

Afro-American Studies 560, Spring 2007
The Harlem Renaissance
Dr. Kenneth Janken

How to reach me:

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My office hours are Wednesday mornings, 9:15-11:15. Please drop by!

Required Readings

The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader, ed. David Levering Lewis.

George Schuyler, *Black No More*.

The Complete Fiction of Nella Larsen: Passing, Quicksand, and The Stories.

Selected readings on paper reserve or Blackboard (follow link for "course documents").

And students choose one of the following:

David Levering Lewis, *When Harlem Was in Vogue*.

Cheryl A. Wall, *Women of the Harlem Renaissance*.

Thadious Davis, *Nella Larsen, Novelist of the Harlem Renaissance: A Woman's Life Unveiled*.

Recommended Readings

The New Negro: Voices of the Harlem Renaissance

Rhapsodies in Black

(These will enhance your knowledge of the course material and may help you with your research projects. But *Rhapsodies in Black* especially is expensive. Both are available on reserve.)

Course Description: This course covers of some of the outstanding artistic, literary, cultural, and political themes of the Harlem Renaissance. Through readings, prints and photographs, lectures, and class discussion, we will delve into the literature, history, culture, and politics of race advancement of the New Negro movement. We will read a variety of literature from the Renaissance, including poetry, short stories, novels, nonfiction essays, and memoirs. We may see film of and about the New Negro movement. We will visit the museum. Each student will develop a research proposal and write a research-based term paper of between 15 and 20 pages; students will be grouped according to the themes of their research and will present their findings to the class at the end of the semester.

Course Requirements

1. A review of student's choice of *When Harlem Was in Vogue* OR *Women of the Harlem Renaissance* OR *Nella Larsen, Novelist of the Harlem Renaissance: A Woman's Life Unveiled*. The purpose of this assignment is two-fold. First, any of these books provides a solid overview of the New Negro era, and through the process of writing a review, you will familiarize yourself with it, which will help orient you for the rest of the semester. Second, any of these books are capable of stimulating significant questions that can form the basis for your research project. The review is worth 10% of your grade. **Must be uploaded to Blackboard by January 30.**

2. A short research exercise, worth 10% of your grade. **Must be uploaded to Blackboard by February 7.**

3. A research paper that draws substantially on primary sources, 15-20 pages in length (not counting notes and bibliography) worth 35% of your grade. **Due date still to be set.**

4. A class presentation on your work, worth 10% of your grade. As part of your presentation, you will have to select a relevant a short (5-7 pages) reading or document that is representative of your research project and distribute it to class members in advance so that they will have a better understanding of your project and will be able to ask you substantial questions about it.

5. A final exam, worth 35% of your grade.

6. Regular attendance and active participation in class activities. Class activities include, but are not limited to, discussion, work during designated research days, and selection of works of art from [HTTP://ARTSTOR.ORG](http://artstor.org) or *Rhapsodies in Black* that illustrate themes brought out in the readings. At different times during the semester, I will project these images on the screen in class for us to discuss. Students who miss too much class will not receive a passing grade.

A note about managing the work load of this course: The reading load in this course is generally not heavy, and even when the weekly assignment is an entire novel, the plot moves the book along at a crisp pace. But a large proportion of the class is a research paper, and it is easy to fall behind and leave most of it for the last couple of weeks before it is due. *Avoid this at all costs!!* You will do much better in this class if you complete the readings on time and you work steadily on your research paper. I suggest doing something related to it – refining your topic, looking up, locating, organizing, and reading your primary and secondary sources; reading through your notes; writing your paper; organizing your footnotes and bibliography; and so forth – several times a week. And if you hit a roadblock in your research, please talk to a reference librarian and let me know what the difficulty is. Do this in a timely fashion and do not allow problems to accumulate. I am available to you for consultations during my office hours or another agreed-upon time.

Tentative Schedule

NOTE: Except where noted, readings are to be completed before the first class meeting of the week.

