

# ENG 221: AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE

## LITERATURE OF THE JAZZ AGE

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Meeting times: Monday & Wednesday 10:00-11:50 am.

4 Course Credits. CRN 59104. No Prerequisite or Corequisite for this course.



Norman Lewis, "Jumping Jive," 1942, painting owned by [Michael Rosenfeld Gallery](#) and displayed by [telegram.com](#)

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Between WWI and the stock market crash of 1929, significant changes took place within the African American community. Industrialization, urbanization, and the migration of six million black southerners to northern states introduced a "New Negro" whose art, literature, and music came to define an era now referred to as the Harlem Renaissance. Foremost among these emerging art forms was jazz, an exciting but controversial new sound out of New Orleans, Louisiana based on syncopated rhythms and improvisation. The hallmarks of this new sound can also be applied to the literature of the era as writers and their characters would improvise unprecedented expressions of blackness and black identity that were sometimes "out of rhythm" with their post-Victorian worlds. This course examines 1920s culture, the early reception of jazz, African-American literature, and major figures of the Harlem Renaissance.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

- David Levering Lewis, Ed. *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*. Viking: 1994.
- James Weldon Johnson. *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. DigiReads: 2016.
- Nella Larsen. *Passing*. Signet Classics, 2021.

Texts are available for purchase at the [OSU Bookstore](#), but you are welcome to purchase used versions online, provided that you have them in time for class assignments. I recommend [bookfinder.com](#) for the best deals.

## ATTENDANCE & LATE WORK POLICIES

1. ATTENDANCE POLICY: I will not be keeping attendance, but every meeting will include a Participation Assignment that cannot be made up. **I REPEAT: IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION ASSIGNMENTS CANNOT BE MADE UP.** For this reason, every class you miss will result in a 2.67% reduction to your overall grade, as each Participation Assignment is worth 2.67%. See below for an explanation of how this looks in practice:
  - 1 absence = 2.67%
  - 2 absences = 5.34%
  - 3 absences = 8.01%
  - 4 absences = 10.68%
2. TARDINESS POLICY: You should be seated at your desk when class begins. Tardiness is not only disrespectful, it disrupts the lesson. For this reason, every 3 tardies will result in a 5% penalty to your grade in the class.
  - 3 tardies = 5%
  - 6 tardies = 10%
  - 9 tardies = 15%

If you cannot make it to class on time regularly, due to a schedule conflict or any other reason, I urge you not to take this class, as the tardiness policy will be upheld regardless of your personal circumstances.

3. LATE WORK POLICY: Every day that an assignment is late, it will receive a 10% grade reduction. As you can see below, this adds up rather quickly. For this reason, it is essential that you anticipate assignment due dates and plan accordingly. You will not be

granted an extension unless you face truly extenuating circumstances, such as a major health crisis or a death in the family.

- 1 day late = 10%
- 2 days late = 20%
- 3 days late = 30%
- 4 days late = 40%

## OFFICE HOURS

Office hours are held every Monday and Wednesday from 4-5 pm. Walk-ins are welcome but it might be wise to schedule an appointment, especially when major assignments are approaching. Typically, students visit office hours for help on their assignments, but you are welcome to visit for any reason—whether it's to discuss topics from the class or merely to socialize.

## GRADING SCALE

Grade	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	F
Percent Range	97-100	94-96	90-93	87-89	84-86	80-83	77-79	74-76	70-73	67-69	64-68	60-63	59 and below

## ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment Type:	Participation	Discussion Board	Reaction Papers	Total
Percent of Grades:	40%	30%	30%	100%

## Participation

Throughout the term, you will complete a variety of in-class group assignments, usually during the first hour. The purpose of these “active learning” assignments is threefold: 1) They increase the knowledge you retain, 2) They develop your skills as a thinker and speaker, 3) They add variety to your learning experience. After completing the exercise, you will submit a Google Doc to Canvas under the “Participation” category. In order to receive credit, you must be present in class, participate actively in the exercise, and complete your portion of the work. Specific instructions will be provided on the pertinent days. Participation is worth 40% of your grade, so it’s absolutely crucial that you attend class. **IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION ASSIGNMENTS ARE WORTH 2.67% EACH AND CANNOT BE MADE UP. I REPEAT: IN-CLASS PARTICIPATION ASSIGNMENTS CANNOT BE MADE UP.** Only in rare circumstances (such as a health crisis or a death in the family) will you be able to make up these assignments. If this or a comparable situation applies to you, arrange to meet with me during office hours.

