

## Scrapbooks as Literary Documents: Digital Scholarship and the Scrapbooks of Alice Dunbar-Nelson

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Office: University of Delaware English Department Room 51, or Morris Library Department of Special Collections

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 1:00 to 3:00pm, or by appointment

Course Identifier: ENGL 874-010

Course Location and Hours: Memorial Hall Room 107, Thursday 9:15am-12:15pm

### Course Introduction

In this class, you will have the opportunity to work closely with the Alice Dunbar-Nelson Papers (MSS 113) located in the University of Delaware Library Special Collections. Alice Ruth Moore Dunbar-Nelson (1875-1935) was a prominent African American writer, poet, journalist, lecturer, activist, and educator who lived in Wilmington for most of her adult life. Her personal papers include her original manuscripts, correspondence, professional records and “self-works” such as scrapbooks, diaries, and reading journals. This class focuses on her scrapbooks, which, for the most part, were operationalized to document her professional activities and column writing. This seminar is predicated upon the notion that there is an intrinsic, often overlooked value to scrapbooks. The course encourages an exploration of the various ways that the format of scrapbooking has been used throughout its history. Through an analysis of Dunbar-Nelson and her works, you will have the chance to examine the methods by which she utilized her own scrapbooks as a tool of narrative construction. By doing so, we will learn about the importance of this author in the history of African American literature while, at the same time, evaluating the potential of scrapbooking as a participatory educational medium through which learning can occur.

Key Themes: Race and gender in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, social memory, archival documentation, and digital scholarship

### Required Course Texts

1. Adams, Katherine, Gebhard, Caroline, and Sandra A. Zagarell, guest editors. [\*Recovering Alice Dunbar-Nelson for the Twenty-First Century\*](#) special issue of *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2016, pp. ix-xi, 213-446.
2. Dunbar-Nelson, Alice M. [\*Violets and Other Tales\*](#). *Monthly Review*, 1895.

3. Dunbar-Nelson, Alice M. *The Goodness of St. Rocque: And Other Stories*. Dodd, Mead & Co., 1899.
4. Garvey, Ellen G. *Writing with Scissors: American Scrapbooks from the Civil War to the Harlem Renaissance*. Oxford University Press, 2012.
5. Alexander, Eleanor. *Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow: The Tragic Courtship and Marriage of Paul Laurence Dunbar and Alice Ruth Moore: a History of Love and Violence Among the African American Elite*. New York University Press, 2001.
6. Gaines, Kevin K. *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century*. UNC Press Books, 2012.

## Assignments

BOOK REVIEW – Each student will write and present a formal book review covering one of the assigned texts for the course. Reviews should address, summarize, and scrutinize the author’s arguments, considerations, evidences, etc. with examples from the text cited in MLA format (750 to 1,000 words). **Due Date – Student Selected**

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS – After selecting a specific scrapbook or another example of a “self-work” from a site-based collection (e.g. UD Special Collections), each student must write a full-length description of the object covering as many of its observable material facets as possible. Described material components of the bibliographic artifact should include such features as the binding, paper, collation, formatting, graphic design elements (font, layout, etc.), photomechanical and/or photographic inserts, and other memorabilia the work contains. Make a case for how the object can be situated within the broader taxonomic lineage of scrapbooks as a genre of textual production (1,500 to 2,000 words). **Due Date – March 23**

FRAMEWORK ESSAY – Each student is responsible for drafting a framework essay prior to the completion of the final project. The framework essay should make a thoroughly researched argument concerning Alice Dunbar-Nelson’s relationship to ideas around race, gender, and personal identity. The argument can apply to any aspect of her biography including her family, career, writing, and activism; alternatively, it can focus primarily on how both the medium and practice of scrapbooking worked together to express her views on a given subject. Text from the main body of this essay will be repurposed for use as narrative content in the final project. The argument must include supporting evidence from both primary and secondary sources, and secondary sources must integrate works of peer-reviewed scholarship. Citations and bibliography should be in MLA format (2,500 to 3,000 words). **Due Date – April 26**

