

**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 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. ENG 253 and ENG 254 may be taken out of order. Prerequisite: ENG 112 or equivalent. Lecture 3 hours per week.

General Course Purpose: ENG 253 develops skills in critical literacy, provides opportunities for self-expression, and promotes understanding of multiple genres of African-American literature of the eighteenth through the early twentieth century. The course explores works within their historical and cultural contexts. 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. Upon successful completion of the course, students will have produced at least 12 pages (a minimum of 3000 words) of formal writing, including academic essays and essay examinations, and at least 12 pages (a minimum of 3000 words) of informal writing, including reading responses or journal entries.

Course Prerequisites and Co-requisites:

Prerequisite: ENG 112 or equivalent

Course Objectives:

- 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. Produce at least 12 pages (a minimum of 3000 words) of formal writing, including academic essays and essay examinations, and at least 12 pages (a minimum of 3000 words) of informal writing, including reading responses or journal entries. Academic writing about literature should include clear argumentation and organization, valid textual evidence for support, and correct documentation;
- e. Participate in interactive discussions, peer reviews, and/or one or more formal individual and/or group multi-modal presentation;
- f. Locate and evaluate information retrieved from electronic sources, such as academic databases and web resources;
- g. Use available electronic technologies for creating and submitting texts; and
- h. Recognize literary study as a means for intellectual, aesthetic, and personal growth, and for engaging meaningful and enduring questions common 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
- 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

Effective Date of Course Content Summary: Spring 2014 (revised 6/9/2014)