## Discussion Board Entries

Before each class period, you must answer the discussion questions posted to Canvas for that day. Your answer to each question must be at least four complete sentences and demonstrate comprehension of the assigned readings. The purpose of this assignment is to ensure that you complete the readings before class, ponder their significance, and arrive ready to discuss your answers in person. See individual discussion board posts for more specific instructions. Discussion boards are worth 30% of your grade.

## Reaction Papers

You will write 3 Reaction Papers this term. Papers must be 2-3 pages in length and demonstrate comprehension of the course materials. Use Times New Roman, 12-point font, one-inch margins, double spaces, and MLA format. Works Cited page not required. See specific instructions for each Reaction Paper below.

**REACTION PAPER 1:** In this Reaction Paper, discuss aspects of 1920s American society in light of the course materials. This can be approached from a number of angles. For example, you might discuss how mass production blurred the boundaries among middle and lower classes, white and black culture, civilized and primitive. You might discuss the differences between pro-black primitivism (Rousseau) and anti-black primitivism (Grant). You might even consider how the flapper can be understood as “primitive” when compared against the “civility” of the Gibson girl. Finally, you might perform an analysis of the fictional works—*The Emperor Jones*, *The Jazz Singer*, or “The Day of Atonement”—in light of primitivism, mass production, or any other aspect of 1920s society. These are just a few example topics.

As you prepare your paper, please draw on materials from Weeks 1-3 of our course. The paper should make an original argument and demonstrate your comprehension of the course materials. There is no "correct" answer; however, your Reaction Paper must be 2-3 pages in length, reference the course materials, and demonstrate critical thinking. Use Times New Roman, 12-point font, one-inch margins, double spaces, and [MLA format](#). Works Cited page not required. This essay is worth 10% of your grade.

Due Date: Friday of Week 3

**REACTION PAPER 2:** In this Reaction Paper, write about any of the topics discussed from Weeks 4-6. For example, you might compare and contrast the different approaches taken by the Castles and Joel A. Rogers in "Jazz at Home" to popularize jazz. You might discuss black artistry and racial justice in light of the essays by Garvey, Du Bois, Schuyler, Locke, or Woodson. You might even compare and contrast their views with that of contemporary figures Coleman Hughes or Ibram X. Kendi. These are just a few example topics.

As you prepare your paper, please draw on materials from Weeks 4-6 of our course. The paper should make an original argument and demonstrate your comprehension of the course materials. There is no "correct" answer; however, your Reaction Paper must be 2-3 pages in length, reference the course materials, and demonstrate critical thinking. Use Times New Roman, 12-point font, one-inch margins, double spaces, and [MLA format](#). Works Cited page not required. This essay is worth 10% of your grade.

Due Date: Friday of Week 6

**REACTION PAPER 3:** In this Reaction Paper, write about any of the topics discussed from Weeks 7-10. For example, you can compare and contrast Johnson's novel with Larsen's novel, you can discuss the philosophical stakes of racial passing, or you can perform a close reading of passages from either novel to explicate its themes.

As you prepare your paper, please draw on materials from Weeks 7-10 of our course. The paper should make an original argument and demonstrate your comprehension of the course materials. There is no "correct" answer; however, your Reaction Paper must be 2-3 pages in length, reference the course materials, and demonstrate critical thinking. Use Times New Roman, 12-point font, one-inch margins, double spaces, and [MLA format](#). Works Cited page not required. This essay is worth 10% of your grade.

Due Date: Friday of Week 10

## CONTENT NOTE

The study of literature is meant to be challenging. After all, authors write about life, and life can get pretty dark sometimes. In this course, you will read racist literature (for educational purposes), anti-racist literature, and fictional depictions of racism inspired by real-life experiences. The readings will be intellectually challenging and emotionally difficult at times. If the topics listed above are too difficult for you to read about and discuss in a group setting, I recommend not taking this class.

Please note, as well, that Oregon State University protects [Free Expression and Academic Freedom](#), in accordance with federal law. Following these guidelines, my course embraces open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement to combat the spread of moral authoritarianism in higher education. For an explanation of these core tenets, continue reading below.

**Open Inquiry** refers to your ability to ask questions, share your ideas, and challenge cultural orthodoxies without the risk of censure. In an open environment, students can explore facts, opinions, and beliefs without penalty, allowing space for intellectual growth.

