

History 225: Afro-Atlantic Histories and Peoples, 1808-Present
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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 1:30-3:00 and by appointment
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The purpose of this course is to increase the student's knowledge of the issues and problems that have most impacted peoples of the African diaspora in the years since the English outlawed the slave trade in 1808. As such, the focus will be thematic rather than chronological. The primary emphasis will be on the history of political, social, intellectual movements. Topics will include slave resistance, black nationalism, socialism, and anti-colonialism. Other topics to be covered include: the meaning of "freedom," the construction of black "masculinities," diasporic religious expressions, art and literature, and race and medicine.

Procedures and Requirements

- 1) The course will ask you to concentrate your efforts on weekly reading and discussion instead of regular exams or a lengthy research paper. As such, students will be expected to attend every class session/discussion section and to participate actively in section discussions. Students are allowed one unexcused absence from discussion during the course of the semester. All absences beyond the first one will result in one point off your final grade for each discussion missed. The reading assignments on the syllabus must be completed by the time of your discussion section each week.
- 2) Attendance will not be taken for class lectures; however, there will be several pop quizzes on lectures and assigned readings during the course of the semester. These quizzes will count for 15% of your final grade. Quizzes will be given in your weekly discussion sections. No make-up quizzes will be administered. If you miss a quiz or are late for class, you will receive a zero on that week's quiz. No exceptions.
- 3) There will be two short written assignments during the course of the semester, both of which will be due in your discussion sections. The first will be due in week 3 and the second in week 11. The assignments for each of these papers are outline in the syllabus. You will receive more detail on them in your sections.
- 4) All students will be required to write a final essay (10 pages), to be turned in during the exam week, answering the following questions: Given the disparate experiences of African-descended peoples in the Americas over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, what is it that unifies the African diaspora or "black Atlantic"? Is there a set of elements that suggest a broadly shared history of African-descended peoples in the Atlantic world during this period? Or, are the

historical experiences of African-descended peoples so diverse that the idea of a singular “African diaspora” is of little use? Explain your answer. Hint: Be comparative. Your answers should also account for change over time. Draw from readings and class lectures to formulate your answers.

- 5) The final grade will be determined as follows: map quiz (5%), primary source analysis (15%), pop quizzes (15%), Child of the Dark paper (15%), discussion section (20%), final paper (30%).

Readings

Miguel Barnet, Biography of a Runaway Slave (Curbstone Press, 1994)

Richard Graham, ed., The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940 (Univ. of Texas, 1990)

Carolina Maria de Jesus, Child of the Dark (Signet, 1983)

James Baldwin, No Name in the Street (Laurel, 1986)

Walter Rodney, Robert Hill, Howard Dodson, Walter Rodney Speaks: The Making of an African Intellectual (Africa World Press, 1990)

Coursepack

Week 1 Introduction to the Course—Revolution and “Modernity”?

Reading: David Geggus, “The Haitian Revolution,” in Franklin W. Knight and Colin A. Palmer, *The Modern Caribbean* (UNC, 1989), 21-50; Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “An Unthinkable History: The Haitian Revolution as a Non-Event,” in Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon, 1995), 70-107

9/6 Go over syllabus, course requirements. Defining “modern;” defining the African Diaspora. How do we delineate “modernity”? What is the African Diaspora, and how is it applicable to the late 19th and 20th centuries?

9/8 Lecture: The Haitian Revolution from Above...and Below. Importance of lens, etc.

What is the importance of the Haitian Revolution to the history of the African diaspora? To Western history more generally? Is it possible to tell the history of Haiti through the lens of Western history? Why, or why

not? To date, have scholars been successful in depicting the events of the Haitian Revolution? Illegal Slave Trade and the Continuing Importance of Africa: Cuba, Puerto Rico, Brazil

Week 2 Resisting Slavery

Reading: Miguel Barnet, Biography of a Runaway Slave, 1-57; João José Reis, *Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia* (Johns Hopkins, 1993), chapters 4 and 5

9/13 Lecture: Slavery and Slave Resistance after 1807. Contours of “illegal” slave trade. Slave life. Definition of resistance. Resistance v. Agency? Demerara, Sam Sharpe, Malês, Nat Turner, etc.

9/15 Lecture: Slave Rebellion after 1807..continued. Film clip: Amistad. To what extent was freedom “granted” by abolitionists, and to what extent did slaves demand/take freedom?

Amistad workshop. ESSAY DUE IN SECTIONS IN WEEK 3: For discussion section, all students must read the following 8 page document from the National Archives web site and write a 3-5 page paper analyzing the source. You will receive instructions in sections on how to analyze primary sources.

<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/amistad/gedney-statement.html>

Week 3 Constructing Freedom

Reading: Barnet, 62-156; Sidney W. Mintz, “Panglosses and Pollyannas; or, Whose Reality are we Talking About?,” in Frank McGlynn and Seymour Drescher, eds., The Meaning of Freedom (Pitt, 1992), 245-256.

