**Hurston on the Horizon: Past, Present, and Future**

**A Summer Institute for Higher Education Faculty**

**July 11 - 30, 2021**

NEH Summer Scholars will have access to the following schedule’s required readings prior to the start of the program via Dropbox. NEH Summer Scholars are encouraged to explore suggested readings prior to the Institute as well. They may also elect to study the suggested readings during the Institute.

#### Week 1: Hurston’s Canon

**Resident Faculty**: Trudier Harris

**Visiting Faculty:** Cheryl Wall, Julian Chambliss, and Sylvia Fernández

**Panel:** N.Y. Nathiri, Carmaletta Williams, John Lowe, and Maryemma Graham

**Guiding Questions:** What are the cultural and social factors governing the reception of Hurston’s classic texts? What differences and similarities exist between her celebrated fiction, folklore, and essays? How has the changing assessment of Hurston’s best-known texts defined and redefined African American literary study?

**Sunday, July 11, 2021**

5:30-7:30 Opening Dinner

**Monday, July 12, 2021**

**9:00-10:15: Overview: “Why Study/Teach Hurston Now?” Graham and Harris**

Graham and Harris’s opening will provide an overview of the Institute and make a case for why scholars in the humanities (i.e. American Studies, Anthropology, English, History, Theater, Journalism, and Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies) should continue to examine and redefine the breadth and variety of Hurston’s cultural production.

**10:30-11:30: Participant Presentations**

NEH Summer Scholars will give brief conference style presentations introducing themselves, their research and teaching expertise, and their specific interest in Hurston. These presentations will allow NEH Summer Scholars to identify group partners for collaborative projects, on which they will present during the Institute’s final week.

**1:00-2:15: Participant Presentations**

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**2:30 – 3:45: Participant Presentations**

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**Tuesday, July 13, 2021**

**9:00-10:15: “Introducing Hurston and the Harlem Renaissance” by Harris**

Resident faculty will identify the major trends, themes, and artists during the Harlem Renaissance. They will contextualize Hurston’s most critically engaged works during her publishing height (1920-1940), which coincides with the peak in early twentieth-century African American literary production during the Renaissance.

**10:30-11:30: Discussion led by Harris**

NEH Summer Scholars will discuss the assigned readings complementing the morning’s presentation.

**1:00-2:15: “Recovering Hurston” by Harris**

Harris will highlight when, why, and how the popularity of Hurston’s work waxes, i.e. when scholars like Walker and Gates return to the writer in the 1970s and 2000s, and wanes, i.e., after the Harlem Renaissance and during the African American literary tradition’s focus on protest fiction, as exemplified by Richard Wright. NEH Summer Scholars will trace the trajectory of critical scholarship on Hurston and its dominating themes, as promoted by the publication of key readers, collections, and biographies.

**2:30 – 3:45 “The Living Legacies” Panel: Nathiri, Williams, Lowe, and Graham**

NEH Summer Scholars will learn about ongoing recovery projects on Hurston and new projects devoted to sustaining her legacy, including the Zora! Festival of the Arts and Humanities. Nathiri will discuss her work in Florida and endeavors in public humanities; Williams will speak about the importance of public engagement, her award-winning first person presentations of Zora before local and national audiences as an example, and introduce NEH Summer Scholars to holdings at the Black Archives of Mid-America, Kansas City, which she directs; Lowe will discuss his journey researching Hurston in various archives for his foundational monograph and recent work; and Graham will share the history of HBW as a long running literary recovery project and public humanities initiative as well as moderate. The panel will frame the importance of Hurston’s work—from writing to ethnography—as it extends the meaning and practice of the humanities.

**Required readings:**

1. Robert E. Hemenway’s *Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography*
2. Alice Walker’s “Dedication: On Refusing to Be Humbled by Second Place in a Contest You Did Not Design: A Tradition by Now,” and “Afterword: Looking for Zora,” *I Love Myself When I am Laughing*, 1-6; 297-313.
3. Daryl Dickson Carr’s “Dickties vs. Rats: Class and Regional Differences within the New Negro Movement,” in *Spoofing the Modern: Satire in the Harlem Renaissance*, 87-113.
4. Ernest Julius Mitchell II’s “‘Black Renaissance’: A Brief History of the Concept” *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 55. 4 (2010): 641-665.
5. John Lowe, “Introduction: Co(s)mic Zora,” *Jump at the Sun*, 1-49.

**Suggested Readings:** Cynthia Davis and Verner D. Mitchell’s *Zora Neale Hurston: An Annotated Bibliography of Works and Criticism*; Gene Jarrett’s “Introduction: The Problem of African American Literature,” *In Deans and Truants*, 1-28; and Tiffany Ruby Patterson’s *Zora Neale Hurston and a History of Southern Life*.

