Variations on Black Themes, an introductory course in the study of black literature, permits students to make cursory examination of representative works of many black writers for the purpose of identifying major writers and recurring themes. The course content includes: introduction to some works of major Black American authors; identification of lesser known writers; identification of recurring themes, such as "on the beauty of blackness", "love is a sometimes thing", "to be free", "as we lay dying", and "the black woman"; and finally, comparison of various writers' attitudes toward the identified themes. An 8-page listing of resource materials is included. (CL)
AUTHORIZED COURSE OF INSTRUCTION FOR THE QUINMESTER PROGRAM

DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DIVISION OF INSTRUCTION 1971

LANGUAGE ARTS
Variations on Black Themes
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VARIATIONS ON BLACK THEMES

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5116.11

English, Black Literature

Written by Gloria D. Randolph
for the
DIVISION OF INSTRUCTION
Dade County Public Schools
Miami, Florida
1971
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Miami, Florida 33132

Published by the Dade County School Board
COURSE TITLE: VARIATIONS ON BLACK THEMES

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course permits students to make cursory examination of representative works of many black writers for the purpose of identifying major writers and recurring themes in the literature of black Americans.

I. PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

A. Having studied selected poems, short stories, novels and essays written by black Americans, the student will identify the writers by name and work studied.

B. Given several prose or poetic works having the same general theme, the student will identify the major conflicts in each.

C. Having identified recurring themes in prose works, poems, or films, the student will differentiate between the attitudes of various writers toward a given theme.

II. COURSE CONTENT

A. Rationale

Variations on Black Themes is primarily an introductory course in the study of black literature, which is here defined as writings by black Americans. The major purpose of the course is to briefly explore the works of some of the representative black writers of America. At this point it should be noted that no attempt has been made here to present this course as a chronological study of black writings. Further, the course purposely does not include the writings of all noted black authors; however, because some teachers may have greater access to these materials than others, each teacher who presents this course is invited to make other or additional choices of materials.

Much valuable information concerning the African heritage as well as biographical and historical information about black American writers can be found in Dade County Bulletin 9K, Negro History and Culture. For additional titles, activities, and reference materials, teachers may want to refer to the quinnmester courses "The Harlem Renaissance" and "The Black Novelist in America."
It is emphasized that teachers should read the selections included in this course before attempting to use them in their classes with their students. In some of these works, the reader will find some profane language. Additionally, there may be in some a few scenes which graphically depict sex, violence, and unmitigated criticism of some long held traditions and ideals. For the most part the protagonists of these stories face a culture conflict; that is they have to decide whether their first loyalty is to their racial group or to the country in which they are too often made to feel alien.

It is hoped that just as many real life differences are being confronted, studied, and accepted, diverse strands, including the writings of blacks, will soon truly be represented in all of what is called American literature.

B. Range of content

1. Introduction to some works of major writers including Langston Hughes, J. Saunders Redding, Arna Bontemps, James Weldon Johnson, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Charles Chestnutt, Richard Wright and James Baldwin.

2. Identification of lesser known writers including Zora Neale Hurston, Mari Evans, Don Lee, Robert Hayden, and others.

3. Identification of recurring themes in the writings of black authors. Themes included in the course are:
   a. On the Beauty of Blackness
   b. Love Is a Sometimes Thing
   c. To Be Free
   d. As We Lay Dying
   e. The Black Woman

4. Comparison of various writers' attitudes toward the identified themes.
C. Projects

1. Have students find pictures of well-known black writers and make a bulletin board display.

2. Have students who can secure cameras photograph scenes of black life. Encourage students to construct from the pictures a montage of black life as seen through student eyes. Monitor the project to make sure that the resulting montage is tasteful and does not alienate racial groups within the class.

3. Provide materials on the backgrounds of writers. Present interesting highlights from these materials to stimulate student reading.

D. Lectures

1. Avoid detailed lectures on the chronological development of black literature. Stress the experience of literature approach.

2. Develop a brief lecture to use as introductory or explanatory material in conjunction with each theme.

III. TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective A. Having studied selected poems, short stories, novels and essays written by black Americans, the student will identify the writers by name and by work studied.

1. Have students listen to "Thank you, M'am" by Langston Hughes from the recording Insights - Themes and Writers from Webster-McGraw-Hill Book Company.

2. Employing the techniques used in the recording of this story, (Narrator, character dialogue, background music, and sound effects) have several groups of students record in the same manner one or more of the following stories from The Best Short Stories by Negro Writers:
   
   "The Revolt of the Evil Fairies" by Ted Poston
   "Junkie-Joe Had Some Money" by Ronald Milner
   "The Sheriff's Children" by Charles Chesnutt
   "A Summer Tragedy" by Arna Bontemps
   "The Only Man on Liberty Street" by William Melvin Kelley
3. Play the student recordings to the entire class.

