

ENGL 7/8329: African American Literature: Beginnings to 1850

Course Descriptions: Beginning in 1619 when the first 20 African landed in Virginia the African has been a “problem” for the American Experiment. In this course we will examine African American literature through a historical framework that reflects the complexity of the African slave trade, American slavery, and the development of a nation under such a cruel and inhumane system. Starting with colonial America and ending with the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and the first African American novel, *Clotel; or, the President's Daughter*, we will interrogate how early America was shaped by the African presence on its shores. We will explore the early slave narrative, radical political tracts, spiritual conversion narratives, poetry, and sermons as a way to understand early America and its complicated relationship with slavery.

Tentative Texts:

David Walker's Appeal –David Walker—9781605208046

The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano: Written by Himself—Olaudah Equiano—9780312442033

Phillis Wheatley, Complete Writings—Ed. Vincent Carretta—9780140424300

Sisters of the Spirit: Three Black Women's Autobiographies of the Nineteenth Century—Ed. William L. Andrews—9780253287045

Maria W. Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer—Ed. Marilyn Richardson—9780253204462

Narrative of the Life Frederick Douglass—9780872865273

Clotel; or, The President's Daughter—William Wells Brown—Ed. Robert S. Levine—9780312152659

Negro President: Jefferson and the Slave Power—Gary Wills—9780618343989

Slavery and Politics in the Early American Republic—Matthew Mason—9780807830499

The Trials of Phillis Wheatley—Henry Louis Gates Jr—978-0465018505

The Life and Adventures of Venture Smith, A Native of Africa: But Resident above Sixty Years in the United States of America—Venture Smith—available through Documenting the American South website (free)