

CES 331/ENGL 321: INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE
SPRING 2013 – TTH 1:25- 2:40 P.M. – CUE 219

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(E-mail is the preferred method for reaching the professor. It is also the method that will yield the quickest response.)

PROFESSOR'S OFFICE HOURS:

Tuesdays 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., and by appointment

We bear witness here to a protracted argument over the nature of the sign itself, with the black vernacular discourse proffering its critique of the sign as the difference that blackness makes within the larger political culture and its historical unconscious.

Henry Louis Gates

We must learn to wear our names within all the noise and confusion in which we find ourselves. They must become our masks and our shields and the containers of all those values and traditions which we learn and/or imagine as being the meaning of our familial past.

Ralph Ellison

Color isn't no faucet
You can't turn it off and on
I say, color isn't no faucet
You can't turn it off and on
Tell the world who you are
Or you might as well be gone.

Michelle Cliff

Course Description:

This course will examine the significance of an African American literary tradition in the specific context of the contemporary American and global worlds. We will begin by positioning African American literature within an American literary history. We will look at African American literature both as a literary tradition in its own right and as a lens through which we can better see contemporary African American culture and American culture as a whole. These cultural texts will allow us to see the ways in which African Americans have contributed to, have been influenced by, and have transformed America, and continue to do so. We will also closely consider verbal and literary modes, including: African retentions, oral traditions, signifying, folklore, and music, as well as their evolutions and how they have created a uniquely African American literary voice and how that voice has transformed to fit this contemporary moment. In an effort to critically map the trajectories of contemporary African American literature we will be interrogating not only the historical and political contexts of the works, but also the ways in which issues of gender, sexuality, and class specifically inform the works.

As a starting point, there are several primary questions that will guide our consideration of the course texts:

- 1) Does literature have a distinctive social purpose?
- 2) Is there an African American *identity*?
- 3) How does race play a determinative role in culture?
- 4) How do race, class, gender, and sexuality interact in African American literature?

Learning Outcomes:

- (1) To develop an understanding of an African American literary tradition as a syncretically shaped artistic form.
- (2) To begin to understand the critical uses of the narrative forms of oral traditions, signifying, folklore, and music in making African American literature a unique literary model.
- (3) To understand the theoretical concepts of race, racism and radicalization as they inform the creation of an ethnic literature.
- (4) To examine the critical connections between historical eras and events and the formation of narrative.
- (5) To begin to understand the unique aspects of African American literary theory.
- (6) To understand how racial and ethnic groups have resisted and struggled to recreate their own cultural identities in relations to each other and dominant white groups, leading to both conflict and community empowerment
- (7) A critical understanding of ethnic identity and racial identity and how it is constructed and reconstructed by individuals and groups over time and different contexts.
- (8) Develop and sharpen critical communication skills through the participation in class discussions and writing skills through essay assignments

THIS IS YOUR ONLY WARNING: This class relies on the participation of the students. As such, we will engage in many lively discussions. Emphasizing

collaboration and dialogue, conversation and debate, we, as an intellectual community, will engage one another in meaningful and challenging ways while we explore the varied perspectives that each of us bring to bear on class discussions. Hence, various opinions will be expressed and espoused. I ask that you be respectful of my opinions and those of your peers. In other words, refrain from rude and negative comments, for they will not be tolerated. We should be constantly vigilant that our contributions, opinions, and responses, while intellectually critical, are respectful of the differences in position, perspective, and experience we all have. If your beliefs are so strong that you cannot tolerate the opinions of others, please begin to practice tolerance now, or choose another class. People can disagree without being disrespectful.

- Respect the person; challenge the behavior.
- Create anti-racist, anti-Sexist, anti-homophobic language and group dynamics.
- Communicate

Note #1: As this is a literature course, the reading load is quite heavy and the pace fast. Be prepared to spend much time carefully reading, considering, discussing, and writing about the texts in the course. If you cannot devote the time necessary to keep up with the assignments, and to do so in a critical manner, you will not do well in this class and may want to consider if this is the right class for you.

