

Prof. Noelle Morrissette
 Department of English
 Office: Rice Hall, #101
 Office Phone: 775-8921
 Office Hours: MW 11:30-12:30 and by appt.
 English 263-01 and 02
 MWF 9-9:50 and 10:00-10:50am
 King 323

The Harlem Renaissance and the Jazz Age
 Or, Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance

A survey of the decade of artistic production known as the “Harlem Renaissance or the “New Negro Renaissance,” or alternatively as the “Jazz Age”—from roughly 1919 to 1929—that explores the controversies of racial representation and identification in the context of American national literature. We will address key interactions on the subject between and among black and white artists of the period, treating their fiction, poetry, and essays. Our exploration will focus on literary discourses of identity through the issues of race, racism, racialism; cultural nationalism and national culture; modernist aesthetics and modern black aesthetics. Visual art, music, and film will accompany the introduction of texts.

Required Texts

Course Books (available at the Oberlin Bookstore):

James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*; F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*; Jean Toomer, *Cane*; Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*; Carl Van Vechten, *Nigger Heaven*; Claude McKay, *Home to Harlem*; Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*

Recommended Texts (on library reserve)

Harlem: Art of Black America. David Levering Lewis, *When Harlem was in Vogue*. George Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White*. Jervis Anderson, *This Was Harlem*. (Please see Instructor for additional recommendations)

M FEB. 3RD: Introduction. Outline of course policies and requirements.
 Claude McKay and Ice T, “If We Must Die”: the Making of a Harlem Renaissance Tradition

From Black Bohemia to the Black Metropolis of Harlem

W FEB. 5TH: Jervis Anderson, “The Promised Land”
 James Weldon Johnson, from *Black Manhattan*

Crossing Districts, Transgressing Boundaries

F FEB. 7TH: George Chauncey, “Building Gay Neighborhood Enclaves: the Village and Harlem”
 Jervis Anderson, “The Saturday Night Function”

Parties

M FEB. 10TH: Jervis Anderson, “Around Midnight”
 Langston Hughes, “When the Negro Was in Vogue”

Metaphors of Modernity

W FEB. 12TH: W.E.B. Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings," *The Souls of Black Folk*

F FEB. 14TH: No class: instructor away

M FEB. 17TH: Johnson, *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, in entirety

W FEB. 19TH: Johnson, *Autobiography*.

F FEB. 21ST: Johnson, *Autobiography*.

M FEB. 24TH: No class: instructor away

North and South: Migrations and Modernism

W FEB. 26TH: Toomer, *Cane*, "Karintha" through "Blood-Burning Moon."

F FEB. 28TH: Toomer, *Cane*, "Seventh Street" through "Bona and Paul."

Old Negro, New Negro: Black Radicalism and Harlem

M MAR. 3RD: Rudolph Fisher, "City of Refuge"

W MAR. 5TH: W. A. Domingo, "The New Negro—What is He?"; A. Phillip Randolph, "A New Crowd—A New Negro"; Marcus Garvey, "Africa for the Africans."

SLIDES: James Van Der Zee, "March of the 369th Infantry," "War Heroes," "Marcus Garvey in Regalia," "Marcus Garvey Rally"

F MAR. 7TH: Alain Locke, ed., *The New Negro*. Locke, essay, "The New Negro,"
SLIDES: Aaron Douglass, "Aspects of Negro Life"; Winold Reiss, "Harlem at Night," "Interpretation Harlem Jazz I"

The New Woman

M MAR. 10TH:
F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Bernice Bobs Her Hair"

W MAR. 12TH: Wallace Thurman, "Cordelia the Crude"

F MAR. 14TH: Georgia Douglas Johnson, "The Heart of a Woman"; Gwendolyn Bennett, "To A Dark Girl"

M MAR. 17TH: Figuring Black Militancy
Eugene O'Neill, *Emperor Jones*

W MAR. 19TH: e. e. cummings, "Jean le Nègre"

F MAR. 21ST: In-class midterm

MARCH 22ND-30TH: SPRING RECESS

Mobility and Race

M MAR. 31ST:
Claude McKay, *Home to Harlem*, parts 1 & 2
SLIDE: Archibald Motley, "Saturday Night Street Scene"

