

## African American History I (21:512:233)

**Mondays and Wednesdays 10-11:20am**

**Conklin 346**

**Professor Beatrice J. Adams**

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**Office Hours: Mondays & Wednesdays 11:30-1pm**

**Office Location: Conklin 326**

### **Course Description**

This course covers the African American historical experience from the African coast to the end of slavery and Reconstruction. Through deep and sustained reading assignments, it highlights key episodes in African American History during the period as well as how and why historical thought about these periods has changed. Through broad, narrative class lectures and discussions, it seeks to detail how the narrative of African American history both adds to and challenges the generally understood narrative of American History.

With particular interest to providing students with new chronological frames of history and knowledge of lesser-known events in African American history, the course covers the challenges to and advancements of African Americans strivings from slavery to freedom.

### **Course Goals**

1. For students to be able to reproduce a detailed outline of the key events in African American History from its beginning to Reconstruction.
2. For students to be able to identify connections between these key events and current social, cultural, and political events.
3. For students to be able to identify, review, and analyze the main arguments, themes, and purposes of historical writing through written and verbal communication.
4. For student to deeply engage with an historical subject and develop public speaking, research, and writing skills through a final presentation.

### **General Course Information**

**Attendance-** Your attendance and participation make up 10% of your grade and **attendance is mandatory**. Roll will be called at the beginning of class, please note that you must sign if you arrive after roll is called. Beginning the second week you are expected to attend the entire class. Signing in and leaving early (without notifying the instructor) is a triple absence. If you cannot get to this class on time due to a schedule conflict, do not enroll in this class.

**The best way to succeed in this class is to simply attend class and be an active participant.** Students are expected to do all the reading and be prepared to discuss readings in class (please bring your readings to class). **Arriving more than 5 minutes late to class will be considered a half-absence and after two unexcused absences each unexcused absence will result in a 1% reduction of your final grade.**

As detailed in the Rutgers catalog "the recognized grounds for absence are illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions". The Rutgers Catalog can be found at [http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nwk-ug\\_0608/index.html](http://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/nwk-ug_0608/index.html).

Additionally, per the policies of the Department of History, "Any student who misses eight or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class. Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F."

**And in general, if you plan to miss class or be late to class for any reason, please notify me through email before the start of class if at all possible.**

**Students with Disabilities:** Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. For more information please the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219 or contact [odsnewark@rutgers.edu](mailto:odsnewark@rutgers.edu).

**Honor Pledge:** The history department requires all students to write and sign the Rutgers University Honor Pledge on all assignments. To receive credit, you must write "On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination/assignment." and sign your name below this statement on every assignment submitted for this class.

**Academic Integrity:** Plagiarism and cheating are unacceptable. For the policies, which you are responsible for reading and abiding by, go to: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers>. If you commit Academic Dishonesty, I will not be very understanding. All papers will be submitted to Blackboard and will be reviewed for plagiarism. Any assignment in which a student engages in Academic Dishonesty will receive a grade of "0". And as a standard minimum penalty, students who are suspected of cheating or plagiarism are reported to the Office of Academic Integrity. Pending investigation, further penalties can include failure of the course, disciplinary probation, and a formal warning that further cheating will be grounds for expulsion from the University.

## Grading Scale & Weighting

100%-90%=A  
89%-87%=B+  
86%-80%=B  
79%-77%=C+

76%-70%=C  
69%-60%=D  
59%-0%=F

Class Participation	10%
Discussion Questions & Reading Quizzes	25%
Midterm Exam	25%
Final Presentation	40%

## Assignments

**Why Classroom participation matters?** This can only work if we all help each other. It is an exercise in collective action. Please come to class prepared, having read, and ready to participate in discussions as well as group activities. I am interested in what you have to say, even if your ideas differ from my own. While we all have to respect each other, including and especially me, I want this to be a space where ideas can be debated in a critical way. **10%**

**Discussion Questions & Reading Quizzes-**Each class period will begin with either a short reading quiz or a few minutes to formulate discussion questions based on the readings for that day. These assignments are meant to check reading comprehension. They are also a way for you to shape the nature and content of in-class discussions based on your interests and needs. **25%**

**Midterm Exam-** the **midterm exam** will cover assigned readings and class lectures. Students will be expected to identify and link common themes we have covered in the course. We will discuss the content and composition of the exam in the class periods before the exam. The exam will be posted on Blackboard and submitted online as well. While you are welcome to work in groups to study for the exam, students should not be working together on the exam.