Note #2: Regarding terminology in this course: in both your written and verbal engagement in this course it is **NOT** permissible to use either of the following terms:

- **Colored person/people/man/woman, etc.** – Things are *colored*. People are *of color*, or alternatively, African-American, Black, Latino, Asian-American, etc. *Colored people* is an offensive, derogatory, archaic term that was meant to linguistically create an inferiority about non-white peoples, and **DOES NOT** mean the same thing as people of color.

- **The white man** – There is **NO** one, singular white man on which racism and inequality can be blamed, so the term has no critical meaning. The use of the term demonstrates a relatively unsophisticated, uncritical understanding of the historical systems of race domestically and globally, and at this point, in an upper-division course on race, you should possess a much more complex understanding of racial systems. You may refer to any number of things, including: empire, colonization, white privilege, capitalism, white supremacy, etc., all of which are much more specific and critical.

Any use of either of these terms in either your written or verbal engagement will result in a points reduction in the specific written assignment in which occurs, or your participation grade, respectively.

The **ONLY** exception to the above policy is when you are using or referring to a **DIRECT QUOTE** from an author, in which case the quote should be properly cited to determine its origin.

Required Texts (alphabetically by author):

James Baldwin
Just Above My Head
(Delta, 2000, Reprint)

Octavia Butler
Kindred
(Beacon Press, 2009, Reprint)

Junot Diaz
This Is How Your Lose Her

(Riverhead, 2012)

Nikky Finney
Head Off and Split
(Triquarterly, 2011)

Tayari Jones
Leaving Atlanta
(Grand Central Publishing, 2003)

Toni Morrison
Sula
(Vintage, 2004, Reprint)

Toni Morrison
Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination
(Vintage, 1993)

Kenneth W. Warren
What Was African American Literature?
(Harvard University Press, 2012)

In addition, throughout the session there may be supplemental readings assigned by the professor. The professor will announce any such additions during lecture.

All texts are available at The Bookie and Crimson & Gray. They are also readily available for order on Amazon, or other online outlets. If you choose to order your books online please be VERY aware of the date each book is scheduled for discussion in class. An untimely order IS NOT a legitimate excuse for not being prepared for class.

Additionally, many of the books are available as e-books. While you are welcome to use e-book versions of the course texts please note that the pages listed on the “Schedule of Classes” correspond to the paper versions of the texts and may not match up directly to the e-book pages; so make sure to verify the point to which you should be reading for each class.

Assessment and Evaluation:

Taking classes is your job here at the university. Thus, you should treat the work and requirements accordingly. In the workplace things such as absences, tardiness, and not doing your work properly have negative consequences. This is the case in my class as well. Many students’ low grades are a result of not following directions or policies as well as not expending enough effort. It is your responsibility to be aware of the policies on this syllabus. If you miss class it is your responsibility to check with your classmates to find out what you have missed. And though you are always welcome to follow up with me if you are absent, **do not** ask me if you “missed anything important.”

Your grade is dependent on a number of factors that, together and holistically, inform the evaluation and assessment of your performance. In summary, these criteria include: participation, in-class activities, midterm, film response essays, and the successful completion of the final project.

Course Requirements:

• CLASS ATTENDANCE

Though your attendance will not be formally used to calculate your final grade, you are expected to attend class every day, arrive on time and participate in an informed and consistent manner. Anything less will not be tolerated and will result in problems in this class. **Despite not being a formal component of your course evaluation, attendance does have the potential to affect your grade.** Consistent tardiness will result in the lowering of your overall grade by one-half of a grade (e.g. a B would become a B-). Moreover, students missing any class meeting are responsible for missed lectures and media material shown/discussed in their absence. Any in-class assignments **cannot be made up.**

• PARTICIPATION (5% OF FINAL GRADE)

This class is a student-centered learning environment in which you are largely responsible for making the meaning of the course. Unlike some approaches to learning in which the professor largely determines the content of course lectures and discussions, a student-centered approach views learning as a process of intense exchange and a negotiation of each other's different beliefs, social locations, and ways of knowing. Student-centered courses are not lecture-based, and so they depend on student dialogue and the professor's relentless facilitating, questioning, and mediating of student ideas. Because of this pedagogical approach, participation is the cornerstone of this class, and a significant portion of your final grade.

You are expected to be present intellectually as well as physically in the classroom. This means that not only must you attend, but that you must endeavor to contribute to the flow and body of the course. You will be expected to prepare carefully for each class by completing the required readings by the day on which they are listed in the course schedule.