4. Assign oral reading of poems such as "We Real Cool" by Gwendolyn Brooks, "The Rebel" by Mari Evans, "We Wear the Mask" by Paul L. Dunbar, "The Whipping" by Robert Hayden and "Me and the Mule" by Langston Hughes from I Am the Darker Brother.

5. Make available to the class such anthologies as I Am the Darker Brother, Kaleidoscope, The Scholastic Black Literature Series, God's Trombones, Black Fire, The Panther and the Lash, Dark Symphony, Black Voices, and New Negro Poets, U.S.A. Permit students a free reading period of 20 minutes at least twice per week.

6. Provide a few copies of Ask Your Mama by Langston Hughes. Students who have musical instruments might try setting the jazz lyrics to rock music. Ask students to compare some of the themes found in jazz lyrics to those found in rock lyrics.

7. Play side 1 "Plantation Slavery" from the album Chains of Slavery, EBEC. Have students respond to the following questions:
   a. In "Deep River" the slave sings longingly of Africa. How much alike were the feelings of blacks for Africa and whites for Europe? How unlike were they?
   b. Why did so many slave songs like "Jacob's Ladder" and "Jericho" refer to the Bible?
   c. Do you agree with Fanny Kemble when she says that compared to the moral burden of the slaveholder "the most wretched slave is worthy of envy?" Explain your point of view.

8. For able readers, provide copies of Puttin' on Ole Massa. Assign each student to read one of the slave narratives in this book and give a brief resume of the narratives. Lead a class discussion in which the lives of Henry Bibb, William Welles Brown, and Solomon Northrup are compared. Have students comment on the style in which the narratives are written.

9. Play side 2 "Breaking the Chains" from the album Chains of Slavery, EBEC.
10. Have students write a theme in which they describe the plans and emotions of a slave about to be freed by his owner. An alternate approach to the writing could be the recounting of the emotions and plans of a slave about to break free and run away.

11. Arrange a showing of Parts 1 and 2 of the film *Where Is Prejudice?* Lead the class in a discussion of the major points made in the film. (This film is available from Dade County Audio Visual Services. Catalogue numbers are Part 1 - 1-31614 and Part 2 - 1-31619.)

12. Have the class read the short story "The Convert" by Lerone Bennett in *American Negro Short Stories*. Ask for volunteers to role play the story.

13. Assign the reading of "The Creation" or "Go Down Death" by James Weldon Johnson from *God's Trombones*. Ask a male student to read the portions spoken by the minister. Assign other members of the class to read the parts of the congregation.

14. Have students read from *Black Miser* by Langston Hughes. Then ask students to complete several of their own versions of Black is...in writing. The funniest or most ironic sayings can be illustrated to form a bulletin board display.

15. Conduct a choral reading of "For My People" by Margaret Walker from *Major Black Writers* - Scholastic Black Literature Series.

16. Read or have a student read to the class, "Jack and the Devil's Daughter" by Julius Lester, p. 16 and "How John Boscoe Outsung the Devil" by Arthur P. Davis, p. 38 in *The Scene*, Black Scholastic Literature Series. Lead a class discussion with the following questions:

   a. What particular attributes did the devil have in each of the stories?

   b. What other stories have students read in which the hero made a pact with the devil?

   c. Describe the devil.

   d. What, in each story, prevented the hero from being defeated?
Those students who wish to do so may write a modern fable in which the devil is the villain.

17. Assign as independent study the reading of the poetry of any one writer by individual students. Include in the listing such poets as Countee Cullen, Langston Hughes, Margaret Walker, Don Lee, and Mari Evans. Include other poets if desired, however, keep the listing small enough so that several students can read the same poet, therefore enabling group work. Assign students to work in groups on a designated day. Let students group themselves according to the authors that they have read in order to discuss the poems. One student in each group might give a biographical sketch of the poet he has read. Next, alternate the groups so that each student has the advantage of hearing about more than one poet.

18. According to age and reading level of students, assign outside reading of one of the novels listed below. Students should make oral or written book reports on the novels according to the teacher's specifications.

(Novels are listed in the order of difficulty of reading level and maturity of theme from easy to advanced levels.)

- The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou - Kristin Hunter
- Maud Martha - Gwendolyn Brooks
- The Learning Tree - Gordon Parks
- The Hit - Julian Mayfield
- The Street - Ann Petry
- The Foxes of Harrow - Frank Yerby
- Not Without Laughter - Langston Hughes
- Knock on Any Door - Willard Motley
- Jubilee - Margaret Walker
- Beetlecreek - William Demby
- The Landlord - Kristin Hunter
Have students as a group respond to the novels through the writing of book reviews, by role playing short episodes or by writing and producing short plays based on the novels.

