

Here is an example of an excellent proposal. This one was submitted by Taylor Mallory, and her project is directed by Dr. Barbara McCaskill.

20th CENTURY SOUTHERN AFRICAN AMERICAN PROSE:

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To become familiar with the major Southern African American writers of the 20th century and their works.
2. To write critically about common themes and symbols in Southern African American Literature.
3. To gain an understanding of how early 20th-century black writers were discussing the South and how contemporary writers continue to respond to their insights.
4. To develop an understanding of the history of African American Literature in the South.

TOPIC DESCRIPTION:

Just as there is a distinct genre for Southern Literature, there is a distinct group of Southern African-American writers. Though the University offers classes in African-American Literature and Southern Literature, there is no class that focuses on the cultural issues and themes that Southern African-American writers deal with. I would like to attend graduate school at UNC-Chapel Hill, where I want to major in Southern Literature and possibly minor in African-American Literature, so I am very interested in gaining a deeper understanding of how the two genres overlap.

I studied several Southern African-American writers -- Zora Neale Hurston, Richard Wright, Alice Walker, and Ernest Gaines -- in my high school AP English classes. I have also taken a few classes here in which I have been exposed to some of these writers: Dr. Bernstein's "Multicultural American Literature" (ENGL 1030), Dr. Kibler's "American Literature: 1865-Present" (ENGL 2380H), and Dr. Eberle's "Introduction to English Studies" (ENGL 3000). However, I would really like the opportunity to study these writers, their literary traditions, and the historical context of their writings in more depth.

Dr. McCaskill and I have prepared a syllabus of readings by writers representative of all the Southern states, except for Virginia, Arkansas, and Kentucky. Also, she has provided me a list of secondary sources for biographical, historical, and cultural research. I plan to write 2-3 page response papers on each author as well as a final 15-page research paper on this topic, possibly to expand on later for my honors' thesis.

STATEMENT OF CONTACT HOURS:

Meetings with Dr. Barbara McCaskill every other week for an hour each session.

TIMELINE:

Weeks 1-4: Post Reconstruction Era through Harlem Renaissance

Weeks 5-9: Civil Rights Era

Weeks 10-13: Contemporary "Post-Black" Literature

Weeks 14-15: Wrap-Up

Weeks 14-15: Finish Research Paper

ASSIGNMENTS:

2-3 pp. typewritten response to each reading, summarizing the biography and career highlights of the writer and major themes and symbols in the book

15 pp. final research paper

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

I. PRIMARY SOURCES

Weeks 1-2 : Selected readings from the following books:

Chesnutt, Charles. *The Wife of His Youth* . New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1899.

Chesnutt, Charles. *Conjure Woman Stories* . North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1993.

Cooper, Anna Julia. *A Voice from the South* . New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Washington, Booker T. *Up from Slavery* . New York: Avon Books, 1965.

Du Bois, W. E. B. *Souls of Black Folk* . New York: Avon Books, 1965.

Toomer, Jean. *Cane* . New York: Modern Library, 1994.

Weeks 3-4:

Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God* . New York: Perennial Library, 1990.

Jonah's Gourd Vine . Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1971

Week 5:

Wright, Richard. *Black Boy* . New York: Harper and Row, 1945.

Week 6:

Walker, Margaret. *Jubilee* . Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1966.

Week 7-8:

Walker, Alice. *Meridians* . New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanich, 1976.

You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down. (selected stories) New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanich, 1981.

In Love and Trouble . (selected stories) London: Women's Press, 1973.

Week 9:

Gaines, Ernest. A Lesson Before Dying . New York: Knopf, 1993.

Bloodlines . (selected stories) New York: Dial Press, 1968.

Week 10:

Kenan, Randall. A Visitation of the Spirits . New York: Grove Press, 1989.

Selections from Albert Murray, Train Whistle Guitar .

Week 11:

Youngblood, Shay. The Big Mama Stories . New York: Firebrand Books, 1989.

Andrews, Raymond. Appalachee Red . Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1987.

Week 12:

Ansa, Tina. Baby of the Family . San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989

Week 13:

Dixon, Melvin. Trouble the Water . Boulder: University of Colorado: Fiction Collective Two, 1989

Selections from Tayari Jones, Leaving Atlanta .

II. SECONDARY SOURCES:

Andrews, William L., ed. Literature of the American South: A Norton Anthology . New York: W.W. Norton, 1998.

Dixon, Melvin. Ride Out the Wilderness: Geography and Identity in African American Literature . Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr. The Signifying Monkey. New York: Oxford University Press, 1988.

Griffin, Farah Jasmine. Who Set You Flowing?: The African American Migration Narrative . New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Harris-Lopez, Trudier. Power of the Porch: The Storytellers Craft in Zora Neale Hurston, Gloria Naylor, and Randall Kenan . Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996.

Harris-Lopez, Trudier. *South of Tradition: Essays on African American Literature* . Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2002.

Hubbard, Dolan. *The Sermon Tradition of African American Literature* . Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1994.

Ketchim, Susan, ed. *The Christ-Haunted Landscape: Faith and Doubt in Southern Fiction* . Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994.

Ladell, Payne. *Black Novelists and Southern Literary Tradition* . Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981.

Stepto, Robert. *From Behind the Veil: A Study of Afro-American Narrative* . Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1979.

Sundquist, Eric J. *To Wake the Nations: Race in the Making of American Literature* . Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993.

Walker, Alice. *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens: Womanist Prose* . London: Women's, 2000.