

**J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College
Course Content Summary**

Course Prefix and Number: ENG 253

Credits: 3

Course Title: Survey of African-American Literature I

Course Description: Examines selected works by African-American writers from the colonial period to the present, more specifically to the early twentieth century. Involves critical reading and writing. ENG 253 has been designated as a "writing intensive" course according to standards developed by the English department. Prerequisite: ENG 112 or equivalent. Lecture 3 hours per week.

General Course Purpose: ENG 253 develops skills in critical literacy, provides opportunities for humanistic study, and promotes an understanding of selected American literature from the pre-colonial period through the mid-nineteenth century. As a writing intensive course, ENG 253 will provide specific instruction in writing, especially literary analysis, and substantial written and oral feedback on formal writing, with the opportunity to revise at least one formal paper. Students will produce at least 12 pages (3000 words) of formal writing, including academic essays and essay exam responses, and at least 12 pages (3000 words) of informal writing, including reading responses or journal entries.

Course Prerequisites and Co-requisites:

Prerequisite: ENG 112 or equivalent

Student Learning Outcomes:

Upon completing this course, the student will be able to

- a. Describe, analyze, and interpret themes and features of literary texts from a variety of genres, using appropriate literary terminology;
- b. Demonstrate knowledge of the literary movements covered in the survey, including literary techniques, innovations, major writers, and major texts;
- c. Explain the relationship between literature and the historical and cultural contexts in which it is produced, with particular attention to the shaping of cultural identities as reflected in the literature;
- d. Compose writing about literature that includes clear and concise argumentation and organization, valid textual evidence for support, and correct documentation; and
- e. Use literary study as a means for engaging in meaningful and enduring questions across human cultures.

Major Topics to Be Included:

Students may expect to study the following

- a. African-American literary production from the eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, including issues relevant to the emergence of a "Negro literature" and the legacy of vernacular traditions;
- b. The relationship of early political and/or religious writing, including the genre of the slave narrative, to the existence of slavery and the construction of race in America;
- c. African-American literary production from the literary renaissance of the 1850s and 1860s to the early twentieth century, including the rise of the African-American novel; and
- d. The relationship of mid- to late-nineteenth century African-American literature to the history of the American Civil War and Reconstruction and issues of race, gender, and class.

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