**ESSEX COUNTY COLLEGE**

**Humanities Division**

**ENG 238 – Major African American Writers**

**Course Outline**

**Course Number & Name:** ENG 238 Major African American Writers

**Credit Hours:**  3.0 **Contact Hours:**  3.0 **Lecture:** 3.0 **Lab:**  N/A **Other:**  N/A

**Prerequisites**: Grade of “C” or better in ENG 102

**Co-requisites:** None **Concurrent Courses:** None

**Course Outline Revision Date:**  Spring 2011

**Course Description**: This course will explore the development of literary trends and values as well as prevailing social conditions as they are represented by African American writers from early to modern literature.

**General Education Goals**: ENG 238 is affirmed in the following General Education Foundation Categories: **Humanistic Perspective** and **Global and Cultural Awareness of Diversity**. The corresponding General Education Goals are respectively as follows: Students will analyze works in the field of art, music, or theater; literature; and philosophy and/or religious studies; and will gain competence in the use of a foreign language; and Students will understand the importance of global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

**Course Goals:** Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. apply critical and analytical approaches the study of African American literature; and

2. write critical and analytical essays about literary works using critical literary research.

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)**: Upon successful completion of this course, students should specifically be able to do the following:

1. Apply critical and analytical approaches the study of African American literature:

* 1. *define basic terms and concepts used in literary discussion;*
  2. *recognize and discuss how these literary terms and concepts function in each literary piece;* and
  3. *recognize and describe individual writers and their works from various periods that help explain universal and diverse themes in the literature*

**Measurable Course Performance Objectives (MPOs)** (continued):

2. Write critical and analytical essays about literary works using critical literary research:

2.1 *write critical and analytical essays on each author studied;*

2.2 *consider the implications of literary criticism of African American texts;*

2.3 *use appropriate citations from the source to support the development of the thesis idea following Modern Language Association (MLA) style format in the critical and analytical essay;*

2.4 *use the library, Internet, and other sources to find relevant, scholarly source material in support of the thesis in all critical and analytical essays;* and

2.5 *write in one’s own voice in the essay while properly incorporating primary and secondary material*

**Methods of Instruction**: Instruction will consist of lectures, discussions, presentations, and the development of critical and analytical essays using critical literary research.

**Outcomes Assessment:** Checklist rubrics will be used to evaluate critical and analytical essays for MLA documentation and research techniques and for the various elements of African American literary thought for the presence of course objectives. Rubrics will be used to evaluate recognition of literary terms and concepts specific to African American literature in sampled writing assignments. Data is collected and analyzed to determine the level of student performance on these assessment instruments in regards to meeting course objectives. The results of this data analysis are used to guide necessary pedagogical and/or curricular revisions.

**Course Requirements:** All students are required to:

1. Complete the reading and analysis of selected texts.

2. Write five multi-page critical and analytical essays using literary research documented in MLA style format.

3. Give a critical research presentation.

**Methods of Evaluation:** Final course grades will be computed as follows:

**% of**

**Grading Components final course grade**

* **5 or more Multi-page Critical and Analytical Essays 80%**

(to be assigned by instructor)

Essays will provide evidence of the extent to which students meet course objectives including, but not limited to, recognizing how literary terms and concepts function in African American works studied, using appropriate citations in MLA style to support the development of the thesis, and including scholarly sources from the library, Internet, and other resources while maintaining one’s own voice throughout. In addition, the student will consider the implications of literary criticism of African American texts.

* 1 Critical Research Presentation (to be assigned by instructor) 20%

The critical research presentation will provide evidence of the extent to which students meet course objectives including, but not limited to, researching a work relevant to the course using MLA style format and defining basic terms and concepts used in literary discussion that recognizes a writer from a specific period that helps explain universal and divers themes in African American literature.

**Academic Integrity:** Dishonesty disrupts the search for truth that is inherent in the learning process and so devalues the purpose and the mission of the College. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

* plagiarism – the failure to acknowledge another writer’s words or ideas or to give proper credit to sources of information;
* cheating – knowingly obtaining or giving unauthorized information on any test/exam or any other academic assignment;
* interference – any interruption of the academic process that prevents others from the proper engagement in learning or teaching; and
* fraud – any act or instance of willful deceit or trickery.

Violations of academic integrity will be dealt with by imposing appropriate sanctions. Sanctions for acts of academic dishonesty could include the resubmission of an assignment, failure of the test/exam, failure in the course, probation, suspension from the College, and even expulsion from the College.

**Student Code of Conduct:** All students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible and considerate adults who respect the rights of others. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. All students are also expected to attend and be on time for all class meetings. No cell phones or similar electronic devices are permitted in class. Please refer to the Essex County College student handbook, *Lifeline*, for more specific information about the College’s Code of Conduct and attendance requirements.