**Wednesday, July 14, 2021**

**9:00-10:15: “Hurston’s Native Village” by Nathiri**

Nathiri will establish Hurston’s origins in Nostasulga, AL, which is often overlooked in discussions of the writer’s familial and cultural beginnings, and the significance of the black community in Eatonville, FL, with which Hurston is most associated. She will provide NEH Summer Scholars a history of the latter city, the first incorporated black town in the U.S., where Hurston continues to hold importance in oral community narratives. Additionally, Nathiri will detail how restored attention on Hurston’s work and its sense of belonging revitalized the community in the 1990s—illustrating Hurston’s impact in tangible ways.

**10:30-11:30: Discussion led by Nathiri**

NEH Summer Scholars will discuss the assigned readings complementing the morning .

**1:00-2:15: “Hurston Writing Her Life and Times” by Harris**

Harris will guide NEH Summer Scholars to think about the dialogue between the known facts of Hurston’s life, her self-representation in her autobiography, and her autobiographically-infused fiction and essays, especially *Jonah’s Gourd Vine* and essay “How It Feels to be Colored Me.” Harris will track revisions and discrepancies in these various narratives.

**2:30-3:30 Discussion led by Harris**

NEH Summer Scholars will discuss the assigned readings complementing the afternoon.

**Required readings:**

1. Hurston’s *Dust Tracks on a Road*
2. *Jonah’s Gourd Vine*
3. “How It Feels to Be Colored Me”
4. “The ‘Pet’ Negro System”
5. “My Most Humiliating Jim Crow Experience”
6. Valerie Boyd’s *Wrapped in Rainbows*

**Suggested Readings:** Rhonda Collier’s “Yearning for a Distance: Prophetic Narrative in Zora Neale Hurston’s *Jonah’s Gourd Vine*,” *In The Repressed Expressed: Novel Perspectives on African and Black Diasporic Literature*, Eds. Ndi, Ankuma, and Fiskkin, 143-160; Kimberley D. Blockett and Nellie Y. McKay’s “Telling Tales in *Dust Tracks on a Road*: Hurston’s Portrait of an Artist,” In *Approaches to Teaching Hurston’s Their Eyes Were Watching God and Other Works*, Ed. John Lowe, 157-163; and Trudier Harris’s “Zapping the Editor, Or, How to Tell Censors to Kiss Off without Really Trying: Zora Neale Hurston’s Fights with Authority Figures in *Dust Tracks on a Road*,” In *South of Tradition*, 51-68.

**Thursday, July 15, 2021**

**9:00-10:15: “Representing 1920s Harlem” by Wall**

Wall will provide an overview of Hurston’s characterization of the urban North as a southern migrant. NEH Summer Scholars will gain insight into Hurston’s historical context, as Wall will highlight significant representations of the city in Hurston’s early short stories during the Harlem Renaissance and their relation to other contemporaneous cultural contexts.

**10:30-11:30: Discussion led by Wall**

NEH Summer Scholars will discuss the assigned readings complementing the morning.

**1:00-2:15: “The Timelessness of *Their Eyes Were Watching God*” by Hardison**

The Co-Director will discuss the major ways scholars have read and taught Hurston’s most famous novel. She will single out the importance of rural southern folk culture, spirituality, romance, and gender politics to the book’s extant prominence. NEH Summer Scholars will also view select clips from video footage of “Black Love: A Symposium,” the conference Hardison co-organized to celebrate the 80th anniversary of *Their Eyes*.

**2:30 – 5:00: Screening—*Their Eyes Were Watching God*—and Discussion by Harris and Hardison**

Harris and Hardison will lead a group discussion of the novel’s film adaptation, written by playwright Suzan-Lori Parks, to illustrate the endurance and legacy of the novel. NEH Summer Scholars will tease out the similarities and differences between the novel and film, particularly in regard to each’s respective representations of gender, folklore, spirituality, colorism, and sexuality.

**Required readings:**

1. Hurston’s *The Complete Stories*
2. “Monkey Junk”
3. “The Back Room”
4. “The Country in the Woman”
5. “She Rock”
6. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