**Viewpoint Diversity** takes place when we approach topics from a range of perspectives, backgrounds, and personal experiences. When a community embraces intellectual humility, empathy, and curiosity, viewpoint diversity gives rise to respectful debate, constructive disagreement, and shared progress toward the truth.

**Constructive Disagreement** occurs when people have different perspectives on an issue but are nevertheless committed to exploring the issue collaboratively, learning from each other in the process. Rigorous, open, and responsible engagement across lines of difference is the foundation of healthy academic practice and essential to making good ideas better.

I am committed to creating a classroom environment that welcomes diverse people with diverse viewpoints, an environment that equips learners with the habits of heart and mind to engage that diversity with empathy, intellectual humility, and respect. If at any point during the term, you are unsettled by the course material, my comments, or comments made by your classmates, I request that you arrange a meeting with me to discuss the matter. Whenever possible, I will provide alternate assignments and/or accommodations to ensure your success in the class. If, however, you are not able to engage in open inquiry, viewpoint diversity, and constructive disagreement, I urge you not to take this class.

## COURSE SPECIFIC LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Explain how 20<sup>th</sup> century eugenicists constructed racial categories and how these categories impacted American lives.
2. Describe the race debates of 1920s America and the various positions adopted by Harlem Renaissance authors, the nature of their debates, and the logic behind their key disagreements.
3. Articulate the various positions adopted by contemporary scholars in today's race debates and the logic behind their key disagreements.
4. Explain how mixed-race individuals used "passing" to challenge racism and other systems of oppression.

## BACC CORE CATEGORY LEARNING OUTCOMES

This course fulfills the Baccalaureate Core requirement for Literature and the Arts in the Perspectives category.

Category Learning Outcome (CLO)	Subject	Activities	Assessment
Category Learning Outcome #1  Recognize literary and artistic forms/styles, techniques, and the cultural/historical contexts in which they evolve.	Students will identify literary form, style, and technique in Perusall annotation exercises; students will critically discuss 1920s culture and society in discussion board posts.	Weekly discussion boards.	Students must fulfill annotation tasks for a passing grade; students must demonstrate deep thought and engagement with the reading and/or viewing material in their discussion board posts.
Category Learning Outcome #2  Analyze how literature/the arts reflect, shape, and influence culture.	Students will analyze how the literary and artistic forms, styles, and techniques of the Harlem Renaissance reflect the historical context of 1920s culture.	Students write three Reaction Papers addressing how the literary and artistic works under discussion reflect and shape 1920s culture. In addition, students will critically discuss 1920s culture and literature in their discussion board posts.	Student Reaction Papers are graded on the student's ability to write critically about the relationship between 1920s cultural movements and the literature they produced.

Category Learning Outcome (CLO)	Subject How does the course align with or meet this specific outcome?	Activities What assignments, class activities, discussions are used to address this outcome?	Assessment How is student achievement of this outcome formally measured?
Category Learning Outcome #3  Reflect critically on the characteristics and effects of literary and artistic works.	Students will critically reflect on the characteristics of jazz literature and explain its effects and impact on 1920s culture and society through various writing assignments.	Discussion board posts and Reaction Papers.	Reaction Papers and discussion board posts measure students' ability to articulate, in their judgment, how American culture was influenced by jazz literature.



Hale Woodruff, ["The Building of Savery Library,"](#) 1938, mural owned by Talladega College

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

## Academic Calendar

All students are subject to the registration and refund deadlines as stated in the Academic Calendar: <https://registrar.oregonstate.edu/osu-academic-calendar>

## Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities

Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by Disability Access Services (DAS). If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098 or at <http://ds.oregonstate.edu>. DAS notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations."

**Student Conduct Expectations link:** <https://beav.es/codeofconduct>

## Student Bill of Rights

OSU has twelve established student rights. They include due process in all university disciplinary processes, an equal opportunity to learn, and grading in accordance with the course syllabus:

<https://asosu.oregonstate.edu/advocacy/rights>

## Reach Out for Success

University students encounter setbacks from time to time. If you encounter difficulties and need assistance, it's important to reach out. Consider discussing the situation with an instructor or academic advisor. Learn about resources that assist with wellness and academic success at [oregonstate.edu/ReachOut](https://oregonstate.edu/ReachOut). If you are in immediate crisis, please contact the Crisis Text Line by texting OREGON to 741-741 or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255)



William H. Johnson, [“Street Musicians.”](#) ca. 1939-1940, screenprint on paper, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Douglas E. Younger, 1971.143

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1: Blurring Racial & Class Boundaries

This week we learn about the major events and cultural trends that occurred in 1920s America. Emphasis will be given to the role of mass-produced consumer goods, the “flapper,” and Irving Berlin’s “Puttin’ on the Ritz” in the blurring of racial and class boundaries. You will read an essay about 1920s consumer society by Lawrence Glickman, and an essay about the 1920s “flapper” by Kenneth Yellis. Your first discussion board post is due before class on Wednesday.