This course asks you to read texts closely and responsively. This means that if you want to do well you will actively engage with your books by writing questions in the margins, circling key terms, looking up words you do not know, and underlining themes or issues you find intriguing. Responsive readers think of themselves as having a dialogue with the author and use reading as the basis for formulating their own interesting ideas, questions, and arguments. This approach will

likely assist you with comprehending the material and it may give you ideas for your contributions to the class and its discussions.

Read and dialogue in a politically engaged way. Cultural systems and phenomena, for our purposes here, reflect **power**. Power dynamics are situational and relational. You may have power in some spaces and lack it in others, all depending on social location. Ask yourself these questions while reading and discussing within this classroom space: Is this analysis leaving anyone relevant out? For what reasons? Where is this analysis coming from? Whose knowledge base is being explored, privileged, or advanced?

Speak with evidence and “facts” on your side in both your written and verbal work and exchanges in this course. Despite several popular pronouncements that there are no *wrong* responses, there are incomplete, problematic, superficial, surface, uncritical, and unsubstantiated responses. Reflect on your own responses and the basis of your conclusions.

Your level of readiness to participate in a conversation about issues of race and racism is predicated upon a number of issues such as one’s personality, awareness of issues, experience, and classroom climate. I also recognize that time constraints and size of the class will limit the number of people who participate. Ultimately though, while it is understood that not everyone contributes to the same degree or in the same manner, total silence during the course of the semester will affect your evaluation.

Note: Some of the reading on this syllabus may feature material of a sexual or violent nature, including explicit language; you should not remain in this class if you are uncomfortable reading works that may include this material.

Your classroom participation grade will be based on the following criteria:

Excellence (A) requires that you play a leadership role in discussion, demonstrate that you carefully read and thoughtfully consider the text; discuss points articulately; listen sensitively and respond intelligently to other’s views; do not interrupt, obstruct or dominate discussion; ask insightful, carefully-constructed questions; and take responsibility for the overall quality of the discussion.

Above Average (B) requires that you participate actively in discussion, demonstrate good knowledge of the text, work to achieve understanding, listen to other viewpoints, and ask sound questions.

Average (C) requires that you follow the discussion, make occasional comments, have a basic knowledge of the text, and sometimes ask questions.

Below Average (D) requires that you occupy a seat and occasionally show signs of life.

Failure (F) requires that you occupy a seat but show no signs of life.

- **IN-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS (10% OF FINAL GRADE)**

Students will receive credit for various in-class assignments and activities throughout the term. **Students must complete these assignments in class.** Full credit will be awarded to those students who attend class and complete the assignments. **NO** points will be awarded to students who opt out of the assignments/activities or who are not in class. These assignments will not be announced and they **CANNOT BE MADE UP. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

- **WEEKLY READING QUESTIONS (10% OF FINAL GRADE)**

Once each week, (either Tuesdays or Thursdays), students will be responsible for responding to a question posed by the professor in class. The weekly questions will be based primarily on the readings, though they may also address topics drawn from lectures, discussions, and/or in-class assignments.

Once the question has been presented, students will be given 15-20 minutes to write his/her response. Students' responses **MUST** be **NO SHORTER** than **8 sentences** in order to receive full credit. Students may use books and notes to construct their responses. The more engagement with course readings, themes, and ideas a student is able to demonstrate in his/her answer the more credit he/she will receive.

Though I will collect each week's responses, I will formally grade responses only periodically. All other weeks' responses will receive basic credit for being turned in. Those responses that are formally graded will be chosen randomly.

Weekly in-class questions may only be done *in class on the specific day*. You cannot make up weekly in-class questions. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

- **MIDTERM EXAMS (40% OF FINAL GRADE)**

There will be **TWO (2)** in-class midterm exams. **EACH** exam will be worth **20% of your final grade**. The exams will be made up of 1 short critical essay question and 1 close reading passage question taken from the novels. The questions will be based on material from the readings and the lectures. The midterms are not cumulative, rather they will cover the material addressed only in the weeks preceding each of the respective exams. **PLEASE BRING BLUEBOOK(S) FOR THE THE EXAM.**

- **FORMAL CLOSE READING ESSAY (15% OF FINAL GRADE)**

In this assignment you will be asked to choose a passage from one of the novels, or a poem, from the first half of the course for which you will provide a developed close reading that examines one of the themes that the professor will give you to choose from 2 weeks prior to the due date of the essay. We will practice the elements of a close

reading throughout the term so that you will be well-versed in what makes for a successful close reading. This assignment is a **3-page, double spaced essay**.