**Suggested Readings:** Cheryl A. Wall’s “Zora Neale Hurston’s Traveling Blues Women of the Harlem Renaissance” In *Women of the Harlem* *Renaissance*, 139-199; Glenda R. Carpio and Werner Sollors’s “Five Harlem Short Stories by Zora Neale Hurston,” *Amerikastudien/ American Studies* 55.4: 557-560; Christopher Allen Varlack’s “The Gender Mountain: The Architecture of Male-Female Relationships in Hurston's Short Fiction,” In *Zora Neale Hurston*, Ed. Sharon L Jones, 101- 122; Karla F.C. Holloway’s “Holy Heat: Rituals of the Spirit in Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*,” *Religion and Literature* 23.3 (Autumn 1991): 127-41; Daphne Mary Lamothe’s "Vodou Imagery, African American Tradition and Cultural Transformation in Zora Neale Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*," *Callaloo*, 22.1 (1999): 157-175; Trudier Harris’s “The Limits of Lovemaking and Community: Infertility in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*,” *Revista de Estudios Norteamericanos* 21 (2017): 169-187 and “Celebrating Bigamy and Other Outlaw Behaviors: Hurston, Reputation, and the Problems Inherent in Labeling Janie a Feminist,” In *Approaches to Teaching Hurston’s Their Eyes Were Watching God and Other Works*, Ed. John Lowe, 67-81; Deborah G. Plant’s “*Their Eyes Were Watching God*: The Novel, the Film—An Interview with Valerie Boyd,” In *“The Inside Light”: New Critical Essays on Zora Neale Hurston*, Ed. Plant, 197-202.

**Friday, July 16, 2021**

**9:00-10:15: “Digital Hurston” by Chambliss**

Chambliss will undertake a discussion of the current status of digital resources for teaching and learning about Hurston. He will give a demonstration on his own digital humanities project which considers the importance of cities to Hurston. NEH Summer Scholars will contemplate what can be gained and/or lost in digitizing her archives and texts.

**10:30-11:30 Discussion led by Group 1**

NEH Summer Scholars assigned to Group 1 will facilitate discussion of the assigned readings complementing the morning .

**1:00-2:15: Pedagogy—“Close Reading, Reading Digitally” by Fernández and Harrison**

The activity will encourage NEH Summer Scholars to think about the “teachability” of Hurston’s work in the classroom, especially in regard to her use of vernacular English from a digital humanities prospective. NEH Summer Scholars will consider ways to resolve students’ difficulty or oversimplification of the texts through digital tools. Fernández and Harrison will provide NEH Summer Scholars with a model demonstration of HBW archives’ usability in the classroom. NEH Summer Scholars will also get an introduction to KU Libraries’ print and online collections.

**2:30 – 4:30: Roundup: Collaboration, Research, and Conferences**

This time will allow NEH Summer Scholars to converse and form clusters of 2-3 participants, which will serve as interlocutors with whom participants will develop a group project and organize a presentation for the Institute’s mini conference during the final week. NEH Summer Scholars will also have the opportunity to schedule individual conferences with Resident Faculty and Co-Directors as well as pursue individual research interests.

**Required readings:**

* + 1. Hurston’s“Characteristics of Negro Expression”
    2. “The Eatonville Anthology”
    3. “Folklore and Music”
    4. “Negro Mythical Places”
    5. “Art and Such”
    6. “Negroes without Self-Pity”
    7. Kenton Rambsy’s “Text-Mining Short Fiction by Zora Neale Hurston and Richard Wright Using Voyant Tools,” *CLA Journal* 59. 3 (Mar 2016): 251-258.
    8. Nicole M. Brown, et al. “In Search of Zora/ When Metadata Isn’t Enough: Rescuing the Experiences of Black Women Through Statistical Modeling.”

**Suggested Readings:** Cheryl A. Wall’s “Zora Neale Hurston’s Essays: On Art and Such” *S&F* 3.2; Christopher D. Felker’s “‘Adaptation of the Source’: Ethnocentricity and the Florida Negro,” In *Zora in Florida*, Ed. Steve Glassman and Kathryn Lee Seidel, 146-158; Lloyd Willis’s “Zora Neale Hurston, the Power of Harlem, and the Promise of Florida,” In *Environmental Evasion: The Literary, Critical, and Cultural Politics of “Nature’s Nation,”* 103-109;Leigh Anne Duck’s “‘Go there to know there’: Zora Neale Hurston and the Chronotype of the Folk,” *American Literary History* 13.2 (2001): 265-94.

#### Week 2: The “Other” Hurston

**Resident Faculty**: Deborah Plant

**Visiting Faculty**: Nicole Hodges Persley, Carla Kaplan, Sherri Williams, and Riché Barnes

**Screening and Talkback:** Plant, Kaplan, and Barnes

**Staged Reading**: Hurston’s Short Plays *Woofing* and *Poker*

**Guiding Questions:** How does Hurston’s use of other genres reflect her distinctive style and language, engagements with literary traditions, and ongoing experimentation? How do social contexts, individual desires, and aesthetic debates dictate critical engagement with her lesser known works? How do new collections, archival studies, and editions affect access to and presentation of these understudied texts?

**Monday, July 19, 2021**

**9:00-10:15: “Reconsidering *Moses, Man of the Mountain*” by Plant**

The week’s opening presentation offers an overview of the “other” Hurston, the less familiar and critically engaged aspects of her career, as well as the silences and gaps in early and mid-twentieth-century African American literary history more broadly. In this context, Plant will provide a framework for analyzing and teaching one of Hurston’s understudied novels *Moses*, which offers a retelling of the Biblical figure set in a U.S. southern town. NEH Summer Scholars will be asked to consider how the text fits into Hurston’s corpus and why it has been overlooked in literary history until recently.

