Course Description:
The aim of this course is to hone students’ critical reading abilities and to develop rhetorical skills requisite for speaking authoritatively and writing persuasively about African American literature. We shall cover literary performances from the vernacular tradition to the contemporary postmodern period. Students will be expected to identify, describe, and analyze some of the major thematic and stylistic characteristics of the major African American texts we shall study. We shall focus on the creative use of the oral and residually oral forms in our effort to understand the complex relationship of Afro-American culture and character to Euro-American society. Students will explore, therefore, social, cultural, historical, and technological forces that stimulated the literature and improve writing skills developed in English 1301 and 1302.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
SOPHOMORE LITERATURE COURSES
Communication:
1. **Writing:** Students will apply the writing skills in English 1301 and 1302 (clear introductions, main body paragraphs, conventional use of grammar and style) to writing about literature.
   a. Using their reading and/or research, students will compose critical/analytical essays with a clear thesis and introduction.
   b. Using their reading and/or research, students will compose critical/analytical essays with organized supporting paragraphs.
   c. Students will use the standard conventions of English grammar and punctuation and write clear and efficient sentences.
   d. Students will maintain a style and persona appropriate for a particular purpose and audience
2. **Oral or visual communication:** Students will present clear, salient, and supported oral/visual speeches/demonstrations. And/or students will discuss group or class topics.

**Critical Thinking** *(Note: We equate Critical thinking with literary analysis)*
Through essays, students will analyze literary works.

**Social Responsibility** *(Note: Since most of what we teach reflects the interplay and the individual within his society, “the one and the many,” and since we do not have field tests or laboratories in our disciplines, we see social and personal responsible as a dynamic rather than two distinct activities.)*
**Outcome:** In written responses (preferably complete essays), presentations, discussions (online or face to face) students will illustrate an understanding of social, cultural, historical, scientific or technological forces that stimulated literature in one or more literary movements or periods.

**Personal Responsibility** *(Note: Since most of what we teach reflects the interplay and the individual within his society, “the one and the many,” and since we do not have field tests or laboratories in our disciplines, we see social and personal responsible as a dynamic rather than two distinct activities.)*
**Outcome:** In written responses (preferably complete essays), presentations, discussions (online or face to face), and potentially in the same response used to measure “social responsibility,” students will illustrate an understanding of the complexities of personal choice or the role of the individual within his or her social and cultural environment—as evidenced in at least one literary work.

Required text:

Requirements:--Three tests and a final exam based on readings 15% each; in-class writing assignments and/or pop-quizzes and homework assignments 10% total; two papers (2/3 to 3/2 pages) 15% each.
There are no make-ups for pop quizzes if you are absent or arrive 10 minutes after quiz is handed out to class. Your best 4 quiz performances will count toward your final grade. There are 3 due dates for the papers but you are required to do 2. Papers passed in after due dates will be penalized 5 points for each day late unless a valid reason is provided. Only one late assignment will be accepted from any one student.

All papers must be documented according to the MLA style. Proper documentation and other relevant MLA style requirements (heading, pagination, etc.) are pertinent to each paper format and will be taken into account in evaluating the paper grade. All material taken from a source that is not your primary source should be adequately documented and identified in a Works Cited page. Because 1301 and 1302 are prerequisites for this course, you will be expected to be familiar with the proper style requirements.

Attendance Policy:
Each session is 55 mins. Leaving class early means that you are absent for that session. Inform me before class if you have an appointment that requires your leaving class before class is dismissed. Frequent lateness for class and/or excessive absences are likely to affect your final grade. You are permitted three unexcused absences without penalty. Reserve them for emergencies such as illness, family crises, etc. You are responsible for keeping track with our schedule (even if we deviate from the syllabus) when you are absent. If you are absent for seven classes (more than twice the allotted number), you will score no higher than a C; with eight absences, no higher than a D; if you accrue nine absences (three weeks of absences) you should drop the course because you are likely to receive a failing grade.

