

Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences  
**College in High School**

2024-2025  
**20<sup>th</sup> Century African American Literature**  
*ENGLIT 1230--3 Credits*

**Description:** ENGLIT 1230 is an advanced course focused on the topics, form, and function of African American Literature as they develop throughout the 20th century. The course is meant to provide students with both a broad framework to understand the modern history of this category of literature and the opportunity to practice selective, in-depth analyses of formal, thematic, and argumentative movements within and between specific examples in the time period. The readings and discussions are usually organized historically but can have additional organizational interests focused on genre/medium, the borders of African American literature, the cultural or political work being done by the literature, or the relationship between 20<sup>th</sup> century African American literature and the 21<sup>st</sup> century reader.

**Prerequisites:** None.

**Grading:** Grading should include a variety of assignments. Short writing assignments, using an individual or small group format, and a final paper are required. Group projects, longer exams, quizzes, group or individual presentations, blogs, annotated bibliographies, and a midterm essay are all optional assessment tools. The final paper must address 2 or more examples of the course content in terms of one of the major course topics.

**Textbook:** Most anthologies of African American literature follow a chronological organization with differing levels of author information and analytical discussion for individual entries, which makes them as useful as reference materials as they are for their content. For more contemporary titles, or for subgenres not typically included in the larger anthologies (like African American Science Fiction, Horror, Westerns, Detective Fiction, and Romance literature) individual texts might need to supplement any anthology adopted by a class. If a more in-depth discussion of specific texts is desired, specific critical additions of many of the more commonly assigned texts could be added to the anthology, as well.

Approved:

- Norton Anthology of African American Literature
- Any available Project Gutenberg versions of the assigned readings
- Any standalone edition of individual texts

Avoid:

- Masterpieces of African American Literature (Or any other source that summarizes and analyzes the works without reproducing them in their entirety. This source, along with the Cambridge Companion to African American Literature could be excellent support materials for instructors, however.)

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**Learning Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to identify significant, contextually relevant elements of literary content and form within African American literature.
2. Students will demonstrate critical reading and writing skills such as close reading, inquiry, analysis, argumentation, revision, and critique.
3. Students will draw viable and meaningful conclusions about the historical efficacy of African American literature based on the content and form of the readings.
4. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the impact of historical context on literary representation.
5. Students will be able to meaningfully compare and contrast the racial politics of today to those of early, mid, and late 20<sup>th</sup> century America.

**Required paper:** All 20<sup>th</sup> Century African American Literature students are required to examine the content of the course in the form of a sustained final written assignment. This paper can emphasize analysis, synthesis, evolution, or comparison/contrast, but should largely avoid evaluation. At least one outside source should be cited in the paper. As the approaches mentioned above suggest, this final assignment is meant to ask students to establish argumentative links between texts across time, and between the texts and the modern reader. A good example of this assignment could touch on all five of the course goals, but would be particularly focused on the last three:

- Students will draw viable and meaningful conclusions about the historical efficacy of African American literature based on the content and form of the readings.
- Students will demonstrate an understanding of the impact of historical context on literary representation.
- Students will be able to meaningfully compare and contrast the racial politics of today to those of early, mid, and late 20<sup>th</sup> century America.

**Additional course credit information for ENGLIT 1230:**

At the University of Pittsburgh, course credits can count in three ways: toward the requirements for a major, toward elective requirements, and/or toward the total number of credits needed to graduate. For this course:

- Majors: ENGLIT 1230 fulfills a major requirement in English Literature.
- Electives: Individual Schools and Colleges of the University (such as Engineering, Arts & Sciences, Business, Computing & Information, and so on) have different policies about elective credits and may count this course as an elective. Students interested in studying at the University of Pittsburgh should contact their School/College of interest to see if this course would be counted.
- Graduation: This course's credits count toward the number of credits needed for graduation.

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**Academic Integrity:** All College in High School teachers, students, and their parents/guardians are required to review and be familiar with the University of Pittsburgh's Academic Integrity Policy located online at <https://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policies-and-procedures/academic-integrity-code>.

**Grades:** Grade criteria in the high school course may differ slightly from University of Pittsburgh standards. A CHS student could receive two course grades: one for high school and one for the University transcript. In most cases the grades are the same. These grading standards are explained at the beginning of each course.

**Transfer Credit:** University of Pittsburgh grades earned in CHS courses appear on an official University of Pittsburgh transcript, and the course credits are likely to be eligible for transfer to other colleges and universities. Students are encouraged to contact potential colleges and universities in advance to ensure their CHS credits would be accepted. If students decide to attend any University of Pittsburgh campuses, the University of Pittsburgh grade earned in the course will count toward the student grade point average at the University. At the University of Pittsburgh, the CHS course supersedes any equivalent AP credit.

**Drops and Withdrawals:** Students should monitor progress in a course. CHS teacher can obtain a Course Drop/Withdrawal Request form from the CHS office or Aspire. The form must be completed by the student, teacher and parent/guardian and returned to teacher by deadlines listed. Dropping and withdrawing from the CHS course has no effect on enrollment in the high school credits for the course.