

**ENGL 2303 - 008**

**“Empire State of Mind”**

**Fall 2015**

**Class Meetings:** MWF, 300 Preston Hall (PH), 9:00 – 9:50 AM

Instructor: Dr. Kenton Rambsy **Office Number:** 413 Carlisle

Email: [kenton.rambsy@uta.edu](mailto:kenton.rambsy@uta.edu) Faculty Profile:

**Office Hours:**

Tuesday 10 - Noon;

Wednesday 10:00 - 10:50 AM; 1-3:00 PM

And, by appointment

**Course Description:** “Empire State of Mind” concentrates on a range of texts—novel excerpts, short stories, poems, and rap music—that present New York City as a focal point. Students will develop a sharper awareness of the importance of New York in African American artistic history and gain experience analyzing literary texts.

This course asks for your *active, consistent participation*. I encourage you to make a real commitment to the course materials and to your peers in the classroom. Keeping up with the readings will be necessary in order for you to contribute more effectively to productive classroom discussions. *Showing up to class and completing the reading assignments and yet rarely contributing your thoughts in class constitutes C-level participation/attendance.* You can contribute to class discussion in several ways: making observations about details in the readings, asking critical questions that spark discussion (i.e. questions about interpretation and significance), and raising issues that further the class’s learning.

**Required Textbooks and Other Course Materials:**

1. *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* (3rd Edition)
2. RapGenius Account (<http://genius.com/>)

* How to create Rap Genius Account

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cvlm8jXtCYU&feature=youtu.be>

* How to annotate

<http://genius.com/1493028>

**The main objectives will involve developing:**

* encourage students to see that literary studies matter and to foster enjoyment of literature, as students engage with ideas and beliefs in ways that extend beyond the English classroom.
* help students recognize that literature does not occur as isolated literary events, but as complex dialogue within cultural and historical contexts.
* develop students’ ability to read critically by studying a variety of literary elements such as form, structure, and style.
* enable students to demonstrate their understanding of and their ability to analyze literary texts both orally and in writing.

**Grade Break Down:**

**(%) Weekly Writing Activities**

**(%) Daily Participation**

**(%) Mid-Term**

**(%) Writing Assignment #1**

**(%) Writing Assignment #2**

**(%)Collaborative Project**

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**(100%)**

*Week 1*

August 28

*Week 2*

August 31: Jay Z—Empire State of Mind

**September 2:** Review Key Words

**September 4:** Key Words and Jay Z’s “Empire State of Mind”

*Week 3*

*Slavery*

September 7—Labor Day Holiday

**September 9:** Frederick Douglass—*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas*s (Chapter 11-P. 381)

**September 11:** Harriet Jacobs—“XL. The Fugitive Slave Law” (pg 253)

*Week 4*

**September 14:** James Weldon Johnson—“My City;” Helene Johnson— “Sonnet to a Negro in Harlem;” Paul Laurence Dunbar—“The Fourth of July and Race Outrages”

**September 16:** Langston Hughes—“Ballad of the Landlord;” “Harlem,” “Mother To Son,”

“I, Too,” “Negro Speaks of Rivers”

**September 18:** “NY State of Mind”—Nas (Annotation: Langston Hughes)

*Week 5*

**September 21:** Rudolph Fisher—“City of Refuge”

**September 23:** Rudolph Fisher—“City of Refuge” (Continued)

**September 25:** “South Bronx”—Boogie Down Productions (Annotation: “City of Refuge)

*Week 6*

**September 28:** James Baldwin—“Sonny’s Blues”

**September 30:** James Baldwin—“Sonny’s Blues” (Continued);

**October 2:** “New York (Ya Out There)”—Rakim (Annotate: “City of Refuge”)

*Week 7*

**October 5:** Henry Dumas—“Will the Circle Be Unbroken”

**October 7:** Henry Dumas—“Will the Circle Be Unbroken” (Continued)

**October 9:** (Timeline Due)

*Week 8*

**October 12:** “The Message”—Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five

**October 14:** Review for Midterm

**October 16:** Midterm Exam

*Week 9*

**October 19:** Robert Hayden “El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz;” Amiri Baraka “A Poem for Black Hearts;” Larry Neal “Malcolm X—An Autobiography,”