There will be two parts of the exam. One half of the exam will be identifications of key terms based on in-class discussions, presentations, and course readings. The other half will be an essay addressing broad themes introduced in the readings. **25%**

**Final Presentation-** the **final presentation** will consist of students writing and presenting a five-page paper that approaches a current event through an historical lens. The paper and presentation will consist of three key components: 1) Description of a recent event (the last 5 years) in the United States where the issue of slavery has been discussed, 2) How slavery was related to the event, and 3) What the discussion of slavery got wrong and right. The presentation will be discussed in more detail in class periods throughout the semester. Presentations will take place in class on the last week and the accompanying paper will be due the day of the final exam. **40%**

**Extra Credit-**I will provide a few opportunities for extra credit throughout the semester; however, the best way to do well in my class is to attend regularly and communicate clearly about challenges you

encounter to your success in the course. If you cannot attend regularly and show up on time, this may not be the class for you.

### **Course Books**

These books may be found used online but be sure to order well in advance of the beginning of classes.

Edward Countryman, ed. *How Did American Slavery Begin?* Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1999.

Deborah Gray White, Mia Bay, and Waldo E. Martin Jr. *Freedom on My Mind*. Bedford/St. Martin's; Combined edition (December 14, 2012)

### **Course Schedule & Weekly Reading Assignments**

\*\*\*= Denotes the reading being available on Blackboard

**BOLD**= Denotes a chapter in *Freedom on My Mind*

#### Week One: When and where does African American History begin?

Wednesday, September 5th- Introduction to Class & Overview of Assignments

#### Week Two: Africa & The Atlantic World

Monday, September 10th-\*\*\*“Trust, Pawnship, and Atlantic History”

Wednesday, September 12th- “Chapter I: Kongo in the Lowcountry”, *Rituals of Resistance: African Atlantic Religion in Kongo and the Lowcountry South in the Era of Slavery* (available online through library website)

#### Week Three: The Beginnings of American Slavery

Monday, September 17th- **Chapter 1: “From Africa to America”**

Wednesday, September 19th- Countryman, Chapter 1

#### Week Four: “The Terrible Transformation”

Monday September 24th - Countryman, Chapter 3 & 4

Wednesday September 26th - Countryman, Chapter 5

#### Week Five: Colonial Era Slavery

Monday, October 1<sup>st</sup>- **Chapter 2: “African Slavery in North America”**

Wednesday, October 3rd-\*\*\*Excerpt of *Narrative of Sojourner Truth*

#### Week Six: The American Revolution

Monday, October 8th - **Chapter 3: “African Americans in the Age of Revolution”**

Wednesday, October 10th - \*\*\*Excerpt of *Notes on the State of Virginia*

#### Week Seven: Slavery in the New Nation

Monday, October 15th-**Chapter 4: “Slavery and Freedom in the New Republic”**

Wednesday, October 17th-Midterm

Week Eight: Antebellum Slavery- The Slave Trade

Monday, October 22nd- “Chapter Six: Acts for Sale”, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (available online through library website)

Wednesday, October 24<sup>th</sup>-“Chapter Seven: Life in the Shadow of the Slave Market”, *Soul by Soul* (available online through library website)

Week Nine: Antebellum Slavery- Life in the Slave South Part 1

Monday, October 29<sup>th</sup> -**Chapter 5: “Black Life in the Slave South”**

Wednesday, October 31<sup>st</sup>-\*\*\*Excerpt of *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

Week Ten: The Free Black Community

Monday, November 5<sup>th</sup>- \*\*\*“Chapter 7: The Story of Seneca Village”, *African or American?: Black Identity and Political Activism in New York*

Wednesday, November 7<sup>th</sup>-\*\*\*Excerpts of *David Walker’s Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World*

Week Eleven: Antebellum Slavery- Life in the Slave South Part II

Monday, November 12<sup>th</sup>- \*\*\*“Chapter 1: A Geography of Containment”, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*

Wednesday, November 14<sup>th</sup>-\*\*\*“Chapter 2: I Could Not Stay There”, *Closer to Freedom*

Week Twelve- The Black Freedom Struggle

Monday, November 19<sup>th</sup>- **Chapter 6: “The Northern Black Freedom Struggle and the Coming of the Civil War”**

Wednesday, November 21<sup>st</sup>-No Class

Week Thirteen: The Civil War

Monday, November 26<sup>th</sup> - **Chapter 7: “Freedom Rising”**

Wednesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>-\*\*\*“Chapter 3: Of Rumors and Revelations, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South From Slavery to the Great Migration* (available online through library website)

Week Fourteen: Reconstruction

Monday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>-**Chapter 8: “Reconstruction”**

Wednesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>-\*\*\*“Chapter 6: Of Paramilitary Politics”, *A Nation Under Our Feet*: (available online through library website)

Week Fifteen:

Monday, December 10<sup>th</sup>: Final Presentations

Wednesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>: Final Presentations

**Final Exam: Monday, December 17<sup>th</sup> at 11:45pm-2:45pm**