Have students read some of the earlier poems of Hughes such as "American Heartbreak," "As I Grew Older," "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "The Weary Blues," and "As Befits a Man" from Selected Poems by Langston Hughes. Next have students read "War," "Peace," "Jumumba's Grave," "Dinner Guest: Me," "Little Song on Housing" and "Impasse." Ask students to identify some factors in the changing social climate of America that may have influenced the tone of the last poems as contrasted with the first. The second group of poems can be found in The Panther and the Lash.

Ask students to choose one of the following essays, solely on the basis of the title. Have students read the essays that they choose and comment on the purpose and tone of the author. Students should carefully note the original date of publication of the essays that they read. Have students write a paragraph telling whether, after having chosen the essay on the basis of title alone, the content surprised them or was what they expected.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essay</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Source</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>b. &quot;I'll Never Escape the Ghetto&quot;</td>
<td>Stanley Sanders</td>
<td>Black Voices</td>
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<tr>
<td>c. &quot;The White Race and Its Heroes&quot;</td>
<td>Eldridge Cleaver</td>
<td>Soul on Ice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d. &quot;Cold, Hurt, and Sorrow&quot;</td>
<td>Leroi Jones</td>
<td>Black American Literature: Essays</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Author</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>e.</td>
<td>&quot;Fooling Our White Folks&quot;</td>
<td>Langston Hughes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f.</td>
<td>&quot;What the Negro Thinks of the South&quot;</td>
<td>George Schuyler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g.</td>
<td>&quot;The Talented Tenth&quot;</td>
<td>Arna Bontemps</td>
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<tr>
<td>h.</td>
<td>&quot;My Dungeon Shook&quot;</td>
<td>James Baldwin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i.</td>
<td>&quot;The Souls of Black Folk&quot;</td>
<td>W.E.B. DuBois</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>j.</td>
<td>&quot;Black Bourgeoisie&quot;</td>
<td>E. Franklin Frazier</td>
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<tr>
<td>k.</td>
<td>The Fire Next Time</td>
<td>James Baldwin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

22. Use the following checklist or some similar device to keep the class aware of its progress. It is preferable that the checklist not be used as a test, but rather as a stimulus.
BLA W RITERS - A CHECKLIST

Directions: Check one blank in Column I to indicate whether or not you are familiar with the names of the writers. Check one or more blanks in Column II to indicate the genre in which the writer is recognized.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Writer</th>
<th>Column I</th>
<th>Column II</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>familiar</td>
<td>unfamiliar</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Saunders Redding</td>
<td></td>
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<td>2. James Baldwin</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Julian Mayfield</td>
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<td>4. Charles Chestnutt</td>
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<td>5. Robert Hayden</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Margaret Walker</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Leroi Jones</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Claude McKay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Countee Cullen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Paul Laurence Dunbar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Arna Bontemps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Zora Neale Hurston</td>
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<td>14. William Melvin Kelley</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Mari Evans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>16. Eldridge Cleaver</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17. Jean Toomer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Ralph Ellison</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Kristin Hunter</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Langston Hughes</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Objective B. Given several prose works or poems which deal with the same general theme, the student will identify the major conflicts in these works.

1. Have students briefly review the elements of fiction including theme, conflict, tone, and point of view.

2. Through readings, discussion, or written exercises, assist the students in differentiating between conflict and theme.

3. When introducing a poem or short story in which there is much new vocabulary, try to use methods of vocabulary study that do not depend largely upon daily word study from the dictionary. Use the words in familiar sentences on the chalkboard, or use context clues as much as possible.

4. For students who read below the level of the selection to be studied, tape record poems or portions of the stories so that all students can benefit from hearing, if not from reading, the selection.

5. Read to the students or have the students read several of the following selections

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Day I Learned</td>
<td>Dick Gregory</td>
<td>Easing into Life -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shame&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Crossroads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Cross&quot;</td>
<td>Langston Hughes</td>
<td>I Am The Darker Brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Closed Door&quot;</td>
<td>David N. Peery</td>
<td>The Journey - Scholastic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Merry Go-Round&quot;</td>
<td>Langston Hughes</td>
<td>I Am the Darker Brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;My Brother Went to</td>
<td>Frank Yerby</td>
<td>Black American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>Literature: Fiction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Through discussion, help the students identify the protagonist and antagonist in each selection.

6. Play the last three minutes of the record I Have A Dream" (20th Century Fox Records). Ask the students to list five well known real life black vs. white conflicts mentioned in the speech. Have students give their opinions as to which of the conflicts have been resolved, or which have grown more rigid.
7. Write on the chalkboard "Poem (No Name No. 2)" by Nikki Giovanni from Black Out Loud. After students understand what the poet attempts to do through the repetition of words, have the students name the protagonist and antagonist of this work and name the conflict.

