



# Spring 2025 Courses

## Fall 2024 African American Studies Required Classes

**AAS 301-001/ENG 301-001: Black Folks from Fiction to Film—Studies of Representation in Literature and Media** TR 9:30

**Dr. Maxine Morgan**

In this course, students will survey a variety of literatures written by and about Black folks that have also been adapted into film, mini-series, theater, and other media. Students will learn the conventions of each genre and comparatively discuss the genre-specific choices (narrative, stylistic, aesthetic, etc.) alongside the genre-specific and intersectional challenges inherent in creating fiction and film and adapting fiction into film and other media. Engaging critical frameworks across literary, media and performance, and African American studies, the students will become a critical reading, viewing, and listening audience. This student audience—in class dialogue, assignments, and a final creative project—will be asked to put on the hat of cultural critic and comparatively interpret the constructions of race, gender, sexuality, place, ability, and socioeconomic status in the representation of Black communities and culture in fiction and film. We will look closely at audience reception within and without the classroom; independent and mainstream Black film and television companies, makers, and producers; and actors, actresses, and authors alike to also examine the role of each in these representations of Black people and culture in our fictions and viewings. The chronology of this course will be circular; students will engage written and audiovisual texts from across time and place and consider the importance of historical context in both the creation of the fictions and their subsequent media adaptations. Some fiction and film titles include but are not limited to Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*, Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, James Baldwin's *If Beale Street Could Talk*, and Gloria Naylor's *Women of Brewster Place* as well as contemporary texts such as Zakiya Dalila Harris' *The Other Black Girl*, Candice Cary-Williams' *Queenie*, and many more. Students enrolled in this course will have the opportunity to attend a field trip to the Alabama Shakespeare Festival to view Cheryl West's stage production/adaptation of Christopher Paul Curtis' *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963*.

**AAS 370-001 Special Topics in African American Studies / Black Voices of New Orleans: Literature, Culture, and Legacy** MWF 10:00

**Dr. Paul Mahaffey**

This course examines the prose and poetry of Black New Orleans writers, both past and present, to explore how their works reflect the integral role of Black cultural life in shaping not only the city's identity but also the broader fabric of American culture. Through the writings of iconic figures and contemporary authors, students will investigate the historical and ongoing contributions of Black individuals to the rich cultural landscape of New Orleans, from its music and cuisine to its language, traditions, and resilience in the face of continuous adversity. The course will trace the evolution of Black literature in New Orleans, from early narratives that grapple with slavery and Reconstruction to modern works that address the complexities of race, identity, and urban life. Through the lens of New Orleans, students will see how Black writers have chronicled the deep ties between community, place, and creativity, highlighting the city's singular role as a cradle of Black expression. Moreover, this course will examine how Black culture in New Orleans has been indispensable to the formation and continuation of American culture, particularly through its influence on music (such as jazz), literature, and civil rights movements. By engaging with the works of writers such as Tom Dent, Kalamu ya Salaam, Brenda Marie Osbey, Mona Lisa Saloy, Jesmyn Ward, Maurice Carlos Ruffin and others, students will come to understand how the artistic contributions of Black New Orleanians have reverberated far beyond the city, shaping national dialogues on race, identity, and cultural expression. In addition to literary analysis, students will explore how Black New Orleans life is a source of cultural innovation, providing insight into the complexities of America's ongoing struggles with race and inequality while also being a beacon of creativity, community, and resistance.

## AAS 370-001, continued

### Reading List

*The American Daughters | The Ones Who Don't Say I Love You* (Maurice Carlos Ruffin)

*Salvage the Bones* (Jesmyn Ward)

*Second Line Home: New Orleans Poems* (Mona Lisa Saloy)

*All Saints* (Brenda Marie Osbey)

*I Am New Orleans* (Kalamu ya Salaam)

Posted Canvas Readings

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## Fall 2024 Approved African American Studies Electives

### THEA 450-003: Beyond Color—Black Voices in Black Theatre

TR 2:00

#### Ms. Chalethia Williams

This course will explore the validity and complexity of Black Theatre. It will also cover topics including, but not limited to, the need for Black stories to be told by Black actors, the global perspective on Black Theatre and importance of Black Theatre in Black communities (telling our own stories). This course will also foster an appreciation for the stories of Black life through play readings, video viewings and discussions of Black culture which will discuss how it is rich, complicated, and so much a part of America's story. The end goal of the course is to celebrate Black culture through the lens of Black Theatre.