WEEK ONE (January 11): Introduction to course.

WEEK TWO (January 16, 18): The Harlem Renaissance and Modernism.

READINGS: **Jan. 16:** Michael North, introduction to *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern*, available on Blackboard. **Jan. 18:** Richard J. Powell, “Re/Birth of a Nation,” in *Rhapsodies in Black*, which is on reserve in the ART LIBRARY in Hanes Art Center. **Ask for it at the circulation desk. You will need the call number: N6538.N5 R56 1997.** From the *Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader (PHRR)*: Alain Locke, “The New Negro.”

WEEK THREE (January 23, 25): War and race consciousness; Black Manhattan.

READINGS: **Jan. 23:** In *PHRR*: W. E. B. Du Bois, "Returning Soldiers"; Claude McKay, "If We Must Die," "Baptism." **Jan. 25:** In *PHRR*: W. A. Domingo, "Gift of the Black Tropics"; James Weldon Johnson, excerpt from *Black Manhattan*. On Blackboard: Charles S. Johnson, "Black Workers and the City," from the Harlem issue of *Survey Graphic*.

WEEK FOUR (January 30, February 1): Research orientation in the library and a museum visit.

Book review due January 30.

Jan. 30: Meet at Undergraduate Library, rm. 124. **Feb. 1:** Trip to the NC Museum of Art in Raleigh. Class will meet at a time and place to be arranged and travel together by bus.

WEEK FIVE (February 6, 8): The Negro Art debate; Harlem Renaissance night life.

Short research project due Feb. 7.

READINGS: **Feb. 6:** In *PHRR*: Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain"; George Schuyler, "The Negro Art Hokum"; Du Bois, "The Criteria of Negro Art"; Richard Wright, "Blueprint for Negro Writing." **Feb. 8:** In *PHRR*: Rudolph Fisher, "The Caucasian Storms Harlem"; Langston Hughes, excerpts from *The Big Sea*; Claude McKay, "The Harlem Intelligentsia," from *A Long Way from Home*.

WEEK SIX (February 13, 15): Transatlantic connections.

READINGS: In *PHRR*: Countee Cullen, "Heritage" and "To France"; Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers." On reserve in the Undergraduate Library: The following excerpts from Langston Hughes, *The Big Sea*: "Africa," "Sailor's Holiday," S. S. 'Malone'," Burutu Moon," "Montmarte," "Work," and "Grand Duc."

WEEK SEVEN (February 20, 22): Research and Painting.

READINGS: **Feb. 20:** Use class time to work on research project. Class will not meet. **Feb. 22:** Meet at Ackland to view Jacob Lawrence's "John Brown" series.

WEEK EIGHT (February 27, March 1): Zora Neal Hurston.

READINGS: **Feb. 27:** Hurston, excerpt from *Dust Tracks on a Road*, "Drenched in Light," and "Color Struck," all in *PHRR*. **March 1:** Research/writing day.

WEEK NINE (March 6, 8): Nella Larsen and the "tragic mulatto."

READINGS: Larsen, *Quicksand*.

WEEK TEN (March 13, 15): SPRING BREAK

WEEK ELEVEN (March 20, 22): George Schuyler, uplift and the politics of racial representation.

READINGS: Schuyler, *Black No More*.

WEEK TWELVE (March 27, 29): Short stories.

READINGS: From *PHRR*: Eric Walrond, "The Wharf Rats" and "The Yellow One"; Langston Hughes, "Luani of the Jungles," "Father to Son," and "The Blues I'm Playing."

WEEK THIRTEEN (April 3, 5): Poetry: Brown and Hughes.

READINGS: In *PHRR*: selections TBA.

WEEK FOURTEEN (April 10, 12): Student presentations.

WEEK FIFTEEN (April 17, 19): Student presentations.

WEEK SIXTEEN (April 24, 26): Student presentations

Final exam: Tuesday, May 1, 12-2.