8. Have a student read to the class chapter VII "The 'Promise' of Education" from Black Rage by Grier and Cobb. Write the following statement on the board:

"One of the keystones in white America's justification of its exploitation of black people is the assumption that black men are stupid." p. 11.

Have students write a paragraph in which they agree or disagree with this statement by citing at least three points to support their positions. Have students recall several of the selections that they have read during the course and decide whether any of the authors supported this premise through their writing.

9. After assigning the different character parts to students, conduct an in-class reading of Act I - "The Drinking Gourd" by Lorraine Hansberry, in The Journey, Scholastic. At the end of the reading, ask students to compare through discussion the statement cited from Black Rage in activity #8 to the following statement:

"Our new government is founded upon the great truth that the Negro is not equal to the white man — that slavery is his natural and normal condition."

Alexander H. Stephens
Vice-President of the Confederacy

10. Have students rewrite any poem or short story from the viewpoint of the antagonist.

11. Have students examine the photographic essay "The Fontenelle Family" in Gordon Parks' Born Black as preparation for activity #12.
12. Have students read and discuss Stanley Sanders' "I'll Never Escape the Ghetto" in Black American Literature: Fiction. Have students contrast Sanders' viewpoint with those of the protagonists in Raisin in the Sun.

13. Have students read the following poems: "Dinner Guest: Me," "Bible Belt," "Little Song on Housing," "The Backlash Blues," and "A Dream Deferred" in The Panther and the Lash. Ask students to imagine each poem is a short story. Ask students to tell what the conflicts would be, and to name the supposed protagonists and antagonists of these imaginary stories.

14. Spend a portion of one class period reviewing with the students the major conflicts in the works already studied. Help the students compare the similarity of conflict in the different works discussed.

15. In discussion of any of selections listed in the preceding strategies, use the following questions as stimuli:

   a. Does the time in which the story is set have a particular history that is significant in the lives of black people?

   b. To what degree are the responses of characters in stories shaped by the history of oppression of blacks in America?

   c. Are there allusions in the story that are usually understood only by black people? (Some such allusions may be to foods, whites, love, voodoo, etc.)

   d. Are the despair and hopelessness that are projected in many of the stories an actual reflection of life as it is lived by blacks?

   e. Which universal human attitudes are revealed in the works?
Objective C. Having read or experienced selected works of prose and poetry, students will identify recurring themes in the several works.

[NOTE: LISTED BELOW ARE SEVERAL SUGGESTED THEMES WITH APPROPRIATE WORKS DESIGNATED AND SAMPLE TEACHING STRATEGIES GIVEN. NO ONE TEACHER IS EXPECTED TO USE ALL OF THE WORKS IN ANY ONE THEME. TEACHERS ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO DEVELOP OTHER THEMES TO USE IN THIS COURSE.]

**THEME I - ON THE BEAUTY OF BLACKNESS**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>GENRE</th>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
<th>SOURCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>poem</td>
<td>&quot;The Emancipation of George Hector&quot; (a colored turtle)</td>
<td>Mari Evans</td>
<td>I Am A Black Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poem</td>
<td>&quot;Me and the Mule&quot;</td>
<td>Langston Hughes</td>
<td>I Am the Darker Brother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poem</td>
<td>&quot;The Young Black and Beautiful in Pursuit of Ancient Freedreams&quot;</td>
<td>Mari Evans</td>
<td>I Am A Black Woman</td>
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<td>poem</td>
<td>&quot;Vive Noir&quot;</td>
<td>Mari Evans</td>
<td>I Am A Black Woman</td>
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<tr>
<td>poem</td>
<td>&quot;When in Rome&quot;</td>
<td>Mari Evans</td>
<td>I Am A Black Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poem</td>
<td>&quot;Who Can Be Born Black&quot;</td>
<td>Mari Evans</td>
<td>I Am A Black Woman</td>
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<td>short story</td>
<td>&quot;Debut&quot;</td>
<td>Kristin Hunter</td>
<td>Black American Literature: Fiction</td>
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<td>poem</td>
<td>&quot;Awareness&quot;</td>
<td>Don Lee</td>
<td>Black Out Loud</td>
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<td>poem</td>
<td>&quot;Black Is Best&quot;</td>
<td>Larry Thompson</td>
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<td>&quot;We Own the Night&quot;</td>
<td>Leroi Jones</td>
<td>Black Out Loud</td>
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<td>&quot;Poem (No Name No. 2)&quot;</td>
<td>Nikki Giovanni</td>
<td>Black Out Loud</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;But He Was Cool: or he even stopped for green lights&quot;</td>
<td>Don Lee</td>
<td>The Scene - Scholastic</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;Soul Food&quot;</td>
<td>Leroi Jones</td>
<td>The Scene - Scholastic</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;i used to wrap my white doll up in&quot;</td>
<td>Mae Jackson</td>
<td>Black Out Loud</td>
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<td>&quot;Black Is a Soul&quot;</td>
<td>Joseph White</td>
<td>I Am the Darker Brother</td>
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<td>&quot;Color&quot;</td>
<td>Langston Hughes</td>
<td>The Panther and the Lash</td>
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<td>&quot;Our Shining Black Prince&quot;</td>
<td>Ossie Davis</td>
<td>The Black Hero - Scholastic</td>
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<td>The Journey - Scholastic</td>
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<td>Raymond Patterson</td>
<td>The Journey - Scholastic</td>
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<td>&quot;The Visitation&quot;</td>
<td>Sun-Ra</td>
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<td>The Search - Scholastic</td>
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<td>Kristin Hunter</td>
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<td>Not Without Laughter</td>
<td>Langston Hughes</td>
<td>The Journey - Scholastic</td>
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<tr>
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<td>&quot;Not Any More&quot;</td>
<td>Eloise Greenfield</td>
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<tr>
<td>autobiography</td>
<td>Black Boy</td>
<td>Richard Wright</td>
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1. Read to the class "The Emancipation of George Hector" by Mari Evans. Ask students to tell whom or what George Hector represents.

