

The Harlem Renaissance
University of Florida
Fall 2025
AFA 3930; Class #24432; 3 Credits

African American Studies Program
1012 Turlington Hall
Gainesville, FL 32611
Phone: (352) 392-5724

Classroom: Online
Instructor: Prof. J.E. Young

Office Hours: Wednesdays 3-5pm
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Course Description

This seminar is designed to introduce students to literary and musical works of the Harlem Renaissance and Classic Blues Period. We will place the height of these cultural movements in historical context by relating them to the political and economic climate of the early twentieth century—over one hundred years or five generations from today. Our course will question how critical and primary texts communicated race, gender, and class identity during world war, migration, and social movements for justice. The course will enhance students critical thinking, writing, and oral communication skills.

Student Learning Outcomes:

- Analyze the social, cultural, political, and economic issues that shaped the Harlem Renaissance and Class Blues Period.
- Interpret primary and secondary sources that form the foundation of the Harlem Renaissance.
- Develop critical thinking, problem solving, and analytical reading skills through writing and discussions that reflect an in depth understanding of the Harlem Renaissance.

Required Texts: Most texts are available online via the University of Florida Library website.

1. Charles W. Chesnutt, “The Wife of His Youth” (available online).
2. Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (available online).
3. Fauset, Jessie Redmon. *There is Confusion* (available online).
4. Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.
5. Larsen, Nella. *Passing* (available online).
6. McKay, Claude. *Home to Harlem* (available online).

Supplemental Texts:

1. Jacobs, Harriet A. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (available online).
2. Washington, Booker T. *Up From Slavery: An Autobiography* (available online).
3. Thurman, Wallace. *The Blacker the Berry* (available online).

Communication:

In any communication, i.e. face-to-face or via email, you are to refer to me as Professor Young. Since they are professional communications, all your e-mails to me must, at a minimum:

1. Have a subject line that accurately expresses the purpose of the email (e.g., “Assignment Question for AFA 3000”).
2. Open with a salutation (such as “Hello/ Hi/ Greetings Professor Young”) and have a closing with your full name.

Assignment Information

All assignments should be typed, double-spaced, proofread, and follow MLA, APA, or Chicago guidelines for formatting citations and bibliographies. Information and ideas that are not your own must be appropriately cited.

Grading Scale: 945-1000 95-100 **A** | 895-944 90-94 **A-** | 865-894 87-89 **B+** | 835-864 84-86 **B** | 795-834 80-83 **B-** | 765-794 77-79 **C+** | 735-764 74-76 **C** | 695-734 70-73 **C-** | 665-694 67-69 **D+** | 635-664 64-66 **D** | 595-634 60-63 **D-** | 594- 59 or below **F** |

Course Assignments:

Syllabus Quiz	10 Pts.
Bi-Weekly Reflection Paper:	100 Pts. (5 Total)
Bi-Weekly Key Terms:	100 Pts. (5 Total)
Research Question and Proposal:	50 Pts.
Abstract and Sources:	50 Pts.
Midterm:	150 Pts.
Outline and Annotated Bibliography:	50 Pts.
Rough Draft:	100 Pts.
Presentations and Peer Reviews:	100 Pts.
Final Draft:	290 Pts.

Total: 1000 Pts.

Required Assignments

1. Because of the online format for this course, a significant amount of autonomous work and discipline is required to succeed. Students will engage in a substantial number of wide-ranging materials, including academic scholarship, primary sources, and sometimes interviews or lectures.
2. The first assignment submission on the course material will be due on **Friday, August 29, 2025, by 11:59pm**. All submissions must be made on or before the exact deadline listed or face point deductions.
3. Every other week, each student will submit a **three to five paragraph reflection paper** that replies to critical questions, key arguments and evidence in readings, and synthesizes the importance of any assigned media content (Weeks 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10). For each paper, address the specific prompt for the week. Also be sure to include:
 - Who: Who is the author's audience?
 - What: What is the text about? Identify and cite key passages.
 - When: When is the relevant time period?
 - Where: What is the relevant country, region, county, city, or state?
 - Why: How does this text contribute to larger course themes?

Please submit these responses **in narrative form with complete sentences and proper citations in .doc or .pdf format**.

