

Spring 2024  
Lecturer: Dr. Jason Siegel

### **English 282: Black Literature (HU, USD)**

<u>Time and Place:</u>	<u>Office Hours</u>
TuTh 2:00-3:15 pm	MW 11:00 am-12:00 pm
Room: 191 (Wausau), 126 (Marshfield)	E-mail: jsiegel@uwsp.edu

No history of the United States is complete without an account of the historical mistreatment and remarkable contributions of African Americans. The purpose of this course is to explore the varied literature that depicts and arises from the experiences of African Americans from slavery to the present day. We will closely read great works of African American Literature in a variety of genres, ranging from speeches, slave narratives, and essays to poems, short stories, plays, and novels. The goal is not only to become more sensitive and sympathetic to the plights of African Americans, to get a more complete view of the United States, and to confront and challenge our own unconscious assumptions about race, but also to develop an appreciation for the artistry of some of the great works of American Literature.

While cultural themes will orient our discussion of literary texts, much of our time will be spent developing critical reading, writing, and thinking skills. In class you will be given the opportunity to develop your own interpretations of the literary works under discussion and exchange opinions with your peers in a way that can stimulate thought and broaden your perspective on the course readings. You will also devote a great deal of time to honing your writing and interpretive skills through various exercises, handouts, and short writing assignments. By the end of the course, you will learn to write persuasive prose about literature. Finally, this class will give you the opportunity to appreciate some of the finest works of literary art that Americans have produced, while enriching and deepening your experience of life. I hope you enjoy it!

**Required Texts**, in order of use, available from the UWSP Bookstore

*Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, Vol. 1-2, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.  
*Their Eyes Were Watching God*, Zora Neale Hurston  
*Native Son*, Richard Wright  
*Beloved*, Toni Morrison

Additional readings available on Canvas

## **Course Requirements**

### **Essay 1 (15%)**

3-4 pages

### **Essay 2 (20%)**

5-6 pages

### **Midterm (20%)**

Take-home exam

### **Participation (20%)**

Based on regular attendance, preparation, and frequent contribution to class discussion.

### **Final Exam (25%) Due Thursday, May 16 at 2:30 pm on Canvas**

The identification portion of the exam will deal only with material covered after the midterm, but the essay portion will draw on all of the course texts.

**Grading Scale:** A+=98-100; A=93-97; A-=90-92; B+=87-89; B=83-86; B-=80-82; C+=77-79; C=73-76; C-=70-72; D+=67-69; D=60-66; F=0-59

## **Attendance**

You are allowed two free absences without penalty, but each subsequent absence will lower the participation portion of your grade by half a grade (i.e. from A to A-). If you miss more than six classes, you will automatically fail the entire course.

Obviously, I will take into account *extraordinary* reasons for an absence such as a severe accident or illness, a family emergency or death, a recognized religious holiday, or jury duty. Just let me know!

## **Academic Honesty and Plagiarism**

Plagiarism, or taking credit for words or ideas not your own, is a serious offence and will lead to dire consequences. The penalty for plagiarism ranges from failing the course to expulsion from the university. See the *Student Rights and Regulations* handbook for more information about plagiarism and its consequences. If I think you have plagiarized, I will meet with you and refer your name to a disciplinary committee responsible for overseeing the investigation of academic crimes. Except for acknowledged quotations, all of your work is to be written in your own words. You may not copy from a book, another student's paper, a webpage, an AI, or any other source.

## **UWSP @ Wausau Tutoring-Learning Center**

Writing tutors in the TLC are successful UWSP@ Wausau students who are available to discuss all types of writing at any stage of the drafting process, including brainstorming, conducting research, editing, or handling citations. Tutors work with experienced as well as struggling writers. One-time and regular appointments are available, free of charge to all students.

## Course Calendar

In the assignments below, NA1 refers to *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, Volume 1, and NA2 refers to *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature*, Volume 2.

Jan	23	T	Introduction
	25	Th	Phyllis Wheatley, Poetry (NA1 137-150)
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	30	T	Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life</i> (NA1 326-59)
Feb	1	Th	Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life</i> (NA1 359-88)
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	6	T	Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (NA1 221-261)
	8	Th	Booker T. Washington, "The Atlanta Exposition Address" (NA1 548-49, 572-79)
			W. E. B. Du Bois "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others" (NA1 679-83, 694-702)
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	13	T	"Harlem Renaissance 1919-1940: (NA1 929-33) Claude McKay, Poetry (NA1 1000-1007)
	15	Th	Langston Hughes, Poetry (NA1 1302-1320)
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	20	T	Hurston, <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> , Ch. 1-5 (1-75)
	22	Th	Hurston, <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> , Ch. 10-15 (76-138)
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	27	T	Hurston, <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> , Ch. 16-20 (139-93)
	29	Th	Wright, <i>Native Son</i> (1-62)
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March	5	T	Wright, <i>Native Son</i> (62-139)
	7	Th	Wright, <i>Native Son</i> (140-199) <b>Essay #1 Due</b>
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	12	T	Wright, <i>Native Son</i> (200-270)
	14	Th	Wright, <i>Native Son</i> (271-340) <b>Midterm Exam Due at 11:59 pm</b>
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MARCH 18-22 NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK

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	26	T	Wright, <i>Native Son</i> (340-382)
	28	Th	Wright, <i>Native Son</i> (382-430)
April	2	T	Ellison, “King of the Bingo Game” (Canvas) Ellison, “Flying Home” (Canvas)
	4	Th	Baldwin, “Going to Meet the Man” (NA2 453-465)
	9	T	Hansberry, <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> (NA2 470-98)
	11	Th	Hansberry, <i>A Raisin in the Sun</i> (NA2 498-530)
	16	T	Wilson, <i>Joe Turner’s Come and Gone</i> (NA2 1205-1234)
	18	Th	Wilson, <i>Joe Turner’s Come and Gone</i> (NA2 1234-1251)
	23	T	Morrison, <i>Beloved</i> (1-59)
	25	Th	Morrison, <i>Beloved</i> (60-124)
	30	T	Morrison, <i>Beloved</i> , (125-195)
May	2	Th	Morrison, <i>Beloved</i> , (197-235) <b>Essay#2 Due</b>
	7	T	Morrison, <i>Beloved</i> (236-77)
	9	Th	Morrison, <i>Beloved</i> (279-324) Final Exam Review <b>Essay #1 Rewrite Due</b>

**Final Exam Due on Thursday, May 16 at 2:30 pm**