### ENG 232-005 & 006: Eating Nations: Transnational Literatures of Food, Identity, and Nation

MWF 10, 11

#### Dr. Maxine Morgan

ENG 232—Global Literature: Perspectives within a Period or Location—serves to introduce students to an in-depth study of a topic, issue, or genre within a literary period or cultural location and explore the varied angles and variety of perspectives from which to examine a particular movement, form, or region. In this section, students will critically engage literatures that use food to illustrate cultures within and without the Americas and shape themes of race and ethnicity; citizenship, emigration, and immigration; class, labor, and globalization; war, nationalism and nationhood; and identity, belonging, and freedom. Reading literatures by and about people and characters from the African, Asian, Latinx, Irish, Jewish, and Europeans diasporas, students will strengthen their analytical skills and improve their expository writing in assignments and class discussions by critically interpreting how these authors narrate food, food access, food (in)security, and hunger, to contemplate the relationship of culture and nationality to identity formation, belonging, and exclusion. We will read a survey of literature including novels, excerpts, and short-stories, autobiography and memoir, flash and graphic fiction, as well as poetry and digital literacies/media.

### ENG 454-001/ 554-001/ PJS 470-002: Writing about Place in Alabama MWF 1:00

#### Dr. Cynthia Mwenja

Throughout the term, this class contends with many of Alabama's vexing incongruities: why do we have such rich biodiversity but so few environmental protections? Why do we have such poor overall health outcomes when we're home to world-class medical facilities? How can we have low educational achievements and also lead in space exploration? Why is one of the most significant Indigenous archaeological sites in the U.S. under-recognized? Why was the state central to both the confederacy and the Civil Rights movement?

Students explore the places and rhetoric of Alabama via field trips, creative writing prompts, and targeted research. We define Alabama for ourselves through interactions with natural spaces, archival records, rhetorical artifacts, and our own personal relationships with the state. Course readings include selections on rhetorical theory, personalized scholarly research, and Linda Lappin's *The Soul of Place: A Creative Writing Workbook*. Course projects include a field trip memoir, rhetorical analysis of an Alabama artifact, a personalized deep map of Alabama, and an individually focused Alabama place profile.

**ENG 471/571-001: Soul Food Lit—The Intersections of African American Literature and Foodways** TR 12:30

**Dr. Maxine Morgan**

In this course, we will read a variety of African American literature, and through close reading, interpret what food in these literatures reveals and reflects about the dynamism of Black peoples, identity, and culture. We will read novels, short stories, excerpts, and poetry alongside cookbooks and recipes to consider how the foods and practices of cooking and eating therein locate Black literary, aesthetic, and culinary traditions. Engaging Black feminist literary criticism, African American literary theory, and scholarship on African American foodways, we critically examine the meaning and utility of foods in African American literature to question and defend how these foods have been shaped by and reflect African diasporic experiences and culinary histories. Using a chronological approach, we will invest time in the soul (1960-1975) and post-soul (1975-present) eras to define and discuss soul food as an African diasporic cuisine and its significance in African American literature. We will engage and discuss scholarship and artifacts (artwork, music, performance, fashion, etc.) of these eras to understand the contours of their defining and their aesthetic contributions to conceptualize if, how, and through what cultural context the foods present in our texts are soul foods. Using our cultural texts as a frame and food—particularly soul food—as a lens, we will interrogate the intersections of race, gender, region, sexuality, ability, and socioeconomic status and explore constructions of Blackness, selfhood, community, and agency in African American literature.

**ENG 472-001/ENG 572-001/PJS 470-001: Decolonizing the Mind: Caribbean Literature from (Post)colonialism to Transnationalism** TR 3:30

**Dr. Jennifer Rickel**

This course considers the role that literature plays in decolonizing the mind. From Caribbean, American, and African American literature to Commonwealth and Anglophone literature, multiple literary fields often claim the influential writers whose works we will read in this course. As these authors and many of their characters move in and across the Caribbean, Africa, England, and the Americas, they problematize the cultural narratives that have supported slavery, colonialism, and continued cultural and economic exploitation. This course will examine how the selected texts deal with the paradox of challenging imperialism while using the language and literary forms that have been integral to its construction. It will pay particular attention to depictions of the Middle Passage, slavery, colonial education, anti-colonial nationalism, migration, and tourism. In doing so, the course will analyze how colonialism, inequitable postcolonial “development,” and contemporary economic and cultural imperialism produce transnational subjects in and beyond the Caribbean.