

Senior Seminar: The Harlem Renaissance

Professor Merrill Cole
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English 476 Section 001
Fall Semester 2012

Office: Simpkins 109
Hours: TTh, 12:30-2:00; W, 12:30-1:30

TTh, 3:30 – 4:45 p.m.
Simpkins 27



Aaron Douglas, *The Negro Speaks of Rivers (for Langston Hughes)*, 1941

Texts

The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes. ISBN: 0679764089

Fire!! Ed. Wallace Thurman. ISBN: 0912607009

Gay Rebel of the Harlem Renaissance. ISBN: 0822329131

Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. ISBN: 0061120065

Hurston, Zora Neale and Langston Hughes. *Mule Bone*. ISBN: 0061651125

Larsen, Nella. *Quicksand and Passing*. ISBN: 0813511704

McKay, Claude. *Home to Harlem*. ISBN: 1555530249

The New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance. Ed. Alain Locke. ISBN: 0684838311

Toomer, Jean. *Cane*. ISBN: 0871402106

Thurman, Wallace. *Infants of the Spring*. ISBN: 1555531288

Van Vechten, Carl. *Nigger Heaven*. ISBN: 0252068602

Overview

What is the Harlem Renaissance? This question was hotly contested by the writers and artists who we see today as its most important participants. A consensus has never been reached, but this is only one of the signs that Harlem Renaissance is still alive. What we can say is that more than an incredibly vibrant movement, the Harlem Renaissance is a major event in American cultural and social history. Like the Paris of the Surrealists, the Berlin of Dada, and the London of Bloomsbury, with Harlem, New York becomes an epicenter of modernity, an important site for the production of art seeking to break artistic norms and to place social convention under critique. During a brief period in the 20s and 30s, Harlem also became the world capitol of Black artistic life.

Requirements

Prerequisites: ENG 280, ENG 299 with a grade of C or better, and senior standing, or consent of department chairperson. *Writing Instruction in the Discipline (WID) course.*

Writing for this course centers on a 12-page research essay, which will be due at the end of the semester. This essay must cite at least five literary and/or cultural criticism sources (open webpages, news pieces, historical overviews, and Wikipedia don't qualify, though you may use them), in the course of making an argument about one or more of the literary works we discuss. In order to prepare for this task, there will also be an annotated bibliography assignment, due three weeks before the research essay. This bibliography must include 15 critical sources. In addition, each student will give a ten-minute presentation on her or his research. You must write a one-page research proposal and have it approved, before you can begin the bibliography. The sooner you settle on a topic for the research paper, the better chance you have of success.

There will also be a five-page close reading essay, due in the middle of the semester.

This is a heavy reading course. Good reading takes time.

This is a seminar, not a lecture. Everyone is a contributing scholar. You must be prepared to say something and/or to ask questions about the text at hand during every session. My role is not "teacher"; I am the facilitator. Take responsibility for your learning and that of your classmates, including me.

Should it prove necessary in order to facilitate discussion, I will add more written assignments. Please don't make me do this.

See <<http://www.wiu.edu/provost/student/>> for student rights and responsibilities.

Grading

Participation:	30%	(includes presentation)
Midterm Essay:	10%	(may be revised & resubmitted)
Annotated Bibliography:	10%	(may be revised & resubmitted)
Research Essay:	50%	

Unless excused, late work will receive a one-letter grade reduction. I am, however, usually willing to grant an extension, so long as the student contacts me *at least 24 hours in advance*. Extensions on the final essay will only be given under exceptional circumstances. Plagiarism will result in an F for the course, and I will report the student for academic discipline. Missing classes will affect the participation grade. A student with three unexcused absences *automatically fails the course*.

Visiting My Office

Please take the opportunity to meet with me during my office hours, or by appointment, to talk about the readings, or your writing. *I very much appreciate any kind of feedback about the course.*

Students with Disabilities

In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), I will make academic accommodations for any student who notifies me of the need. For me to provide the proper accommodation(s), you must provide me documentation from Disability Support Services. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to my attention, as I am not legally permitted to ask. Students who require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e., fire, tornado, etc.) should tell me the most appropriate procedures to follow. Please contact Disability Support Services at 298–2512.

Schedule

Week 1: August 21 & 23

Introduction to the course

Cane

Week 2: August 28 & 30

Cane

Week 3: September 4 & 6

The New Negro

Week 4: September 11 & 13
Nigger Heaven

Week 5: September 18 & 20
Nigger Heaven
FIRE!!

Week 6: September 25 & 27
FIRE!!
Home to Harlem

Week 7: October 2 & 4
Home to Harlem

Week 8: October 9 & 11
Midterm Essay due October 9
Quicksand & Passing

Week 9: October 16 (Class Canceled October 18)
The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes

Week 10: October 23 & 25
The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes

Week 11: October 30 & November 1
Mule Bone
Infants of the Spring

Week 12: November 6 & 8
Infants of the Spring

Week 13: November 13 & 15
Annotated Bibliography due November 15
Gay Rebel of the Harlem Renaissance

Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: November 27 & 29
Their Eyes Were Watching God

Week 15: December 4 & 6
Their Eyes Were Watching God

Final Exam Week, December 10
Research Essay due Monday, December 10 at 1:00 p.m. in my office