Schedule of Classes

Week One
Mon 8/27  Introduction
  Assignment: The Vernacular Tradition 3-25
Wed  8/29  Discuss Readings
  Assignment: The Vernacular Tradition 3-25
Fri  8/31  Discuss Readings
  Assignment: Vernacular 3-25

Week Two
Mon 9/3   H O L I D A Y
Wed  9/5  Discuss Readings
  Assignment: The Vernacular Tradition 48-64
Fri  9/7  Discuss Readings; research items due.
  Assignment: Vernacular 48-64

Week Three
Mon 9/10  Discuss Readings
  Assignment: Jacobs’s Incidents 279-287
Wed  9/12  Discuss Readings
  Assignment: Jacobs’s Incidents 287-300
Fri  9/14  Discuss Readings
  Assignment: Jacobs 300-315

Week Four
Mon 9/17  Discuss Reading; last day to drop with refund
  Assignment: Brown’s Clotel 315-345
Wed  9/19  Discuss Reading; Paper due
  Assignment: Brown’s Clotel 315-345
Fri  9/21  Discussion
  Assignment: Slave Narratives 151-154; 158-160

Week Five
Mon 9/24  Discuss Readings
  Assignment: Slave Narratives
Wed  9/26  Discuss Readings
  Assignment: DuBois 686-689; 692-99
Fri  9/28  Discuss Readings
Assignment: DuBois 686-689; 692-99 Prepare for test

Week Six
Mon 10/1 **Test One** (Vernacular to Brown); last day to drop or w/d without penalty
Assignment:

Wed 10/3 Discuss reading
Assignment: The Autobiography 791-93; 803-836

Fri 10/5 Discuss Readings
Assignment: The Autobiography 836-858

Week Seven
Mon 10/8 Discuss Readings
Assignment: The Autobiography 858-883

Wed 10/10 Discuss Readings
Assignment: The Autobiography ctd.

Fri 10/12 Discuss Readings
Assignment: The Autobiography ctd

Week Eight
Mon 10/15 Discuss Readings
Assignment: The Harlem Renaissance 953-961

Wed 10/17 Discuss readings
Assignment: Prepare for test

Fri 10/19 **Test Two** (DuBois and The Autobiography)
Assignment: The Harlem Renaissance

Week Nine
Mon 10/22 Discuss Readings
Assignment: Hurston 1022, “Sweat”

Wed 10/24 Discuss Readings
Assignment: Hughes 1288-1309

Fri 10/26 Discuss Readings
Assignment: Hughes 1288-1309

Week Ten
Mon 10/29 Discuss Readings
Assignment: Hughes

Wed 10/31 Discuss Readings
Assignment: Hughes

Fri 11/2 Discuss Readings
Assignment: Toomer Cane 1181, “Becky”

Week Eleven
Mon 11/5 Discuss readings; Paper due; last day to drop of w/d with academic penalty
Assignment: Toomer Cane “Esther”

Wed 11/7 Discuss Reading
Assignment: Toomer Cane

Fri 11/9 Discuss readings
Assignment: Hansberry 1768-1796

Week Twelve
Mon 11/12 Discuss Readings
Assignment: Hansberry 1797-1820

Wed 11/14 Discuss readings
Assignment: Prepare for test

Fri 11/16 **Test Three** (Harlem Renaissance to Toomer)
Assignment: Hansberry 1820-1830

Week Thirteen
Mon 11/19 Discussion
Assignment: Hansberry

Wed 11/21 Discussion
Assignment: Hansberry
Fri 11/23 HOLIDAY

Week Fourteen

Mon 11/26 Discussion
Assignment: Hansberry

Wed 11/28 Discussion; Paper due
Assignment: “The Sky is Gray” 2322-2344

Fri 11/30 Discussion
Assignment: “The Sky is Gray” 2322-2344

Week Fifteen

Mon 12/3 Discussion
Assignment: Review

Wed 12/5 Last class day

Final Exam: (Hansberry to Gaines) Fri. 12/07/12 at 11:00-1:30 a.m.

