

AMST/AAST 4250/5250
The Harlem Renaissance
MWF 10:00 a.m. - 10:50 a.m. Engineering 4066
Course Syllabus
Fall 2013

Instructor: Dr. Ulrich Adelt
Office: Cooper House
Office Hours: MWF 11 a.m. – 12 noon and by appointment
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Course Description

In the 1920s and 1930s, between World War I and the Great Depression, African American culture experienced an unprecedented florescence in literature and the arts that became known as the Harlem Renaissance. This movement had a tremendous impact on African American culture. In this course, we will examine the Harlem Renaissance, which centered in New York City but also reached out to other places in and outside of the U.S., including Africa and the Caribbean. In particular, we will critically reflect on negotiations of "race" as they appear in Harlem Renaissance texts. The texts we will discuss include novels, short stories, essays, poems, songs, and paintings. Course requirements include one 5-7 page essay (15-20 pages for graduate students), four response papers, active participation in class, a final exam as well as various quizzes.

U.S. Diversity (D)

This course fulfills the Diversity in the U.S. (D) requirement of the 2003 University Studies Program. Diversity in the U.S. (D) explores the complexities of culture in the U.S. both through history and contemporary experience. Diversity in the U.S. (D) courses examine the complexity of cultures in the U.S. and the interdependence of these cultures. Understanding influences such as race, class, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, religion, and age offer insight into how the diversity of the cultural traditions of the United States have shaped and continue to shape identity and national experience.

Required Texts

at the University Bookstore

David Lewis (ed.), *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*
Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*
Nella Larsen, *Passing*
Claude McKay, *Home to Harlem*

Course Requirements

You will have to write a 5-7 pp. essay, for which you will get different topics to choose from (15-20 pp. for graduate students). I will give you specific information on this paper as the class unfolds. A proposal is due **November 24**. The final version of your essay is due on **December 10**.

Class participation is an integral part of this course and will be graded accordingly. Missing class frequently will make it very likely that you will fail the course. **If you miss more than six classes without an excuse, you will receive an overall grade deduction of one third letter grade per class you missed.**

A cumulative final exam will consist of short answers and an essay question. The final exam will take place on **Monday, December 15 at 10:15 a.m. in class.**

Response Papers

You will have to turn in four response papers. I will provide specific discussion questions that refer to readings we will discuss in class. Response papers can be somewhat informal but should engage critically with the materials they are addressing. They have to be turned in on the due date as indicated on the reading schedule. **Late response papers and e-mail attachments are not accepted.** Each response paper should be one to two full pages, **single-spaced.**

Grade Distribution

Undergraduate students:

25% Attendance and class participation
20% 5-7 pp. essay
20% 4 response papers (5% each)
15% Quizzes
20% Final exam

Graduate students:

20% Attendance and class participation
40% Research paper (15-20 pp.)
20% 4 Response papers (5% each)
20% Final exam

Grading

You can improve your grade by coming to class regularly, participating actively (which means sharing your opinion AND giving others room to share their opinion, too), and through smart time management (planning ahead will help a lot). Feel free to meet me during my office hours to discuss your papers (preferably while you're working on them and not after you've handed them in) and your performance in class.

Attendance

Class participation is an integral part of this course and will be graded accordingly. In addition to the readings, there are mandatory screenings of films you have to attend (or make arrangements to watch the films on your own). If you miss class, you are responsible to catch up on what we discussed on that particular day. Missing class frequently will make it very likely that you will fail the course. ***If you miss more than six classes without an excuse, you will receive an overall grade deduction of one third letter grade per class you missed.***

Cell Phones

Cell phones and other electronic devices need to be turned off during class. Be respectful of your classmates and your instructor.

Writing Center

If you need help at any stage of writing your paper, the Writing Center is a very useful and free resource. Appointments are recommended. Call (307) 766-5250 to make an appointment. More information is available at www.uwyo.edu/ctl/writing_center.

Late Papers

Assignments must be turned in during class on the day they are due or earlier. Late papers will receive a grade reduction of a third letter grade per day (A- to B+, etc.). I will try to arrange make-up assignments for excused absences.

Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty is *an action attempted or performed that misrepresents one's involvement in an academic endeavor in any way, or assists another student in misrepresenting his or her involvement in an academic endeavor; e.g., cheating, fabrication of information, plagiarism etc.* A student who plagiarizes at minimum will receive an "F" in the course and may go before a University board for a hearing on the matter. At *maximum* the above can occur *and* you can be dismissed from the University. Please see UW Reg 802.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious offense and will not be tolerated. Plagiarism includes copying from books and internet sources without giving proper credit and having someone else write a paper or parts of a paper. Plagiarism will lead to failing the course.