FINAL PROJECT “DIGITAL SCRAPBOOK”– Using Adobe Spark, each student will create a digital scrapbook that makes a visually oriented version of the argument advanced in the framework essay. You will present your final projects to the class for commentary and appraisal during the final week of the course. Projects will be graded on 1) clarity of the narrative, 2) syntactical quality of the textual compensation, 3) overall strength of the

argument, 4) creativity and aesthetic quality of the graphic design (word count will vary depending upon the make-up of the project's visual content). **Due Date – May 24**

PROJECT EXHIBIT “COURSE SCRAPBOOK” – Working with augmented reality (AR) technology in the form of quick response codes and Layar, each student must enhance their digital scrapbook project by creating additional supplementary content. Completing this assignment will involve the conversion of digital selections from the final project back to a printed format and combining these selections with printed clippings from other digital resources. Students will use this material to collectively produce a unique, digitally enhanced paper-based course scrapbook for a single case library exhibit that will be on view after the end of the course (word count will vary depending upon the make-up of the project's visual content). **Due Date – May 24**

### Attendance and Class Participation

Attendance is mandatory and this includes the scheduled tours and lab days. Since this course is structured as a seminar, it is essential that you come to class prepared to contribute to engaging discussions on the readings, collaborative project work, and other course activities. Unexcused absences will have a negative impact on your overall participation grade. Excessive absences can lead to an unofficial withdrawal from the course.

### Grading

I. Participation will account for 10% of your final grade

II. Assignments

- i. Book Review will account for 10% of your final grade
- ii. Descriptive Analysis will account for 15% of your final grade
- iii. Framework Essay will account for 25% of your final grade
- iv. Final Project/Presentation will account for 30% of your final grade
- v. Project Exhibit will account for of 10% your final grade

### Course Schedule and Readings

Week 1 (February 5-9) – Course Introduction: Bios, Alice, Scrapbooks

Readings:

1. Dunbar-Nelson, Alice M. *Violets and Other Tales*. Monthly Review, 1895. (pages 1-85)
2. Adams, Katherine, Gebhard, Caroline, and Sandra A. Zagarell. “Recovering Alice Dunbar-Nelson for the Twenty-First Century: An Introduction.” *Recovering Alice Dunbar-Nelson for the Twenty-First Century* special issue of *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2016, pp. 213-253.

Week 2 (February 12-16) – Familiarization: Digital Explorations

Lab 1: Introduction to Adobe and its products

Exercise: Biographical VR touring

Location: Morris Library Student Multimedia Design Center

Readings:

1. Dunbar-Nelson, Alice M. *Violets and Other Tales*. Monthly Review, 1895. (pages 86-177)
2. “Alice Dunbar-Nelson: A Gallery of Images.” *Recovering Alice Dunbar-Nelson for the Twenty-First Century* special issue of *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2016, pp. 259-266.

Week 3 (February 19-23) – Alice: The Early Years

Book Review: *Violets and Other Tales* (1895)

Readings:

1. Dunbar-Nelson, Alice M. *The Goodness of St. Rocque: And Other Stories*. Dodd, Mead & Co., 1899. (pages 1-107)
2. Adams, Katherine, Gebhard, Caroline, and Sandra A. Zagarell. “Alice Dunbar-Nelson’s Published Works: Bibliography in Progress.” *Recovering Alice Dunbar-Nelson for the Twenty-First Century* special issue of *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2016, pp. 254-258.

Week 4 (February 26-March 2) – Evidence: Research in the Reading Room

Reading Room Intensive: Guided work with the Alice Dunbar-Nelson Papers

Location: Morris Library Room 200b

Readings:

1. Dunbar-Nelson, Alice M. *The Goodness of St. Rocque: And Other Stories*. Dodd, Mead & Co., 1899. (pages 108-224)
2. Gebhard, Caroline. “Masculinity, Criminality, and Race: Alice Dunbar-Nelson’s Creole Boy Stories.” *Recovering Alice Dunbar-Nelson for the Twenty-First Century* special issue of *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2016, pp. 336-360.

