

ENG512: African American Literature

Survey of African-American Literature: In order to gain a voice in American society, African-Americans first had to claim a voice in literature. This course covers some of the most important writers and periods in the African-American literary tradition. We will study each writer's distinct contributions to and within a specific age or aesthetic as well as the continuum of African-American literature from the mid-1800s to the present, appreciating the fluidity of terms, dates, and styles as well as comparable narrative impulses among diverse writers. Reading a variety of genres, we will try to answer questions such as: How have these writers helped to establish an African-American literary tradition? How is "the African-American experience" or the "African-American community" represented on the page? What role does ethnicity or "race" play in these texts? How do ethnicity, gender, race, and class intersect? Throughout the term, we will consider how major African-American writers incorporate orature, art, aesthetics, and socio-political commentary into their works, appealing to and enriching readers from all walks of life. Simply put, there would be no "American" literature at all without African-American literature.

Credit Hour(s): 3

Department: English