**10:30-11:30 Discussion led by Group 2**

NEH Summer Scholars assigned to Group 2 will facilitate discussion of the assigned readings complementing the morning .

**1:00-2:15: “The Neglect of an Icon” by Hardison**

NEH Summer Scholars will encounter yet another, “other” Hurston with a discussion of her novel *Seraph*. Hardison will sketch the major movements and trends of white character-driven African American literature, both acknowledging and interrogating the boundaries that have defined this genre within the tradition, including Hurston’s famous peer Richard Wright.

**2:30-3:30 Discussion led by Group 3**

NEH Summer Scholars assigned to Group 3 will facilitate discussion of the assigned readings complementing the afternoon.

**Required readings:**

1. Hurston’s *Moses, Man of the Mountain*
2. *Seraph on the Suwannee*
3. “What White Publishers Print”

**Suggested Readings:** Erica Edwards’s “*Moses, Monster of the Mountain*: Gendered Violence in Zora Neale Hurston’s Gothic” in *Charisma and the Fictions of Black Leadership*, 77-104; Deborah G. Plant’s “Politics of Self: Individualist Perspectives in *Seraph on the Suwanee*” In *Approaches to Teaching Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God and Other Works*, Ed. John Lowe, 120-130; and Claudia Tate’s “Hitting 'A Straight Lick with a Crooked Stick': *Seraph on the Suwanee*, Zora Neale Hurston's Whiteface Novel” *Discourse: Journal for Theoretical Studies in Media and Culture* 2 (Winter 1997): 72-87.

**Tuesday, July 20, 2021**

**9:00-10:15: “Hurston, Innovation, and Ethnography” by Plant**

NEH Summer Scholars will acquire a context for valuing Hurston’s endeavors as a social scientist. Plant will outline social science methodologies and highlight the author’s anthropological studies as an important dimension of her life and cultural work that beckon the attention of literature, history, and anthropology scholars and teachers. Plant will assist NEH Summer Scholars in bridging Hurston’s literature and her folklore collection *Mules and Men*.

**10:30-11:30 Discussion led by Group 4**

NEH Summer Scholars assigned to Group 4 will facilitate discussion the assigned readings complementing the morning .

**1:00-2:15: “Hurston, the WPA, Florida, and the Caribbean” by Barnes**

This presentation will discuss *Mules and Men* alongside Hurston’s anthropological work, collected in *Every Tongue Got to Confess*; her field work for the Works Project Administration (WPA) Florida Negro Project, later compiled in *Go Gator and Muddy the Water*; and her observations in *Tell My Horse*. Barnes will point out the significance of region, kinship, identity formation, and diaspora across these works.

**2:45 – 4:30: Discussion led by Group 5**

NEH Summer Scholars assigned to Group 5 will facilitate discussion of the assigned readings complementing the afternoon.

**Required readings:**

1. Hurston’s *Mules and Men* Moses
2. *Tell My Horse: Voodoo and Life in Haiti and Jamaica*
3. *Every Tongue Got to Confess: Negro Folk-tales from the Gulf States*
4. *Go Gator and Muddy the Water: Writings From the Federal Writers' Project*, Ed. Pamela Bordelon

**Suggested Readings:** Irma McClaurin’s “Zora Neale Hurston: Enigma, Heterodox, and Progenitor of Black Studies” *Fire!!!* 1. 1 (2012): 49-67; Lucy Anne Hurston’s “Zora Neale Hurston: Pioneering Social Scientist,” *“The Inside Light”: New Critical Essays on Zora Neale Hurston*, Ed. Deborah G. Plant, 15-22; Gwendolyn Mikell’s “Feminism and Black Culture in the Ethnography of Zora Neale Hurston” In *African-American Pioneers in Anthropology*, Eds. Ira E. Harrison and Faye V. Harrison, 51-69; Cheryl A. Wall’s “Mules and Men and Women: Zora Neale Hurston’s Strategies of Narration and Visions of Female Empowerment” *Black American Literature Forum* 23.4 (Winter 1989): 661– 680, Rpt. in *Critical* *Essays on Zora Neale Hurston*, Ed. Gloria L. Cronin, 53– 70; Trudier Harris’s “‘Africanizing the Audience’: Zora Neale Hurston’s Transformation of White Folks in *Mules* *and Men*,” *Zora Neale Hurston Forum* 7.1 (Fall 1993): 43– 58, and “Performing Personae and Southern Hospitality: Zora Neale Hurston in *Mules and Men*,” In *The Power of the Porch: The Story Teller’s Craft in Zora Neale Hurston, Gloria Naylor, and Randall Kenan*; andIfeoma Kiddoe Nwankwo, “Insider and Outsider, Black and American: Rethinking Zora Neale Hurston’s Caribbean Ethnography” *Radical History Review* 87 (Fall 2003): 49–77

