

INTRODUCTION: ZORA NEALE HURSTON: A SOUTHERN GENIUS

On-line, using ZOOM

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Looking forward to our first ZOOM class on Wednesday, September 23, from 10:00 AM until 11:30 AM, I am delighted to greet all of you now via email. Below, you will find an outline of how the course will proceed, along with some bibliographic notes.

Zora Neale Hurston's "Their Eyes Were Watching God" is of paramount importance. (I am using a good paperback edition which is also available on kindle, a Harper-Collins e-book: *Forwards*, Edwidge Danticat and Mary Helen Washington; *Afterward*, Henry Louis Gates. [amazon Kindle](#)).

Hurston's language begs for oral dramatization. Beginning with Week II, there will be assigned readings in which you will participate. This will certainly liven-up our ZOOM experience. Please let me know, now, if you are willing to practice and then perform. Do not be afraid of "dialect/idiom!" Communicate via email: juliet_baker@fastmail.fm or telephone: 207-338-4228.

Tacked on to these pages is a sheet of African American Poems which we will consider during our first class. Please read and then bring a copy of them with you to the ZOOM class. As you look over the following outline, do not let internet references distract you. I will clarify each of these as we go along. Finally, search through YouTube where there's plenty of good material on Hurston.

If you have any questions about ZOOM, please contact our co-host, deirdregood@mac.com.

A SUMMARY OF EACH WEEK'S PLANS:

Zora Neale Hurston: Week I 9/23, 10:00 AM

Hurston's Negro Voice: Dialect vs. Idiom

1. Read pp. 1-33 of "Their Eyes Were Watching God"
2. Discuss narrative technique, themes, Hurston's approach
3. Dialect vs Idiom—Negro voice + Jook
4. Hurston's frequent use of idiomatic language (email before class)
5. Review poems (e-mail) for form and language
6. Volunteer readers for next week

[A New African American Identity: The Harlem Renaissance ...](#)
[nmaahc.si.edu > blog-post > new-african-american-identity-harlem-renaiss...](#)

Zora Neale Hurston: Week II 9/30, 10:00 AM

Narrative Technique; Hurston's Background

Read pp. 34-93 of "Their Eyes Were Watching God"

1. Narrative technique: storytelling through dialogue; omniscient 3rd person narration for plot
2. Prominence of figurative speech: dramatic readings
3. Hurston's Eatonville-
4. Hurston's education and work as an ethnographer and Anthropologist.

<https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=126109921>

<https://www.jamesmadison.org/the-history-and-legacy-of-eatonville-floridas-pioneering-african-american-town/>

file:///Users/Juliet/Desktop/Zora%20Neale%20Hurston/'Straight%20Lick'%20collects%20all%20of%20Hurston's%20stories%20in%20one%20volume.webarchive MORE ON Hurston's short story collection

"Eatonville, Fl, a pure negro town"- : <https://www.jamesmadison.org/the-history-and-legacy-of-eatonville-floridas-pioneering-african-american-town/>

Zora Neale Hurston: Week III 10/7, 10:00 AM

Male and Female Identity

1. Read pp. 100-128
2. Confluence of themes on gender, on loss, romance, betrayal, marriage, individualism, loyalty, class, and most of all, love.
3. Note Janie's departure from Eatonville—review from where she has come
4. Tragic story of Mrs. Tyler
5. Review all characters by name.
6. Contemporary response to Tea Cake; questions of class.

file:///Users/Juliet/Desktop/Zora%20Neale%20Hurston/'Straight%20Lick'%20collects%20all%20of%20Hurston's%20stories%20in%20one%20volume.webarchive MORE ON THE GREAT MIGRATION & Hurston's short story collection

Zora Neale Hurston: Week IV 10/14, 10:00 AM

Kinds of Migration

1. Read 129-167
2. The land of hard, physical labor and the jook
3. Hurston vs. Richard Wright—how might /must the artist depict race?
4. Story of Mrs. Turner and Nuncio
5. Pause to appreciate the many character names
6. Brilliant suspense as storm literally overtakes Chapter 18.
7. The Long-Lasting Legacy of the Great Migration

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/long-lasting-legacy-great-migration-180960118/> Isabel Wilkerson

Zora Neale Hurston: Week V 10/21, 10:00 AM

The Horizon and the Dream

1. Read 168-193
2. Even the greatest sadness cannot overwhelm Janie; let's take another longer look at her character.
3. The symbol of death is paramount, and for the novel is one of many to review.
4. Still young, Janie's life has gone full circle, from seeds to the horizon.

https://www-tc.pbs.org/theblues/classroom/downloads/south_north_great_migration.pdf

Zora Neale Hurston: Lesson VI 10/28, 10:00 AM

Looking Back and Looking Ahead

1. In 1927, in Mobile, Alabama, Hurston interviewed Kosola, known as Cudjo Lewis, a survivor of the last and illegal slave-bearing ship, the Clotilda.
2. In 1927, the time of the interview, the Harlem Renaissance was bursting with artists brought to NYC by "The Great Migration."
3. For many African Americans, the hopefulness and opportunity of leaving the South, failed to undo the basic racism which strongly existed in the north.
4. We've looked at Hurston's brilliance and optimism, but we don't have to look far to the novels of Richard Wright, to Lorraine Hansberry's 1959 play *A Raisin in the Sun*, or to the vast body of Black Literature to understand the chaos of today.
5. Despite a penniless and almost anonymous death, Zora Neale Hurston never lost her optimism. She remained a resilient, brilliant, and accomplished woman, one always with a sense of humor and of style.

<file:///Users/Juliet/Desktop/Zora%20Neale%20Hurston/'Straight%20Lick'%20collects%20all%20of%20Hurston's%20stories%20in%20one%20volume.webarchiveMORE> ON THE GREAT MIGRATION & Hurston's short story collection

https://www-tc.pbs.org/theblues/classroom/downloads/south_north_great_migration.pdf

Alice Walker's readings and lectures from Youtube

A ROUGH BIBLIOGRAPHY—TEXTS and E-BOOKS

Eds. Harper and Walton, *The Vintage Book of African American Poetry: 200 Tears of Vision, Struggler, Power, Beauty, and Triumph from 50 Outstanding Poets*. Vintage Books. 2000.

Hemenway, Robert. *Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography*. Foreward, Alice Walker. University of Illinois, 1977. 1980.

Alan Locke ed. *The New Negro*. Intro., Arnold Rampersad. Touchstone e-book.
Albert and Charles Boni. 1925

McWhorter, John. *Talking Back, Talking Black: Truths about America's *Lingua Franca**. Belleview Literary Press. NY. 2017.

Menand, Louis. "The Hammer and the Nail: Richard Wright's Modern Condition."
New Yorker Magazine. July 20, 1992.

Pierpont, Claudia Roth. "A Society of One: Zora Neale Hurston, American contrarian."
New Yorker Magazine. February 17, 1997.

Wilkerson, Isabel. "The Long-Lasting Legacy of the Great Migration." *Smithsonian Magazine*. September. 2016.

ZNH, *Barracoon: The Story of the Last "Black Cargo."* ed. Deborah G. Plant.
Amistad (Harper Collins).

ZNH, *Dust Tracks on a Road* (The Restored Text Established by the Library of America). Forward, Maya Angelou. Series Ed. Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Harper Collins e-books.

ZNH. *Hitting a Straight Lick with a Crooked Stick*. Forward, Tayari Jones. Intro, Genevieve West. Amistad (Harper Collins).

ZNH. *Mules and Men*. Preface, Franz Boas. Foreword, Arnold Rampersad. Afterward, Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Harper Coilins ebooks.