**Course Content Outline:** based on the following literary periods and representative authors/texts (required for adjunct instructors/optional for full-time faculty):

Literature of Slavery and Freedom:

Vincent Carretta, ed. *Phillis Wheatley: Complete Writings*. New York: Penguin, 2001. ISBN: 978-014-0424-300

David Walker. *Appeal in Four Articles*. Baltimore, MD: Black Classic Press, 1993. ISBN: 978-0933121-385

William Wells Brown. *Clotel*; or *The President’s Daughter*. New York: Bedford/St. Martins, 2005. ISBN: 978-0312152-659

Frederick Douglass. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2001. ISBN: 0-300-08701-2

Harriet Jacobs*. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. New York: Dover, 2008. ISBN: 978-0-554-04866-6

Harriet E Wilson. *Our Nig, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black*. NY: Dover, 2008. ISBN: 0-486-44561-5

Reconstruction and Harlem Renaissance:

W E B Du Bois. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Henry L Gates Jr and Terri Hume Oliver, eds. NY: WW Norton, 1999. ISBN: 978-0-393-97393-8

Jacqueline Jones Royster, ed. *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B Wells, 1892-1900*. NY: Bedford/St Martin’s, 1996. ISBN: 978-0-312-116-958

James Weldon Johnson. The *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. ISBN: 978-145-6314880

Paul Laurence Dunbar. *The Complete Poems of Paul Laurence Dunbar*. NY: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1913. ISBN: 987-111-0-131204

Jean Toomer. *Cane*. NY: Liveright, 1999. ISBN: 0-87140-151-7

Zora Neale Hurston. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. NY: HarperCollins, 2000. ISBN: 0-06-093141-8

Langston Hughes. *The Collected Works of Langston Hughes: The Poems,* *1921-1940*. Missouri UP. ISBN: 0-826-213-396

Nella Larsen. *Quicksand and Passing*. NJ: Rutgers UP, 2004. ISBN: 0-8135-1170-4

Realism, Naturalism, Modernism:

Richard Wright. *Native Son*. NY: HarperPerennial, 2003. ISBN: 978-0-06-053348-9

Era Bell Thompson. *American Daughter*. Minnesota Historical Society Press, 1989. ISBN: 0-873-512014

Ann Petry. *The Street*

Realism, Naturalism, Modernism (continued):

Gwendolyn Brooks

James Baldwin. *Giovanni’s Room*

Ralph Ellison. *Invisible Man*

Lorraine Hansberry. *A Raisin in the Sun*.

The Black Arts Era:

Audre Lorde. *Zami*

Amiri Baraka

Sonia Sanchez

Toni Cade Bambara

Literature since 1975:

Maya Angelou. *I Know why the Caged Bird Sings*

Toni Morrison

Alice Walker. *The Color Purple*

August Wilson. *Fences*

David Bradley. *The Chaneysville Incident*

Essex Hemphill

**Week Content/Topics**

1 Course Introduction/Class Syllabus & Schedule Review

Literature of Slavery and Freedom – The Slave Narrative: Frederick Douglass

2 Lecture/Discussion on The Antebellum Era – Frederick Douglass’s Narrative Voice

Group Discussions/Response Writing Activity

3 Lecture/Discussion on The Heroic Slave – Frederick Douglass

Literary Research Techniques

4 **First** **Critical and Analytical Essay Due**

Lecture/Discussion on Women in Slavery – Harriet Jacobs’s *Incidents*

**Week Content/Topics**

5 Student Presentations Begin

Lecture on Literary Research and the Slave Narrative

Group Discussions/Response Writing Activity

Harriet Jacobs’s Narrative Strategies

6 Lecture on The Slave Mother

Group Discussions on Gender, Race, and Class in *Incidents*

Student Presentations (continued)

7 **Second Critical and Analytical Essay Due**

Student Presentations (continued)

Lecture on Realism, Naturalism, Modernism – Richard Wright’s *Native Son*

8 Lecture/Discussion on Richard Wright, What is Realism?

Response Writing Activity

Literary Research Assignment

Student Presentations (continued)

9 Lecture on Media Images of African Americans in *Native Son*

Group Discussions on the Negation of Black Male Power

Student Presentations (continued)

Literary Research Exercise

10 **Third** **Critical and Analytical Essay Due**

Lecture on Feminism in Ann Petry’s *The Street*

Group Discussion on Gender, Race, and Class

Student Presentations (continued)

11 Lecture/Discussion on Ann Petry

Response Writing – Compare and Contrast Wright and Petry

Group Discussion on Single Motherhood in 1940s Harlem

Student Presentations (continued)

12 Lecture on Black Realism in *The Street*

Literary Research Assignment

Group Discussions on Modernism in Petry

Student Presentations (continued)

13 **Fourth** **Critical and Analytical Essay Due**

Lecture on Literature since 1975 & African American Poets – Maya Angelou, Alice Walker, Essex Hemphill

Student Presentations (continued)

14 Lecture/Discussion on The Community of Black Women Writing and Literary Research Methods

Group Discussion on New Trends in African American Writing

**Week Content/Topics**

15 **Fifth** **Critical and Analytical Essay Due**

Final Literary Discussions

Final Student Presentations