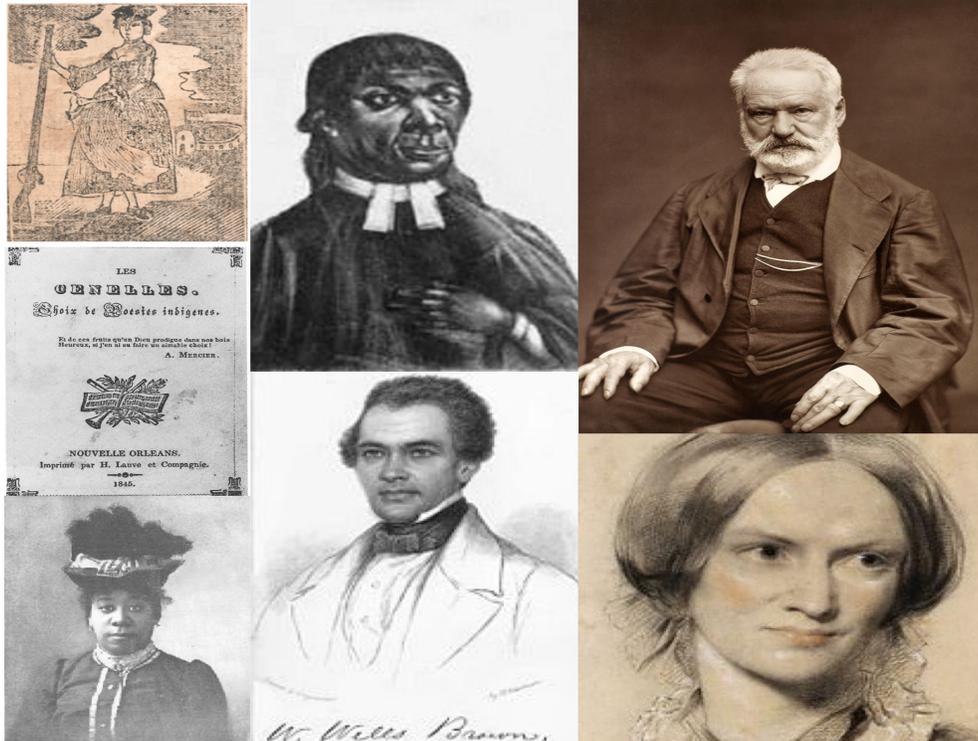


358:338 Nineteenth Century African American Literature and its International Influences

TTH6 CAC 15533 KERNAN MU-301



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Office Hours (by appointment): Thursdays 6:00pm, 024 Murray Hall

Course Description

In this class will examine canonical African American literary works in terms of their international inspirations and influences. The course aims to lay bare a genealogy that explores the extent to which African American poetry and prose have always constituted an international literature, even in their most nationalist incarnations. Exploring issues ranging from the impact of French Romanticism on African American literature's inaugural moments to the Diasporic awareness that helped to fuel its early poetry, the course will address how international literary movements helped to shape some of the inaugural texts African American literary canon. In short, the course strays from critical narratives that stress the *sui generis* origins of nineteenth century African American literature in order to emphasize the heterogeneity of a canon whose roots lie both in evolving conceptions of African American artistic productions as well as in the alluvial soil of various international literary movements. This will entail an exciting journey that will expose us to the effects that: the Indian captivity narrative had on the slave narrative (and vice versa) throughout the Americans; that French Romantic theatre had on William Wells Brown and the birth of the African American theatrical tradition; that Victor Hugo's poetry had on the first collection of African American poetry; that Charlotte Brontë had on Pauline Hopkins' early

articulations of post-bellum African American womanhood, and that Plato and Hegel had on W.E.B. Du Bois's seminal *The Souls of Black Folk*. In addition to their engaged in-class participation, students will be required to complete regular reading quizzes and to write a final paper.

Departmental Learning Goals

1. Gain knowledge of literatures in English, as well as their historical, cultural, and formal dimensions and diversity.
2. Develop strategies of interpretation, including an ability to use critical and theoretical terms, concepts, and methods in relation to a variety of textual forms and other media.
3. Develop the ability to engage with the work of other critics and writers, using and citing such sources effectively.
4. Develop the ability to write persuasively and precisely in scholarly and, optionally, creative forms.

Academic Integrity

Students and instructors have a duty to each other and to our community to abide by norms of academic honesty and responsibility. To present something as your own original writing when it is not is plagiarism. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are serious violations of trust. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will have severe consequences, in accordance with the University Policy on Academic Integrity and the Code of Student Conduct. For details about the University's academic integrity policies, please see <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/>.

General Policies

Attendance

Attendance at all classes – with the texts we are discussing in-hand – is expected. You may miss two classes without penalty. If you miss three classes, your overall grade for the semester will drop by half a letter (i.e. if you are absent three times, the best grade you could receive is a B+). If you miss six classes, you automatically fail the class regardless of work completed. Lateness of twenty minutes or more will count as half an absence. Lateness of forty minutes or more will count as a full absence. If you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the RU absence reporting website, which automatically sends an email to the instructors. The site can be found here: <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/>.

Discussion and Office Hours

Class discussion offers you a place for exploration, a space where – if you come prepared – all can benefit from your insights and from those of others. Exploring texts can be difficult, and fascinating discussions depend on a variety of opinions. Discussion is also meant to clear up any confusion you might have about lectures, our texts or the essays we'll be

writing. You should NEVER be afraid to ask a question. There are stupid professors, but there are no stupid questions.

