A bibliography is simply a list of works on a particular topic. In its broadest definition, it can include any kind of sources. The basic information of a bibliography is identical to that of a works-cited list: author, title, publisher, date, and, in the case of articles: periodical name, volume, and page number. Like a works-cited list, a bibliography is arranged in alphabetical order, based on each author’s last name. Unlike a works-cited list, which includes only the works you reference in your essay, a bibliography includes all of sources you looked at in the process of researching your topic. To annotate a bibliography means to include critical commentary about each work on the list, usually in the form of two paragraphs (see step #4 in description below). This assignment will allow you to expand the course material in a direction of your own choosing. You will use the library as a research tool and, in the process, you will discover, evaluate, and annotate the most important sources for your topic.

The assignment consists of five steps. Steps 1-3 describe the research aspect of the project. Steps 4-5 describe the writing aspect of the project.

Research:

1. For your topic, choose a literary figure, theme, genre or period that might reasonably be discussed in a class on African American literature. (If you have questions about your topic, see me during office hours.)

2. You will attend a required Friday workshop at the library for a research session that will greatly help you in your search for these resources. In addition to running these sessions, librarian Harry Murphy has set up a web site with tips and examples to further help you with the assignment. The scheduled Friday workshops at the library are as follows:

   **Week 3:** Those who signed up under AFRAM 214 will meet on Friday, April 16 at 9:30 at the Suzzallo Instruction Lab on the first floor (near west entrance behind the Donor's Room).

   **Week 4:** Those who signed up under ENG 258 or through an Add Code will meet on Friday, April 23 at 9:30 at the Suzzallo Instruction Lab on the first floor (near west entrance behind the Donor's Room).
3. Locate **four academic books or articles** (in scholarly journals or periodicals such as *African American Literary Review, Callaloo*, etc.) that **best** address your topic. (Avoid irrelevant or weak sources. For example, do not use children’s books. You will be evaluated partly on your selections.)

**Writing:**

4. Under the heading, **“Critical Overview,”** begin the assignment by writing a critical overview of your research. Write two paragraphs analyzing the general trends you perceive in these books and articles. Do the sources disagree with each other? How so? What source do you find most compelling? Why? What source do you find least compelling? Why? What seems to be the central debate around this literary figure, theme, genre or period? Having read some of the scholarly debate, what is your own critical stance? Extend your critique **beyond** an assessment of interest (“this was boring; this was interesting.”)

5. Under the heading, **“Annotated Bibliography,”** create annotated bibliography entries for each item. Each annotated bibliography entry should begin by identifying the source in correct MLA documentation. You will then provide the following:

- A brief description of the author's topic, thesis, and methodology (what kind of evidence the author uses, what kind of theory she/he draws upon, what academic discipline they locate themselves within, e.g. literature, history, cultural studies, etc.).
- A concise outline of the main points in the text.
- A statement about the author’s goals and his/her intended audience.
- An evaluation of the text within the context of your investigation.

To sum up steps #4 and #5, your written assignment will consist of two sections: first, a “critical overview” and second, your “annotated bibliography.” (If you skip one of these sections, the highest grade you will receive is a low “C.”

Make sure to complete both sections!) Your entire assignment should be about five to six pages long. Please meet with me during office hours or after class if you have any questions. (I have an example of an "A" assignment in my office.) The assignment is **due Friday, May 7th, by 3:30** in Ellen Palms’ office, Padelford B505, in the American Ethnic Studies Department. Good luck!