

**Syllabus: International Studies 384, English 384, American Studies 394  
Macalester College, Spring 2009**

**Langston Hughes: Global Writer**

Instructor: David Chioni Moore  
Class: T-Th 3:00 – 4:30, Carnegie 404  
Office hours: Tues-Thurs 100 to 230, in Carnegie 410, and by appointment  
Contacts: w: 696-6242 h: 647-1655, 9 am to 9 pm mooredc@macalester.edu

*Introduction:* The great African American writer Langston Hughes (1902-1967) is widely remembered as the “poet laureate of the Harlem Renaissance.” Though richly true, this title masks Hughes’ remarkably wide-ranging and internationalist career. He published in every imaginable genre – children’s story, humor, novel, memoir, drama, song lyric, history, and more – and collaborated with writers from Latin America, Soviet Central Asia, Africa and the Francophone Caribbean. He was also the first black writer of any nation to make his living exclusively from writing. This course ranges chronologically and widely through Hughes’s career, attending to multiple dynamics. Written assignments may include research on little-known or archival texts, making use of materials not available to the general public.

*Recommended Preparation:* Students should come to the course with good background in one or more of a) literary (especially but not only poetry) studies, b) American race studies, and c) international or global studies. Nobody is expected to have all three – but the class as a whole will embody all of these preparations.

*Course Conduct:* The class will be run as a joint exploration, rather than a dispensation of information. Classes will feature close reading and discussion of texts and research.

*Assignments/Evaluation:*

- |   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| a. preliminary paper  | ungraded, but an absolute requirement |
| b. <i>your</i> poem in a style or spirit of Hughes (minimum grade A-) | 3%                                    |
| c. brief oral recitation of poetry by Hughes                          | 5%                                    |
| d. presentation of a book by Hughes not on the syllabus               | 5%                                    |
| e. first paper (5-6 pages)  | 15%                                   |
| f. second paper (5-6 pages)   | 15%                                   |
| g. active and insightful class participation                          | 24%                                   |
| h. longer (12-15 page) final research paper                           | 33%                                   |

*Notes:* Timely class attendance is integral to the course and its grade. Inform me in advance of conflict with any religious holidays or any relevant disabilities; we’ll arrange acceptable alternatives and/or accommodations, and your grades will be unaffected.

*Paper format:* physical and not email submission. Double-spaced, *numbered pages*, stapled, 1” margins all around, 12-point font. A title page with a good title, and then your name, course title, my name, and date. Generous acknowledgments of all contributors, works, and sources used at the end of the paper. I assume your font gives you 300 or more words per page. Papers are due under my office door by the day and time noted, and drop 1/2 grade per day from that point. Further writing requirements and suggestions are posted on my website. RTFM.

**How to read the schedule:**

The date listed for each week is the Tuesday our T-Th class. Unless otherwise specified, have all of the reading for that week completed by your arrival to the Tuesday class.

**Schedule:**

- 1 J27 Tu: Introduction of course and participants; brief L.H. history  
→ preliminary 2-pg paper due Wednesday, January 28th, at 1:00 pm  
Th: pre-Hughes poems by Wheatley, Dunbar, McKay, Cullen, and others  
Hughes poetry of the 1920s
- 2 F3 Hughes' landmark 1920s poetry, plus "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain"
- 3 F10 American analysis: *The Ways of White Folks* (short stories), 1934
- 4 F17 The first autobiography: *The Big Sea: The U.S., Africa, Europe, Mexico*, 1940
- 5 F24 Radical Internationalism I: Poems from the 1930s  
→ First paper (5-6 pp, reading in detail) due Friday Feb 27, 1 pm under my office door
- 6 M3 Radical Internationalism II: *A Negro Looks at Soviet Central Asia*, 1934
- 7 M10 Political and social journalism from the 1940s to the 60s:  
Hughes in the *Chicago Defender*, and other essays  
  
→ [spring break, week of March 17th – no class]
- 8 M24 Poems from the 1940s, and selected Hughes essays including 1953 Senate testimony
- 9 M31 Critical humor from the 40s to the 60s: *The Return of Simple*  
→ Second paper due (5-6 pp.) due Friday April 3rd, 1:00 pm under my office door
- 10 A7 Global autobiography, 1931 to 1938: *I Wonder as I Wander*, 1956
- 11 A14 Poems from the 1950s: *Montage of a Dream Deferred*  
→ one-page prospecti for final papers due in class Tuesday
- 12 A21 Letters with South African writers, 1953-1967  
→ four-page unstapled outline for final papers due in class Tuesday  
Thurs: final paper presentations/workshop
- 13 A28 Poems from the 1960s  
Thurs: final paper presentations/workshop
- 14 M5 Concluding class on Tuesday

Macalester classes end Tuesday May 5th. Finals period, Thurs-Mon May 7-11

**Final papers due Friday May 8, by 1:00 pm under my office door.**

**Course Books: seven to buy, and two provided in manuscript by the instructor**

1. *African-American Poetry : An Anthology, 1773-1927*. Ed. Joan R. Sherman. Mineola, NY: Dover Thrift Editions, 1997.
2. *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes*, ed. Arnold Rampersad and David Roessel. New York: Vintage, 1995.
3. *The Ways of White Folks: Stories* [1934]. New York: Vintage, 1990.
4. *The Big Sea: An Autobiography* [1940]. New York: Hill and Wang, 1993.
5. *Langston Hughes and the Chicago defender: Essays on Race, Politics, and Culture, 1942-62*. Ed. Christopher C. De Santis. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1995.
6. *The Return of Simple*. Ed. Akiba Sullivan Harper. New York: Hill and Wang, 1994.
7. *I Wonder as I Wander: An Autobiographical Journey* [1956]. New York: Hill and Wang, 1993.
8. *A Negro Looks at Soviet Central Asia* [1934]. Revised and expanded text edited by David Chioni Moore, with the assistance of Jennifer A. Bouta, 2008.
9. *From Harlem to Johannesburg: Letters Between Langston Hughes and Pioneering South African Writers, 1953-1967*. Manuscript in progress by David Chioni Moore with the assistance of Harmony S. O'Rourke and Kristen A. Harkness, 2008.

**Reading assignment for Thursday, January 29th:**

I have asked you to purchase the inexpensive *African-American Poetry: An Anthology, 1773-1927*, so we may learn a bit about Hughes's poetic precursors. Since the book is short – just 78 small-format pages – I encourage you to explore the entire text. However, within that totality, you should closely read, at minimum, these 21 poems:

Wheatley	On Being Brought from Africa to America
Horton	Liberty and Slavery
Simpson	Away to Canada, To the White People of America
Harper	Bury Me in a Free Land, To the Union Savers of Cleveland, Learning to Read
Bell	from <i>A Poem Entitled the Day and the War</i>
McClellan	The Feet of Judas
Cotter	Dr. Booker T. Washington to the National Negro Business League
Campbell	'Sciplinin' Sister Brown
Corrothers	Paul Laurence Dunbar, An Indignation Dinner
Johnson	O Black and Unknown Bards
Dunbar	Sympathy, An Ante-Bellum Sermon, The Poet
McKay	The Harlem Dancer, If We Must Die
Toomer	Georgia Dusk
Cullen	From the Dark Tower