ES 399 The Harlem Renaissance
Fall 2011; MW 12-1:20pm; 106 Friendly
Professor Thorsson
Email: thorsson@uoregon.edu
Office Hours: M/W 10-11:30am, 521 PLC

Course Description
In this course, we will study fiction, non-fiction, poetry, music, and film from and about the period known as the Harlem Renaissance. Using close reading and historical context, we will investigate the gender, genre, and geography of this celebrated era of African American arts and letters. For example, how might we understand the workings of gender and sexuality in 1920s African American writing? What is the role of the anthology form in creating and preserving the Harlem Renaissance? Did this flowering of art and literature take place only, or even primarily, in New York's Harlem neighborhood? This course will require you to exercise your critical faculty by reading carefully, discussing seriously, and writing analytically about texts.

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

- George Schuyler, "The Negro Art Hokum" (1926) *
- Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (1926) *
- Zora Neale Hurston, "Characteristics of Negro Expression" (1933) *
- Sterling Brown "Folk Literature" and selected poems *
- Cheryl Wall, "Passing for What? Aspects of Identity in Nella Larsen's Novels" in Norton Critical Edition of *Passing*
- Deborah McDowell, "Black Female Sexuality in *Passing*" in Norton Critical Edition of *Passing*
- Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937), Harper Perennial Modern Classics Edition

*on Blackboard course site

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.

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/or 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 the instructor soon. Please request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter outlining your approved accommodations. Disability Services: disabsrv@darkwing.uoregon.edu, 346-1155; http://ds.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 (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. 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>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close Reading #1 (2-3 pgs)</td>
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<td>Close Reading #2 (2-3 pgs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper Proposal (2-3 pgs)</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
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We will discuss each assignment in detail in class as it approaches. Please also print and consult the assignment sheet posted on Blackboard.

**Week One**

M 1/9  Introduction


Arnold Rampersad, "Introduction" (ix-xxiii)

Alain Locke, "Foreword" and "The New Negro" (xxv-xxvii)

Melville Herskovits, "The Negro's Americanism" (353-360)

**Week Two**

M 1/16  No Class, Martin Luther King Day
Week Three
M 1/23  
Selection from Locke, *The New Negro* (1925):
E. Franklin Frazier, "Durham: Capital of the Black Middle Class" (333-340)

W 1/25  
Selection from Locke, *The New Negro* (1925):
James Weldon Johnson, "Harlem: the Culture Capital" (301-311)
Claude McKay, *Home to Harlem* (1928) (ix-xxvi, 1-119)

Week Four
M 1/30  
Claude McKay, *Home to Harlem* (1928) (120-275)
*Close Reading #1 Due*

W 2/1  
Claude McKay, *Home to Harlem* (1928) (276-340)
Selection from Locke, *The New Negro* (1925):
Claude McKay, "Poems" (133-135)

Week Five
M 2/6  
Selections from Locke, *The New Negro* (1925):
Arthur A. Schomburg, "The Negro Digs Up His Past" (231-237)
Countee Cullen, "Poems" and "Heritage" (129-133, 250-253)

W 2/8  
George Schuyler, "The Negro Art Hokum" (1926) (13-16) *
Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" (1926) (1-2)*
Zora Neale Hurston, "Characteristics of Negro Expression" (1933) (24-31) *
Selection from Locke, *The New Negro* (1925):
Albert C. Barnes, "Negro Art and America" (19-25)

Week Six
M 2/13  
Selections from Locke, *The New Negro* (1925):
Jean Toomer, "Carma, from Cane," "Fern, from Cane," "Poems" (96-104, 136-137)
Langston Hughes, "Poems," "Jazzonia," "Nude Young Dancer" (141-145, 226, 227)

W 2/15  
In-class Film Screening: *Looking for Langston*
Week Seven
Close Reading #2 Due


Week Eight
    Elise Johnson McDougald, "The Task of Negro Womanhood" (369-382)
    Georgia Douglass Johnson, "Poems" (146-147)
    Anne Spencer, "Lady, Lady" (148)
    Angelina Grimke, "The Black Finger" (148)
    Helene Johnson, "The Road" (300)

W 2/29  Sterling Brown, "Folk Literature" (1941), "Odyssey of Big Boy" (1932), "Strong Men" (1931), "Southern Road" (1932), "Ma Rainey" (1932)*
Selections from Locke, *The New Negro* (1925):
    James Weldon Johnson, "The Creation" (138-141)
    Arthur Huff Fauset, "American Negro Folk Literature" (238-244)

F 3/2  Symposium on Place and Displacement in African American Literature
10am-4:30pm, Knight Library Browsing Room
Attend at least one talk and write a 2-page response for 5 points extra credit.

Week Nine
M 3/5  In-class workshop of paper proposals
**Paper Proposal Due – bring 2 copies to class**

W 3/7  In-class Film Screening: *Zora Neale Hurston: Jump at the Sun*

Week Ten
M 3/12  Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (1937) (ix-128)


T 3/20 – Final Paper due to Professor Thorsson's office (521 PLC) by 5pm
If you would like your final paper back with comments, you must attach a self-addressed, stamped envelope when you hand it in.