

# **The Future in Black: The Post-Soul Moment and Contemporary African-American Literature**

**Major Authors: African American Literature**

**English 7/8328**

**5:30-8:30pm M**

**Patterson Hall Room 221**

## **Course Description:**

In this course we will trace the expansion and maturation of African American literature over the last thirty years. Emerging alongside the rapidly changing social, political, and economic landscapes of post-Civil Rights America, we will chronicle an impressive array of new, young voices that not only reflect the lives of African Americans after the Civil Rights Movement, but that also interrogate how external and integral forces and structures impact the lives the authors depict in unique ways. Called “post-soul” by some, the “Word Movement” by others, contemporary African American literature has been influenced most directly black nationalism, black feminism, and hip-hop music, all of which we will explore in this class. This class will unfold through several units, as we move from classic “literary” fiction to popular “street lit” to episodes of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*. In each unit we will explore critical and theoretical frameworks animating those works, whether they are the New Black Aesthetic, Afrofuturism, Black Southern Literary Tradition, and Black Popular/Hip-Hop Fiction. Finally this class culminates with an examination of artists and critics who combined elements of distinct African American culture with the politics and aesthetics of multiple movements to become mainstream popular and critical successes. What, we will ask, does the world look like with African American literature at the center of the universe?

## **Potential Texts:**

Beatty, Paul	<i>The White Boy Shuffle</i> (ISBN: 9780312280192) <i>The Sellout</i>
Carter, Stephen L.	<i>The Emperor of Ocean Park</i>
Jemisin, N.K.	<i>How Long Til Black Future Month</i> <i>Far Sector</i>
Jones, Tayari	<i>Silver Sparrow</i> (ISBN: 9781616201425) <i>An American Marriage</i> (ISBN: 9781616208776)
Ward, Jesmyn	<i>Men We Reaped</i> (ISBN: 9781608195213) <i>Sing, Unburied, Sing</i> (ISBN: 9781501126079)
Coates, Ta-Nehisi	<i>Between the World and Me</i>
Whitehead, Colson	<i>The Underground Railroad</i> (ISBN: 9781617751318) <i>The Intuitionist</i>
Wilson, August	<i>Gem of the Ocean</i> <i>Radio Golf</i>