

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

Course Description: Beginning in 1619 when the first 20 Africans 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 second African American novel, *The Garies and Their Friends*, we will interrogate how early America was shaped by the African presence on its shores. We will explore the slave narrative, radical political tracts, spiritual conversion narratives, poetry, and sermons as a way to understand early America and the emerging African “American.”

Possible Texts:

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

David Walker’s Appeal—David Walker—9781605208046

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

Clotel; or, The President’s Daughter—William Wells Brown—Ed. Robert S. Levine—978031215659

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

Equiano, the African. Biography of a Self-Made Man—Vincent Carretta—9780143038429

Poetical Works of George M. Horton—George M. Horton—9781456323240

Making Freedom. The Extraordinary Life of Venture Smith—9780819568540

The Trials of Phillis Wheatley—Henry Louis Gates Jr.—9780465018505

The Garies and Their Friends—Frank J. Webb—9780801855979

Collected Works of Jupiter Hammon—9781621903291