ENG257 African American Lit
Weekly Reading and Writing #6

READING
Tuesday:
Please read the headnotes for each of the following poets/writers and then study the following poems: Claude McKay’s If We Must Die p 1007 (and audio companion track 3) and Harlem Shadows, To the White Fiends; America; Sterling Brown’s Strong Men p 1252 (and audio companion track 4); Countee Cullen’s Heritage p 1347 (and audio companion track 9)

Thursday:

WRITING
Please choose one question from Tuesday’s reading and one from Thursday’s

• Identify the themes of the blues (in one or a few of the specific poems we’re reading this week) and discuss how these blues’ themes follow from the surrounding black vernacular traditions. Include in your thinking and writing this connection: we call the Blues a literature of transcendence.

• Write specifically about the blues (write your own definition) and the ways in which you see the blues as inspiration and resource (in theme, style, form) for any (be specific) of the literature of the Harlem/New Negro Renaissance we’re reading (last week or this week).

• Identify several of the African American tropes (be specific and use lines from the poems to support your points) in some of the poems we’re covering this week.

• Consider and write about the ways in which Hurston’s Sweat draws on folklore. Then relate this connection to our larger class themes regarding Vernacular as the engendering impulse for this tradition.

• Consider a few of the African American tropes and relate them to Hurston’s work (include Sweat and Gilded and her essays for support).

• Hurston’s stories present an opportunity for a comparative representation of married Negro life in the South in the early 20th century. Write a comparative analysis of the two.

Writing Guidelines:
• Word-process
• Write one (and only one) full page single-spaced
• Include a heading in the upper left-hand corner (your name; date; ENG257 Weekly Writing #6)