Research Assignment: Look up reference sources and, using your own words as much as possible, write clear and thorough definitions of the following terms and concepts. Some are more complex than others.

Race, ethnicity, freedom, democracy, individualism, sex, gender, class (say how class differs from caste)

Head up according to MLA rules and present definitions of items in alphabetical order. Each definition must have three clear components: the item being defined, the translated information from the source or sources, and the proper bibliographical information. Good dictionaries and encyclopedias are valid but if you use a single dictionary or encyclopedia to define all the items, your work will be seen as an incomplete. You will find it useful to examine more than one source for complex terms. At least three different kinds of significant sources will be seen as adequate. The completed assignment is due on 9/7/12

Topics for Papers. Papers should be about 2½ pages typed double spaced and presented according to the MLA style requirements. Papers including secondary references should be at least 3½ pages.

1. Themes of both the desire to escape and the need to face difficulties appear in the Spirituals, Gospels, and Blues we have studied. Identify at least two songs that deal with any of these messages and making relevant analysis of the texts explain what the songs reveal about the singers’ attitudes to life. You may compare and contrast two different songs from the same category or from different categories.

2. Identify any two characters from Jacobs’ text and explain why you admire or do not admire them. Alternatively, you may discuss a character you admire and one you do not admire.

3. What persuasive images and/or arguments do you find in Clotel that make a strong case as to why slavery is wrong? Identify the images and arguments and explain why you think that Brown succeeded in making a strong case against human bondage. Alternatively you may argue that he failed to make a strong case.

4. Briefly explain what you understand by DuBois’s use of the term “double-consciousness.” Select any character or characters from the texts we have read and directly referring to the person(s) behavior and referring to clear episodes in the text(s), explain why the character’s or characters’ behavior illustrated the condition DuBois called double-consciousness. Provide a developed and reasonable explanation on why the behavior influenced you to like or dislike the character or characters.

5. In what ways were women’s lives made difficult during the period we have covered in the literature so far? Describe the difficulties of at least two women we have read about. Provide information on how they tried to cope, and explain why you sympathize with or fail to sympathize with them. You may sympathize with one and not the other and so choose to compare and contrast the two women.

6. Christianity is a matter that the writers we have studied refer to constantly. Focusing on one or more of the texts we have studied, explain what you find the writer or writers achieve in making these repeated references to the Christian church.
7. African American literary artists, musicians, and religious leaders have traditionally played significant roles in shaping identities and influencing social and political debates in America. Draw on ideas from any literary works, musical compositions, and/or speeches as well as activities by black religious leaders that you believe have had shaping impacts on American society. Clarify what the texts and performances have had to say about the lives they describe and explain why you have found these acts meaningful as shaping forces in American culture. You must select at least one major work or personality or at least two minor works.

8. Discuss the cultural and historical significance of the Harlem Renaissance to one or more of the following: African Americans, Americans as a whole, or internationally.

9. What was Race Uplift for African Americans? Who were among the major contributors to this cause? What did at least two of the contributors do and why do you consider these two important?

10. Do you agree that issues of race, class, and gender that have featured throughout the history of the African American struggle, and other issues related to African American citizenship (respecting the ideals of freedom and democracy, for example) are as important today as they have been in the past? Choose any one or more of these issues and discuss the relevance of the issue(s) to the past, regarding the struggles for freedom and civil rights and/or to the period we live in today. Your paper would benefit, most likely, were you to draw on your prior research of the term(s) which you propose to discuss.

11. Hurston, Toomer, and Hughes are among the artists who focus on the lives of rural African Americans. What do any two of the writers we have studied seek to achieve in choosing to portray the lives of these “folk?” Analyze details from the texts to support a clear thesis and explain what message(s) these writers communicate about such characters’ lives.

12. Identify any text that you found interesting and educational and write a paper explaining why the text interested you and what you learned from it. Simply summarizing the plot will not prove very successful. You will need to produce an effective thesis evolving out of your evaluation of the material and develop the thesis through supporting arguments and details. For example, the text might have taught you about how courageous a particular person was or how potentially demoralizing the system of slavery was.