9/20 Lecture: The Multiple Meanings of Freedom: Brazil, Cuba, the US, and Jamaica. Salvador v. São Paulo. Film clip from “Abolição.” Assess the meaning of “freedom” for former slaves. Did freedom have a consistent meaning across time and space? How was it constructed differently in various settings?

9/22 MAP QUIZ ON AFRICAN DIASPORA

Week 4 Labor and Society

Reading: Francisco Scarano, “Labor and Society in the Nineteenth Century,” in The Modern Caribbean, eds. Franklin W. Knight and Colin A. Palmer (UNC, 1990), 51-84.

9/27 Lecture: Apprenticeship, Sharecropping, Debt Peonage, and Subsistence Farming. Did slavery really end? Film: “Rue Cases Negres” (Sugar Cane Alley).

9/29 “Sugar Cane Alley” continued.

Week 5 Scientific Racism, Whitening, and Mestizaje

Reading: Richard Graham, The Idea of Race in Latin America (all)

10/4 Lecture: The Rise of Scientific Racism and its Impacts on the Americas.

10/6 Lecture: Whitening, Mestizaje, and “Modernization.”

What were the impacts of racial science on the peoples of the Americas? How did governments and intellectuals respond to the challenges posed by European “science”? Assess the efficacy of policies like “whitening” and “mestizaje.” What were/are the limitations of these concepts?

Week 6 Race and the (De-)Constructions of Black Masculinities

Reading: Aline Helg, “Black Men, Racial Stereotyping, and Violence in the US South and Cuba at the Turn of the Century,” Comparative Studies in Society and History 42 (2000), 576-604; Gail Bederman, “‘The White Man’s Civilization on Trial’: Ida B. Wells, Representations of Lynching, and Northern Middle-Class Manhood,” in Bederman, Manliness and Civilization (Chicago, 1995), 45-76; bell hooks, “Reconstructing Black Masculinity,” in Black Looks: Race and Representation (1992)

10/11 Lecture: Rapists and Witches: Black Responses—Cuba, 1912; Ida B. Wells and lynching, Jack Johnson. “Without Sanctuary: Photographs and Postcards of Lynchings in America”

10/13 Lecture: Comparative Black Masculinities—Hip Hop, Bofos, Bichas, and the Crying Game; clips from “Black Is, Black Aint.”

In what ways are constructions of race and gender entangled? How do sexual stereotypes play into these formulations? Is it possible to talk about “racism” separately from “sexism”? How have white feminists addressed the race problem?

Week 7 Nationalism Ascendant: Caribbean Inflections

Reading: Winston James, “The Peculiarities of Caribbeans: Characteristics and Forces Conducive to Radicalization,” in Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia (Verso, 1998), 50-91

10/18 Lecture: Caribbean Influences on Black Nationalism. HH Harrison, CLR James, Eric Williams, George Padmore, etc.

10/20 Lecture: Marcus Garvey and the UNIA. Video and Audio presentation. Garvey speeches, etc.

Describe the influence of Caribbean migrants on radical and civil rights movements in the US. What kinds of life experiences did Caribbean migrants bring to US civil rights movements? What was the appeal of the black nationalist message of Marcus Garvey? Who was most attracted to Garveyism? Why? What were the flaws of Garvey’s “back to Africa” movement?

Week 8 Confronting Colonialism

Reading: Fanon, Black Skin White Masks, 17-40; 109-140; Colin A. Palmer, “Identity, Race, and Black Power in Independent Jamaica,” in Franklin W. Knight and Colin A. Palmer, eds., The Modern Caribbean (UNC, 1989), 111-128.

10/25 Lecture: Congo as a Case Study of Colonialism; The Psychoses of Racism and Colonialism; US Occupation of Haiti

10/27 Lecture: Responses to Colonialism: Negritude, Black Consciousness, Pan-Africanism. Clips from Cry Freedom, Lumumba, etc.

What were the psychological impacts of colonialism/racism? Compare and contrast the ways that colonized peoples responded.

Week 9 Nationalism, Socialism, Pan-Africanism, or All of the Above?: Complicating the African Diaspora

Reading: Walter Rodney, Robert Hill, Howard Dodson, Walter Rodney Speaks: The Making of an African Intellectual (all)

11/1 Lecture: Socialists, Pan Africanists, and those in Between: Shifting Currents in Approaches to Black Oppression. Video: Paul Robeson: Here I Stand

11/3 Lecture: Black Power, Socialism, and Convergent Paths—WEB DuBois, George Padmore, Paul Robeson, MLK, Malcolm X, Walter Rodney.

What explains the different shifts in ideology among some leading black political figures in the 20th century? Why did some become more nationalist and others more socialist? Were these two currents incompatible? Why do you think all of these figures were relentlessly harassed by various Western governments?

