English 6336
African-American Literature

Instructor: Dr. Gabby Serrano
Office: Academic Building 0019 A
Office Phone: 486-6155
Office Hours: By appointment (face-to-face or via Blackboard Collaborate)
E-mail: gserrano@angelo.edu

Course Description
This course will focus on African-American authors from the 19th through the 21st centuries and examine the social and political contexts that shaped the texts we will study throughout the semester. Although we will study major authors in African-American literary history, such as Frederick Douglass and Toni Morrison, etc., we will also evaluate works by lesser-known writers, such as Ayad Akhdar and Amanda Gorman. Also, we will consider how theoretical lenses, such as critical race theory, Black feminism, etc., give us specific insight into how African-American is a vital part of a rich cultural history of American literature and culture.

Covid-19 Wellness and Safety
For the protection of all students, staff, and faculty, students must correctly wear a protective mask at all times while in the classroom and around campus. Also, make sure to wash and sanitize your desks, wash hands frequently, and practice social distancing.

Your Semester Grade
Research for Paper (Annotated Bibliography, Outline, Abstract) 25%
Seminar Paper 50%
Seminar Paper Presentation 15%
Class Participation and attendance 10%

Texts

Zora Neale Hurston: Their Eyes Were Watching God

Ralph Ellison: Invisible Man

Toni Morrison: The Bluest Eye

Angie Thomas: The Hate U Give

Ayad Akhdar: Disgraced: A Play
Research Assignments
A seminar paper takes an entire semester to work on, so students need to begin work on the paper as soon as the class begins. Every-other week, students will complete work that will aid them in the research and writing of the paper.

  Tentative and Final Thesis - developing a clear, concise argument takes several attempts, so students will turn in a tentative thesis statement during the first week of class and a final thesis.
  Annotated Bibliography – A list of twelve sources with a complete bibliographic citation for a critical work followed by two sentences explaining the overall argument of the critical work.
  Abstract – a 250 word paragraph that includes a clear, argumentative thesis statement and clearly summarizes the entire final paper. I encourage students to submit abstracts to future projects, such as conferences and publications.
  Outline – a four page outline that clearly describes the major topics and subtopics that will be discussed in the paper. The outline must be organized and well-developed.

Seminar Paper
This paper is a longer, individual paper (12-15 pages) over one or more major text(s) we will be evaluating over the semester. Students will use the Research Assignments they work on over the course of the summer session and apply their research to this paper. Students are expected to read, evaluate, and respond to the text(s) critically and deepen their understanding of the text(s). Students must include at least five citations in their paper, and will preferably come from sources in the Annotated Bibliography, but they may be different sources. (see MLA Handbook for guidelines or the OWL at Purdue: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/)

Use of Technology
Assignments must be uploaded on Blackboard as WORD or PDF documents. I will not accept excuses for any technical difficulties students may have with their assignments, which include computers crashing, difficulty uploading papers, Blackboard shutting down, etc.

Student Handbook Statement of Academic Integrity
Academic integrity is taking responsibility for one’s own class and/or course work, being individually accountable, and demonstrating intellectual honesty and ethical behavior. Academic integrity is a personal choice to abide by the standards of intellectual honesty and responsibility. Because education is a shared effort to achieve learning through the exchange of ideas, students, faculty, and staff have the collective responsibility to build mutual trust and respect. Ethical behavior and independent thought are essential for the highest level of academic achievement, which then must be measured. Academic achievement includes scholarship, teaching, and learning, all of which are shared endeavors. Grades are a device used to quantify the successful accumulation of knowledge through learning. Adhering to the standards of academic integrity ensures grades are earned honestly. Academic integrity is the foundation upon which students, faculty, and staff build their educational and professional careers. Students must understand the principles of academic integrity and abide by them in all classes and/or course work at the University. Academic Misconduct violations are outlined in Part I, section B.1 of the Code of Student Conduct. If there are questions of interpretation of academic integrity policies or about
what might constitute an academic integrity violation, students are responsible for seeking
 guidance from the faculty member teaching the course in question.