2. Have students name some foods that are popularly known as "soul food." Ask how many of the foods are eaten largely or only by black people. Have students point out which soul foods are not "black" but regional (southern) such as fried chicken, collard greens, sweet potato pie, etc.

3. Have students read "Soul Food" by Leroi Jones in The Scene - Scholastic.

4. Have a student read to the class "When in Rome" by Mari Evans.

5. Assign a student to read "Not without Laughter" by Hughes (secure copy from public library). Have student report to the class on the novel. Other members of the class might question the student who makes the report as follows:
   a. What does the title of the book mean?
   b. How do the characters survive in their poor circumstances?
   c. What specific role does color play in the lives of the characters?

6. Have students read "Yet Do I Marvel" by Cullen. Ask students to explain the lines...

   "Yet do I marvel at this curious thing:
   To make a poet black and bid him sing!"

As counterpoint to this poem, read to the class Mari Evans' "Who Can Be Born Black." Have the class discuss the poem.

7. Read to the class "We Real Cool" by Gwendolyn Brooks. Have a student read "But He Was Cool: or he even stopped for green lights" by Don Lee. Explain or have a student explain what Lee means in the last line of his poem. Contrast Lee's admonition with the stereotype that black people are "cool".

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8. Have students read "Debut" by Kristin Hunter. After the reading, have students write a brief paper in which they give reactions to the following questions:

a. Why was Mrs. Simmons so harsh with Judy at the beginning of the story?

b. Why did Mrs. Simmons remind Judy that she would be the "poorest, darkest one" at the ball?

c. What did Judy learn from the conversation that the boys held under her window?

d. Why was Mrs. Simmons so proud of Judy after she was unkind to Ernest Lee?

9. Read to the class "I used to wrap my white doll up in" by Mae Jackson. Ask the students to explain the meaning of the poem. Assign as silent reading "Not Any More" by Eloise Greenfield in *The Journey* - Scholastic.

10. Assign the reading of "The Almost White Boy" by Motley and "The Only Man on Liberty Street" by Kelley to two small groups of able readers as an outside reading assignment. On a prearranged day, have these two groups discuss with each other the implications of these stories with reference to color. When asking the students to consider the following, try to have them avoid obvious or shallow answers.

   Although of different ages, what single discovery do Jim in Almost White Boy and Jennie in Only Man on Liberty Street make? How do you think this discovery affects each of their lives?

11. Mimeograph class copies of a group of poems from Theme I, On the Beauty of Blackness. Assign students to read the poems aloud to the class. Ask students to compare the attitudes of Cullen, Mae Jackson, Mari Evans and Langston Hughes toward the question of color as expressed through the poems.

12. Have students identify the speaker and the listener in a group of selected poems. Ask students to express their opinions as to why hatred is frequently expressed toward the "white you" in some of the poems.
13. Assign the reading of "The Soul Brothers and Sister Lou" as an out of class activity. Conduct in-class reading of selected portions that you think will appeal to your class depending on the age level. Ask students to point out instances of color prejudice in the novel. Have them speculate about this prejudice in reference to a "blue vein society" in reverse. Have students point out other instances of conflict in the story such as the generation gap.

