Saint Louis University Department of English
African American Doctoral Reading List

Primary List
[These 54 authors, regardless of the number of works, must be read]

C18
Briton Hammon, *A Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings, and Surprizing Deliverance* (1760)
Olaudah Equiano (Gustavus Vassa), *Interesting Narrative* (1789)
Prince Hall, *A Charge Delivered to the African Lodge at Menotomy* (1797)
Phillis Wheatley, collected works
John Marrant, *A Narrative of the Lord’s Wonderful Dealings* (1802)

C19
David Walker, *Appeal in Four Articles* [Preamble and Article I only] (1829)
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life* (1845) [usefully compared with Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855)]
Solomon Northrop, *Twelve Years a Slave* (1853)
William Wells Brown, *Clotel; or, a Tale of the Southern States* (1853)
Harriet Wilson, *Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black* (1859)
William and Ellen Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom* (1860)
Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861)
Charles W. Chesnutt, *The Conjure Woman and Other Tales of the Color Line* (1899); *The Marrow of Tradition* (1900)

Early C20: Romanticism & The Harlem Renaissance
Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (1901)
Paul Laurence Dunbar, *The Sport of the Gods* (1902); *Lyrics of Lowly Life* (1896)
James Weldon Johnson, *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* (1912); *God’s Trombones* (1927)
Jean Toomer, *Cane* (1923)
Alain Locke, ed. *The New Negro* (1925)
Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (1927); Their *Eyes Were Watching God* (1937)
George Schuyler, “The Negro Art-Hokum” (1926); *Black No More* (1931)
Langston Hughes, *The Weary Blues* (1925); *Fine Clothes to the Jew* (1927);
“The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” (1926); *Not without Laughter* (1930)
Nella Larsen, *Quicksand* (1928); *Passing* (1929)
Jessie Fauset, *Plum Bun* (1929)
Sterling Brown, *Southern Road* (1932)
The 1940s-1950s, the “School of Wright,” and the “Triumph of Naturalism”

Richard Wright, *Uncle Tom’s Children* (1938); *Native Son* (1940); *Black Boy* (1945)
William Attaway, *Blood on the Forge* (1941)
Chester Himes, *If He Hollers Let Him Go* (1945)
Ann Petry, *The Street* (1942)
Robert Hayden, selected poems
Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1952)
Gwendolyn Brooks, *Maud Martha* (1953); *In the Mecca* (1968)
James Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son* (1955); *The Devil Finds Work* (1976)
Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (1956)

1960s-70s: Black Arts/Black Consciousness

Adrienne Kennedy, *Funnyhouse of a Negro* (1964)
Amiri Baraka, *Dutchman; The Slave* (both 1964): poems
Larry Neal, Amiri Baraka, eds., *Black Fire* (1968)
Ed Bullins, *Clara’s Ole Man; Goin’ a’ Buffalo* (1969)
Addison Gayle, *The Black Aesthetic* (1972)
Ishmael Reed, *Mumbo Jumbo* (1972)
June Jordan, collected poems

Later C20; Black Feminism; C21 Literature

August Wilson, *Fences* (1983); *The Piano Lesson* (1990)
2nd Series, Individual Works [choose 20 works from this total of 34 authors]

C18
Jupiter Hammon, An Evening Thought, Salvation by Christ, With Penetential [sic] Cries (1760); An Address to the Negroes in the State of New York (1787)
Johnson Green, The Life and Confessions (1786)
Venture Smith, A Narrative of the Life and Adventures (1798)

C19
Hannah Crafts, The Bondswoman’s Narrative (? bt. 1853-1861; pub. 2002)
Frank J. Webb, The Garies and Their Friends (1857)
Martin J. Delany, Blake; or, the Huts of America (1859)
Elizabeth Keckley, Behind the Scenes; or, Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House (1868)
Anna Julia Cooper, A Voice from the South (1892)
Ida B. Wells, A Red Record (1895)

Early C20: Romanticism / Harlem Renaissance
Pauline Hopkins, Contending Forces (1900); Of One Blood (1902)
Angelina Weld Grimke, Rachel (1920)
Rudolph Fisher, The Conjure-Man Dies (1924)
Countee Cullen, Caroling Dusk (1927)
Claude McKay, Home to Harlem (1928)
Anne Spencer, collected poems

1940s-1950s / “School of Wright”/ “Triumph of Naturalism”
William Attaway, Blood on the Forge (1941)
Margaret Walker, For My People (1942); Jubilee (1966)
Frank Yerby, The Foxes of Harrow (1946); The Dahomean (1971) [alt. title: The Man from Dahomey]
Robert Hayden, selected poems

1960s-70s: Black Arts/Black Consciousness
William Melvin Kelley, A Different Drummer (1962)
Sam Greenlee, The Spook Who Sat by the Door (1969)
Ed Bullins, Clara’s Ole Man; Goin’ a’ Buffalo (1969)
Albert Murray, The Omni-Americans: Black Experience and American Culture (1970); Train Whistle Guitar (1974)
Eldridge Cleaver, Soul on Ice (1972)
June Jordan, collected poems
Later C20; Black Feminism; C21 Literature
Sonia Sanchez, *Homegirls and Handgrenades* (1985)
Nathaniel Mackey, *Djbot Baghostos’s Run* (1993)
Jesmyn Ward, *Salvage the Bones* (2011)
Percival Everett, *Erasure* (2011)

Critical/Theoretical Works & Historical Background [30 works, 28 authors: choose 26 works]
Dorothy Porter, *Early Negro Writing, 1737-1860* [some C18 primary works can also be found here]
Shirley Samuels, ed. *The Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender and Sentimentality in 19th-Century America*
Nicholas Lemann, *Redemption: The Last Battle of the Civil War*
---, *The Promised Land: The Great Black Migration and How it Changed America*
Robert F. Reid-Pharr, *Conjugal Union: The Body, the House, and the Black American*
---, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*
Frances Smith Foster, *Written by Herself: Literary Production by African American Women, 1746-1892*
Michael North, *The Dialect of Modernism: Race, Language and 20th-Century Literature*
Gilbert Osofsky, *Harlem: The Making of a Ghetto*
Robert Stepto, *From Behind the Veil: A Study of Afro-American Narrative*
Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*
Hazel V. Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood: The Emergence of the Afro-American Woman Novelist*
Jacqueline Goldsby, *A Spectacular Secret: Lynching in American Life and Literature*
Matthew Pratt Guterl, *The Color of Race in America, 1900-1940*
Miriam Thaggert, *Images of Black Modernism*
Henry Louis Gates, Jr., ed. “Race,” *Writing, and Difference*
George Hutchinson, *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White*
Ann Douglas, *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s*
James Smethurst, *The New Red Negro; The African American Roots of Modernism*
Harvey Young, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to African American Theatre*
Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration*
Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America’s Great Migration*

Petrine Archer-Straw, *Negrophilia: Avant-garde Paris and Black Culture in the 1920s*

Lawrence Levine, *Black Culture and Black Consciousness*

Lawrence Jackson, *The Indignant Generation: A Narrative History of African American Writers and Critics, 1934-1960*

Manning Marable, *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*

Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual*

Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*

* Jean Fagan Yellin and Cynthia D. Bond, *The Pen is Ours: A Listing of Writings by and about African American Women before 1910 with Secondary Bibliography to the Present*

[This should be consulted as one would any reference work, but it is particularly useful if one’s principal interest toward C19-early C20 African American women’s literature]