**Operating Policy 10.5 (student accommodation)**
Angelo State University is committed to the principle that no qualified individual with a
disability shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in or be denied the
benefits of the services, programs, or activities of the university, or be subjected to
discrimination by the university, as provided by the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
(ADA), the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008 (ADAAA), and
subsequent legislation. All students at Angelo State University must have the capacity and
ambition to undertake, with reasonable accommodation from the faculty and administration, the
academic challenges necessary to fulfill the academic requirements for the degree or certification
programs which they are pursuing. Operating Policy 10.19 (Holy Day): “Religious holy day”
means a holy day observed by a religion whose places of worship are exempt from property
taxation under Texas Tax Code §11.20. A student who intends to observe a religious holy day
should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who
is absent from classes for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an
examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the
absence. A student who is excused under section 2 may not be penalized for the absence;
however, the instructor may respond appropriately if the student fails to complete the assignment
satisfactorily.

**Title IX at Angelo State University**
The University prohibits discrimination based on sex, which includes pregnancy, sexual
orientation, gender identity, and other types of Sexual Misconduct. Sexual Misconduct is a broad
term encompassing all forms of gender-based harassment or discrimination including: sexual
assault, sex-based discrimination, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, public indecency,
interpersonal violence (domestic violence and/or dating violence), and stalking. As a faculty
member, I am a Responsible Employee meaning that I am obligated by law and ASU policy to
report any allegations I am notified of to the Office of Title IX Compliance. Students are
encouraged to report any incidents of sexual misconduct directly to ASU’s Office of Title IX
Compliance and the Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator at: Michelle Boone,
J.D. Director of Title IX Compliance/Title IX Coordinator Mayer Administration Building,
Room 210 325-942-2022 michelle.boone@angelo.edu You may also file a report online 24/7 at
www.angelo.edu/incident-form. If you are wishing to speak to someone about an incident in
confidence you may contact the University Health Clinic and Counseling Center at 325-942-
2173 or the ASU Crisis Helpline at 325-486-6345. For more information about Title IX in
general you may visit www.angelo.edu/title-ix.

**Inclusion Statement**
We will be addressing controversial topics related to underprivileged groups throughout the
semester. I support a diversity of thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honor all identities
(including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, etc.). Please let me if there is a
particular name or pronouns by which you identify. Also, please let me know if anything I or
your peers may say in class makes you feel excluded or marginalized. You may come see me in
my office, leave me a note, and your concerns will remain anonymous.
Confidential Resources Available to Students:
Office of Title IX Compliance: 325-486-6357
University Health Clinic: 325-942-2171
University Counseling Center: 325-942-2173
ASU Crisis Helpline: 325-486-6345

Schedule of Readings and Assignments
(Tentative and Subject to Change)

Jan. 26
Course Introduction and Syllabus
African-American Spirituals

Feb. 2
Frederick Douglass: *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

*Tentative Thesis* (upload by midnight 2/7)

Feb. 23
Excerpt from *Up from Slavery* (Ch. 14)
Charles Chesnutt: “Po Sandy”
“The Sheriff’s Children”

Mar. 2
The Harlem Renaissance
Artistic and Musical Selections
Langston Hughes: “Slave on the Block”
“The Negro Speaks of Rivers”

Mar 9
Zora Neale Hurston: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
*Annotated Bibliography* (upload by midnight 3/14)

Mar. 16
Ralph Ellison: *Invisible Man*

Mar. 23
Ralph Ellison: *Invisible Man* (continued)
Richard Right: “The Man Who Was Almost a Man”

Mar. 30
Alice Walker: “In Search of our Mothers’ Gardens”
“Everyday Use”
Toni Cade Bambara: “Gorilla, My Love”
Abstract Due on Blackboard (upload by midnight 4/4)

Apr. 6
Toni Morrison: *The Bluest Eye*

Apr 13
Emerging Poets
Terrance Hayes: selections
Amanda Gorman: selections

Outline Due on Blackboard (upload by midnight 4/18)

Apr. 20
Angie Thomas: *The Hate U Give*

Apr. 27
Excerpt from *The Souls of Black Folk*
Students’ Choice

May 4
Ayad Akhdar: *Disgraced*

Seminar Papers (upload by midnight 5/9)

May 11
Seminar Paper Presentations