14. Refer to the teacher's manuals of the Scholastic Black Literature Series for help in devising creative activities.

15. Secure back issues of such magazines as Ebony and Jet. Keep them in the classroom for students to read.

16. Have students read Louis Lomax's "The Emerging Tribe." Ask students to relate the essayist's ideas to the wearing of dashikis, afro hair styles, and the "black is beautiful" movement.
## THEME II - LOVE IS A SOMETIMES THING

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<td>&quot;Juke Box Love Song&quot;</td>
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<td>I Am The Darker Brother</td>
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1. When students have read a number of poems listed under Theme II - Love Is A Sometimes Thing, ask them to give opinions on the following:
   a. Why do many of these love poems reflect sadness?
   b. How do these poems differ from well known love poems in language and outlook?

2. Refer to Negro Literature for High School Students by Barbara Dods for additional titles to use in conjunction with the themes in this course.

3. Conduct a short class discussion on love. Stimulate thought with such questions as:
   a. What is love?
   b. How many kinds of love are there?
   c. What is the greatest kind of love?
   d. What inconveniences in life are caused by love?

4. Have students read "The Wife of His Youth" by Charles Chestnut. Lead a discussion of the story with the following questions:
   a. What was the "Blue Vein Society"?
   b. What quality did Liza Jane have that can be compared to a similar quality in Penelope of The Odyssey?
   c. Does the philosophy of the "Blue Vein Society" have much of a following today?
   d. Did Mr. Ryder reveal that Liza Jane was his wife out of love or pity?
   e. How did Mr. Ryder's friends feel toward him after he revealed that Liza Jane was his wife?
   f. Speculate about how Mr. Ryder's standing in the Blue Vein Society was affected by the return of Liza Jane.

5. Refer students who wish to do further reading on color caste within the black culture to "Black Bourgeoisie" by E. Franklin Frazier in Images of the Negro in America.
6. Ask students to bring to class some recordings by popular singers such as Nina Simone, Aretha Franklin and Dionne Warwick. Play the recordings. Ask students to identify love themes in the songs.

7. Refer to the Dialect Glossary in the teachers manual for The Search - Scholastic. Read "Miss Merlelee" and "Since You Went Away" to the class.

8. Have students read "A Summer Tragedy" by Arna Bontemps. Have students speculate why this story was included in the love theme. Refer students to questions in activity #1 of this theme.

9. Ask students to recall or reread the story "The Almost White Boy." Ask them what part love played between the main characters of the story.

10. Read "Magnets" by Cullen to the class. Discuss the literal meaning of the poem. Let students give their opinions about the idea of "feeling needed" as it relates to love.

11. Have students read "After the Winter" by McKay and "Another Time, Another Place" by Katie Cumbo. Ask students the following questions:
   a. What does "winter" symbolize in the first poem?
   b. Why in both poems is the time for love put off until later?

12. Ask students to write original poems on the theme of love.

13. After having students read "Where Have You Gone" by Mari Evans, have students tell why the poem appears on the page as it does. Have students write a short paragraph in which they imagine the life of the lovers before the man deserts the woman.

14. Have students who draw well illustrate some of the love poems. Make sure that students understand the literal meaning of the poems, but allow for fanciful or symbolic illustrations. Make a display of the drawings.
15. Assign a girl student to read "I Want to Die While You Love Me" by Georgia Johnson. Have students answer the following questions:

1. Why would one want to die while he is loved?
2. Is life preferable to death, even if one is not loved?
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<td>Frank Yerby</td>
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1. Read "Letter to His Nephew" by Baldwin to the students. Have them answer orally or in writing the following questions:

   a. Why does Baldwin address a letter of this type to James, a teen-aged boy?
   b. Who does James symbolize or represent?
   c. Who are the "innocents"?
   d. What are three main ideas that Baldwin wants his nephew to accept?
   e. Have students explain what they think Baldwin meant by quoting, "The very time I thought I was lost, my dungeon shook, and my chains fell off."

2. As a follow-up assignment, ask students to write a letter to an older or younger person explaining a serious subject such as how they should view militancy, police brutality, the hippie movement, the war in Asia, or new directions in the Black Movement.

3. Hold a class discussion on the topic "What Is Freedom." Let students question freely during the discussion. Point out some of the inequities of a "free" society. Speak about freedom with responsibility. Ask students to write answers to the following questions:

   a. Why can some elements of a society have more freedom than others?
   b. Why must freedom sometimes be limited?
   c. What is inner freedom?
   d. Why should a person's race affect his freedom?

4. Have students read "Middle Passage" by Robert Hayden. Have students look for irony in the poem. Point out to the students the lines in the poem that describe the African kings. Ask what part these kings played in the enslavement of their countrymen.