**Wednesday, July 21, 2021**

**9:00-10:15 “Recovering *Barracoon*” by Plant**

NEH Summer Scholars will learn about Plant’s efforts to initiate critical conversation about Hurston’s most recently published text, for which she wrote the introduction. Plant will review early assessments of the ethnography, including Robert Hemenway’s critique, and current responses to the text. NEH Summer Scholars will be encouraged to identify the text’s distinction from Hurston’s other collections and register current trends enabling its posthumous publication.

**10:30-11:30 Discussion led by Group 6**

NEH Summer Scholars assigned to Group 6 will facilitate discussion of the assigned readings complementing the morning

**1:00-2:15: Pedagogy—“Teaching Ethnography in the Classroom” Plant**

NEH Summer Scholars will think about the “teachability” of Hurston’s work in the classroom, especially in regard to her use of social science methodologies. The group work will help teachers of literature, history, and anthropology consider ways to resolve students’ unfamiliarity with ethnography.

**2:45 – 4:45: Screening—Library of Congress 16 mm film footage—and Discussion by Plant and Graham**

NEH Summer Scholars will view 90 minutes of 16 mm film footage, collected during Hurston’s field work in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, and South Carolina and archived in the Library of Congress. Scenes include children at play, a baptism in a river, a logging camp, and octogenarian Oluale Kossula, also known as Cudjo Lewis, the final survivor from the slave ship *The Clotilde*. In the discussion to follow, Plant and Graham will point out the significance of this footage in regard to Hurston’s anthropological genius but also importance as an early twentieth-century African American woman filmmaker. This event is open to the public.

**Required readings**:

1. Hurston’s *Barracoon*
2. Audio recordings from the Library of Congress, including:

* “Gonna See My Long-Haired Babe”
* “Uncle Bud”
* “Evalina”
* “Halimuhfack”
* “John Henry”
* “Wake Up, Jacob”
* “Oh, the Buford Boat Done Come”
* “Tilly, Lend Me Your Pigeon”
* “Oh Mr. Brown”
* “Po' Gal, “Mule on the Mount”
* “Mama Don't Want No Peas, No Rice”
* “Description of lining track”
* “Crow Dance”
* “Dat Old Black Gal”
* “Shove It Over”
* “Let's Shake It”
* “Let the Deal Go Down”
* “Georgia Skin”

**Suggested Readings:** Genevieve Sexton’s “The Last Witness: Testimony and Desire in Zora Neale Hurston’s ‘Barracoon’” *Discourse* 25.1/2 (2003): 189-210; Daphne A. Brooks, “Sister, Can You Line It Out?": Zora Neale Hurston and the Sound of Angular Black Womanhood” *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 55. 4 (2010): 617-627; Elizabeth Binggeli, “The Unadapted: Warner Bros. Reads Zora Neale Hurston” *Cinema Journal* 48.3 (Spring 2009): 1-15, and “Hollywood Wants a Cracker: Zora Neale Hurston and Studio Narrative Culture, *“The Inside Light,”* Ed. Deborah G. Plant, 33-52; and Aimee Dixon’s “Zora Neale Hurston,” In *Women Film Pioneers Project*, Eds. Gaines, Vatsal, and Dall’Asta, Center for Digital Research and Scholarship

**Thursday, July 22, 2021**

**9:00-10:15: “Hurston and Her Letters” by Kaplan**

Guided by Kaplan, editor of Hurston’s compilation of correspondence, NEH Summer Scholars will consider the significance of letters in recovering Hurston’s life and her own view of her work. Kaplan’s presentation will highlight obscure aspects of the author’s relationships with editors and friends as well as her reflections on her writing process and travels.

**10:30-11:30 Discussion led by Group 7**

NEH Summer Scholars assigned to Group 7 will facilitate discussion of the assigned readings complementing the morning.

**1:00-2:15: “Hurston, Media, and the Sensational” by Williams**

NEH Summer Scholars will reflect on Hurston’s journalism, specifically her newspaper coverage of the sensational Ruby McCollum trial. Hurston viewed the African American woman’s murder of a white doctor as a public debate on black women’s sexual agency. As Hurston’s reporting informed journalist and novelist William Bradford Huie’s bestselling book about the trial, Williams will discuss Hurston’s journalism as another intervention, although not readily cited, in her discourse on race, gender, and sexual politics.

**2:45 – 4:45: Roundup: Collaboration, Research, and Conferences**

This time will allow NEH Summer Scholars to meet with their chosen group partners to collaborate on their projects and organize their presentations for the mini conference during the Institute’s final week. NEH Summer Scholars will also have the opportunity to schedule individual conferences with Resident Faculty and Co-Directors and pursue research interests.

