ENG220
Weekly Reading and Writing #4

Monday, Jan 25  
Let’s begin our discussion of African American Literature by considering African American history, language, text. Please research the following (and bring your notes) for our class discussion on Monday:

- Transatlantic Slave Trade
- Middle Passage
- Slavery
- “Reconstruction”
- Jim Crow laws, lynching, sharecropping

Wednesday, Jan 27
Toni Morrison’s “Recitatif”

- Before you begin reading “Recitatif” for the first time, look up the definition(s) of the title.
- Pick out and be ready to discuss the comparisons and contrasts between Twyla and Roberta and between them and Maggie.

WRITE: Choose one from the following:

- Draw on the historical list above; choose one or a few to explain to someone who is unfamiliar with this history. Place your discussion in the context of our 21st century classroom focus on difference, power, and discrimination. Be vigilant in documenting your sources.
- Write a comparative analysis of the characters Twyla, Roberta, and Maggie.
- Choose any scene from Recitatif and rewrite it in another time period in America.
- Choose any scene from Recitatif and rewrite it with some other ethnic “crash.”
- Explain the meaning of the title Recitatif as it relates to specific issues and themes in the story.
- Consider Morrison’s purpose in this short story: “The only short story I have ever written was an experiment in the removal of all racial codes from a narrative about two characters of different races for whom racial identity is crucial.” Write about the importance of racial identity in our lives. Use this story (details and quotes) as evidence to support your points.