- **FINAL ESSAY (20% OF FINAL GRADE)**

The final essay will focus on Junot Diaz's *This is How You Lose Her*. In it you will be asked to address both the creative aspects of Diaz's collection as well as the ways in which Diaz's portrayal of raced identity informs the course's overarching questions regarding the queries and significance of African American literary traditions. The specific assignment will be passed out 2 weeks prior to the due date of the essay.

Written Work & Evaluation Criteria:

- **Written Work Guidelines:**

- Written work to be graded should be typed using a 12-point font, double-spaced (unless otherwise specified), spell checked, and proofread.
- **I DO NOT ACCEPT PAPERS VIA E-MAIL, (unless otherwise stated in class). NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- **I WILL NOT ACCEPT** formal assignments that are not typed. If you turn in a paper for a formal out-of-class assignment that is not typed, I will not grade it.
- **DO NOT PUT ANY ASSIGNMENTS UNDER MY OFFICE DOOR UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.**
- Always keep copies of all important formal assignments – including **print** copies of electronic files – until after you receive your final grade in the course. Your professor will retain your final exam, and may retain the originals or copies of your other papers, but the responsibility for document preservation (for grade appeals or other reasons) is yours.
- In your written assignments, both formal and informal, please avoid extensive summary and background (unless otherwise requested to do so). Remember, all of us in class, most particularly the professor, have read (or should have read) the material for discussion.
- You are encouraged to *discuss* the course content and assignments with other students, but you must submit your work in your own words. I reserve the right to reject any apparently plagiarized or dishonest work. (*See the Academic Integrity Policy below*)
- Regarding written assignments, **DO NOT use dictionaries or encyclopedias, of any type, (i.e. books or online), as critical references in your papers. Though I do encourage you to consult dictionaries and encyclopedias for your own personal clarification, they are to be used for clarification purposes ONLY and are not considered critical resources. [Any use of dictionaries as critical references in written assignments will result in the assignment being marked down.]**

• **Evaluation of Written Work:**

All papers will be evaluated on a 100-point scale, although letter grades and their numerical equivalent are used to determine your actual grade. Your papers will be evaluated on the basis of content, clarity, organization, style and grammar, and insight. The specific criteria grading scale are as follows:

Content (50 points) Here I will evaluate how well you cover the issues, integrate classroom readings into your paper, construct arguments to defend your position, critique other points of view, and put forth an effort to write a good paper.

Clarity (20 points) The main question here is whether your paper is clear and can be read by a neutral person.

Organization (20 points) Do you follow and develop a single line of reasoning or explanation before shifting to another issue or point? Is the paper logical consistent and well organized throughout? Is the writing discursive or rambling? Are your paragraphs well organized, substantive, and are there appropriate breaks between paragraphs?

Style and Grammar (10 points) Proofread your paper. Check your paper to make sure it is free of misspelled words and grammatical errors. Insure that it is neat, has appropriate margins, page numbering, and any appropriate citations.

• **Grading Scale:**

100-94=A 93-90=A-	Suggests that a student's work is outstanding to excellent; the student's work reflects an engaged comprehension of the course content and shows thoughtful insight into the complexities of the course. Student shows an attentive engagement with the course. Student's work is consistently well-considered and well-written.
89-87=B+ 86-83=B 82-80=B-	Suggests that a student's work is very good to good; the student's work reflects a very strong, engaged, and solid understanding of course material. Occasionally, the student's work doesn't go the extra step in critical analysis. Student's work is mostly well-considered and well-written.
79-77=C+ 76-73=C 72-70=C-	Suggests that a student's work is adequate; the student's work reflects a fair, but essentially disengaged, grasp of the course material and doesn't go very far in comprehension, or reflects a lack of understanding of the issues represented in the material. Student's work is un- or underconsidered and unclearly written. Class attendance may be a problem.
69-67=D+ 66-60=D	Suggests that a student's work shows some, but very little effort; the student's work does not reflect a comprehension of the course

59-0=F

material, is disengaged, or reveals a lack of reading, attention, and/or attendance.

