

## The Zora Neale Hurston Digital Archive

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### AML 4300 The Zora Neale Hurston Era

University of Central Florida

Dr. Kevin Meehan

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Class Meets: Tu-Th 13:00-14:15

Classroom: CL1-112

Office: CNH 304C

Hours: Tu-Th 14:30-17:00

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### The Idea of the Course

This course offers an in-depth look at the works of Zora Neale Hurston. Through an examination of Hurston's novels, stories, folklore, anthropology, memoir, essays, and journalism, we will learn about the main thematic and stylistic trends that define African American literature from the time of the Harlem Renaissance to the Black Arts Movement. We will also study selected fiction by Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison, and James Baldwin to get a better view of Hurston's literary and historical context, and to see where she echoes and where she departs from so-called "mainstream" or "canonical" African American literature of the time. Central concerns during the semester will be the status of folk culture, Hurston's depiction of women and her status as a black woman writer, and how Hurston's writing reflects the race and class politics of her time. Assignments include a midterm and final exam, an essay assignment, a creative final project, and weekly submission of email discussion questions.

### Books Required

Robert Hemenway. Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography.

Zora Neale Hurston. Folklore, Memoir, and Other Writings.

---. Novels and Stories.

### Schedule of Readings

FMWO = Folklore, Memoir, and Other Writings      NS = Novels and Stories

ZNH = Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography      (R) = reserve

Tu 1/8 Introduction

Th 1/10 "Characteristics of Negro Expression" (FMOW 830-846)

"High John de Conquer" (FMOW 922-931)

Tu 1/15 Mules and Men (FMOW 1-61)

Hemenway, "Do You Know Any Folktales" (ZNH 84-103) (R)

Th 1/17 Mules and Men (FMOW 63-175)

Hemenway, "Godmother and Big Sweet" (ZNH 104-135)

Tu 1/22 Mules and Men (FMOW 176-195, 222-231)

Hemenway, "The Will to Adorn" (ZNH 159-187)

Th 1/24 Tell My Horse (FMOW 277-330)

Hemenway, "Crayon Enlargements of Life" (ZNH 227-231)

Tu 1/29 Tell My Horse (FMOW 331-375)

Hemenway, "Voodoo Gods and Biblical Men" (ZNH 246-251)

Th 1/31 Tell My Horse (FMOW 376-532)

Tu 2/5 Dust Tracks on a Road (FMOW 561-665)

Hemenway, "Ambiguities of Self, Politics of Race" (ZNH 273-290)

Th 2/7 Dust Tracks on a Road (FMOW 666-733)

Tu 2/12 Dust Tracks on a Road (FMOW 743-808)

Th 2/14 "The Ocoee Riot" (FMOW 897-901)

"Crazy for This Democracy" (FMOW 945-950)

"Court Order Can't Make Races Mix" (FMOW 956)

Hemenway, "Ambiguities of Self, Politics of Race" (ZNH 291-301); "The Pots in Sorrow's Kitchen" (ZNH 327-337)

Tu 2/19 Review

Th 2/21 Midterm Exam in Class

Tu 2/26 "Spunk" (NS)

"Sweat" (NS)

Hemenway, "From the Earliest Rocking of My Cradle" (ZNH 60-83)

Th 2/28 Jonah's Gourd Vine (NS)

Hemenway, "Plough Up Some Literary" (ZNH 188-205)

Tu 3/5 Jonah's Gourd Vine (NS)

Th 3/7 Jonah's Gourd Vine (NS)

Tu 3/12 SPRING BREAK

Th 3/14 SPRING BREAK

Tu 3/19 Richard Wright "Big Boy Leaves Home" (R)

Hurston, "Stories of Conflict: Richard Wright's Uncle Tom's Children" (FMOW 912-913)  
Th 3/21 Ellison, "Flying Home" (R)  
Tu 3/26 Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues" (R)  
Th 3/28 Their Eyes Were Watching God (NS)  
Hemenway, "Crayon Enlargements of Life" (ZNH 231-245)  
Tu 4/2 Their Eyes Were Watching God (NS)  
Th 4/4 Their Eyes Were Watching God (NS)  
Tu 4/9 Moses, Man of the Mountain (NS)  
Hemenway, "Voodoo Gods and Biblical Men" (ZNH 251-272)  
Th 4/11 Moses, Man of the Mountain (NS)  
Tu 4/16 Seraph on the Suwanee (NS)  
Hemenway, "Ambiguities of Self, Politics of Race" (ZNH 301-318)  
Th 4/18 Seraph on the Suwanee (NS)

## Description of Assignments

**Midterm Exam.** Th. 2/21. Written in class in a blue book. Identify and give a close reading of five out of eight quotations from Hurston's non-fiction. Worth 20 % of final grade.

**Final Exam.** Th 4/25. Written during exam period in a blue book. Identify and give a close reading of 10 out of 12 quotations from fiction of Hurston, Wright, Ellison, and Baldwin. Worth 25% of final grade.

**Hurstonian Journalism.** Due in class Thursday 1/31. Attend at least one event during the Zora Neale Hurston Festival in Eatonville, 1/24-1/27. Write a spirited essay describing the event and using some concept from Hurston's folklore writing to interpret and analyze your experience. **Minimum 1000 words.** Please choose an interesting title and follow correct MLA format, ie, type, double space, and number your pages, use 1" margins, use internal citation and include a Works Cited page. Worth 20% of final grade.

**Creative Final Project.** Due in class Th 4/18. Students prepare a final project that creatively responds to some aspect of the Zora Neale Hurston Era in African American literature. Typically, the best creative projects respond to a particular text by, for example, illustrating scenes from a story or several poems, writing music to go with a text, adapting a text to video, composing a dance piece, producing original writing in a style inspired by one of the assigned texts, etc. Students also compose a **750 word typed artist's statement** explaining the origins and goals of the project, how the project expresses a response to this period in African American literary history, and how successfully you feel you have realized your goals. Worth 20% of final grade.

**Email Discussion Questions.** Due once each week. Each week, you are required to submit three discussion questions to me at [zoraera@yahoo.com](mailto:zoraera@yahoo.com). Email questions are due by 12:00 noon on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Once we discuss a text in class, you may not submit discussion questions on that text. Worth 15% of final grade.

**Plus/Minus Grading.** The university has introduced a plus/minus grading system. The Hurstonian journalism assignment and creative project will receive letter grades with pluses and minuses as appropriate. The exams are scored 0-100 and will correspond to letter grades according to the following scale:

100-95	A
89-87	B+
86-84	B
83-80	B-
79-77	C+
79-78	C
73-70	C-
69-67	D+
66-64	D
63-60	D-
50-0	F

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