

ENG3011: Black Diasporic Thought

Fall 2025

T: Period 7 (1:55 PM - 2:45 PM)

R: Period 7 - 8 (1:55 PM - 3:50 PM)

Final Exam: Final Exam: 12/11/2025 @ 3:00 PM - 5:00 PM

Professor: Catherine C. Saunders, PhD

Office: Turlington 4354

Office Hours

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

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

Course Overview

This course engages the critical contemplation(s) of the Black theorist. Whether Double Consciousness, the “New Negro,” Afropessimism, or the Globalectic, the diasporic theorist conveys a rich theoretical history that casts a unique conceptual lens on the world at large. This course engages theory from a diasporic standpoint and considers how the culturally specific theorist curates a unique insight on the world at large. Ambitiously, this course strives to acquaint students with the Black critical thinker and to unlock the theorist within each student.

Course Objectives

- To engage conventional and unconventional theory from Black authors and philosophers
- To contemplate the overlap between fiction and theory
- To apply Black critical thought to visual, audio, and literary texts
- To creatively and critically contemplate Black critical thought throughout the diaspora
- 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
- To employ course readings as an informant to a new or nuanced theory

Required Texts

The Souls of Black Folk, W.E.B. DuBois

Giovanni's Room, James Baldwin

Recitatif, Toni Morrison

Boy. Snow. Bird. Helen Oyeyemi

Dream on Money Mountain Derek Walcott ‘

Course Assignments + Course Weight

Course Assignments

I. Writing Assignments: 40%

This course involves a number of both critical and creative assignments.

- A. **Weekly:** You are expected to arrive for each class with two critical questions in response to the readings. If a fictional text accompanies a theory, then one question should correspond to each reading. I strongly encourage you to come to class with a one-sentence summary. You are also to turn in a weekly journal where you react, respond, or ruminate on the readings.

Critical Questions + Thoughts of a scholar/ theorists (TOAST) 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 a critical question and your interpretation/close reading of the text.

- C. **Response Papers:** This course requires you produce two response papers.

Your response papers must adhere to the following format:

1. **Precis:** Your paper must begin with a precis in the form of a paragraph that articulates the author’s core argument and main objectives (aka how they make their argument) in your own words.
2. **Response:** The second paragraph must articulate a thesis statement that you explicate with at least two examples.
3. This assignment should be about *one-page single spaced*, contain a creative *title*, and contain *no more than three paragraphs*.

Response Paper I due 9/12

Response Paper II due 11/7

Response Paper III: Due dates vary (to accompany your presentation)

II. Midterm 10/3: 15%

III. Research Paper (11/21) 25%: 5 pages + 3 secondary sources

Your research paper emerges as a product of cumulative assignments that span the entire course. For this assignment, you are to create your own theory or add critical nuance to a theory we encounter this semester. **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 Project Due 20%:** December 8th

For your final project, you are to create a web text to accompany the theory you developed in your research paper. Weebly and WordPress offer free platforms, though I invite you to the platform most comfortable to you and your needs. Your web text should consist of the following:

- A site title
- A definition
- Three instances of application: Your site should implement visual and written texts that illustrate your theory. Two examples should be correct and one example must demonstrate how an uninformed party would use the term.
- The final component of your web text invites you to creatively articulate what you hope your conceptual lens will offer the world at large. *How do you see your work contributing to the theory and humanities discipline as a whole?* You may wish to perform a monologue or a Ted-Talk, or you may find a skit or another artistic form of expression useful to convey your point(s).

***** A Gentle Reminder:** While I encourage you to develop your own theory, I do wish to note that you are welcome to build on a theory we encounter and discuss in class. Nuance can refine the work of the past and inform its afterlife with valuable insight!

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.

Date	Readings	Assignments
August 21 st	Course Introductions	Review and Sign Syllabus Post Course Introductions before Sunday at 11:59pm
Week of August 26 th	WEB Du Bois: “On Our Spiritual Strivings” and “On the Passing of the First Born” from <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i>	8/25: Critical Questions + Responses Due by noon
Week of September 2 nd	Alain Locke: “The New Negro” + “Ideological Peace” “Dave’s Neckliss,” Charles Chestnutt	9/1: Critical Questions + Responses Due by noon
Week of September 9 th	The American African: “Black Matter (s)” Toni Morrison <i>Recitatif</i> Toni Morrison	9.8: Critical Questions + Responses Due by noon <i>Reader’s Response I Due: 9.12</i>
Week of September 16 th	Post Modern Blackness: bell hooks “Home” Langston Hughes	9.15: Critical Questions + Responses Due by noon
Week of September 23 rd	Afro-Pessimism Selected Scenes from <i>Atlanta</i>	9.22: Critical Questions + Responses Due by noon <i>9.26: Topic Proposal Due</i>
Week of September 30 th	Derek Walcott: “What the Twilight Says” Sylvia Wynter: “Novel and History, Plot and Plantation”	9.29: Critical Questions + Responses Due by noon <i>Midterm: 10.3</i>
Week of October 7 th	Derek Walcott: <i>Dream on Monkey Mountain</i>	10.6: Critical Questions + Responses Due by noon
Week of October 14 th	Stuart Hall: “Cultural Identity and Diaspora” “Who Owns Black Pain?” Zadie Smith Excerpts from <i>Grand Union</i>	10.11: Critical Questions + Responses Due by noon <i>10.17: Annotated Bibliography</i>
Week of October 21 st	<i>Boy. Snow. Bird.</i> Helen Oyeyemi	10.20: Critical Questions + Responses Due by noon
Week of October 28 th	Black Canadian Thought: Excerpts from <i>A Map to the Door of No Return</i> and <i>Nomenclature</i> Dionne Brand “Money Tree” and “Riding the Red” by Nalo Hopinkson	10.27: Critical Questions + Responses Due by noon <i>10.31: Rough Draft Due</i> <i>**Sign up for conference with me!</i>
November 4 th	<i>Giovanni’s Room</i> , James Baldwin	11.3: Critical Questions + Responses Due by noon <i>Reader’s Response II Due 11.7</i>
November 11 th	Ngugi: The Globalectic	11.10: Critical Questions + Responses Due by noon

	<i>Sinners, Ryan Coogler</i>	
Week of November 18th		Polish and Submit Research Paper <i>11.21: Research Paper Due</i>
Holiday Recess	No Class	
Week of December 2nd	Course Conference	<i>Final Projects due December 11th</i>

*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/syllabuspolices>.

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/#absencecontext>

University Policies

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.