#### MONDAY

- No assignments due

Note: In class today, we will watch Bill Moyers’s documentary, “The Twenties.”

#### WEDNESDAY

- Lawrence Glickman’s “Rethinking Politics: Consumers and the Public Good During the ‘Jazz Age’” (PDF on Canvas)
- Kenneth Yellis’s “Prosperity’s Child: Some Thoughts on the Flapper” (PDF on Canvas)

- Due before class: Discussion Board 1
- Submitted during class: Participation Submission 1

## **WEEK 2: Race “Science” and Black Primitivism**

This week we learn about the prevailing scientific view of race in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Eugenicists Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard both argued that the white race was biologically superior to the black race, whose primitive genetic makeup made it impossible for them to integrate within “civilized” society. This faulty science exacerbated hegemonic society’s racist belief that African Americans were less evolved, a belief reflected in Vachel Lindsay’s “The Congo” and challenged by Eugene O’Neil’s “The Emperor Jones.” You will read excerpts from Grant’s and Stoddard’s scientific treatises, a poem by Vachel Lindsay, an excerpt from a play by Eugene O’Neil, an essay by Edward Marx that explores the ways in which “black primitivism,” a term he coins, was paradoxically embraced by artists of the Harlem Renaissance, and several other works. There is a discussion board post due before each class.

### **MONDAY**

- Edward Marx’s “Forgotten Jungle Songs: Primitivist Strategies of the Harlem Renaissance” (PDF on Canvas)
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s [A Discourse on the Origin of Inequality](#)
- Pages 13-17 and 82-88 of Madison Grant’s [The Passing of the Great Race](#)
- Pages 87-97 of Lothrop Stoddard’s [The Rising Tide of Color](#)
- Due before class: Discussion Board 2
- Submitted during class: Participation Submission 2

### **WEDNESDAY**

- Vachel Lindsay’s “The Congo” (PDF on Canvas)
- Eugene O’Neill’s “from *The Emperor Jones*” (*The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, in the table of contents under Part III: Fiction)
- Paul Robeson’s “Reflections on O’Neill’s Plays” (*The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, in the table of contents under Part I: Essays and Memoirs)
- Hongmei Zhang and Wang Ni’s “Eugene O’Neill’s Blackness in *The Emperor Jones*” (PDF on Canvas)
- Due before class: Discussion Board 3
- Submitted during class: Participation Submission 3

## **WEEK 3: The Jazz Singer**

This week we learn about *The Jazz Singer*, the first feature-length film to synchronize image with dialogue. Released in 1927, *The Jazz Singer* presaged the end of silent film and ushered in the “talkies.” *The Jazz Singer* was adapted from a play by Samson Raphaelson, which was based on

Raphaelson's short story, "The Day of Atonement." We will watch *The Jazz Singer* in class on Monday, and then on Wednesday, we will discuss the film, the related essays, and Raphaelson's short story. There is a discussion board post due before each class. Your first Reaction Paper is due Friday.

## MONDAY

- Charles Musser "Why Did Negroes Love Al Jolson and the Jazz Singer?: Melodrama, blackface and Cosmopolitan Theatrical Culture" (PDF on Canvas)

Note: In class today, we will watch Alan Crosland's 1927 film *The Jazz Singer*.

## WEDNESDAY

- Sam Raphaelson "The Day of Atonement" (PDF on Canvas)
- Daniel Goldmark "Adapting the Jazz Singer from Short Story to Screen: A Musical Profile" (PDF on Canvas)
- Due before class: Discussion Board 4
- Submitted during class: Participation Submission 4