- **Late Work Policy:**

- If you are unable to complete any paper by the due date, (this **DOES NOT** include the weekly reading questions/responses), you must notify me at least **ONE DAY BEFORE** the due date and negotiate an extension. **ONLY ONE EXTENSION WILL BE GRANTED DURING THE SEMESTER.**

- If you do not submit the assignment by the agreed upon extension date your assignment grade will be reduced by **ONE GRADE** for each additional day it is late and **WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED** after one week past the agreed upon extension date.

- If you do not notify me about late work at least one day before the due date to negotiate an extension, your grade for the assignment will immediately be reduced by one half grade for each day it is late and **WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED** after one week past the original due date.

- **NO EXTENSIONS WILL BE GIVEN FOR THE FINAL ESSAY.**

General Information:

- **Academic Integrity Policy:**

In all instances, you must do your own work. Otherwise, you are being dishonest. There is no excuse for plagiarism, or for submitting another's (including fellow students') work, ideas, or wording as your own, or for not doing your own work. In

simple terms, plagiarism is the act of using another person's words or work without giving them credit for it. Relatedly, academic dishonesty involves not doing the work you are supposed to do on your own. If you do not understand the seriousness of plagiarism and/or academic dishonesty, and the importance of avoiding those behaviors, you are encouraged to read *WSU's Academic Integrity Policy* (WSU Student Handbook, WAC 504-26-202—Acts of Dishonesty and WAC 504-26-010—Definitions).

Plagiarism and academic dishonesty, whether intentional or unintentional, may result in a grade of "F" for the assignment in

question, or a grade of "F" for the entire course, at my discretion. Should there be any suspicion of plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty, I will discuss the situation with you first and then with the Chair of Comparative Ethnic Studies. I may then alert the Office of Student Conduct, which could result in an academic integrity hearing and university sanctions against you. If you are at any time unclear about what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, or academic dishonesty, contact me and I will clarify it for you. ***The rules for plagiarizing or other forms of cheating are not negotiable. Remember that your grade depends on your understanding of these policies.***

- **Disability Accommodation:**

Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and may need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please visit the Access Center. All accommodations **MUST** be approved through the Access Center (Washington Building, Room 217). Please stop by or call 509-335-3417 to make an appointment with a disability specialist. Please notify me during the first week of class of any accommodations needed for the course.

- **Campus Safety:**

In the interest of campus safety and emergency procedures, please become familiar with the information available on the WSU-provided websites.

<http://safetyplan.wsu.edu> Campus Safety Plan

<http://oem.wsu.edu/emergencies> Emergency management web site

<http://alert.wsu.edu> WSU Alert site

- **Grade Problems**

During the semester use my office hours to talk to me about any problems you are having with your progress and/or evaluations for the course so we can try to fix any bad situation **early**, before it's too late.

You must communicate any problems you may be having that are affecting your coursework early on so that I am aware of the situation as I continue to evaluate your work. Any explanations for poor performance, relevant or not, will not be accepted at the end of the semester and will have no effect on your final grade. Accordingly, do not come to me at the end of the semester when you are receiving a low grade saying the you "wanted to get an A in the course," and "is there anything you can do to raise your grade?" You had all semester to work on raising your grade. Also, please do not come

to ask me to change your grade after you have failed the course, or ask me to give you an “I” because you are failing or have failed the course. Reasons for these requests including: being kicked off a team; being put on probation in a fraternity or sorority; being kicked out of a major; or jeopardizing scholarships, are all reasons you were aware of ALL semester. Be vigilant about your academic career.