Most of the time, I'll be able to stay after lecture to answer brief questions, and you should also (in all of your classes for the rest of your academic life) take advantage of my office hours! Office hours allow you to get one-on-one help with any difficulties you may encounter, and your visitation keeps professors from getting too lonely and spiteful in their offices.

Etiquette

Your classmates are your colleagues, and therefore we expect you to behave toward each other in a professional, courteous, and helpful manner. Mutual respect will better enable us to discuss and develop diverse opinions and create a dynamic intellectual community.

Late Work

Reviews submitted after the due date will lose half a letter grade for every day they are late. We will consider extensions on a case-by-case basis, provided you have a compelling reason for requiring the extension and you speak to one of us at least 72 hours before the essay is due.

Formatting

Work should be formatted according to MLA standards. If these are unfamiliar, refer to MLA guide- lines as explained via the [Purdue OWL](#) style guide. Ensure that your margins are set to 1" on all sides; that you do not exceed 12-point font; that you use between one-and-a-half and double spacing; that you provide page numbers; and that you use a clear, legible typeface (such as Garamond, Palatino, or Times New Roman). All written work will be submitted via the "Assignments" tab on Sakai, in Word document format (.doc or .docx) when possible. Otherwise, submit via PDF. Other formats (.pages, Google doc links, etc.) are not acceptable.

Students with Disabilities

All reasonable accommodation will be given to students with disabilities. Students who may require accommodation should speak with me at the start of the semester. You may also contact the [Office of Disability Services](#) (848.445.6800).

Grading Standards

A- Outstanding. Demonstrates thorough mastery of course materials and skills.

B- Good. The student's work demonstrates serious engagement with all aspects of the course but incomplete mastery of course materials and skills.

C- Satisfactory. The student's work satisfies requirements but shows significant problems or major gaps in mastery of course material.

D- Poor or minimal pass. The student completes the basic course requirements, but the student's work is frequently unsatisfactory in several major areas.

Failure. Student has not completed all course requirements or turns in consistently unsatisfactory work.

The final grade will be based on a numerical score but is subject to instructor discretion. Unsatisfactory work in all areas of the course will result in an F even if the numerical score corresponds to a passing grade. It is not possible to pass the course without completing all response papers and essays.

Requirements

Participation(35%)

Includes attendance and discussion. Students are expected to attend each class session ready to participate. This means not only having done the assigned reading, but also being prepared and willing to contribute. Discussion requires every student to take the intellectual risk of offering observations, ideas, and arguments in class in response to one another and to the instructor. Lateness, lack of preparation, or disruptive behavior – including non-class use of computers or phones – will affect your participation grade. Failing to bring the assigned texts to class will impact your participation grade for that day. Attending office hours also counts toward participation.

Remember, you are not supposed to know all the answers in advance. You are, however, required to make your best effort to figure things out as we go along, and to work with your classmates to help them do so as well.

Reading Quizzes (30%)

Marked on the calendar: Reading quizzes will entail short answer responses.

Final Paper (35%)

Reading Schedule

Week 1

September 4th Course Introduction

September 6th Rowlandson, Mary. Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson (1684)

Week 2

September 11th Rowlandson, Mary. Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson (1684)

September 13th Rowlandson, Mary. Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson (1684)

Week 3

September 18th Marrant, John. A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, a Black (1785)

Reading Quiz

September 20th Marrant, John. A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, a Black (1785)

Week 4

September 25th Marrant, John. A Narrative of the Lord's Wonderful Dealings with John Marrant, a Black (1785)

September 27th Hugo, Victor. Selection's from Selected Poems of Victor Hugo

Reading Quiz

Week 5

October 2nd Hugo, Victor. Selections from Selected Poems of Victor Hugo

October 4th Hugo, Victor. Selections from Selected Poems of Victor Hugo

Week 6

October 9th Selected Poems from Creole Echoes: The Francophone Poetry of 19th Century Louisiana

Reading Quiz

October 11th Selected Poems from Creole Echoes: The Francophone Poetry of 19th Century Louisiana

Week 7

October 16th Selected Poems from Selected Poems from Creole Echoes: The Francophone Poetry of 19th Century Louisiana

October 18th Brown, William Wells. *The Escape; or, A Leap for Freedom* (1858)

Reading Quiz

Week 8

October 23rd Brown, William Wells. *The Escape; or, A Leap for Freedom* (1858)

October 25th Brown, William Wells. *The Escape; or, A Leap for Freedom* (1858)

Week 9

October 30th Brontë, Charlotte. Jane Eyre (1847)

Reading Quiz

November 1st- Brontë, Charlotte. Jane Eyre (1847)

Week 10

November 6th Brontë, Charlotte. Jane Eyre (1847)

November 8th Brontë, Charlotte. Jane Eyre (1847)

Week 11

November 13th Hopkins, Pauline. Contending Forces (1900)

Reading Quiz

November 15th Hopkins, Pauline. Contending Forces (1900)

Week 12

November 20th Hopkins, Pauline. Contending Forces (1900)

November THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 13

November 27th Hopkins, Pauline. Contending Forces (1900)

November 29th Selections from a) Hegel, G.W.F. Phenomenology of Spirit and b) Plato *Symposium*

Week 14

December 4th Du Bois, W.E.B. The Souls of Black Folk (1903)

Reading Quiz

December 6th Du Bois, W.E.B. The Souls of Black Folk (1903)

Final Class

December 11th Du Bois, W.E.B. The Souls of Black Folk (1903)

December 15th Final Paper Due**Books for Purchase:**

978-0252071492 Creole Echoes

978-0226359816 Selected Poems of Victor Hugo

978-0195067859 Contending Forces

*All other readings may be found on Sakai under "Resources"