Week 5 (March 5-9) – Alice: A Career Woman

Site Visit: Delaware Historical Society

Location: 505 N Market St, Wilmington, DE 19801

Readings:

1. Garvey, Ellen G. *Writing with Scissors: American Scrapbooks from the Civil War to the Harlem Renaissance*. Oxford University Press, 2012. (pages 1-130)
2. Emery, Jacqueline. “Writing to Belong: Alice Dunbar-Nelson’s Newspaper Columns in the African American Press.” *Recovering Alice Dunbar-Nelson for the Twenty-First Century* special issue of *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2016, pp. 286-309.

Week 6 (March 12-16) – Alice: Her Complex Identity

Book Review: *The Goodness of Saint Rocque* (1899)

Readings:

1. Garvey, Ellen G. *Writing with Scissors: American Scrapbooks from the Civil War to the Harlem Renaissance*. Oxford University Press, 2012. (pages 131-229)
2. Garvey, Ellen G. “Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson’s Suffrage Work: The View from Her Scrapbook.” *Recovering Alice Dunbar-Nelson for the Twenty-First Century* special issue of *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2016, pp. 310-335.

Week 7 (March 19-23) – Scrapbooking Work: Labor and Intellect

Book Review: *Writing with Scissors* (2012)

Readings:

1. Alexander, Eleanor. *Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow: The Tragic Courtship and Marriage of Paul Laurence Dunbar and Alice Ruth Moore: a History of Love and Violence Among the African American Elite*. New York University Press, 2001. (pages 1-111)
2. Shawn, Anthony C. “‘Upon the Young People of Our Race, by Our Own Literature’: Alice Dunbar-Nelson’s ‘Negro Literature for Negro Pupils.’” *Recovering Alice Dunbar-Nelson for the Twenty-First Century* special issue of *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2016, pp. 267-285.

**Assignment Due:** Descriptive Analysis

Week 8 (March 23-30) **Spring Break**

Week 9 (April 2-6) – Migrations: Merging Archival Materials with the Digital

Lab 2: A tutorial for maximizing tools and best practices when using Adobe Spark

Readings:

1. Alexander, Eleanor. *Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow: The Tragic Courtship and Marriage of Paul Laurence Dunbar and Alice Ruth Moore: a History of Love and Violence Among the African American Elite*. New York University Press, 2001. (pages 112-180)
2. Adams, Katherine, Gebhard, Caroline, and Sandra A. Zagarell. "Reflections on the Archive: Alice Ruth Moore Dunbar-Nelson." *Recovering Alice Dunbar-Nelson for the Twenty-First Century* special issue of *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2016, pp. 382-391.

Week 10 (April 9-13) – Scrapbooking Romance: Life and Love

Book Review: *Lyrics of Sunshine and Shadow* (2001)

Video Stream: Excerpts from Richard Thompson's *Mask in the Mirror* (2012)

Readings:

1. Gaines, Kevin K. *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century*. UNC Press Books, 1996. (pages 1-66)
2. Adams, Katherine, Gebhard, Caroline, and Sandra A. Zagarell. "Recovered from the Archive: Two Stories by Alice Dunbar-Nelson." *Recovering Alice Dunbar-Nelson for the Twenty-First Century* special issue of *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2016, pp. 404-407.
  - a. Dunbar-Nelson, Alice M. "St. John's Eve." (pages 408-415)
  - b. Dunbar-Nelson, Alice M. "His Heart's Desire." (pages 416-421)

Week 11 (April 16-20) – Scrapbooks Abound

Site Visit: Winterthur Museum

Location: 5105 Kennett Pike, Winterthur, DE 19735

Readings:

1. Gaines, Kevin K. *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century*. UNC Press Books, 1996. (pages 67-127)
2. Storm, Anna. "Quinine Pills and Race Progress: Alice Dunbar-Nelson and the Black Women's Literary Tradition." *Recovering Alice Dunbar-Nelson for the Twenty-First Century* special issue of *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2016, pp. 361-383.