5. When students have read "My Brother Went to College," have them explain in discussion the following:
a. What seemingly insignificant incident made Mark realize that Matt was not really free despite his social and economic success?

b. Why did Mark laugh at Matt’s simple request?

c. What does Yerby mean when he has Mark refer to the incident as "one of the saddest things I ever heard of"?

6. Have students contrast in discussion the differences between the freedom sought by Frederick Douglass and other abolitionists with the search for freedom as expressed through the writing of James Baldwin, Langston Hughes and other contemporary writers.

7. Have students read "The Homecoming" by Yerby. Through discussion, lead them to an understanding of the times in the South during which the story was set. Have students discuss the following:

   a. What is the significance of the statement: "Nigger, do you know where you’re at?"

   b. At what point did Colonel Bob question his own philosophy of the Negro's "place."

   c. Did Colonel Bob change his attitude?

   d. Explain Willie’s actions. Was he being brave? foolish? suicidal?

   e. Was Martha’s advice justified? Why? Why not?

   f. Did Bob really save Willie by calling the Red Cross?

   g. Why did Willie consider that by having his life saved, he had lost all things of worth?

8. Have students write an alternate ending to "The Homecoming" in which Willie’s aim is not thwarted.

9. Have students read Yerby’s "Health Card." Have them compare the experiences of Johnny and Lily to the present day experiences of hippies.

10. Have students define the word "mulatto." Read to the class Chestnutt’s "The Sheriff’s Children." Have students comment on the style of the writer. Ask students the following questions:
a. Why did the sheriff prevent the mob from lynching Tom?

b. Would the sheriff's attitude toward the lynch mob have been different had he known then that Tom was his son?

c. How did Tom's revealing his identity affect the sheriff?

d. What affect did Tom's death have on the sheriff?

11. Ask students to read silently "Right to the Streets of Memphis" by Richard Wright. Have students discuss their own childhood experiences in which they were challenged by their peers. Ask students to comment on why youngsters, black or white, must prove themselves to their peer group.

12. Have students read "Enemy Territory" by William Melvin Kelley.

13. Read to the class "We're the Only Colored People Here" by Owendolyn Brooks. Ask students the following questions:

a. Have you and your date ever been the only members of your race or religion at a social gathering?

b. Did you feel welcome at the affair?

c. Did you feel self-conscious? Why? Why not?

d. What did the woman in the story mean by "if only no one looked intruded upon"?

e. Why was Paul reluctant to go to the World Playhouse?

f. If Paul and Martha had been richly dressed, would they have felt less conspicuous?

14. Conduct a choral reading of "Let America Be America Again" with the class. As counterpoint, have one student read aloud "I, Too, Sing America." Point out that both poems were written by Langston Hughes. Have students comment on whether the poems express different viewpoints.
15. Divide "The Convert" into three distinct episodes. For three consecutive days have students read one episode in class. Have them speculate after each of the first two episodes the outcome of the story. At the end of the third episode ask students why Lerone Bennett calls this story "The Convert." Ask students if they think the title is appropriate and why or why not.
## THEME V - AS WE LAY DYING

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1. Ask students to read several poems from Theme IV - 
As We Lay Dying. Include "Go Down Death," "Of 
DeWitt Williams," "The .38" in the list of poems, 
but be sure to include other selections. When 
students have read the poems, ask them to discuss 
the following questions:

a. Why is death such a popular theme with many 
black poets?

b. Which views of death are expressed most often?

2. Have students read "To Hell with Dying" by Alice 
Walker. Ask students to contrast the view of death 
expressed in this story with the view presented in 
some of the poems listed in the preceding activity.

3. Have students express their opinions as to whether 
funerals ever have humorous elements. After brief 
discussion, have a male student read to the class 
"As Befits a Man" by Hughes. Ask for student com-
ments on the ideas expressed in this poem.

4. Have the students read again the Brooks poem "Of 
DeWitt Williams." Ask students to answer the fol-
lowing questions:

a. Why did Miss Brooks give so much detail about 
the route of DeWitt's funeral procession?

b. What kind of life had DeWitt lived?

c. Does DeWitt represent a particular element of 
society?

5. Have a male student with a strong voice tape record 
"The .38" by Ted Joans. Appoint several other stu-
dents to work with the speaker. Let the group 
experiment with sound effects as background for the 
poem. (e.g., repeated single gunfire each time the 
speaker repeats the words "the .38). Play the 
completed recording for the entire class. Discuss 
the effect of the gunshot sounds on the effective-
ness of the poem.
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<td>&quot;For Our Women&quot;</td>
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1. Read to the class Reginald Lockett's "This Poem for Black Women."