## FRIDAY

- Due: Reaction Paper 1

## WEEK 4: The Harlem Renaissance

This week we learn about the Harlem Renaissance, a blossoming of black music, dance, fashion, art, literature, theater, and scholarship in the 1920s and 30s that revolutionized popular American culture. In the Reconstruction era following the Civil War, southern blacks became an influential part of the voting public and, as a result, many black officials were elected into office. With the presidential election of Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876, however, Reconstruction came to an end, segregation laws were enforced, and the Ku Klux Klan grew in popularity. As a result, southern blacks faced increased hostility and, beginning in 1910, hundreds of thousands of black people moved from the rural South to the urban Northeast, Midwest, and West, where the living conditions and economic opportunities were much better for black Americans. The great migration, as it is often called, resulted in black urban centers with a flourishing intellectual culture and art scene that gave birth to what Alain Locke termed "the new negro." At the same time, jazz spread from New Orleans to Chicago and finally to New York City, where it permeated every expression of the Harlem Renaissance. This week, we read W.E.B. Du Bois's "Of the Training of Black Men," Alain Locke's "The New Negro," and Carter Woodson's "The Migration of the Talented Tenth." We also read an essay by Rachel Farebrother, in addition to

other works, about black American influence on mainstream culture. There is a discussion board post due before each class.

## MONDAY

- Rachel Farebrother's "The Congo is flooding the Acropolis": Art, 'Exhibits', and the Intercultural in the New Negro Renaissance" (PDF on Canvas)
- BBC Radio: You're Dead to Me Podcast, [The Harlem Renaissance](#)
-  Harlem In Vogue: Fashion & Style in the Harlem Renaissance
- Due before class: Discussion Board 5
- Submitted during class: Participation Submission 5

## WEDNESDAY

- W.E.B. Du Bois's "Of the Dawn of Freedom" (PDF on Canvas)
- Alain Locke's "The New Negro" (*The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, in the table of contents under Part I: Essays and Memoirs)
- Carter G. Woodson's "The Migration of the Talented Tenth" (*The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, in the table of contents under Part I: Essays and Memoirs)
- Due before class: Discussion Board 6
- Submitted during class: Participation Submission 6

## WEEK 5: The Early Reception of Jazz

This week we learn about the early reception of jazz by the mainstream media. As you will find, some outlets warned that jazz was morally corrupt, uncivilized, and dangerous while others defended jazz as a harmless fad. We also learn that the famed ballroom dancers, Vernon and Irene Castle, rebranded the black dance forms associated with jazz to quell the fears of mainstream audiences who believed the "animalistic" dance moves would cause young people to behave promiscuously. Finally, we read "Jazz at Home" by Joel A. Rogers, a black historian and journalist who celebrates jazz as a uniquely American artform born out of the African jungle—that is, as something brand new but also ancient. Rogers agreed with the ostensibly racist view that Africans are evolutionarily attuned to certain rhythms, but he framed this evolutionary difference as the key to superior art, suggesting, in turn, that African Americans are superior artists. There is a discussion board post due before class on Wednesday.

## MONDAY

Note: In class today, we will watch episode 1 of the Ken Burns documentary, *Jazz*.

## WEDNESDAY

- Lewis Erenberg's "Everybody's Doin' It" (PDF on Canvas)
- Joel A. Rogers's "Jazz at Home" (*The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, in the table of contents under Part I: Essays and Memoirs)
- Five early media reports on jazz:
  - ["Origin of Jazz"](#)
  - ["Urge Better Music in the First Step of Dance Reform"](#)
  - ["Jazz Stunts are Shattering Our American Nerves"](#)
  - ["A Defense of Jazz"](#)
  - ["Hot Tamale Mollie' Makes Debut as Jazz Scrap Waxes Hotter"](#)
- Due before class: Discussion Board 7
- Submitted during class: Participation Submission 7

## WEEK 6: Considering the Black Artist, Then and Now

This week we learn about the competing views of black artistry advanced by various Harlem Renaissance writers. Should black art be fundamentally different from white art? Can black artists succeed within white artistic traditions, should they focus on Afrocentric forms, or should the black American create novel art forms? You will read essays by W.E.B. Du Bois, Alain Locke, George S. Schuyler, Langston Hughes, and Marcus Garvey that attempt to answer these questions. Then, on Wednesday, we will turn our attention to the modern era, exploring the works of Ibram X. Kendi and Coleman Hughes, two prominent figures in today's race debates. We will ask if the race question has changed dramatically since the 1920s and consider whether aspects of these debates carry on in the present day. There is a discussion board post due before each class. Your second Reaction Paper is due on Friday.

