

AML3607: African American Literature 1945 to Present

Fall 2025

Professor: Catherine C. Saunders, PhD

T: Period 2 - 3 8:30 AM - 10:25 AM

R: Period 3 9:35 AM - 10:25 AM

Final Exam: Final Exam: 12/08/2025 @ 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Office: Turlington 4354

Office Hours

Tuesday: Period 4: 10:40am-11:30am

Thursday: Period 5: 11:45-12:35pm

Course Overview

This course offers a survey of 20th and 21st century African American literature. From Ann Petry to Percival Everett, we will explore the historical and cultural backdrop that both informs and influences the Black literary text. Both the readings and writing activities that comprise the course require students to challenge the caricature and stereotypes that often obscure the totality of Black people and Black culture. At the crux of this course is the impetus to engage Black literature within and beyond response and resistance to contemplate the query I situate at the heart of this course: *Why Study African American Literature?*

Course Objectives

- To engage a survey of 20th and 21st century African American literary texts
- To become acquainted with the historical backdrop of the canonical and non-canonical African American text
- To demonstrate mastery of course content through a research paper and exam
- To critically and creatively contemplate textual themes and literary motifs
- To meet high standards of writing and produce quality written responses and short papers
- To critically contemplate Black people and Black culture from the inside out

Required Texts

The Street, Ann Petry (1946)

A Raisin in the Sun, Lorraine Hansberry (1959)

The Bluest Eye, Toni Morrison

Two Trains Running, August Wilson (1995)

The Man Who Lived Underground, Richard Wright (1941;2021)

James, Percival Everett (2024)

Course Assignments

I. Writing Assignments 40%

A. Weekly Questions+ Journal: You are expected to arrive for each class with the required reading, two critical questions, and a journal response in correspondence to the readings. Your journals should be about 350 words and should contain a title (which may be a question). You should include at least one quotation and focus on a character or component of the reading to which you offer insight or critique (or both)! Your journals may assume any desired form, but all journal responses must convey critical engagement with the text. **Critical Questions + Journal are due Monday at noon.**

B. Discussion Lead (Presentation): The course requires each student to lead discussion for the text of their choice. As discussion lead you are to facilitate a discussion between you and your peers. You must also submit a one-page (single-spaced) response paper that contemplates the critical question of your choice. For your presentation you are to curate your discussion around this critical question and your interpretation/close reading of the text.

C. Response Papers

Response Paper I: 9/12

Response Paper II: 10/10

Response Paper III: 11/7 (AI & African American Literature)

Response Paper IV is to accompany your presentation

D. Panel Participation: The class will consist of three panel discussions. Students will be required to submit two questions or topics for the panel discussion, and you will be provided with study sheet to help you prepare. You will be evaluated on your ability to think critically and your ability to make germane connections between the assigned texts.

II. Midterm 15%: 10/3

III. Research Paper 25%: Due 11/21 (6 pages/3 sources)

Your research paper emerges as a product of cumulative assignments that span the entire course. For this assignment, you are to make a provocative argument that you illustrate with three texts from our course. **You are also required to prepare an eight-to-ten-minute conference presentation on the final day of class (12/2).**

Topic Proposal: 9/26

10.17: Annotated Bibliography

10/31: Rough Draft Due

*You must meet with me on or before 11/7 to discuss your research paper.

IV. **Final Exam 20%:** December 8th

GRADING SCALE

A 93-100% **A-** 90-92% **B+** 87-89% **B** 83-86%

B- 80-82% **C+** 77-79% **C** 73-76% **C-** 70-72%

D+ 67-69% **D** 63-66% **D-** 60-62% **E** Below 60%

For information regarding current UF policies for assigning grade points, see:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

GRADE APPEALS: Students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available in the English Department Offices. You will need to contact Carla Blount, Program Assistant to the Director of Writing Programs, for details if you wish to file an appeal.

Course Schedule

Date	Readings	Assignments
August 21 st	Selected poems from <i>A Street in Bronzeville</i> (1945)	Review and Sign Syllabus In-Class Diagnostic Post a course intro in 140 characters on Canvas before Sunday at 11:59pm
Week of August 26 th	<i>The Street</i> , Ann Petry	8/25: Critical Questions + Journals Due by noon
Week of September 2 nd	" <i>The Battle Royal</i> ," Ralph Ellison Excerpts from <i>Shadow and Act</i>	9/1: Critical Questions + Responses Due by noon
Week of September 9 th	James Baldwin: "Sonny's Blues" and "Notes of a Native Son" <i>Excerpts from Fire Next Time</i> , James Baldwin	9.8: Critical Questions + Journals Due by noon <i>Reader's Response I Due: 9.12</i>
Week of September 16 th	<i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> (1959) Lorraine Hansberry	9.15: Critical Questions + Journals Due by noon
Week of September 23 rd	The Dutchman , Amiri Baraka + Film	9.22: Critical Questions + Journals Due by noon <i>9.26: Topic Proposal Due</i>
Week of September 30 th	BAM: The Black Arts Movement Selected Poetry from Nikki Giovanni, Sonia Sanchez, Audre Lorde, Lucille Clifton, and Amira Baraka	9.29: Critical Questions + Journals Due by noon <i>Midterm: 10.3</i>