W APRIL 2ND: McKay, *Home to Harlem* in entirety

F APRIL 4TH: McKay, *Home to Harlem*

M APRIL 7TH: Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*

W APRIL 9TH: Larsen, *Quicksand*

F APRIL 11TH: Schuyler, “The Negro Art Hokum”; Langston Hughes, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain”

Recommended reading: W. E. B. Du Bois, “Criteria of Negro Art”

DUE DATE: PROPOSAL FOR CRITICAL PAPER

Representing the Folk: Sermons, Blues, and Dance

M APRIL 14TH: Zora Neale Hurston, “Lovelace Sermon”;

James Weldon Johnson, *God’s Trombones* “Preface,” “The Creation”

AUDIO: James Weldon Johnson, “The Creation”

W APRIL 16TH: Langston Hughes, “The Weary Blues”; Sterling Brown, “Ma Rainey”

SLIDES: Van Vechten, Bessie Smith; Archibald Motley, “Blues”; Palmer Hayden, “Blues Singer”

AUDIO: Bessie Smith, “Backwater Blues”

F APRIL 18TH: Sterling Brown, “Cabaret”*; Langston Hughes, “Midnight Dancer”

SLIDES: William Henry Johnson, “Jitterbugs II,” “Jitterbugs IV”; photo, “Jitterbugging at the Savoy”; Richmond Barthé, “Lindy Hop,” “African Dancer”; James Van Der Zee, “Dancer, Harlem”

M APRIL 21ST: Carl Van Vechten, *Nigger Heaven*, pp. 1-149

SLIDE: Miguel Covarrubias, “A Prediction”

W APRIL 23RD: Van Vechten, *Nigger Heaven*, 150-284

Figuring White Males in Modernism

F APRIL 25TH: F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*

DUE DATE: CRITICAL PAPER

M APRIL 28TH: Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, pp.1-130 (chs. I-XII)

W APRIL 30TH: Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, pp. 131-191 (chs. XIII-XVI)

F MAY 2ND: Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises*, pp.192-251 (chs.XVII-XIX)

“Who’s Passing for Who?”

M MAY 5TH: Rudolph Fisher, “The Caucasian Storms Harlem.”

Wallace Thurman, *Infants of the Spring*, introduction

W MAY 7TH: Thurman, *Infants of the Spring*

F MAY 9TH: Thurman, *Infants of the Spring*

Fitzgerald, “Echoes of the Jazz Age.”

W MAY 14TH: final examination period begins: exam time and location TBA

Course Requirements and Grading Policies:

Writing Assignments:

One paper (5-6 pp).

One proposal (1-2 pp.) for the paper.

Exams:

Midterm Exam.

Final Exam.

Reading Quizzes as per the instructor (unannounced).

The paper will be based upon an important thematic and theoretical question designed by the student and approved by the instructor. Students should expect to concentrate on a single text in depth.

Verbal Assignments:

Regular attendance and participation.

Occasional group presentation of study questions for particular class readings, as per the instructor.

Occasional responses to study questions presented by the instructor in advance of class.

Paper:

Papers must be submitted as typed, double-spaced hard copies. Set a one-inch margin on all sides. Choose a font that results in 250-300 words per page, such as Courier 12, Times 12, Helvetica 12, New Century Schoolbook 12, or Palatino 12.

A short essay does not require a title page. Instead, as a heading, place your name, the course number and section number, the instructor's name, and the date in the upper right-hand corner of the first page. Center the title you are giving to your essay three or four lines below the last line of your heading. Do not put quotation marks around your title unless the title is a phrase drawn from another piece of work.

The pages of your essay *must be numbered* and stapled. Print your surname as an abbreviated header to the second and all subsequent pages, along with the page number. (Thus the upper right-hand corner of the second and third pages of your essay would print the following: "surname 2" and "surname 3".)

Be careful to save your document frequently (every ten minutes or so) to prevent its sudden and disheartening disappearance. At every stage of a draft print a hard copy and save to disk.