- **Reality Check Clause:**

I am a pretty busy person, and as a professor, my role is to teach you about race and race relations and to generally prepare you for the professional world. As such, the decisions you choose to make regarding your personal life outside of the classroom are not my problem. For instance, if you tell me that your parents are going on a vacation to Cabo San Lucas during the week we are having a midterm exam, and they want you to come along (and already bought your tickets), that isn’t my problem. It is your decision. Similarly, if your best friend is getting married in California and you want to go to the wedding the day of a film or a midterm review, that isn’t my problem. Or, if your roommate/friend needs a ride to the Spokane airport and you decide to take him and miss class: not my problem! Thus, before you raise any issue with me, understand that your personal matters should bear no effect on me or on how this class is conducted. And NO special accommodations will be made in these types of cases. It is your responsibility to conform to and abide by the schedule and the syllabus. Ultimately, you need to consider that if you decide to bask under the Mexican sun, or eat wedding cake in sunny California, or go to Spokane during class time, that choice will come with a cost to your grade. It is ultimately up to you to make your own decisions, but bear in mind that decisions always have consequences attached to them.

- **General Course Policies:**

- ALWAYS bring your book, readings, and/or reader to class.
- The following are unwelcome and unacceptable within this class. If you absolutely must do these things then don’t come to class. Doing any of the following will result in a reduction of 3 points for each incident from your Participation grade.
 - a. Sleeping, daydreaming or otherwise tuning out during class
 - b. Doing work for other classes
 - c. Habitual tardiness. If you are late, you **MUST SIT IN THE FIRST ROW AND SPEAK WITH ME AT THE CONCLUSION OF CLASS.**
 - d. Packing up your notebook and other materials prior to the end of

class

- e. Reading the newspaper, another book, or otherwise focusing on something other than class
 - f. Chatting to classmates while either: 1) I am speaking to the class; 2) another student is speaking to the class; 3) we are watching a video; 4) people are working on a class assignment (e.g. weekly reading questions or midterms)
 - g. Leaving class early, unless otherwise discussed with me by the beginning of class
- Turn cell phones off upon arrival to class – Absolutely no texting or phone calls DURING CLASS. Please note that if I see you using your cell phone/other handheld device in any manner once class has begun whether because you've decided to text message, check scores/Facebook/Twitter, show a friend a picture or listen to messages, **TWO** things will occur: 1) You will have to turn your phone into me at the beginning of every class, to be returned to you at the end of class, for the duration of the semester; 2) **You will lose 5 points, the equivalent of ½ a grade, from your MIDTERM GRADE.**
 - Though I prefer that you do not take notes on a laptop computer, or other digital device (except in cases of authorized accommdation), if you still choose to do so please be advised that if you are found to be checking your e-mail, surfing the web, playing video games, or anything other than taking notes for class, you will not be allowed to bring your computer to class for the rest of the semester, and will have 5 points subtracted from your Participation grade. **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
 - Do not wear headphones, earbuds, etc. in class.
 - Also, the classroom is not the appropriate time for complaining about the class, the workload, your grade, etc. This includes before class, after it ends, and during any break we might take. If you have a problem, you should come to my office hours or schedule a time to discuss it with me in private.
 - Also, in this regard, I am available **ONLY** during my stated office hours (unless I have announced otherwise) **OR** if I have made another appointment with you. I will not be in my office for consultation at any

other times, so please don't expect my availability to be on a daily, 8-5 basis.

- The focus of class discussion should be on critical analysis of the works we are reading. Therefore, undeveloped and uncritical personal preference remarks are not acceptable for class discussion.

- **Netiquette**¹

You should consider your university classes as professionalization experiences for your future professional endeavors. As such, I expect you to observe the following proprieties in your email messages, as you would with any professional colleague:

- Emails must have a specific salutation: "Dear Dr. Guerrero"/"Dear Professor Guerrero," or "Good Morning/Afternoon/Evening Professor Guerrero," or "Professor Guerrero"/"Dr. Guerrero" are all appropriate and acceptable ways to begin an email." "Hi," "Hey," "Ms./Mrs. Guerrero" or no salutation at all, while fitting for friends or informal acquaintances, are not acceptable, and are inappropriate ways to begin an email to me, and I may or may not respond to emails that lack these minimal aspects of professional courtesy.
- Emails must close with a signature ("Sincerely," "Thank you," etc.)
- Emails should be grammatically correct, clear, and *concise*. In other words, texting language is inappropriate, and if your question/request is so involved that you must write several long paragraphs then you should come talk to me in person during my office hours.
- Emails should not be sent to request info you can get elsewhere with minimal effort (i.e., my office hours, office location, phone number, due dates, etc. All these are listed on the syllabus. I will not respond to such emails.)
- Assume that your response will come within 24 hours; if it hasn't come by then, do feel free to remind me of your message.