**Required readings**:

1. Hurston’s articles in the *Pittsburgh Courier*:

* “Zora’s Revealing Story of Ruby’s 1st Day in Court!” Oct 11, 1952
* “Ruby McCollum Fights for Life,” Nov 22, 1952
* “McCollum-Adams Trial Highlights,” Dec 27, 1952
* “Ruby Bares Her Love Live,” Jan 03, 1953
* “Doctor's Threats, Tussle over Gun Led to Slaying!,” Jan 10, 1953
* “Ruby, Facing Chair, Now Sued by Medic's Widow for $100,000,” Jan 17, 1953
* “Mrs. Ruby J. McCollum!,” Feb 28, Mar 14, 21, 28, Apr 4, 11, 18, 25, 1953
* “The Life Story of Mrs. Ruby J. McCollum!” March 7, May 02, 1953

1. Carla Kaplan’s *Zora Neale Hurston: A Life in Letters*
2. Carla Cappetti and Zora Neale Hurston’s “Defending Hurston against Her Legend: Two Previously Unpublished Letters” *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 55. 4, 602-614.

**Suggested Readings:** Carla Kaplan’s “Editing an Icon” S&F 3.2 (2005); Roberta S. Maguire, “From Fiction to Fact: Zora Neale Hurston and the Ruby McCollum Trial” *Literary Journalism Studies* 7.1 Spring 2015): 16-34; Shelby Crosby, “Conservative or Visionary: The Journalistic Career of Zora Neale Hurston,” In *Zora Neale Hurston*, Ed. Sharon L. Jones, 209-228; Tammy D. Evans’s *The Silencing of Ruby McCollum: Race, Class, and Gender in the South*; and C. Arthur Ellis’s *Zora Hurston and the Strange Case Of Ruby McCollum*.

**Friday, July 23, 2021**

**9:00-10:15: “Hurston and Black Theatre” by Hodges Persley**

NEH Summer Scholars will engage Hurston’s little-known contributions to the development of black theatre production, which was supported in part by her employment with the Works Project Administration (WPA) during the Depression. Hodges Persley will not only highlight folklore and humor in Hurston’s plays *Polk County* and *Cold Keener*, but she will also outline the history of black theatre production in the early twentieth century and the significance of the twenty-first-century publication of these works, many of which never made it to the stage during Hurston’s lifetime.

**10:30-11:30: Discussion led by Group 8**

NEH Summer Scholars assigned to Group 8 will facilitate discussion of the assigned readings complementing the morning.

**1:00 – 3:00: Roundup: Collaboration, Research, and Conferences**

NEH Summer Scholars will meet with their chosen group partners to collaborate on their projects and organize their presentations for the mini conference during the Institute’s final week. NEH Summer Scholars will also have the opportunity to schedule individual conferences with Resident Faculty and Co-Directors and pursue research interests.

**6:30-8:00 A staged reading of Hurston’s sketches *Poker!* and *Woofing*, directed by Nicole Hodges Persley and starring local actors.**

**Required readings:**

1. Hurston’s *Color Struck*, *Mule Bone: A Comedy of Negro Life*
2. *Polk County*
3. *Cold Keener*
4. *The First One*
5. *The Sermon in the Valley*

**Suggested Readings:** Izabella Penier’s “Zora Neale Hurston's Creative Collaborations: The New Negro, the New Theatre, and New Anthropology,” In *Muses, Mistresses and Mates: Creative Collaborations in Literature, Art and Life*, Eds. Izabella Penier and Anna,Suwalska-Kołecka, 154-170; Jean Lee Cole and Charles Mitchell’s “Introduction: Zora Neale Hurston a Theatrical Life” In *Zora Neale Hurston: Collected Plays*, xv- xxxii; Craig Prentiss’s “Introduction,” In *Staging Faith: Religion and African American Theater from the Harlem Renaissance to World War II*, 1-10; Soyica Diggs Colbert, “Reenacting the African American Harlem Renaissance: Zora Neale Hurston’s *Color Struck*,” In *The African American Theatrical Body: Reception, Performance, and the Stage*, 91-122; and Anthea Kraut’s *Choreographing the Folk: The Dance Stagings of Zora Neale Hurston*

#### Week 3: New Hurston Studies

**Resident Faculty**: Kevin Quashie

**Visiting Faculty**: Lamonda Horton-Stallings, Giselle Anatol, and Rebecca Wanzo

**Guiding Questions:** How are Hurston’s themes and aesthetics taken up by artists, in particular novelists, playwrights, and illustrators, today? How does Hurston speak to, or prefigure, contemporary cultural contexts and trends in popular culture? How can Hurston studies become a measuring rod for reassessing and reimaging the author’s work and African American literature of the past, present, and future more broadly?

