

**ENGL 7/8335: “When the Past is the Subject of the Present”: African American
Literature from 1989 to the Present**

Fall 2026

Wednesdays 5:30-8:30

L. Menson-Furr, Instructor

Course Description

In this seminar, we will study African American literature penned during the last decade of the twentieth century and into the present. Specifically, we will examine the genre of historical fiction (or historically situated literature) as a “*literary site*” of contemporary literature and its important role in providing authors and scholars with new perspectives and theoretical frameworks through which to interpret and interrogate past and present cultural, economic, educational, political, and social contexts, realities, and movements.

Central Texts (partial listing):

Coleman, Ornette. *Sound Grammar*. (2006)

Coogler, Ryan. *Sinners*. (2025)

Cooper, J. California. *Some Love, Some Pain Sometime*. (1995)

Everett, Percival. *James*. (2024)

Jones, Tayari. *Kin*. (2026)

Morrison, Toni. *Paradise*. (1997)

Nottage, Lynn. *Intimate Apparel*. (2005)

Stringfellow, Tara. *Memphis*. (2023)

Whitehead, Colson. *Apex Hides the Hurt*. (2006)

Wilson, August. *The Piano Lesson*. (1990)