COURSE OUTLINE
ENGLISH 225 – AFRICAN-AMERICAN LITERATURE

Prepared By: Nadine N. Jennings, PhD
Updated By: Emily Hamilton-Honey and Melissa Elliott Lee
A. **TITLE:** African-American Literature

B. **COURSE NUMBER:** ENGL 225

C. **CREDIT HOURS:** 3

D. **WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE:** Determined by Semester

E. **COURSE LENGTH:** 15 weeks

F. **SEMESTER(S) OFFERED:** Fall or Spring

G. **HOURS OF LECTURE, LABORATORY, RECITATION, TUTORIAL, ACTIVITY:** 3 lecture hours per week

H. **CATALOG DESCRIPTION:** This course focuses on African American authors from the Colonial Era to the present. Topics include recurring themes and concerns, cultural pressures, historical contexts, intellectual currents and literary innovations. Students study major African American writers such as Zora Neale Hurston, Richard Wright, Langston Hughes, Rita Dove, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, James Baldwin and others.

I. **PRE-REQUISITES/CO-REQUISITES:**
   a. Pre-requisite(s): ENGL 101 (Expository Writing) or ENGL 102 (Oral and Written Expression)
   b. Co-requisite(s): None.

J. **GOALS (STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES):**
   By the end of this course, the student will be able to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Objective</th>
<th>Institutional SLO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>a.</strong> Define common elements of literary study and demonstrate ability to identify and analyze those elements within works studied;</td>
<td>2. Crit. Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>b.</strong> Evaluate literary works by African American authors based upon ability to identify and analyze common elements of literary study;</td>
<td>1. Communication 2. Crit. Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>c.</strong> Identify geographic and cultural roots of African Americans;</td>
<td>2. Crit. Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>d.</strong> Compare and contrast common themes among African American authors and the time period in which they were writing;</td>
<td>2. Crit. Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>e.</strong> Construct oral or written responses that integrate their knowledge of African American literature with their knowledge of American cultural and social history;</td>
<td>1. Communication 2. Crit. Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>f.</strong> Demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods of at least one of the humanities in addition to those encompassed by other knowledge areas required by the General Education program.</td>
<td>2. Crit. Thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
K. **TEXTS:**
(Representative texts; texts chosen by instructor)


L. **REFERENCES:**
(Representative references; references chosen by instructor)


M. **EQUIPMENT:** Technology enhanced-classroom

N. **GRADING METHOD:** A-F

O. **MEASUREMENT CRITERIA/METHODS:**
- Exams
- Quizzes
- Papers
- Participation
P. DETAILED COURSE OUTLINE:

I. Introduction
   A. Diversity of African American Heritage
      1. African Homeland
      2. Immigration & the Middle Passage
      3. Slavery in America
      4. History of African American English
   B. Common Elements of Literature & Terminology
      1. Fiction
      2. Poetry
      3. Drama
   C. Criticism of Literature
      1. Defining Literary Criticism
         a. Toni Morrison
      2. Writing about Literature
         a. MLA Documentation

II. Traditions in African American Literature
   A. The Oral Tradition
   B. Spirituals
   C. Folktales
   D. Blues & Jazz

III. The Literature of Slavery and Freedom
   A. Defining the Time Period (1746-1865)
      1. Slave Narratives
      2. Gender & Class Issues
   B. Representative Authors
      1. Phyllis Wheatley
      2. Sojourner Truth
      3. Harriet Jacobs
      4. Frederick Douglass
      5. Francis E. W. Harper

IV. New Negro Renaissance vs. Harlem Renaissance
   A. Defining the Time Period
      1. New Negro Renaissance (1865-1919)
      2. Harlem Renaissance (1919-1940)
      3. Shades of Color & the ‘Passing’ Trope
   B. Representative Authors
      1. Booker T. Washington
      2. W. E. B. Du Bois
      3. Paul Laurence Dunbar
      4. Zora Neale Hurston
      5. Jean Toomer
      6. Wallace Thurman
      7. Langston Hughes
      8. Countee Cullen

V. Realism, Naturalism, Modernism
   A. Defining the Time Period (1900-1960)
      1. Realism vs. Naturalism
      2. ‘Modern’ Concerns
         a. confronting racism
         b. race and invisibility
c. promoting social change

B. Representative Authors
   1. Richard Wright
   2. Ralph Ellison
   3. Gwendolyn Brooks
   4. James Baldwin
   5. Lorraine Hansberry
   6. Percival Everett

VI. The Black Arts Movement
   A. Defining the Period (1960-1975)
      1. Challenging Assumptions
         a. role of the text
         b. timelessness of art
         c. responsibility of artists to their communities
      2. Civil Rights Movement
      3. Binaries: Assimilation vs. Separatism
      4. Protest Novels & Black Nationalism
   B. Representative Authors
      1. Malcolm X
      2. Martin Luther King, Jr.
      3. Audre Lorde
      4. Amiri Baraka
      5. Toni Cade Bambara
      6. Nikki Giovanni

VII. The Contemporary Period
   A. Defining the Period (1965—present)
      1. Black Identity
      2. Old Issues/Concerns vs. New Issues/Concerns
   B. Representative Authors
      1. Toni Morrison
      2. Alice Walker
      3. Charles Johnson
      4. Rita Dove
      5. Alex Haley
      6. Harryette Mullen

VIII. Conclusion
   A. Literary Innovations in African American Literature
      1. Historical and Contemporary
      2. Reinterpretation and Reevaluation

Q. **LABORATORY OUTLINE:** None.