Week of October 7 th	<i>The Bluest Eye</i> , Toni Morrison Excerpts From poets Maya Angelou and Sterling Brown Panel Discussion	10.6: Critical Questions + Journals Due by noon <i>Reader's Response II Due 10.10</i>
Week of October 14 th	Excerpts From poets Maya Angelou and Sterling Brown "Revolutionary Petunias" and selected Short Stories by Alice Walker and Toni Cade Bambara	10.11: Critical Questions + Journals Due by noon <i>10.17: Annotated Bibliography</i>
Week of October 21 st	<i>Two Trains Running</i> , August Wilson (1990)	10.20: Critical Questions + Journals Due by noon
Week of October 28 th	<i>The Man Who Lived Underground</i> , Richard (1941, 2021) Wright Panel Discussion	10.27: Critical Questions + Journals Due by noon <i>10.31: Rough Draft Due</i> <i>**Sign up for conference with me!</i>
November 4 th	<i>James</i> , Percival Everett (2024)	11.3: Critical Questions + Journals Due by noon <i>Reader's Response II Due 11.7</i>
November 11 th	The Contemporary Poetic: Jericho Brown, Evie Shockley	11.10: Critical Questions + Journals Due by noon
Week of November 18 th	<i>American Fiction: "To Make a Literature Black"</i> Kenneth Warren <i>Sinners</i> , Ryan Coogler: "Next Time You Got Questions like that, Ask Yourself" Dana A. Williams Panel Discussion	11.17: Post Panel Discussions <i>Research Paper Due 11/21</i>
Holiday Recess	<i>No Class</i>	
Week of December 2 nd	<i>In-Class Conference</i>	Final Exam 12/8

*This course complies with all UF policies. For a list of those policies and for academic and wellness resources available to all students, please see <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>.

A Word on Plagiarism...

Many people do not know when LLMs are lying to them, which is unsurprising given that the chatbots are very convincing fabulists, serving up slop with unflappable confidence to their unsuspecting audience. That compromised content is then pumped at scale by real people into their own online interactions. The result: Meretricious material from chatbots is polluting our public discourse with Potemkin pontification, derailing debates with [made-up appeals](#) to authority and [precedent](#), and in some cases, defaming living people by attributing things to them that they never said and do not agree with.

<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2025/08/ai-inventing-quotes/683888/>

Attendance Policy: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/#absencestext>

University Policies

Link to academic policies and campus resources: <https://go.ufl.edu/syllabuspolicies>

University Honesty Policy: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [See the UF Conduct Code website for more information](#). If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal education use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and deliver by an instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course.

A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentation such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or guest lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless, of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support: Contact the [UF Computing Help Desk](#) at [352-392-4357](tel:352-392-4357) or via e-mail at helpdesk@ufl.edu.
- [Career Connections Center](#): Reitz Union Suite 1300, [352-392-1601](tel:352-392-1601). Career assistance and counseling services.
- [Library Support](#): Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources. Call [866-281-6309](tel:866-281-6309) or email ask@ufl.libanswers.com for more information.
- [Academic Resources](#): 1317 Turlington Hall, Call [352-392-2010](tel:352-392-2010), or to make a private appointment: [352-392-6420](tel:352-392-6420). Email contact: teaching-center@ufl.edu. General study skills and tutoring.
- [Writing Studio](#): Daytime (9:30am-3:30pm): 2215 Turlington Hall, [352-846-1138](tel:352-846-1138) | Evening (5:00pm-7:00pm): 1545 W University Avenue (Library West, Rm. 339). Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.
- Academic Complaints: Office of the Ombuds; [Visit the Complaint Portal webpage for more information.](#)
- Enrollment Management Complaints (Registrar, Financial Aid, Admissions): [View the Student Complaint Procedure webpage for more information.](#)
- UF Student Success Initiative: Visit <https://studentsuccess.ufl.edu/> for resources that support your success as a UF student.

Campus Health and Wellness Resources

- UF Whole Gator Resources: Visit <https://one.uf.edu/whole-gator/discover> for resources that are designed to help you thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally at UF.