Week 12 (April 23-27) – Alice: Poetry and the Great American Novel

Lab 3: Digitally augmenting print resources

Readings:

1. Gaines, Kevin K. *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century*. UNC Press Books, 1996. (pages 128-208)
2. Adams, Katherine, Gebhard, Caroline, and Sandra A. Zagarell. “Writing Black Modernism: Two Poems by Alice Dunbar-Nelson.” *Recovering Alice Dunbar-Nelson for the Twenty-First Century* special issue of *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*, vol. 33, no. 2, 2016, pp. 392-397.
  - a. Dunbar-Nelson, Alice M. “Little Excursions Week By Week.” (page 398)
  - b. Dunbar-Nelson, Alice M. “Harlem John Henry Views the Airmada.” (pages 399-403)

**Assignment Due:** Framework Essay

Week 13 (April 30-May 4) – Alice: Comedy or Tragedy

Table Reading: *Mine Eyes Have Seen* (1919)

Readings:

1. Gaines, Kevin K. *Uplifting the Race: Black Leadership, Politics, and Culture in the Twentieth Century*. UNC Press Books, 1996. (pages 209-261)

Week 14 (May 7-11) – Alice: The Politics of Race Activism

Book Review: *Uplifting the Race* (1996)

Week 15 (May 14-18) [Reading Days] – Scrapbooking Modalities: Putting It All Together

Lab 4: Digital/print scrapbook intensive

Week 16 (May 21-24) Finals

**Assignments Due:** Final Projects/Presentations/Exhibition

*Suggested Readings*

Alice Dunbar-Nelson:



1. Dunbar-Nelson, Alice Moore. "A Modern Undine." *The Works of Alice Dunbar-Nelson*. Edited by Akasha Gloria Hull, New York, Oxford University Press, 1988, 3-71.
2. Dunbar-Nelson, Alice Moore, and Gloria T Hull. *Give Us Each Day: The Diary of Alice Dunbar-Nelson*. New York, W.W. Norton, 1984.
3. Hull, Akasha Gloria. *Color, Sex & Poetry: Three Women Writers of the Harlem Renaissance*. Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1987.

#### Scrapbook Studies:

1. Helfand, Jessica. *Scrapbooks: An American History*. New Haven, Yale University Press, 2008.
2. Tucker, Susan, et al. *The Scrapbook in American Life*. Philadelphia, PA, Temple University Press, 2006.

#### Recommended Readings

##### Black Women Writing (from the long nineteenth century):

1. Bibb, Eloise A. *Poems*. Freeport, N.Y, Books for Libraries Press, 1971.
2. Hopkins, Pauline E. *The Magazine Novels of Pauline Hopkins*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1988.
3. Matthews, Victoria Earle. *Aunt Lindy*. Press of J. J. Little, 1893.
4. Tillman, Katherine Davis Chapman, et al. *The Works of Katherine Davis Chapman Tillman*. Edited by Claudia Tate, New York, Oxford University Press, 1991.

##### Local Color Fiction:

1. Cable, George Washington. *Old Creole Days: A Story of Creole Life*. New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917.

##### Book History/Print Culture Studies:

1. Cohen, Lara Langer, and Jordan Alexander Stein, editors. *Early African American Print Culture*. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.
2. Fraser, Robert. *Book History through Postcolonial Eyes: Rewriting the Script*. London, Routledge, 2008.

##### Critical Theory/Cultural Studies:

1. DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid. *Rhythm Science*. Cambridge, Mass., Mediawork/MIT Press, 2004.
2. Fleming, Juliet. *Cultural Graphology: Writing After Derrida*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2016.
3. Foucault, M. "Authorship: What Is an Author?" *Screen*, vol. 20, no. 1, 1979, pp. 13–34., doi:10.1093/screen/20.1.13.