

**Syllabus: International Studies, English, & American Studies 384**  
**Macalester College, Fall 2017**

**Langston Hughes: Global Writer**

Instructor: David Chioni Moore  
Class: T-Th 8:00 – 9:30 a.m., Carnegie 404  
Office hours: T-Th 9:45-11:00, and by appointment; signup sheet on my office door, C410  
Contact: 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’ wide-ranging and internationalist career. He published in every imaginable genre – novel, memoir, drama, children’s story, humor, song lyric, politics, and more – and collaborated with writers from Latin America, Soviet Central Asia, Africa and the francophone Caribbean. He was also the first black writer in English to make his living exclusively from writing. This course ranges widely and chronologically through Hughes’s career, attending to multiple dynamics. 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 two of a.) literary studies (especially but not only poetry), 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 B+)	3%
c. brief oral recitation of poetry by Hughes (minimum grade B)	3%
d. presentation of a book by Hughes not on the syllabus	7%
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:* See my full roster of paper format requirements and writing advice, found in a PDF on my homepage, linked off the I.S. faculty page. You must follow all format requirements. This includes, but is not limited to, double-spacing, numbered pages, 1” margins all around, 12-point font, un-numbered title page with a good title, and generous acknowledgements of all support and works used at the paper’s end. Physical papers are due under my office door by the day and time noted, and drop 1/2 grade per day from that point.

### How to read the schedule:

The date listed for each week is the Tuesday of our T-Th class. Unless otherwise noted, complete all the reading for that week by your arrival to Tuesday's class.

### Schedule:

- 1 S5 Tu: Introduction of course and participants; brief L.H. history  
→ preliminary 2-pg paper due Wednesday, Sept 6th, at noon  
Th: pre-Hughes poems by Wheatley, Dunbar, McKay, Cullen, and others; plus one or two early Hughes poems
- 2 S12 Hughes' landmark 1920s poetry, plus "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain"
- 3 S19 American analysis: *The Ways of White Folks* (short stories), 1934
- 4 S26 The first autobiography: *The Big Sea* (1940): the U.S., Africa, Europe, Mexico
- 5 O3 Radical Internationalism I: Poems from the 1930s  
→ First paper (5-6 pp) due Friday October 6, 1:00 pm under my office door
- 6 O10 Radical Internationalism II: *A Negro Looks at Soviet Central Asia*, 1934  
(Thursday's class will include a 30-minute writing workshop)
- 7 O17 Political and social journalism from the 1940s to the 1960s:  
Hughes in the *Chicago Defender*, and other essays  
→ no class Thursday 10/19; DCM in New England
- 8 O24 *Chicago Defender*, day 2, plus writing workshop  
→ no class Thursday 10/26: Fall Break
- 9 O31 Critical humor from the 40s to the 60s: *The Return of Simple*  
→ Second paper due (5-6 pp.) due Friday Nov 3rd, 1:00 pm under my office door
- 10 N7 Global autobiography, 1931 to 1938: *I Wonder as I Wander*, 1956  
final paper assignment distributed Tuesday 11/7
- 11 N14 Tues: poems from the 1940s  
Thurs: poems from the 1950s: *Montage of a Dream Deferred* (day 1 of 2)
- 12 N21 Tues: *Montage of a Dream Deferred* (day 2 of 2)  
→ 300w final paper prospecti due Tuesday 11/21 by 1pm; DCM responds that eve  
→ no class Thursday Nov 23rd: Thanksgiving
- 13 N28 Tues: Hughes's 1953 Senate testimony  
Thurs: poems from the 1960s (and a few Baraka and Brooks comparisons)  
→ five copies of four-page outline/start of final papers due in class 11/30
- 14 D5 Tues: final paper workshop in small groups  
Thurs: Letters with South African writers, 1953-1967
- 14 D12 Concluding class Tuesday, Dec 12th

Macalester classes end Wednesday Dec 13th. Finals period, Sat-Wed Dec 16-20

**Final papers due Saturday, Dec 16th, by 2:00 pm.**

**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, manuscript, 2012.
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, 2012.

**Reading assignment in Hughes's precursors:**

I have asked you to purchase the inexpensive *African-American Poetry: An Anthology, 1773-1927*, so we may sample Hughes's poetic precursors. Since the book is short (just 78 small-format pages) I encourage you to read it all. However, within that, 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