

SYLLABUS--THEORIZING AFRICAN DIASPORA LITERATURE

English 2400/Black Studies—Theorizing Africana Literature
Professor—Dr. Clenora Hudson-Weems, Professor of English
Class: Tuesdays and Thursdays-12:30-1:45
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Course Description Rationale, Goals and Objectives:

Theorizing Africana Literature is an undergraduate course designed to introduce students to 20th and 21st Centuries Africana Literature and Theory. The turn of the 20th century in the Africana literary world is marked by the WEB DuBois and Booker T Washington Controversy, along with Marcus Garvey, which ushered us into the Harlem Renaissance of the 1920s. Major poets of that era include James Weldon Johnson, Claude McKay, Langston Hughes and Countee Cullen, followed by the WEB DuBois-Alain Locke Debate of the 30s. The cultural and literary debates of the searing 60s, following the Renaissance/Post Renaissance, the precursor, was ignited by the true catalyst of the Civil Rights Movement, the 1955 brutal lynching of 14-year-old Emmett Till, a cause célèbre that today's national massive murders of Blacks mirror. Till's incident was followed by Rosa Parks' demonstration and Dr. Martin Luther King's leadership in the 1956 year-long Montgomery Bus Boycott, traditionally construed as the inception of the Movement, for which the Till incident set the stage.

In understanding the Movement, we look at its sister, the Black Arts/Black Aesthetics Movement, with its prime movers, Amiri Baraka & Larry Neale. William E. Nelson, Jr.'s "Africology: From Social Movement to Academic Discipline" is key in bringing these two Movements together. Today, "Black Lives Matter, TOO" continues the aborted Civil Rights Movement of the 50s and the 60s & will be discussed. The 70s continued the Movement of the 60s, with the theorizing of Black Aesthetician Richard Barksdale, while the 80s ushered in Molefi Asante's Afrocentricity. The latter part of the 20th and the early 21st centuries highlight the Africana literary & theoretical

works of several Africana theorists, including Robert L. Williams--*Ebonics* & Maulana Karenga--*7 Principles & Kwanzaa*. Finally, there are several Africana women theorists, including chief black feminists Barbara Smith & bell hooks, & Africana Womanist Hudson-Weems, who set forth literary theories as tools of analysis for Black writers.

The focus on the mid and latter part of the 20th century and the early 21st century will highlight the Africana literary and theoretical works of several known Africana theorists listed above, culminating with two (2) Africana novels, Toni Morrison's *Home* and Hudson-Weems' *Emmett—Legacy, Redemption and Forgiveness*. The main objective of the course is to introduce students to Africana literature and Africana theoretical constructs as an authentic way of interpreting Africana texts in order to accurately put those texts within the constructs of our everyday lives.

Textbooks and Course Materials:

Hill, Patricia Liggins, Editor. *Call & Response: The Riverside Anthology of the African American Literary Tradition*, Houghton Mifflin, 1997.

Hudson-Weems, C., Editor. *Contemporary Africana Theory, Thought & Action: A Guide for Africana Studies*. Africa World Press, 2007.

-----*Emmett—Legacy, Redemption and Forgiveness*, AH, 2115.

Morrison, Toni. *Home*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.

Web Page Materials—Articles:

Claude McKay (*WJBS*); Emmett Till (*Journal of Black Studies*)
“The Link between Emmett Till and Black Lives Matter”
“The Benefits of Campus Activism”

Emmett Till Blog—Institute of Humane Studies at George Mason U:
<http://www.learnliberty.org/blog/emmett-till-was-murdered-61-years-ago-but-racism-lives-on/>

You Tube--(Hudson-Weems—Emmett Till, 2015, Toronto, Canada; Toni Morrison on *Home*); Africana Womanism presentations at universities

Grade Criteria:

Class Participation—15 %

Oral Report;--15 %

Pop Quizzes—20 %

Mid-Term Exam—25 %

Final Test—25%

***Attendance is mandatory; 3 or more unexcused absences will result in lowering grade 1 grade level.**

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

Weekly Schedule:

1. --Course **Overview** (Thematic)
--Course Requirements & Assignments—**Follow the Syllabus & Read Biographical Head Notes for All Authors, including B.T.W.**

--Early 20th Century—*Call & Response: The Riverside Anthology of the African American Literary Tradition (C&R): 1915-1945, p. 767*
2. --**Booker T. Washington**—*Call & Response*, pp. 658-660

--Washington's "Atlanta Exposition Address," pp. 681-688

--**W. E. B. DuBois**—*Souls of Black Folk* (Chapters I—pp. 737-742; III—pp. 742-748--*C & R*)-

--Video—DuBois and other Icons of the Period
3. **Harlem Renaissance & Reformation (C&R):**

--**ORAL REPORTS (2):**

--**Marcus Garvey**—"Speech on Disarmament Conference Delivered at Liberty Hall," New York, November 6, 1921 (pp. 834-838)

--**Tony Martin**--"The Garvey Aesthetic," Chap. 10 from

Contemporary Africana Theory, Thought & Action (CATA), 163-175

--**W.E.B.**—"The Alain Locke-W.E.B. Du Bois Debate on the Theory of Black Art—**ORAL REPORTS (2):**

