Barely more than a half-century out of slavery, African Americans turned their attention to transforming the social and cultural landscape of the United States. The goals were diverse but straightforward: end racial oppression, ensure black people¹s rights, instantiate black humanity, build a world revolution. The goals were simple enough, though hardly simple to achieve.

This course covers the period popularly known as the Harlem Renaissance: the political, artistic, and social activities that spanned the first four decades of the twentieth century. What scholars have begun to call the New Negro Movement, takes as its point of departure poet Sterling Brown¹s observation that Harlem was the ³show-window, the cashier¹s till² for a much broader movement that occurred largely outside Harlem. We will examine these developments across the United States and throughout the African diaspora. We will explore the importance of physical movement (the Great Migration; Caribbean immigration to the U.S.; Caribbean and African immigration into Europe) and the movement of ideas and art around the world. How did notions of respectability, modernity, and class inform and shape the communities that emerged in this period? What impact did notions like the race man and race woman have on black political thought and activism? How did peoples from different parts of the diaspora make connections, and what role did their ethnic differences play in this history? What did people consider to be the function of art and literature? How did they see local struggles relating to global revolution? How did they see black liberation fitting within other efforts to transform the world?