



## ENGLISH 2050: AFRICAN-AMERICAN LITERATURE

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<b>Professor</b>	D. Harlan Wilson
<b>Office</b>	257 Dwyer
<b>Phone</b>	419.586.0317
<b>Email</b>	david.wilson@wright.edu
<b>Websites</b>	www.wright.edu/~david.wilson

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

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This section of English 2050 studies four classic works of African-American literature. In addition to developing critical thinking and writing skills, you will consider texts as critical representations of the black experience, concentrating on themes of resistance, oppression, exclusion, and identity-formation. Stemming from an oral tradition of storytelling and spirituals, African-Americanism has and continues to be a quest to find and establish an authentic voice, a virtually impossible feat considering that the African-American community was robbed of its own history. By way of literary identification, online discussions, and writing about secondary criticism, you will look at how some of the most famous African-American authors have engaged with the cultural legacy galvanized by the institution of slavery.

IMPORTANT NOTE: This is an online course with clear deadlines for all assignments; as long as you are attentive to these deadlines, you may work at your own pace. I am available by email and by appointment for personal consultation. Needless to say, accessing and using computer technology on a regular basis is a crucial requirement for the course. If you do not own a computer at home, make use of the computer labs on campus.

### TEXTBOOKS

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Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. 1845. Norton Critical Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997.

Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. 1861. Norton Critical Edition. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001.

Wright, Richard. *Native Son*. 1940. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2005.

Ellison, Ralph. *Invisible Man*. 1952. New York: Vintage, 1995.

NOTE: It is essential that you use the editions listed here. Some of your assignments will ask you to read and write about supplementary material in the texts.

## **COURSE EVALUATION**

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Course grades will be based on a points system. As I grade your work, **Pilot** tallies the points so that you may gauge your performance in the course at any time during the semester. At the end of the semester, points will be converted to percentages, and percentages will be converted to letter grades. Here is the grading rubric:

90.0-100%	A
80.0-89.9%	B
70.0-79.9%	C
60.0-69.9%	D
0-59.9%	F

## **WRITING STANDARDS**

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- A The student's writing is consistently superior and expresses independent thought with grace, clarity and force. Words are used with precision and suited to the purposes of the assignment. Writing is free of mechanical errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation.
  
- B The student's writing is above average in thought and expression, demonstrating a clear understanding and execution of the assignment's directions; however, it is not consistently superior in depth of thought, effectiveness of development, and mechanical savvy.
  
- C The student's writing is acceptable as college work, but lacks an original, significant purpose or point-of-view. Typically, written work is characterized by inadequate support of generalizations, slipshod or hurried style, poor attention to detail, straying from directions, or mechanical errors.
  
- D The student's writing meets minimum standards. Work is often underwritten and/or marred by confused purpose, lack of organization, repetition of ideas, improper use of words, and frequent grammatical, spelling and punctuation errors.
  
- F The student's writing does not meet minimum standards.

## **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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English 2050 is part of Element 4 of the Wright State University Core. After taking this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. Critically analyze significant creative, literary, philosophical or religious works.
  
2. Understand and discuss the complex blend of imaginative vision, socio-cultural context, ethical values, and aesthetic judgment in creative, philosophical or religious works.
  
3. Recognize, evaluate and respond to creative, philosophical or religious works.

4. Develop appropriate and ethical applications of knowledge in the humanities or the arts.

## **INTEGRATED WRITING OUTCOMES**

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English 2050 is an Integrated Writing course. After taking the course, students should be able to produce writing that demonstrates their understanding of course content, is appropriate for the audience and purpose of a particular writing task, demonstrates the degree of mastery of disciplinary writing conventions appropriate to the course (including documentation conventions), and shows competency in standard edited American English.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

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Each of the five modules in the course pertains to one of our texts. Over the span of three weeks, you will complete three assignments per module (hence one assignment per week). With some exceptions, these assignments will involve the following: [1] identify certain elements in a text, [2] complete an online discussion, and [3] write a summary of critical reviews and/or essays on the text in question. Specific details (including due dates) for each assignment are located in the modules and on **Pilot**. Be sure that summaries are written in your own words. If even a small portion of a summary is plagiarized, you will not receive credit.

## **PLAGIARISM**

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Plagiarism occurs when a writer: [1] copies verbatim from an author without quotation or attempts to disguise the act by selective omissions or alterations; [2] paraphrases from an author without naming the source in the text of the paper or providing a list of references at the end; [3] turns in a paper written by somebody else. As a point of academic integrity, you are required to submit original material of your own creation. Plagiarism of any material is a serious offense and, if established with sufficient evidence, can result in failure of the course or dismissal from the university.

## **STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER**

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The Student Success Center offers FREE services to help students meet their full potential. Students can find tutoring in any subject, study buddies, one-on-one technology workshops, feedback on writing assignments, and general academic skills coaching. Location: **182 Andrews**. Phone: **419.586.8326**. Web: **[www.wright.edu/lake/ssc](http://www.wright.edu/lake/ssc)**.

Students who use the Student Success Center for help on their writing assignments will be given 10 extra credit points for each visit. Go to the website to make an appointment.

## **CLASS CALENDAR**

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While you will be working on the same types of assignments for each text, you will of course be thinking and writing about different material. Here is a weekly breakdown:

**Module Schedule**

*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* **Week 1:** Identification  
**Week 1:** Discussion  
**Week 2:** Summaries

*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* **Week 2:** Identification  
**Week 3:** Discussion  
**Week 3:** Summaries

*Native Son* **Week 4:** Identification  
**Week 4:** Discussion  
**Week 5:** Analysis & Summary

*Invisible Man* **Week 5:** Identification  
**Week 6:** Discussion  
**Week 6:** Summaries