Students with Special Needs

If you have a physical, sensory, learning, or psychological disability and require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. You will need to register with, and provide documentation of your disability to University Disability Support Services (UDSS) in SEO, room 330 Knight Hall.

The instructor may make changes to the syllabus as the course proceeds. If necessary, these changes will be announced in class. Substantive changes made to the syllabus shall be communicated in writing to the students.

Reading Schedule

PART ONE: DEFINING THE RENAISSANCE

- Sept. 3 Introduction
Sept. 5 "Harlem Renaissance" (from the *Norton Anthology of African American Literature*; handout)
- Sept. 8 W.E.B. Du Bois, "Returning Soldiers" (Lewis 3), Claude McKay, "If We Must Die" (Lewis 290)
Sept. 10 Marcus Garvey, "Africa for the Africans," "Liberty Hall Emancipation Day Speech," Mary White Ovington, "On Marcus Garvey" (Lewis 17-33); Countee Cullen, "Heritage" (Lewis 244-247)
Sept. 12 Alain Locke, "The New Negro" (Lewis 46-51), Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (Lewis 91-95)
- Sept. 15 George Schuyler, "The Negro-Art Hokum" (Lewis 96-99), Langston Hughes, "When the Negro Was in Vogue" (Lewis 77-80)
Sept. 17 Screening: *Ethnic Notions*
Sept. 19 **Response paper 1 due**

PART TWO: NEGOTIATIONS OF "RACE" IN THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

- Sept. 22 James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, chapter I-IV
Sept. 24 James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, chapter V-VIII
Sept. 26 James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, chapter IX-XI
- Sept. 29 Jean Toomer, *Cane* (selections, Lewis 318-332)
Oct. 1 Wallace Thurman, *The Blacker the Berry* (selections, Lewis 636-649)
Oct. 3 George Schuyler, *Black No More* (selections, Lewis 655-666)
- Oct. 6 Nella Larsen, *Passing*, part I
Oct. 8 Nella Larsen, *Passing*, parts II and III
Oct. 10 **Response paper 2 due**

PART THREE: VISUAL ART AND MUSIC

- Oct. 13 Lecture: Art
Oct. 15 Alain Locke, "The Negro Takes His Place in American Art" (Lewis 134-137), Romare Bearden, "The Negro Artist and Modern Art" (Lewis 138-141)
Oct. 17 Lecture: Music
- Oct. 20 Langston Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "I, Too," "America," "The Weary Blues" (Lewis 257-261)
Oct. 22 Langston Hughes, "Advertisement for the Waldorf-Astoria" (Lewis 267-270), Sterling Brown, "Ma Rainey" (Lewis 232-234)

PART FOUR: HOME TO HARLEM

Oct. 24 Claude McKay, *Home to Harlem*, pp. 1-74

Oct. 27 Claude McKay, *Home to Harlem*, pp. 75-119

Oct. 29 Claude McKay, *Home to Harlem*, pp. 123-187

Oct. 31 Claude McKay, *Home to Harlem*, pp. 188-275

Nov. 3 Claude McKay, *Home to Harlem*, pp. 279-340

Nov. 5 no class Carl van Vechten, prologue to *Nigger Heaven* (handout), DuBois and J.W. Johnson, "Critiques of Carl van Vechten's *Nigger Heaven*" (Lewis 106-109)

Nov. 7 no class

PART FIVE: AFTER THE RENAISSANCE

Nov. 10 **Response paper 3 due**

Nov. 12 Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, pp. 1-33

Nov. 14 Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, pp. 34-80

Nov. 17 Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, pp. 81-115

Nov. 19 Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, pp. 116-153

Nov. 21 Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, pp. 154-194

Nov. 24 Richard Wright, "Blueprint for Negro Writing" (Lewis 194-205)

Research paper proposal due

Nov. 26 no class (Thanksgiving break)

Nov. 28 no class (Thanksgiving break)

Dec. 1 **Response paper 4 due**

Dec. 3 Richard Wright, "The Man Who Was Almost a Man," "Big Black Good Man" (handouts)

Dec. 5 **Graduate student presentations**

Dec. 8 Screening: *From These Roots*

Dec. 10 **Research paper due**

Dec. 12 Review for the final exam

Final exam: Monday, December 15, 10:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.