

## **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.