### MONDAY

All readings are from *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, Part I: Essays and Memoirs:

- Marcus Garvey "Africa for the Africans"
- George S. Schuyler "The Negro-Art Hokum"
- W.E.B. Du Bois "Criteria of Negro Art"
- Alain Locke "The Negro Takes His Place in American Art"
- Langston Hughes "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain"
- Henry Louis Gates, Jr. ["Free Blacks Lived in the North, Right?"](#)
- Due before class: Discussion Board 8
- Submitted during class: Participation Submission 8

### WEDNESDAY

- Chapter 1 of Ibram X. Kendi's *How To Be An Anti-Racist* (PDF on Canvas)
- Coleman Hughe's *The End of Race Politics* (PDF on Canvas)
- Due before class: Discussion Board 9

- Submitted during class: Participation Submission 9

## FRIDAY

- Due: Reaction Paper 2

### **WEEK 7: James Weldon Johnson, *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man***

For the next two weeks, we delve into James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. The novel chronicles the journey of an unnamed protagonist of mixed race navigating the complexities of racial identity at the turn of the 20th century. Born to a black mother and a white father, the protagonist grapples with societal prejudices and ultimately chooses to pass as white for societal advantages. However, this decision leads to internal conflicts and moral dilemmas, prompting reflections on the nature of race, cultural heritage, and personal integrity. Through the protagonist's experiences, Johnson's novel offers profound insights into the fluidity and challenges of racial identity in a racially stratified society. We will also read essays by Esther Godfrey on "passing" and the social construction of race. There is a discussion board post due before class on Wednesday.

## MONDAY

VETERANS DAY. NO CLASS.

## WEDNESDAY

- Chapters 1-3 of James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*
- Esther Godfrey's ["Drag, Minstrelsy and Identity in the New Millennium"](#)
- Due before class: Discussion Board 10
- Submitted during class: Participation Submission 10

### **WEEK 8: James Weldon Johnson, *Autobiography (Continued)***

This week, we continue James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*. We also read essays by Anthony Appiah and Paul C. Taylor that examine race as a socio-historical construction. There is a discussion board post due before each class.

## MONDAY

- Chapters 4-6 of James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*

- Anthony Appiah's "The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race" (PDF on Canvas)
- Due before class: Discussion Board 11
- Submitted during class: Participation Submission 11

## WEDNESDAY

- Chapters 7-9 of James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*
- Paul C. Taylor's "Appiah's Uncompleted Argument: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Reality of Race" (PDF on Canvas)
- Due before class: Discussion Board 12
- Submitted during class: Participation Submission 12

## WEEK 9: Nella Larsen, *Passing*

This week, we finish Johnson's novel and begin Nella Larsen's *Passing*. Set in 1920s Harlem, Larsen's novel explores the lives of two childhood friends, Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry, who are both light-skinned African American women. While Irene lives openly as a black woman, Clare has chosen to "pass" as white to access social privileges. Their paths converge, leading to complex reflections on race, identity, and the consequences of denying one's heritage. Larsen masterfully navigates themes of racial identity, societal expectations, and the tensions between personal desires and societal constraints in this gripping narrative. There is a discussion board post due before each class.

## MONDAY

- Chapters 10-11 of James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*
- Chapter 1 of Suzanne Model's *West Indian Immigrants: A Black Success Story?* (PDF on Canvas)
-  Fair Argument Against "Systemic Racism".
- Due before class: Discussion Board 13
- Submitted during class: Participation Submission 13

## WEDNESDAY

- Part 1 of Nella Larsen's *Passing*
- Rebecca Tuvel's "In Defense of Transracialism" (PDF on Canvas)
- Due before class: Discussion Board 14
- Submitted during class: Participation Submission 14

## **WEEK 10: Nella Larsen, *Passing* (Continued)**

This week, we will finish Nella Larsen's *Passing*, read an essay by Claudia Tate, and watch Rebecca Hall's 2021 film adaptation of the novel. There is a discussion board post due before class on Monday. Your final Reaction Paper is due on Friday.

### **MONDAY**

- Part 2 of Nella Larsen's *Passing*
- Jana Cattien's "Against 'Transracialism': Revisiting the Debate" (PDF on Canvas)
- **Due before class: Discussion Board 15**
- Submitted during class: Participation Submission 15

### **WEDNESDAY**

- Part 3 of Nella Larsen's *Passing*
- Claudia Tate's "Nella Larsen's *Passing*: A Problem of Interpretation" (PDF on Canvas)
- **Due before class: Discussion Board 16**

Note: In class today, we will watch Rebecca Hall's 2021 film adaptation of *Passing*.

### **FRIDAY**

- **Due: Reaction Paper 3**

## **FINALS WEEK**

There is no final in this class.