**October 21:** Margaret Walker “For Malcolm X;” Gwendolyn Brooks “Malcolm X;” Lucille Clifton “malcolm”

**October 23:** “Welcome To New York City”— Cam’ron (Annotation: TBA)

*Week 10*

**October 26:** Toni Cade Bambara—“The Lesson”

**October 28:** Toni Cade Bambara—“The Lesson” (Continued)

**October 30:** “Lighters Up”—Lil Kim (Annotation: TBA)

*Week 11*

**November 2:** “Reena”—Paule Marshall

**November 4:** “Reena”—Paule Marshall (Continued)

**November 6:** “Hello Brooklyn”—Jay Z (Annotation: TBA)

*Week 12*

**November 9:** Edward P. Jones—“Old Boys, Old Girls”

**November 11:** Edward P. Jones—“Old Boys, Old Girls” (Continued)

November 13: (Paper Due)

*Week 13*

*Outside of NYC*

**November 16:** Walter Mosley—“Equal Opportunity”

**November 18:** Walter Mosley—“Equal Opportunity” (Continued)

**November 20:** “Brooklyn”—Mos Def (Annotation: TBA)

*Week 14*

**November 23:** Final Review (Annotation: TBA)

**November 25:** Final Review

**November 27—**Thanksgiving Holiday

*Week 15*

**November 30:** Final Review

**December 2: Presentations**

**December 4: Presentations**

*Week 16*

**December 7: Presentations**

December 9—Last Day of Classes

**Classroom Policies**

**Civility Statement:** I enjoy student ideas and welcome them! Comments, questions, and opinions about the topics covered in class are encouraged, but please be mindful to express yourself using respectful and appropriate language. We would like to maintain a constructive learning environment. Therefore, no one is permitted to make offensive, intimidating, or malicious comments or behave in a disruptive manner. Additionally, the use of cell phones and other electronic communication devices will not be tolerated. Thank you in advance for adhering to the policy.

**Attendance Policy:** Because this course is a discussion course and the work we do in the class is designed to help you understand the reading and improve your writing, you must attend class. You will be allowed four absences. For each subsequent absence, however, I reserve the right to drop your final grade by a partial letter (specifically, 2/3). For example, if you turned in all of your assignments on time, did good work all semester, and earned a B+, your fifth absence could drop that grade to a B.

In the event that you are absent, you are STILL RESPONSIBLE for turning in all work by the dates listed on the syllabus. Unless we have made other plans together, in advance of the absence or missed assignment, I will not accept late work, so I encourage you to make arrangements with a classmate to submit any assignments if you will be absent. If you miss class, you are still obligated to prepare for the next class meeting and to turn in your work on time. I advise you to reserve any absences for genuine need, especially in case of illness later in the semester.

Under normal circumstances, I DO NOT distinguish between excused and unexcused absences; however, I realize that there might be special situations that would require extended absences. If you have an issue that requires extended absences (ex. You come down with mono, the flu, etc.), please email me as soon as possible to let me know. To be excused, though, you must present sufficient documentation. Approved forms of documentation include medical excuses, police records, and documentation of funeral attendance. Of course, you are excused from class for religious holidays. If you are a member of a group that travels on behalf of the University (intramural teams are non-applicable), you must provide a letter from your coach or director along with a schedule of the classes you will miss due to travel.

**Late Work:** Under no circumstances will I accept late work—this includes papers and other daily activities.

**University Policies**

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Disability Accommodations: UT** Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including *The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA),* and *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.* All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the **Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD).** Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting:

**The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD)** [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or calling 817-272-3364.

**Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS)** [www.uta.edu/caps/](http://www.uta.edu/caps/) or calling 817-272-3671.

Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Title IX:** *The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit*[*uta.edu/eos*](http://www.uta.edu/hr/eos/index.php)*. For information regarding Title IX, visit* [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**The English Writing Center (411LIBR)**: Hours are 9 am to 8 pm Mondays-Thursdays, 9 am to 3 pm Fridays and Noon to 5 pm Saturdays and Sundays. Walk In ***Quick Hits*** sessions during all open hours Mon-Thurs. Register and make appointments online at [http://uta.mywconline.com](http://uta.mywconline.com/). Classroom Visits, Workshops, and advanced services for graduate students and faculty are also available. Please see [www.uta.edu/owl](http://www.uta.edu/owl) for detailed information.