Week 10 Race, Gender, and Urban Poverty

Reading: Carolina Maria de Jesus, Child of the Dark (all)

11/8 Lecture: Industry, Urban Migration, Ghettos, and Favelas: Brazil and the US Compared. Haiti. Scheper Hughes. Video: City of God.

11/10 City of God (continued)

3-5 PAGE ESSAY DUE IN DISCUSSION SECTION IN WEEK 11: How does urbanization impact sexual roles, “mothering”? How are men’s and women’s roles different in urban environments? Do ideas about childhood change? How do ideas about gender, childhood, etc., transform ideas about race, especially outside of favelas?

Week 11 Cultural Expressions in the African Diaspora: Religion and Music

Reading: George Brandon, “Sacrificial Practices in Santeria, an African-Cuban Religion in the United States,” in Africanisms in American Culture, ed., Joseph Holloway (Indiana Univ. Press, 1991), 119-147; Ben Bollig, “White Rapper, Black Beats: Discovering a Race Problem in the Music of Gabriel o Pensador,” *Latin American Music Review* 23 (2002), 159-178 (on reserve and at Project Muse).

11/15 Lecture: History, Cosmology, and Ritual Practice in Brazilian Candomblé. Film Clips: Bahia: Africa in the Americas or Divine Horsemen.

11/17 Lecture: Diaspora Music and Dance Forms. From Calundu to Samba. Selections from James Brown, Bob Marley, Virginia Rodrigues, MC Solaar, Fela Kuti, Ricardo Lemvo, Bongo Maffin, etc.

Compare and contrast African derived religious forms in the Americas. How have these religious practices changed over time? To what extent are these “authentic” African forms? Why does “authenticity” matter? Is music ever authentic to a particular culture, nationality, or race? Does anyone “own” culture?

Week 12 Literature and Art: James Baldwin and Beauford Delaney

Reading: James Baldwin, “Take Me to the Water,” in Baldwin, *No Name in the Street* (Dell, 1972), 3-81

11/22 Lecture and Discussion: Baldwin and Delaney. Show Delaney’s art. How does Baldwin compare the African-American experience to the Algerian experience in France? Why does Baldwin go to France? Delaney? Race relations in the North versus the South?

11/24 THANKSGIVING

Week 13 Medical Malpractice and Responses in the Diaspora

Reading: Paul Farmer, “AIDS and Accusation: Haiti and the Geography of Blame,” in Douglas Feldman, ed. *AIDS and Culture: The Human Factor* (New York, 1990), 67-91; Farmer, “Sending Sickness: Sorcery, Politics, and Changing Concepts of AIDS in Rural Haiti,” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 4 (1990), 6-27; Mandisa Mbali, “AIDS Discourses and the South African State: Government denialism and post-apartheid AIDS policy making,” *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa* 54 (2004), 104-122.

11/29 Lecture: Medical Experiments and their Effects on Blacks in the Diaspora; film clip on Tuskegee; TB; Sickle Cell

12/1 Lecture: AIDS, Accusation(s), and “The River.” Debates over the origins of AIDS.

Historically, how have Africans and their descendants been treated by the scientific and medical communities? Compare and contrast the various responses of African descended peoples to their mistreatment—US (Tuskegee), Haiti (AIDS), and South Africa (AIDS).

Week 14 Memories of Slavery and the Reparations Debate

Reading: Max Du Plessis, “Historical Injustice and International Law: An Exploratory Discussion of Reparations for Slavery,” *Human Rights Quarterly* 25 (2003): 624-659; Martha Biondi, “The Rise of the Reparations Movement,” *Radical History Review* 87 (2003): 5-18.

12/6 Lecture: Demands for Reparations: Durban 2001. Video: Motherland: A Genetic Journey.

12/8

Motherland (continued)

How is slavery remembered in African-descended communities in the diaspora? Are there differences in the memories of Africans, African Americans, Brazilians? Are reparations economically feasible? How should they be distributed?

Do the subjects in the video “Motherland” have romanticized views of Africa? How do these views change over the course of the video? Is genetic science a useful tool for recovering the African past? What are its limitations?

Week 15

Comparative Race Relations in the Modern Nation State

Reading: Robin Sheriff, Dreaming Equality: Color, Race, and Racism in Urban Brazil (Rutgers, 2002), 59-117; “Best of Friends, Worlds Apart,” and “At a Slaughterhouse, Some Things Never Die,” from NY Times series, “How Race is Lived in America. Articles can be found on-line at www.nytimes.com/library/national/race

12/13

Lecture: The Myth of Racial Democracy in Brazil: Histories and Permutations. Video: Bus 174

12/15

Bus 174 (continued)

Race and Space: How does race operate differently in various diasporic spaces? Race in US v. Brazil? Racial categories in Miami v. Cuba? Meaning of “diaspora” in Haiti v. US? How do these differences affect group identity and diasporic consciousness?