4. On alternating weeks, students will record a discussion analyzing specific sources with an assigned group, which will be uploaded to Canvas for a grade (Weeks 3, 5, 7, 9, and 11). Professor Young will post guiding questions at the beginning of each week. Videos can be created via YouTube for free.
5. Before Week 6, students must propose a final research question and receive approval from the instructor. Students will submit an abstract and a list of **at least five sources** they will use for their approved topic **October 10th by 11:59pm** (Week 8). Students will submit a substantial outline and annotated bibliography on **October 31st by 11:59pm** (Week 10). This must include **at least seven sources** they will use in their final.
6. Students will submit a five-page double-spaced paper draft on **November 14th by 11:59pm** (Week 13). The instructor will match each draft to a student peer reviewer for appraisal.
7. The 10-page double-spaced final draft of the paper will be due at **11:59pm on Thursday, December 4th**. Students are required to use at least four sources from class and a total of nine peer-reviewed sources. Proper citation is required in MLA, APA, or Chicago format.

Academic Policies and Resources

<https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>

Course Outline

Week 1
August 21st – 23rd

Welcome and Introductions

Week 2
August 25th – 29th

Group Discussion #1 Due
Friday, August 29th by 11:59pm.
See Syllabus P. 3 #4.

READINGS

(1845/1960). Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.

Week 3
September 2nd – 5th

Written Reflection #1 Due
September 5th by 11:59pm.
See Syllabus P. 3 #3.

READINGS

(1901). Charles W. Chesnutt, “The Wife of His Youth.”

Week 4
September 8th – 12th

Group Discussion #2 Due
Friday, September 12th by 11:59pm.
See Syllabus P. 3 #4.

READINGS

Alain Locke, “Enter the New Negro.” Survey Graphic (March 1925): 1-6.

W.E.B. Du Bois, “Criteria of Negro Art” (Harlem Renaissance Reader).

(1993). State of the Arts New Jersey Public Broadcasting System. “Against all Odds: The Artists of the Harlem Renaissance.” *YouTube*, 27 February 2024.

Week 5
September 15th – 19th

Written Reflection #2

**Due on September 19th by 11:59pm.
See Syllabus P. 3 #3.**

READINGS

(1928). McKay, Claude. *Home to Harlem*.

**Final Research Question Due
Approval Due by Friday, September 19th.**

Week 6 September 22nd – 26th

**Group Discussion #3 Due
Friday, September 26th by 11:59pm.
See Syllabus P. 3 #4.**

READINGS

(1995). Samuel A. Floyd, Jr. "The Negro Renaissance: Harlem and Chicago Flowerings." *The Power of Black Music*.

MUSICAL SELECTIONS

Ma Rainey.
Bessie Smith.

Week 7 September 29th – October 3rd
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**Written Reflection #3
Due on October 3rd by 11:59pm.
See Syllabus P. 3 #3.**

READINGS

Jessie Fauset, *There is Confusion*.

Cheryl Wall, "Histories and Heresies: Engendering the Harlem Renaissance." *Meridians* 2.1 (2001): 59-76.

Week 8 October 6th – 10th
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**Group Discussion #4 Due
Friday, October 10th by 11:59pm.
See Syllabus P. 3 #4.**

POETRY

Langston Hughes and Helene Johnson.

**Abstract and a List of at Least Five Sources Due
Friday, October 10th by 11:59pm.**

**Week 9
October 13th – 17^h**

**Written Reflection #4 Due
Friday, October 17th by 11:59pm.
See Syllabus P. 3 #3.**

READINGS

Larsen, Nella. *Passing*.

**Week 10
October 20th – 24th**

**Group Discussion #5 Due
Friday, October 24th by 11:59pm.
See Syllabus P. 3 #4.**

READINGS

Langston Hughes, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” (Harlem Renaissance Reader).

Zora Neale Hurston, “Characteristics of Negro Expression.” (Within the Circle, Mitchell, ed.).

**Week 11
October 27th – 31st**

**Substantial Outline and Annotated Bibliography Due
Friday, October 31st by 11:59pm.**

**Week 12
November 3rd – 7th**

**Written Reflection #5 Due
November 10th by 11:59pm.
See Syllabus P. 3 #3.**

READINGS

Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.

VIDEO

“Zora: Jump At the Sun.”

Workshop Outlines with Peers.

Week 13
November 10th – 14th

Rough Draft Due
Friday, November 14th by 11:59pm.

Week 14
November 17th – 21st

Final Paper Presentations.
Workshop Rough Drafts with Peers.

Week 15
November 24th – 28th

Thanksgiving Break.

Week 16
December 1st – 3rd

Final Essay Due
Thursday, December 4th by 11:59pm.