**Course Description**
This course is a survey of writings by African American authors of the 19th and 20th centuries. Studying fiction, essays, drama and poetry, we’ll close read representative texts to identify formal and thematic elements that characterize the African American literary tradition. We will consider how these works exemplify and complicate lived and literary identities. In other words, how do these texts fit into or defy ideas about race, gender, and class on the one hand and classifications of genre, period, and literary style on the other. We’ll study relationships among these works to uncover how they reflect on, depend on, or revise one another. We’ll also look for relationships between these works and other art forms, such as blues, jazz, folklore, visual arts and film. The goal of this course is to help you engage with African American literature, improving your writing, reading, and critical thinking skills in the process.

**Required Books**
Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

The readings for this course are available at the UO Bookstore and the Knight Library reserves desk.

**Course Requirements and Policies**

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<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Close readings (2-3 pages)</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final paper (7-10 pages)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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- Participation and attendance are mandatory. Please bring the assigned readings to class and be prepared to discuss them. 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.
- You will turn in 2 close readings during the term at the beginning of class on the due dates below. Each of your close readings will analyze a short passage of your choice from among the assigned readings. You must attend to both the form and content of your chosen text. Close readings should demonstrate that you’ve read and thought carefully about the assigned work. This is also a good place to explore potential paper ideas. Close readings should be formatted following MLA guidelines (1 inch margins, single-side print, stapled, correct citation and quotation).
- The midterm will consist of identifications and one essay.
- Your final paper should use close reading to support an argument about the work(s) of your choice, selected from the readings on this syllabus. In addition to submitting a paper proposal, I encourage you to come to office hours to discuss plans for your final papers. You
Proposal and final paper must be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class on the due dates listed below. Papers should be formatted following MLA guidelines. Late papers will be marked down by 1/3 of a letter grade (B becomes a B-) for each day they are late. No papers will be accepted more than one week after the due date.

**Tues 9/28**
Introduction

**Thurs 9/30**
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, A Slave, Written by Himself* (1845) (Chapters 1-9, p 387-421)

**Tues 10/5**
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, A Slave, Written by Himself* (1845) (Chapters 10-appendix, p 421-452)

**Thurs 10/7**
Booker T. Washington, from *Up from Slavery* (1901) (p 570-603)

**Tues 10/12**
Close Reading #1 Due

**Thurs 10/14 – No Class**

**Tues 10/19**

**Thurs 10/21**

**Tues 10/26**
Zora Neale Hurston, “Characteristics of Negro Expression” (1934) (p 1041-1053) and “Negro Folklore” from *Mules and Men* (1935) (p 1053-1063)

**Thurs 10/28**
Close Reading #2 Due
Sterling Brown, all poems (1927-1980) (p 1248-1266)
Tues 11/2
Langston Hughes, all poems (1921-1965) (p 1291-1311) and “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” (1926) (p 1311-1314)

Thurs 11/4
Richard Wright, “Blueprint for Negro Writing” (1937) (p 1403-1410)
Ann Petry, from The Street (1946) (p 1504-1516)
Gwendolyn Brooks, “kitchenette building” (1945) (p 1625)

Tues 11/9
Midterm

Thurs 11/11
Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man (1952) (prologue and chapters 1-9)

Tues 11/16
Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man (1952) (chapters 10-18)

Thurs 11/18
Paper Proposal Due
Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man (1952) (chapter 19-epilogue)

Tues 11/23
James Baldwin, “Sonny’s Blues” (1957) (p 1728-1749)

Thurs 11/25 – Thanksgiving Day, no class

Tues 11/30
Hoyt Fuller “Towards A Black Aesthetic” (1968) (p 1853-1859)
Larry Neal “The Black Arts Movement” (1968) (p 2039-2050)
Jayne Cortez “How Long Has Trane Been Gone?”(1969) (2036-2038)

Thurs 12/2
Final Paper Due