The Harlem Renaissance Summer Reading 2023-2024

The Harlem Renaissance (c. 1918-1937) was an explosion of African American culture, particularly in the creative arts, and is considered the most influential movement in African American literary history. Emboldened by Alain Locke and the New Negro Movement, participants sought to re-conceptualize “the Negro” apart from the white stereotypes that had influenced black peoples’ relationship to their heritage and to each other.

Please read the following title by the first day of school:


Langston Hughes is best known for his poetry, and his works played a defining role in the Harlem Renaissance. *Not Without Laughter* is his debut novel about an African American family struggling in a poor town in Kansas. As you read, think about the author’s purpose in writing the novel and the importance of music to the movement. Pay particular attention to allusions the author makes to songs and lyrics. I recommend that you annotate as you read. Having notes to draw from will help you remember what you read so that you may participate in discussion and write an essay about this text in the opening weeks of school.

In the course, we will be reading:


NOTE: Please be sure your copies of these texts have the correct ISBNs. Wordsworth Bookstore in the Heights has all the correct versions. Amazon will send you whatever version they have in stock, and it may not be the correct version.

Questions? Please contact Ms. Hogate: ahogate@episcopalcollegiate.org