ENG 360 African American Writers 1870-1920
Spring 2012
T/Th 10-11:20, 176 Lokey Education Building
Professor Thorsson
Email: thorsson@uoregon.edu
Office Hours: T/Th 12-1:30pm and by appointment, 521 PLC

Course Description
In this course, we will study African American writing from the period Charles Chesnutt called "Post-Bellum, Pre-Harlem." As Chesnutt's terminology suggests, readers and scholars tend to think of this as a low point in African American history, a kind of gap between the ante-bellum era and the Harlem Renaissance. Scholars refer to this period as "the Nadir" because of its intense racial repression and violence. The years 1870-1920 were, however, among the most fruitful for African American literary production, rivaling the Harlem Renaissance in scope, significance, and influence in the African American literary tradition. This course is designed to help you engage in literary study and intellectual conversation. It is thus an opportunity to hone your critical faculty through scholarly discussion and analytical writing about literature.

Required Readings - at the UO Bookstore and on reserve at Knight Library or on Blackboard

• Frances E. W. Harper, *Iola Leroy, Or, Shadows Uplifted* (1892), Dover Edition
• Frances E. W. Harper, selected poems (1854-1901)*
• Charles Chesnutt, *The House Behind the Cedars* (1900), Modern Library Classics Edition
• Close Reading Handout*
• Poetic Meter Handout*
• Assignment Sheet*

*Blackboard

Course Requirements and Policies
Reading, vigorous participation, and attendance are mandatory. Bring the assigned readings to class and be prepared to discuss them. Your participation grade is based on class discussion, in-class writing, and group work. Speak up or otherwise participate 10 times during the term and you will get a perfect participation grade.

Missing class more than twice in the term will result in reduction of your final grade by 1/3 of a letter grade for each absence beyond the two permitted. There is no distinction between excused and unexcused absences. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to get notes for that day from a classmate and otherwise catch up on any material you have missed.
Assignments must be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class on the due dates listed below and formatted according to current MLA guidelines (including 1 inch margins, single-side print, stapled, correct citation and quotation, and works cited). Consult the MLA Handbook if you are uncertain of correct MLA format. Late assignments will be marked down by 1/3 of a letter grade (B becomes a B-) for each day they are late. No assignments will be accepted more than one week after the due date.

If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon. Please request that the Accessible Education Center send a letter outlining your approved accommodations. You can find the ACE at: http://aec.uoregon.edu/

The University Student Conduct Code (conduct.uoregon.edu) defines academic misconduct. Students shall not commit or attempt to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the student’s obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at: www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students.

**Grading:**

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close Reading Exercise (3-4 pgs)</td>
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<td>Secondary Source Exercise (3-4 pgs)</td>
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<td>Paper Proposal (2-3 pgs)</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
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**Week One**

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<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>T 4/3</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>Th 4/5</td>
<td>Frances E. W. Harper, <em>Iola Leroy, Or, Shadows Uplifted</em> (1892), Introduction and Chapters I-IX</td>
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**Week Two**

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<tr>
<td>T 4/10</td>
<td>Frances E. W. Harper, <em>Iola Leroy, Or, Shadows Uplifted</em> (1892), Chapters X-XXI Close Reading Handout*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Th 4/12</td>
<td>Frances E. W. Harper, <em>Iola Leroy, Or, Shadows Uplifted</em> (1892), Chapter XXII-Note Assignment Sheet*</td>
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**Week Three**

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<tr>
<td>T 4/17</td>
<td>Frances E. W. Harper, selected poems (1854-1901)* Poetic Meter Handout*</td>
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<td>Th 4/19</td>
<td>Sutton Griggs, <em>Imperium in Imperio</em> (1899), Preface, Introduction, pages 3-95</td>
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Week Four
T 4/24  Sutton Griggs, *Imperium in Imperio* (1899), pages 96-177
Th 4/26  Charles Chesnutt, *The Conjure Woman and Other Tales* (1899), Introduction, pages 31-81
Close Reading Exercise Due

Week Five
T 5/1   Charles Chesnutt, *The Conjure Woman and Other Tales* (1899), pages 82-145
Th 5/3   Charles Chesnutt, *The Conjure Woman and Other Tales* (1899), pages 146-207

Week Six
T 5/8   Charles Chesnutt, *The House Behind the Cedars* (1900), Introduction, pages 3-72
Th 5/10  Charles Chesnutt, *The House Behind the Cedars* (1900), pages 73-140
Secondary Source Exercise Due

Week Seven
T 5/15  Charles Chesnutt, *The House Behind the Cedars* (1900), pages 141-204

Week Eight
Th 5/24  Paper proposal workshop
Paper proposal due

Week Nine

Week Ten
Th 6/7   Paul Laurence Dunbar, *The Sport of the Gods and Other Essential Writings* (1890-1902), pages 357-433

T 6/12  Final paper due to Prof. Thorsson's office (521 PLC) by 5pm. If you would like your paper back with comments, attach a self-addressed stamped envelope when you turn it in.