¹ Taken from syllabus of Dr. Shanté Paradigm Smalls,
<http://hiphopgendersexuality2012.tumblr.com/syllabus>

- If you have a complaint or concern about something, you should always come to see me about it in person. Email is not an appropriate forum for anything important enough to be dealt with in an extended conversation, or for a discussion in which email, because it can't convey tone, might allow for misinterpretation.
- Please don't email me to ask if I will be in office hours. Unless I have specifically stated in class that I won't be there, I will always be available during office hours on a drop-in basis or by appointment.

[Your continued enrollment in this course after the first week means that you have read and understand the information contained within this syllabus, and that you agree to follow the procedures and policies explained within it.]

CLASS SCHEDULE

- **Schedule subject to change. Any modifications will be announced in class.**
- **This schedule tells you the dates by which you need to have the material read.**

TUE JAN 8: **Introductions**

THU JAN 10: **What is the African American literary tradition?**
 Read Toni Morrison, "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature" (To be handed out in class on 1/8)

TUE JAN 15: ***Just Above My Head***
 Read **pp. 3-117**
 Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain"
 George Schuyler, "The Negro-Art Hokum"
 (both essays to be handed out in class on 1/10)

THU JAN 17: ***Just Above My Head***
 Read **pp. 118-235**

TUE JAN 22: ***Just Above My Head***
 Read **pp. 236-353**

THU JAN 24: ***Just Above My Head***
 Read **pp. 354-471**

Playing in the Dark
"Black Matters" pp. 1-28

TUE JAN 29: *Just Above My Head*
Read pp. 472-589

THU JAN 31: *Sula*
Read pp. 3-51

TUE FEB 5: *Sula*
Read pp. 52-100

What Was African American Literature?
“Historicizing African American Literature” pp. 1-43

THU FEB 7: NO CLASS

TUE FEB 12: *Sula*
Read pp. 101-149

THU FEB 14: *Sula*
Read pp. 150-192

TUE FEB 19: *Kindred*
Read pp. 9-51

THU FEB 21: *Kindred*
Read pp. 52-107

Playing in the Dark
“Romancing the Shadow” pp. 29-60

TUE FEB 26: *Kindred*
Read pp. 108-188

THU FEB 28: *Kindred*
Read pp. 189-264

TUE MAR 5: MIDTERM #1 IN-CLASS (bring bluebooks)

THU MAR 7: *Head Off & Split*
Read pp. 3-32

What Was African American Literature?
“Particularity and the Problem of Interpretation” pp. 44-80

TUE MAR 12: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

THU MAR 14: NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK

TUE MAR 19: *Head Off & Split*
Read pp. 33-68
Due Formal Close Reading Essay – In class

THU MAR 21: *Head Off & Split*
Read pp. 69-end

Playing in the Dark
“Disturbing Nurses and the Kindness of Sharks” pp. 61-91

TUE MAR 26: *Leaving Atlanta*
Read pp. 3-70

THU MAR 28: *Leaving Atlanta*
Read pp. 71-138

TUE APR 2: *Leaving Atlanta*
Read pp. 139-206

THU APR 4: *Leaving Atlanta*
Read pp. 207-272

What Was African American Literature?
“The Future of the Past” pp. 81-117

TUE APR 9: *This Is How You Lose Her*
Read pp. 1-56

THU APR 11: *This Is How You Lose Her*

Read pp. 57-113

TUE APR 16: *This Is How You Lose Her*
Read pp. 114-170

THU APR 18: **MIDTERM #2 IN CLASS (bring bluebooks)**

TUE APR 23: *This Is How You Lose Her*
Read pp. 171-224

What Was African American Literature?
“Conclusion: The Past in the Present” pp. 118-150

THU APR 25: **Course wrap-up, final thoughts, and course evaluations**

FINAL ESSAY IS DUE IN THE PROFESSOR’S MAILBOX (WILSON 111) ON THURSDAY, MAY 2 BY 4 P.M. NO LATE ESSAYS WILL BE ACCEPTED. NO EXCEPTIONS.