Always keep a copy of the paper for yourself. You must turn in all papers to receive a grade for the class.

Citations must be completed in MLA style in the following format, as footnotes:

--The author's name, first name first

--the title of the book, italicized

--the name of the editor or translator (if any), first name first, preceded by "ed." or "trans."

--the volume number, in Arabic numerals, if you are using a multi-volumed work ("Vol. 2")

--in parenthesis, the place of publication, followed by a colon, the name of the publishing company, followed by a comma, and the year of publication

--the page number(s) in Arabic numerals (“47” or “47-51”). If you are citing verse quotations cite line number(s) instead of page number(s) (“2” or “5-7”)

Place a comma between each item in the sequence, except that a comma does not precede the parenthesis containing information about place and date of publication. A footnote or an endnote always ends with a period.

In addition, please follow these guidelines for quotations from poetry:

Unless unusual emphasis is required, verse quotations of a single line or part of a line should be incorporated into , within quotation marks, as part of your text. Quotation of two or three lines may also be placed in your text, within quotation marks, but with the lines separated by a slash (/). Leave a single space on each side of the slash.

Verse quotations of four or more lines should be introduced (in most cases) by a colon and indented from the left margin, but without quotation marks unless quotation marks appear in the poem being quoted. Double space between lines of verse. The spatial arrangement of the poem being quoted should be reproduced as closely as possible.

In addition, please follow these guidelines for quotations from prose:

Prose quotations of not more than four line sin your printed text should be incorporated, within quotation marks, as part of the text, unless special emphasis is required.

Longer quotations are usually introduced by a colon, and indented from the left margin. No quotation marks are necessary unless they are present in the material being quoted. Let the reader see how the source you are quoting from is paragraphed, just as you let the reader know how the lines of a poem are arranged on the page. If the first sentence of the excerpt being quoted is the beginning of a paragraph in the source, indent a few spaces. If not, do not indent.

Failure to cite poetry or prose texts properly will result in the lowering of your paper’s final grade.

Papers will not be accepted unless they have been stapled and have page numbers.

What you should know about plagiarism:

It is incumbent on you, as a scholar, both to document the borrowings that you make from the work of others and to report and more general indebtedness to the people and books that you have consulted in the course of preparing your papers. Plagiarism consists of intentionally misrepresenting someone else’s work, words, or insights as your own. Like any other form of intellectual dishonesty, plagiarism is a serious offense in an academic community. A paper that shows evidence of plagiarism will receive no grade and will lead to no grade for the entire term of English. Every case of plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Student Affairs for disciplinary action, which may range from further reprimand to expulsion from Oberlin College. For further guidance, please see the college website: www.oberlin.edu/~stlife/Honor_Code.html

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance is required, and I will take roll at the beginning of each class. Attendance at all classes is required. I will accept excuses that come under Oberlin College policy, but you must discuss your absences with me so that you can catch up with the class. *If you miss more than three classes without good reason, I will inform*

your academic advisor of your unsatisfactory standing in the class, and your final grade will be lowered by one full letter grade per absence.

Note: you may not attend the other section of this class to make up an absence.

Our class is a seminar, not a lecture; your participation in class discussion is not only welcomed—it is required. I expect thoughtful comments and active listening, interaction with peers as well as the professor. You must keep up with the reading and writing assignments in order to fulfill your obligation as a member of the class and as a participant in the ongoing discussion.

You must come to class on the day that papers are due.

Late Work:

The course moves at a rapid pace, so all work must be completed on time. Late work will lower your final grade. Late assignments, including papers and proposals, will be penalized by 1/3 of a letter grade per day, *with a maximum of three calendar days (not weekdays) permitted*. After three days, you may not submit your work for a grade.

Office Hours:

Every week I will be available in my office for consultation. Office hours are your opportunity to talk to me about the reading and writing process and the ideas you develop on an individual basis. If you cannot make my regular office hours, you may schedule an appointment for another time.

Grading:

Midterm (20%); Final (30%); Paper (25%); Attendance and Participation (includes short writing assignments and quizzes, if any) (25%)