

330: African and African American Linkages: Syllabus

Professor Plummer, Tues.-Thurs. 1:00-2:15 pm. Helen C. White 4281

SYLLABUS

World wars, long-distance markets, and the slave trade brought millions of Africans to the Americas, a population movement that is at the center of modernity in the West. The era of European contact with Africa and the indigenous societies of the Americas contributed to vast global changes in the social, cultural, ecological, and political realms. It created new cultures and new peoples. The scattering of Africa's millions was unique in that this **diaspora** [Greek, dispersion, from diaspeirein to scatter, from dia- + speirein to sow] was the result of elaborate planning and often carried out by force in ways that obscured the historical connections between the Old World and the New.

This course will recover some of those historical linkages. Topics covered include the slave trade; reconstituting and reinventing African communities in the Americas; maroonage, rebellion and revolution; mercantilism, Islam in the Americas; contract laborers and returnees; the emigration and colonization movements; Garveyism; Ethiopianism; and anticolonialism.

Organization. The class format will mix lectures, audiovisual presentations and discussions. Class meetings will address assigned texts or scheduled topics. Scheduled topics provide broad chronological and thematic continuity and supply background material for students' own independent investigation.

Evaluation. Attendance will be kept for each class session. Grades will be based on three quizzes, a literature review, and a take-home final exam. The literature review is an essay that discusses either one book or 3 articles on the subject of African and African American historical linkages. Guidelines for writing the literature review will be distributed separately. They are weighted as follows:

Each quiz = 20 percent of the grade.

Book review = 20 percent of the grade.

Final exam = 20 percent of the grade.

What the grades mean:

A (93-100) - Literature reviews that show strong evidence of serious reading of the text(s), skillful arguments and interpretations, and original thinking. Reviews that are carefully structured, skillfully written, without grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors and are careful about citations. For quizzes and exams, excellent knowledge of facts as demonstrated by quantitative performance on short answer and multiple-choice sections. Indication of superior knowledge, ability to reason on the fly, and writing ability on essay questions.

AB (85-92) - Literature reviews that are well written, show solid understanding of the sources used, and do not simply mirror the conclusions of other authors. These reviews are not outstanding as far as writing style or insights are concerned. A minimum of grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors. For quizzes and exams, good knowledge of facts as demonstrated by quantitative performance on short answer and multiple-choice sections. For essay sections, demonstration of sound knowledge, capacity to sustain an argument, and the ability to write clearly and well spontaneously.

B (80-84) - Literature reviews that have covered some but not most of the bases in describing and interpreting sources. They will have moderate organizational problems. They make a good argument but do not provide evidence to support all of it, or that may not be logical or well organized throughout. Slippage with regard to citations and grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors. For quizzes and exams, good knowledge of facts as demonstrated by quantitative performance on short answer and multiple-choice sections. Essays show an adequate grasp of the subject but arguments are not strongly

supported, and writing is adequate but not impressive.

BC (77-79) - Literature reviews that do not cover enough factual ground to support the arguments being made. They have serious structural or organizational problems. They contain weak arguments or adequate arguments that are weakly supported. They have compositional problems, including inadequate attention to grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors. For quizzes and exams, borderline knowledge of facts as demonstrated by quantitative performance on short answer and multiple-choice sections. Essays that don't fully answer the question, try to answer another question, or that are not clearly written.

C (70-76) - Literature reviews that clearly indicate through inaccuracies or lack of material that reading and thinking through the material was not adequately done. Writing problems serious enough to confuse a reader. Reviews that do not present a real argument, or that do little to support an argument. Extensive citation just to fill up space with poor documentation of the citations. Little or no attention to grammar, punctuation, or spelling. For quizzes and exams, limited knowledge of facts as demonstrated by quantitative performance on short answer and multiple-choice sections. Essays skirt the questions asked, are not well structured, show evidence of writing difficulties.

D (69-65) - Literature reviews that do not contain much information and that are organized and written poorly. Reviews that indicate extensive difficulties with writing and documentation. No attention to the paper's appearance and extensive grammatical, punctuation, and spelling errors. For quizzes and exams, deficient knowledge of facts as demonstrated by quantitative performance on short answer and multiple-choice sections. Essays indicate lack of basic knowledge, have serious organizational and compositional problems.

F (64) - Failure to carry out the minimum requirements of papers or exams as detailed above. Often a product of absence.

Quiz dates and due dates:

Quiz 1 - September 30, 2004

Quiz 2 - October 26, 2004

Quiz 3 - November 19, 2004

Book review - December 9, 2004

Final exam - December 22, 2004 by 4 pm.

Any student who is dissatisfied with a quiz grade that is less than a B may write a short (5 page) supplementary paper in consultation with the professor.

Attendance. Attendance is required. Attendance will be kept for each class session. The reason is to protect the interests of students who diligently come to class and help create a community by their presence. It is based on the idea of a classroom as a social entity and education as a commitment. Anyone can have up to 8 unexcused absences (i.e., one month of classes) without penalty. Students who are members of teams, or involved with University-sponsored activities that may occasionally take them away from class, should provide a schedule of their absences to their professors. Students with constant schedule conflicts, or those who have difficulty getting up for morning classes, should make a decision about whether to take the course. Those otherwise missing more than 8 class sessions (that is, a solid month of classes) cannot earn more than a C in the course.

Texts. Required texts have been placed on reserve at College Library, or at the Historical Society, if the Society owns the book. They are available for sale at the Rainbow bookstore on Gilman Street. There is also a packet of course readings available at the Humanities Copy Center.

Robert Farris Thompson, FLASH OF THE SPIRIT

Jeffrey W. Bolster, BLACK JACKS

Olaudah Equiano, THE INTERESTING NARRATIVE AND OTHER WRITINGS Penguin Classic (paper)
Please note: This edition only!

Michael A. Gomez, EXCHANGING OUR COUNTRY MARKS: THE TRANSFORMATION OF AFRICAN IDENTITY IN THE COLONIAL AND ANTEBELLUM SOUTH

COURSE PACKET

Contact with professor:

- Office location and mailbox: My office is located in 5111 Humanities Building. My mailbox is over there, not in the Helen C. White building. The mailbox number is 4011 and it is on the 4th floor.
- Office hours: Tuesday, 3-4pm; Thursdays 11 am-noon.
- E-mail and telephone: My office telephone number is 263 1845. Messages can also be left with the History Department, phone no., 263 1800, or with the Afro-American Studies Department, phone no. 263 1642. E-mail is better. My E-mail address is bplummer@wisc.edu.
- Class e-mail list: There will also be a class e-mail list to which you will be automatically subscribed if your registration is in order and you have a students.wisc.edu e-mail address. If you haven't received any mail from the class list by the end of the second week of the semester, please let me know. If you are having an e-mail problem and you have a hotmail account, you may need to change your settings. Students should also feel free to use the list to communicate with one another and share information about the course. E-mail is not a substitute, however, for class attendance.