**Monday, July 26, 2021**

**9:00-10:15: “Hurston as Literary Theorist: Part I” by Quashie**

NEH Summer Scholars will revisit Hurston’s oeuvre to reconfigure her as a theorist. Resident Faculty Quashie’s presentation will assess how her intellectual and philosophical endeavors advance both a way of reading and an ethos of interpreting. Quashie’s talk will draw on *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, “Characteristics of Negro Expression,” “What White Publishers Won’t Print,” and *Barracoon*, some of which NEH Summer Scholars will have read and discussed in Weeks 1 and 2.

**10:30-11:30 Discussion led by Group 9**

NEH Summer Scholars assigned to Group 9 will facilitate discussion of the assigned readings complementing the morning.

**1:00-2:15: “Signifying on the Canon Within and Without the Academy” by Horton-Stallings**

NEH Summer Scholars will be encouraged to take up Quashie’s charge by discussing vernacular aesthetics, often recognized as the prime area of Hurston’s brilliance, in contemporary contexts. Horton-Stallings’s presentation will provide an overview of the indefinable trickster figure—as shaped by folklore and queer theory—to tie Hurston’s study of African American dialect to the speech and kinetic acts of today’s black female culture.

**2:30-3:30 Discussion led by Group 10**

NEH Summer Scholars assigned to Group 10 will facilitate discussion of the assigned readings complementing the afternoon.

**Required readings:**

1. Barbara Christian's “The Race for Theory,” *Cultural Critique 6* (1987): 51-63.
2. Zadie Smith’s “Their Eyes Were Watching God: What Does Soulful Mean?,” In *Changing My Mind: Occasional Essays*, 3-13.
3. LaToya Jefferson-James “No Less Sophisticated: Reading Zora Neale Hurston in the Twenty-first Century,” In *Zora Neale Hurston: An Annotated Bibliography of Works and Criticism*, Eds. Cynthia Davis and Verner D. Mitchell, 221-234.
4. Kendra Nicole Bryant’s “Dear Zora: Letters from the New Literati,” In *“The Inside Light,”* Ed. Deborah G. Plant, 181-196.
5. L.H. Stallings’s “Introduction,” *Mutha is Half a Word: Intersections of Folklore, Vernacular, Myth, and Queerness in Black Female Culture*, 1-32
6. “Introduction,” *Funk the Erotic: Transaesthetics and Black Sexual Cultures*, 1-32.
7. Katori Hall’s *Hoodoo Love*

Tuesday, July 27, 2021

**9:00-10:15: “A Speculating and Speculative Hurston” by Anatol**

NEH Summer Scholars will explore African American writers’ use of speculative fiction to imagine other worlds and alternative futures. Anatol will present on the speculative aspects of Hurston’s work, particularly in regard to her deployment of hoodoo and conjure in her fiction based on her anthropological work, and facilitate a discussion of a novel by Nalo

Hopkinson and a short story by Nisi Shawl—two celebrated black women speculative fiction writers.

**10:30-11:30 Discussion led by Group 11**

NEH Summer Scholars assigned to Group 11 will facilitate discussion of the assigned readings complementing the morning.

**1:00 – 3:00: Roundup: Collaboration, Research, and Conferences**

This time will allow NEH Summer Scholars to meet with their chosen group partners to collaborate on their projects and organize their presentations for the Institute’s mini conference at the end of the week. NEH Summer Scholars will also have the opportunity to schedule individual conferences with Resident Faculty and Co-Directors and pursue research interests.

**Required Readings:**

1. Nalo Hopkinson’s *Brown Girl in the Ring*
2. Nisi Shawl’s “The Tawny Bitch”

**Suggested Readings:** André Carrington’s “Introduction: The Whiteness of Science Fiction and the Speculative Fiction of Blackness,” In *Speculative Blackness: The Future of Race in Science Fiction*; Giselle Anatol’s “Conventional Versions: The Soucouyant Story in Folktales, Fiction, and Calypso,” In *The Things That Fly in the Night: Female Vampires in Literature of the Circum-Caribbean and African Diaspora*, 1-34; and Sheree Reneé Thomas’s *Dark Matter: A Century of Speculative Fiction from the African Diaspora*

Wednesday, July 28, 2021

**9:00-10:15: “Illustrating Hurston and Blackness in Graphic Texts” by Wanzo**

NEH Summer Scholars will consider the history of black female representation as well as the textual and visual conventions of comics and graphic novels. Wanzo will offer a framework for NEH Summer Scholars to analyze heroism, race, and gender in Peter Bagge’s depiction of Hurston’s life in *Fire!!* and the autobiographical graphic novel *Jennifer’s Journal: The Life of a SubUrban Girl* by Jennifer Crute.

