

Brian Baaki

Fall 2019

Course Description- English 2202

This course will familiarize students with a variety of African American literature from roughly a two-hundred-year span, from around the time of the founding of the American nation to the close of the twentieth century. We will strive to give equal attention to the most significant moments and movements in African American political and cultural history: the antebellum period, Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction, the Harlem Renaissance, the “Indignant Generation” of pre- and post-World War II America, Black Arts and contemporary. Through this historical coverage, we will gain a sense of the rich variety of African American literature, as we study texts from nearly every conceivable genre, including poetry, political tracts, slave narratives, autobiography, novels, short stories, memoir, essays, literary criticism, and drama. As a class, we will use our collective study of this literature to devise a working definition of what constitutes an African American literature or literary tradition. We will consider what links the earliest African American writing not only to modernist writing of the twentieth century, but to literature of our present day by black American authors. Students are required to submit weekly reading response assignments, write three short critical essays (3-4 pages), and complete a final exam.