When Harlem Was in Vogue (WHWV)*
- McKay: *Home to Harlem (Home)*
- Patton: *Double-Take: A Revisionist Harlem Renaissance Anth. (Anth)*
- Toomer: *Cane*

- Gibaldi: *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (Supplementary)
 - All required texts are available at Rhodes College Bookstore
 - 901.843.3535
 - Rhodes@bkstr.com

Course Requirements

- **Thematic Essay Exams (2):** There will be two four-page thematic essay exams throughout this course. These exams are designed to evaluate the student's ability to articulate an understanding of how the texts covered within the class speak to a particular theme central to the discourse. Each exam will offer the student a thematic prompt on which the student must write a three to four page critical essay. The exam will be due by the beginning of the class period following the date made available. All essays must be in acceptable MLA format and submitted via Moodle in a MS Word document.
- **Papers (2):** Each student is required to produce two papers of varying lengths. These papers serve as the midterm and the final papers. Both of which must be in acceptable MLA format and submitted via Moodle in a MS Word Document. Consult MLA handbook or <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/> for assistance.
 - Critical Essay (Midterm): A five-page paper engaging a specific element covered within the first half of the course. This paper should be a close reading and/or thematic treatment of a piece or multiple pieces of literature that explores the ways in which the literature fits into the larger American narrative. Paper length is non-negotiable. Paper must be in acceptable MLA format and submitted via Moodle in a MS Word document.
 - Final Essay (Research): A ten-page paper exploring a central idea, theme, trope, symbol, motif, et cetera. This paper should be inspired by one or more of the readings from the course and should effectively make use of an identifiable critical lens. Being a research paper, outside sources are required. Paper length is non-negotiable. Paper must be in acceptable MLA format and submitted via Moodle in a MS Word document.
- **Participation/Quizzes:** Although this course is reading intensive, class sessions rely heavily on classroom discussion. The student is expected to show up for class prepared to engage his/her colleagues and professor in a serious dialogue over the text. After one week of absences, one-third letter grade will be dropped; anything in excess of two weeks of absences may result in a withdrawal or failing of the course. <http://www.rhodes.edu/collegehandbook/10372.asp> Quizzes will be administered if class appears to not have done the reading.

- **Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism:** All work submitted in this course must be original to the student and to the class. There is no tolerance for recycled or plagiarized work. If the student engages in any act of plagiarism or academic dishonesty, he/she will fail the assignment/class and be reported to the honor council. <http://www.rhodes.edu/studenthandbook/2175.asp#DisVio>
- **Late Assignments:** Not accepted without legitimate and verified excuse.
- **Assignment Weights:**
 - Participation – 10%
 - Thematic Essay Exam 1 – 15%
 - Thematic Essay Exam 2 – 20%
 - Critical Essay – 25%
 - Final Essay – 30%
- **Professor retains the right to change this syllabus.**

Course Schedule

January 9th

Introductions, Syllabus and Expectations

January 11th

✘ *WHWV*: Chapters 1 & 2

January 14th

✘ *WHWV*: Chapters 3 & 4

January 16th

✘ *WHWV*: Chapter 5

✘ *Anth*: Locke “The New Negro” - Schuyler “The Negro Art Hokum”

January 18th

✘ *Anth*: Hughes “Negro Artist” – Du Bois “Criteria” – Hurston “Negro Expression”

January 21st ~ *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Observance*

January 23rd

✘ *Anth*: J.W. Johnson “Creation” – Dunbar-Nelson “Proletariat”

✘ Douglas – Johnson “Heart of Woman” “Motherhood” “Plumes”

January 25th

✘ *Anth*: Grimké “Rachel”

✘ *Thematic Essay Exam Available*

January 28th

✘ *Thematic Essay Exam Due*

January 30th

✘ *Anth:* Fauset “Oriflamme” “Mary Eliz.” – F. Johnson “Banjo” “Scarlet” “Tired”

February 4th

✘ *Cane*

February 6th

✘ *Cane*

February 8th

✘ *Cane*

February 11th

✘ *Anth:* Hughes “Negro Speaks” “Weary Blues” “The Blues I’m Playing”

✘ Bennett “Heritage” “To a Dark Girl” “Hatred”

February 13th

✘ *Anth:* Fisher “The City of Refuge” “Miss Cynthia”

✘ Hurston “Sweat” “Color Struck”

February 15th

✘ *WHWV:* Chapter 6

February 18th

✘ *Home*

February 20th

✘ *Home*

February 22nd

✘ *Home*

February 25th

✘ *Critical Essay Due*

February 27th

✘ *Anth:* Brown (all poems) – Bontemps (all poems) “A Summer Tragedy”

March 1st

✘ *Anth:* Cullen (all poems)

March 4th

✘ *Anth:* Thurman “Cordelia” “Emma Lou”

March 6th

✘ Film

March 8th

✘ Film Discussion

March 11-17th – *Spring Recess*

March 18th

✘ *Anth:* Nugent “Sahdji” “Sahdji, an African Ballet”

March 20th

✘ *Anth:* West (both stories)

March 22nd

✘ *Anth:* H. Johnson (all poems)

✘ *Thematic Essay Exam Available*

March 25th

✘ *Thematic Essay Exam Due*

March 27th

✘ *WHWV:* Chapter 7

March 29th – *Easter Recess*

April 1st

✘ *Anth:* Hughes “Mulatto”

April 3rd

✘ *Passing*

April 5th

✘ *Passing*

April 8th

✘ *Passing*

April 10th

✘ *WHWV:* Chapter 8

April 12th

✘ *WHWV:* Chapter 9

April 15th

✘ *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

April 17th

✘ *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

April 19th

✘ *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

April 22nd

✘ *Course Discussion and Evaluations*

April 24th

✘ *Final Paper Discussion*

April 26th

✘ *Final Paper Due*

✘ **Awards Convocation and URCAS**