**African American Literature – Leah Allen**

**Email:** [**Leah.Allen@slps.org**](mailto:Leah.Allen@slps.org) **Plan Time & Office Hours: Monday through Friday 7:10 – 8:30 AM**

**Course Description:**

African American Literature is an elective course designed to build upon the reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking skills students have learned previously. Upon successful completion of this class students will be able better use the texts they read to make meaningful connections about how complex ideas interact and develop within that text They will also be more fully able to connect those larger themes and ideas to others works, their own lives, and the larger global community. Students will read and evaluate the claims made by authors make as well as to determine whether the claims are valid and well supported with sufficient, credible evidence. Students will conduct literary analysis which focuses on a central topic and is well supported with relevant examples, facts, and details. They will be expected to work collaboratively with peers to engage in meaningful discussion and share ideas and information they have discovered through reading and research. Students will write in multiple styles throughout the year including narrative, expository, and persuasive. Students will conduct a research project which helps them to put the material they are studying into a broader social context. Students will use diverse formats and technologies to present these and other projects.

**Course Goals:**

By the end of this course, students will not only have gained a deep appreciation for the contributions African American authors have made to literature, but also honed the critical thinking, communication, and cultural awareness skills that are essential for success in an interconnected and diverse world.

1. **Cultural Exploration:** Students will explore a range of literary works from different cultures, developing an understanding of the historical, social, and cultural contexts that shape each piece.
2. **Critical Analysis:** Through rigorous textual analysis, students will enhance their ability to identify literary techniques, themes, and symbols, enabling them to engage in meaningful discussions and written reflections.
3. **Global Perspective:** By studying literature from diverse regions, students will gain a broader worldview and learn to appreciate the rich tapestry of human experiences, values, and beliefs.
4. **Empathy and Understanding:** Reading narratives from various cultural backgrounds will cultivate empathy by allowing students to step into the shoes of characters with unique perspectives and challenges.
5. **Effective Communication:** Through class discussions, presentations, and written assignments, students will refine their communication skills, articulating their thoughts with clarity and precision.

**Resources:**

The primary text for the course are listed below. Students will also read supplemental texts in the form of nonfiction articles, poems, and short stories. These will be supplied by the school, photocopied, or presented as PDFs on the school’s website. Students may choose to purchase their own copy of any text to annotate directly in it.

**Required Materials**

·A dedicated notebook and folder or binder for this class to ensure that all material s

·A set of highlighters or colored pencils for color marking/revising

·Post-in notes for annotating books

**Texts:**

1. *Things Fall Apart* – Chinua Achebe
2. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* – Harriet Jacobs
3. *Kindred* – Octavia Butler
4. *Passing* – Nella Larson
5. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* – Zora Neale Hurston
6. *Sula* – Toni Morrison
7. Selection of poems, short stories, myths, and folktales from various authors and time periods

**Class Assessment and Daily Work:**

All of the work in African American Literature will be assigned a point value. The number of points earned during a grading period will be divided by the total number of points possible to give a percentage grade. As per Metro policy, letter grades will be given as follows:

1. 90%-100% = A
2. 80%-89% = B
3. 70%-79% = C
4. 69% ↓ = F

**Class discussion and participation:** Daily participation is an expectation. is crucial to a richer, deeper understanding of the text. Students must be prepared to contribute to these discussions.

**Oral presentations:** Students will participate in a variety of presentations throughout the year. These will be both individual and group presentations. Points will vary depending on the assignment.

**Journaling/Close reading annotation notes:** Students are highly encouraged to keep a reader’s journal and annotate their texts whenever possible, whether it’s with notes or highlighting on a PDF or post-it notes in a physical book. Students may choose to purchase physical copies of the books we read so they can annotate directly in the book. We will spend time learning how to effectively annotate a text. These notes will be an invaluable resources for papers, projects, and presentations throughout the year.

**Written papers of literary analysis:** 3-4 page literary analyses (approx. 100 points, scoring guides will always be given in advance detailing assessment and point value for the assessment) will be assigned throughout the year. Shorter written responses of 1 or 2 page as well as creative writing assignments will also be given.

**Tests and quizzes:** Regular reading quizzes will be given throughout the year. Essay test grades are usually 50 points, reading quizzes vary more—anywhere from 10 points to 25 points. Vocabulary and writing skills: Over the course of the year, short lessons will be given over specific vocabulary or literary terms, rhetorical elements, and grammar skills.

**Classroom Procedures:**

**Attendance & Tardiness:** All students are expected to be in class on time each day. IB practice assessments, reading quizzes, and opening activities will be given regularly at the beginning of class to encourage prompt arrival.

**Make-Up Policy:** Students will be allowed to make up work that they missed due to an excused absence, but it is the student’s responsibility to find out what work was missed. Tests or quizzes may only be made up outside of regular class time and only by appointment. Under normal circumstances, make up work due to absence must be made up as soon as possible and no later than a week after the date missed.

**Late Work:** Any work that is not turned in at the beginning of the class period in which it is due will be subject to a 10% deduction in points. Work that is not turned by the end of a unit will not be accepted. Please speak to me if you need more time on an assignment or need help in any way. I am very understanding as long as you are being proactive and advocating for what you need.

**Cheating/Plagiarism:** Fundamental to the teaching and learning process is the student’s integrity and honesty. Teachers and administrators expect that all work be entirely the result of the student’s own efforts.

Metro has extremely high regard for academic integrity and, as such, has zero tolerance for any and all forms of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to, all forms of cheating on any assessments, essays, or assignments (copying, taking pictures, group chats with answers, etc.), plagiarism, and any other unethical academic behavior. Any student in violation will receive no credit (zero/F letter grade), a family meeting will be scheduled, and a notation of the violation will be in the student’s school record.

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as Chat GPT, has the potential for misuse and often borders on plagiarism. At Metro, we utilize Turnitin to disrupt plagiarism and ensure the integrity of ALL student work. If it is deemed that a student has used any AI tool to complete an assignment, the student will receive no credit (zero/F letter grade), a family meeting will be scheduled, as well as a notation of the violation in the student’s school record.

Any academic dishonesty violation will affect recommendations written by the school for any student applying for post-secondary institutions, scholarships, and other educational programs.

**Cell Phones/Tablets and Laptops:** While cell phones are not prohibited in the classroom, there are certain rules that must be followed. In normal classroom procedures, cell phones and other electronic devices should not be out or utilized. Playing games, texting, or using social media is prohibited. However, with the instructor’s permission, some cell phone and device usage is acceptable during class. If a student has been asked to put a cell phone/device away and they do not comply, the device may be confiscated and returned at the end of the school day or given to the administration for a parent meeting. For example, looking up a definition or doing quick research during lass discussion is usually acceptable. Any student caught using a cell phone during a test (or any time the class has been specifically instructed to have phones stored away) will receive an automatic zero on that assessment.

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**Please detach the bottom portion of this document and sign it after you have read and discussed it with your student. Please print your student’s name in the parenthesis on the line below and have them sign next to the bottom line.**

My student (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) and I have reviewed the class syllabus and are aware to the polices for this course.

Parent/Guardian Signature   \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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