2. Assign a group of students to read Zora Neale Hurston's "Sweat" aloud to the class. Give the students prior notice so that those students who will read the dialogue will have time to work on their characterizations. Work directly with the student(s) who will read the narrative portions of the story. After the story has been read to the class, ask all students to react to it by telling:
   a. Why did Sykes mistreat Delia?
   b. Did Sykes get what he deserved?
   c. Could this story have happened to characters who are not black?
   d. Did the familiar setting of the story affect the reader's response?

3. Have a student give a brief oral biographical sketch of Zora Hurston to the class. Make sure that the student stresses the fact that she was a Floridian. Encourage students to read other Hurston works such as "The Gilded Six-Bits."

4. Assign to able readers as an outside assignment the reading of *Black Boy* by Richard Wright. Have a group of students prepare an oral report on the book to present to the class. In class have students read the following poems: "Mother to Son" and "The Negro Mother" by Langston Hughes and Gwendolyn Brooks' "The Mother." Have students compare how each poet venerates the mother figure in his poem. Ask students to compare the mother in Wright's *Black Boy* with the mothers described in the poems.

5. Play the recording Thank You M'am. Ask students to write another ending to the story. While the students are beginning the writing assignment, write the following questions on the chalkboard:
   a. Have you ever met a person like Mrs. Jones?
   b. Suppose Roger was ten years older at the time of the story.
   c. Why did Mrs. Jones not call the police?
d. What besides color did Mrs. Jones have in common with Roger?

e. Is the "Mrs. Jones" character peculiar to the black culture?

Ask the students to avoid giving answers to these specific questions, but to reflect upon them as they write.
IV. RESOURCES

A. State adopted textbooks

There are no state adopted textbooks for this course.

B. Non-state-adopted textbooks


C. Non-state adopted books (for teachers and students)

1. Poetry


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2. Short stories


3. Novels


4. Plays


(Includes: *Raisin in the Sun, Take A Giant Step, Purlie Victorious, In the Wine Time, In Splendid Error, No Place to Be Somebody*, and many others).

5. Essays


6. Anthologies


7. Biography


8. Criticism


9. Periodicals


10. Teacher source books


e. *Bulletin (Dade County Public Schools) Black Literature for the Junior High School.*

f. *Bulletin (Dade County Public Schools) Black Literature for the Senior High School.*

g. *Bulletin 9K (Dade County Public Schools) Negro History and Culture.*

11. Records

Folkways/Scholastic Records
904 Sylvan Avenue
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey


d. *Insights - Themes and Writers*. McGraw-Hill Book Company (Webster Division). 680 Forrest Road, N. E., Atlanta, Georgia 30302.

e. *An Anthology of Negro Poetry for Young People*. Read by Arna Bontemps. Folkway Records. (FC 7114)
f. The Learning Tree (2 records plus teaching guide)

g. A Choice of Weapons (2 records plus teaching guide)

Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corporation

Afro-American History in Story and Song (4-record album and discussion guides)

12. Films (available from Dade County Audio-Visual Services)

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13. Rental Films

CCM FILMS, INC.
866 Third Avenue
New York, New York 10022

#INS-414 - THE DEATH OF SIMON JACKSON. 27 min.

A black poet's works are rejected by conservative magazines as "too strong" and by other magazines as "uncle tomish". Rejected by publishers, his girlfriend, and acquaintances, he becomes involved in a riot. By helping police to quell the riot, he angers extremists who kill him, but not before he affirms his belief that blacks will succeed in their fight for dignity without the use of violence.
#7-3033-002-8 - NOTHING BUT A MAN. 92 min.

This is a strong film recommended only for mature senior high school students. A young railway worker gives up a good job to settle down in the South and marry the preacher's daughter. The major emphasis is the protagonist's difficulty in making an emotional adjustment to the age old problems of earning a livelihood and living in dignity in the Alabama of today. The protagonist's problems are compounded by his refusal to play the expected Negro role.

#7-1027-503-X - ALL THE WAY HOME. 30 min.

An objective examination of what happens in a community when a Negro family responds to a "for sale" sign.

AUDIO-BRANDON
34 MacQuester Parkway South
Mount Vernon, New York 10550

A RAISIN IN THE SUN. 128 min.

A black family receives a windfall and makes plans to invest in their own home in a middle class neighborhood until fate intervenes.

GONE ARE THE DAYS. 97 min.

Based on Purlie Victorious, this comic offering details the exploits of Victorious Judson, a glib Negro preacher. Reverend Judson, having finagled a hostile plantation owner out of a barn, conducts an "integrated" funeral for the planter who dies, stricken at the thought that he has been outsmarted by one whom he considers to be his inferior.

MONROE WILLIAMS PRODUCTIONS
8830 S. W. 68 Court, d-1
Miami, Florida

THE MATTER WITH ME. 20 min.

Stimulus film to be used in conjunction with themes in this course.