--**W.E.B. Du Bois**--"Criteria of Negro Art," pp. 850-855

--**Alain Locke**—"The New Negro," pp. 859-865

4. **Harlem Renaissance Critic & Poets**

James Weldon Johnson's "Book of Am. Negro Poetry," p. 869

Johnson's "The White Witch," p. 87

Claude McKay's "If We Must Die," p. 883

McKay's "America," p. 884

McKay's "Harlem Shadows," 884

McKay's "The Harlem Dancer," 885

Langston Hughes' "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," p. 889

Hughes' "Mother to Son," p. 894

Hughes' "Ballad of the Landlord," p. 895

Hughes' "Harlem," 897

Countee Cullen's "Heritage," p. 905

Cullen's "Scottsboro, Too, Is Worth Its Song"

Cullen's "Yet Do I Marvel," p. 915

Sterling Brown's "Old Lem" & "Strong Men"

--**ORAL REPORTS—Other Selections and Other Harlem Renaissance Writers, i.e. Claude McKay--*WJBS* (2)**

5. **Post Renaissance Writers/Critics—from *Call and Response***

--**ORAL REPORTS (2-3):**

--Nella Larsen-- "Quicksand"—pp. 926-931

--Zora Neale Hurston—"Sweat"—pp. 949-955

--1945-1960--*Call and Response*—pp. 1065-1090--**THEORY**

--Nick Aaron Ford—"A Blueprint for Negro Authors," 1112-14

--Ann Petry—"The Novel as Social Criticism," pp. 1114-1119

6. Selections for APPLICATION (Poets)

Robert Haden's "Fredrick Douglass," p. 1137

Dudley Randall's "Booker T. and W.E.B.," p. 1144

Margaret Walker's "For My People," p. 1159

Brooks' "Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till," p. 1170

Brooks' "We Real Cool," p. 1172

--ORAL REPORTS—OTHER POETS (1)

--**Video**—*The Awakening* (1950s-60s)

7. Mid 1950s; 1960s to the Present—*Call and Response*—pp. 1343-1385

--Interview--Hudson-Weems on Till—*Am. Audio Prose Library*

--From *Contemporary Africana Theory, Thought & Action (CATT)*—"Chapter 14—"The Modern Civil Rights Movement," On Emmett Till; pp. 219-239

8. **ORAL REPORTS (2-3)** on activists/orators:

--Malcolm X—*Call and Response*, pp. 1415-1420

--Martin Luther King, Jr.—*Call and Response*, pp. 1420-1423

--Stokely Carmichael—*Call and Response*, pp. 1425-1430

9. **ORAL REPORTS (2)** on *Emmett Till: Sacrificial Lamb of Civil Rights Movement* (Chapter IV, etc.)

Webpage--"Link between Emmett Till & Black Lives Matter"
"Benefits of Campus Activism"

Emmett Till Blog, Institute of Humane Studies—Geo Mason U

Video—Emmett Till's Day in Court: Civil Rights Forum, 1994

William E. Nelson, Jr.'s "Africology: From Social Movement to Academic Discipline," p. 129 (*CATT*)

10. **Black Arts/Black Aesthetics Movements** (*Call & Response*)
--ORAL REPORTS—Theorists (2-3):

--Larry Neale's "The Black Arts Movement," p. 1450

--Joyce Ann Joyce's "The Black Canon: Reconstructing Black American Literary Criticism," p. 1459

--Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s "What's Love Got to Do with It?: Critical Theory, Integrity, & the Black Idiom," p. 1469

Selections for APPLICATION (from *Call & Response*):

--Sonia Sanchez's "the final solution," p. 1402
_____ "right on white America," p. 1493

--Amiri Baraka's "Black Art," p. 1501
_____ "A Poem Some People Will Have to Understand," p. 1506

--Haki R. Madhubuti's (Don L. Lee's) "But He Was Cool, or: he even stopped for green lights," p. 1544

--Mari Evans' "I Am a Black Woman," p. 1573

--Evans' "Speak Truth to the People," p. 1575

--Audre Lorde's "Power," p. 1627

11. **Mid-Term Exam**

--Richard Barksdale's "Critical Theory and the Problems of Canonicity," from *CATTA*, p.193

---*Call & Response*—THEORY----**ORAL REPORT (2):**

--Clenora Hudson-Weems, "Africana Womanism: Historical, Global Perspective for Women of African Descent," p. 1812

--Barbara Smith, "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism," p. 1816

--bell hooks, "Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory," p1844

12. --Hudson-Weems--"Nommo/Self Naming, Self Definition and the History of Africana Womanism," from *CATTA*--Chapter 18

—Africana Womanism (Hudson-Weems--*You Tube*, Bowdoin College, 2015)

--Quiz--Toni Morrison's *Home*

--Morrison's *Home*--Theory(ies) applicable in this novel?

13. --**ORAL REPORT (2)**

--Toni Morrison on *Home*—*You Tube*.

14. Selections from *Contemp. Africana Theory, Thought & Action*

ORAL REPORTS (2-4):

--Molefi Kete Asante--"Afrocentricity & Transformation," from *CATTA*, pp. 29-41

--Robert Williams--"Ebonics: Reclaiming and Redefining Our Language," from *CATTA*, pp. 241-250

--Maulana Karenga--"7 Principles of US," *CATTA*, pp. 445-458

--Obedike Kamau—"Reparations"

15. **ORAL REPORTS (2)**

--Hudson-Weems--*Emmett—Legacy, Redemption, Forgiveness*

--*YouTube*: Interview--Hudson-Weems--Toronto, Canada, '15

--**Emmett Till Blog**: <http://www.learnliberty.org/blog/emmett-till-was-murdered-61-years-ago-but-racism-lives-on/>

--Wrap-Up and Exam II/Test