**10:30-11:30 Discussion led by Group 12**

NEH Summer Scholars assigned to Group 12 will facilitate discussion of the assigned readings complementing the morning.

**1:00-2:15 Pedagogy—“Visual Texts in the Classroom”—by Wanzo**

NEH Summer Scholars will think about the “teachability” of Hurston’s work in the classroom, specifically in regard to its visuality. The group work, led by Wanzo, will help teachers consider ways to incorporate graphic and visual texts in the classroom.

**2:30-4:30 Roundup: Collaboration, Research, and Conferences**

This time will allow NEH Summer Scholars to meet with their chosen group partners to collaborate on their final presentations for the mini conference. NEH Summer Scholars will also have the opportunity to schedule individual conferences with Resident Faculty and Co-Directors as well as pursue individual research interests.

**Required readings:**

1. Peter Bagge’s graphic novel *Fire!!*
2. *Jennifer’s Journal: The Life of a SubUrban Girl* by Jennifer Crute

**Suggested Readings:** Rebecca Wanzo’s “Black Nationalism, Bunraku, and Beyond: Articulating Black Heroism through Cultural Fusion and Comics,” In *Multicultural Comics: From "Zap" to "Blue Beetle*,*"* Ed. Frederick Luis Aldama and Derek Parker Royal, 93-104, and “African American Acafandom and Other Strangers: New Genealogies of Fan Studies” *Transformative Works and Cultures* 20 (2015); and Deborah Whaley’s “Introduction,” In *Black Women in Sequence: Re-inking Comics, Graphic Novels, and Anime*, 3-27.

**Thursday, July 29, 2021**

9:00-10:15: “Hurston as Literary Theorist: Part II” by Quashie

For the Institute’s final presentation, Quashie will invite NEH Summer Scholars to reflect upon Hurston as a theorist by placing the author in conversation with contemporary theories of twenty-first-century black creative practice and cultural production. Quashie’s talk will draw on current discussions of ambivalence and pessimism in African American literary studies to consider articulations of vitality and joy, which emerge in Hurston’s work as well as her Harlem Renaissance contemporaries such as Langston Hughes.

10:30-11:30 Discussion led by Quashie

NEH Summer Scholars will discuss the assigned readings complementing the morning.

1:00-2:15: Overview: “Final Thoughts” by Quashie, Graham, and Hardison

This time will allow NEH Summer Scholars to reflect on the entire three weeks of the Institute and extend any previous discussions prompted by former Resident and Visiting Faculty. NEH Summer Scholars will be asked to brainstorm about other works that sustain the themes, aesthetics, and biographical foundations of Hurston’s legacy. Graham’s comments on the “Hurston and the New Southern Studies” points to ways in which Hurston continues to complicate and interrupt disciplinary boundaries.

1:00-3:00 Roundup: Collaboration, Research, and Conferences

This time will allow NEH Summer Scholars to meet with their chosen group partners to collaborate on their final presentations for the mini conference. NEH Summer Scholars will also have the opportunity to schedule individual conferences with Resident Faculty and Co-Directors as well as pursue individual research interests.

**Required readings:**

Kevin Quashie’s “The Trouble with Publicness: Toward a Theory of Black Quiet” *African American Review* 43.2-3 (Summer 2009): 329-343.

Rita Felski’s *The Limits of Critique*

J. T. Roane’s "Plotting the Black Commons” *Souls* (January 2019): 1-28.

**Suggested Readings**: Kenneth W. Warren’s What Was African American Literature?; Kevin Quashie’s *The Sovereignty of Quiet: Beyond Resistance in Black Culture*; Rebecca Wanzo’s “The Reading Cure: Oprah, Toni Morrison, and Sentimental Identification,” In *The Suffering Will Not Be Televised: African American Women and Sentimental Political Storytelling*, 79-113 and “Apocalyptic Empathy: A Parable of Postmodern Sentimentality,” In *Narrative Power: Encounters, Celebrations, Struggles*, Ed. Timmel L Duchamp and Eileen Gunn, 160-177; and Aida Levy-Hussen, “Introduction,” In *How to Read African American Literature: Post-Civil Rights Fiction and the Task of Interpretation*, 1-16

**Friday, July 30, 2021**

**9:30-11:00: Group Presentations**

NEH Summer Scholars will share their collaborative projects with other Institute participants in a mini conference attended by Resident and Visiting Faculty, and Co-Directors.

**1:00-2:30: Group Presentations**

NEH Summer Scholars will share their collaborative projects with other Institute participants in a mini conference attended by Resident and Visiting Faculty, and Co-Directors.

**3:00-4:30: Group Presentations**

NEH Summer Scholars will share their collaborative projects with other Institute participants in a mini conference attended by Resident and Visiting Faculty, and Co-Directors.

**5:30-7:30 Closing Dinner**