The African American Community
Spring 2021
Asynchronous Schedule
Course Platform: Canvas (canvas.rutgers.edu)

Course Description:

Be it on the news or in casual conversation, at some point, you have likely heard reference to the term “the African American community.” Often, the term is presented in a neat and tidy way that represents African Americans as a unified body. In this course students will analyze and the contours the African American community and complicate the notion of it as a singular whole. We will ask: what, or perhaps more importantly, who do we mean when we refer to the African American community? What does it mean to do community work? What roles do art, politics, and affect play in the construction of community?

In this course, we will draw from academic scholarship, literature, music, digital culture and film to explore a variety of themes related to African American community and community making from the 20th century to the present day. This course does not offer a comprehensive view of the African American community. The readings and texts are designed to address a larger set of questions tied to power, identity, and agency. As we move through the course, you are encouraged to think about themes of interest that are not represented in the course materials and to explore one of these themes in your final project.

For many of us, our lives and sense of community have been deeply disrupted by the pandemic. This course offers a space for imagining what's possible within our lives and communities. The final project for the course as well as some of the readings will be focused on digital community making.

Course Format:

The format of this course is asynchronous which means that you will work to complete the assignments each week on your own time but with scheduled due dates. Unless told otherwise, all weekly assignments are due on Sundays by midnight.

Required Texts:
All readings are available via the course page on Canvas (canvas.rutgers.edu).
Grading, Requirements, and Expectations:

- Class Participation (40%)
- Digital Tour Project (40%)
- Final Project Portfolio (20%)

Unless indicated otherwise, all weekly assignments are due on Sundays by midnight. Grades will be lowered on late papers/assignments (unless if you have spoken with me in advance and received an official extension). That being said, if you are struggling in the course, please contact me immediately. These are challenging times and I will do my best to be understandable.

1. **Class participation** (40%) Some weeks you will be required to view a short video lecture. During these lectures, you may be required to do some short informal writing in a Google doc that is shared with me. For each of these exercises, you should note the date as well as the theme of the week. These exercises will be graded based on evidence of thoughtful engagement with the lecture and the course themes. If a response is in need of further development, you will have the opportunity to elaborate. Periodically, you may also be asked to complete polls, feedback forms, or quizzes. While these polls/forms will not be graded, they are mandatory and will count towards participation.

   **Discussion Board Responses.** Some weeks you will be required to complete a reading form OR to respond to discussion on Canvas. Please in addition to posting an original of your own, you must respond to posts written by a minimum of two other students in the class. Please submit your reading forms via email to: ne100@rutgers.edu.

2. **Digital Tour Project** (40%) For this assignment you will create a digital experience that speaks to the theme of African American community by thoughtfully curating a series of online “stops.” These “stops” will be different websites that you have selected where participants will read, listen to, or view a text and then reflect by responding to a set of questions and instructions designed by you. You will work on this assignment over the course of the semester with several deadlines leading up to the final draft. Please find additional details for this project posted under the “Assignments” section on Canvas.

3. **Final Project Portfolio** (20%) For your final project you will submit a portfolio that includes: 1) Your digital tour project 2) a two-page (double spaced) analysis of the experience you created and how it ties to the themes explored in class 3) A two-paged response on your experience after participating in the digital tours created by two assigned students in the class. Please find a more detailed outline for this in the “Assignments” section on Canvas.
4. **Community Check-Ins.** Once per month, I will offer a space where students can come together to discuss how things are going in the course, ask questions, and share thoughts relevant to the course topic. Community check-ins will last approximately 30 minutes and are **optional**. The decision to not attend or to attend will not impact your grade. If you would like to meet with me at any point during the semester, please feel free to join my office hours or to send me an email to schedule an appointment.

**Academic Integrity:**

Correct and accurate citation of all sources is important and required. If you are unsure of how or whether to cite a source, please contact the course instructor. As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University's educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community. The entire Academic Integrity Policy can be found here: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/

**Accommodation and Support Statement:**

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and the University as a whole. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

**For Individuals with Disabilities:** The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS at (973)353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

**For Individuals who are Pregnant:** The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-1906 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

**For Absence Verification:** The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to University Policy 10.2.7 for information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of
Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries: The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (e.g., broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu.

For English as a Second Language (ESL): The Program in American Language Studies (PALS) can support students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a Second Language (ESL) and can be reached by emailing PALS@newark.rutgers.edu to discuss potential supports.

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University’s Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct located at http://compliance.rutgers.edu/title-ix/about-title-ix/title-ix-policies/.

For support related to interpersonal violence: The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance can provide any student with confidential support. The office is a confidential resource and does not have an obligation to report information to the University’s Title IX Coordinator. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based line available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support.

For Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a support plan to address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Students, faculty and staff may contact the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

For Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-being: The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. If you are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out TAO at Rutgers-Newark for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support: https://tinyurl.com/RUN-TAO.
For emergencies, call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) by calling (973) 353-5111.

Technological Resources:
1) Tech Resources for Students: https://coronavirus.rutgers.edu/technology-resources-for-students/.
2) OIT-Newark Help Desk: https://it.rutgers.edu/guides/oit-newark-help-desk/

CLASS SCHEDULE

January 20: Course Welcome & Introductions
- Watch: Welcome Video
- Upload: A short video introduction of yourself. In the video, please state your name, why you signed up for the class, and what the phrase African American community means to you
- Fill out: The course questionnaire.
- Create: A Google doc titled “AACC Notes: [INSERT YOUR NAME HERE]” and share it with Prof. Extra (ne100@rutgers.edu)

WEEK 1: What is community?
[Jan. 25-29]
- Read: “Community without Community” by Vijay Devadas and Jane Mummery (*only read paragraphs 1-7)
Optional: The Coming of Community by Giorgio Agamben (excerpt)
- Watch: Lecture 1 and take notes in your Google Doc for the class.
- Write: Respond to the discussion questions posted on Canvas and write thoughtful 3-5 sentence responses to TWO posts that you did not write.

WEEK 2: Musical Anthems
[Feb. 1-5]
- Read: “Why the National Black Anthem is Lifting Every Voice to Sing” by Janelle Harris Dixon
Optional: Introduction to Anthem by Shana L. Redmond
- Watch: Lecture 2 and take notes in your Google Doc for the class.
- Watch/Listen: 1) Kim Weston singing "Lift Every Voice And Sing" in the documentary, Wattstax. 2) Beyonce singing "Lift Every Voice And Sing"
- **Write**: Respond to the discussion questions posted on Canvas and write a thoughtful 3-5 sentence responses to a minimum of TWO posts written by your classmates.

**WEEK 3:**

**Sports, Charisma & Stardom**

[Feb. 8-12]

- **Watch**: TBD

Optional: Excerpt from *Charisma and the Fictions of Black Leadership* by Erica R. Edwards

- **Watch**: Lecture 3 and take notes in your Google Doc for the class.

- **Write**: Respond to the discussion questions posted on Canvas and write thoughtful 3-5 sentence responses to TWO posts that you did not write.

**WEEK 4:**

**The Black Church**

[Feb. 15-19]

- **Read**: “Church Sissies: Gayness and the Black Church” from *Sweet Tea* by E. Patrick Johnson (read pages 1-36)

- **Watch**: Lecture 4 and take notes in your Google Doc for the class.

- **Write**: Respond to the discussion questions posted on Canvas and write thoughtful 3-5 sentence responses to TWO posts that you did not write.

**WEEK 5:**

**Digital Community Making and Resistance**

[Feb. 22-26]

- **Read**: “#transform(ing) DH Writing and Research: An Autoethnography of Digital Humanities and Feminist Ethics” by Moya Bailey

- **Watch**: Lecture 5 and take notes in your Google Doc for the class.

- **Write**: Respond to the discussion questions posted on Canvas and write thoughtful 3-5 sentence responses to TWO posts that you did not write.

**WEEK 6:**

[Mar. 1-5]

- **Watch**: Lecture 6 and take notes in your Google Doc for the class.

**WEEK 7:**

**HIV/AIDS & the African American Community**

[Mar. 8-12]

- **Read**: Chapter 2 from *The Boundaries of Blackness* by Cathy Cohen

- **Read**: Selected poems from *Homie* by Danez Smith

- **Write**: Respond to the discussion questions posted on Canvas and write thoughtful 3-5 sentence responses to TWO posts that you did not write OR **Create**: A 5-7 minute video of you reading one to two of Danez Smith’s poems. Explain why you chose to read the poem(s) and how they related to the week’s theme.
WEEK 8:  
[Mar. 15-19]  
- No class. Spring Break.

WEEK 9:  
[Mar. 22-26]  
**Community Building & Organizing**  
- **Read:** Excerpt from *Emergent Strategy* by adrienne maree brown  
- **Write:** Respond to the discussion questions posted on Canvas and write thoughtful 3-5 sentence responses to TWO posts that you did not write.

WEEK 10:  
[Mar. 29-Apr. 2]  
- **Read:** Excerpt from *The Purpose of Power* by Alicia Garza  
- **Write:** Respond to the discussion questions posted on Canvas and write thoughtful 3-5 sentence responses to TWO posts that you did not write.  
- **Write:** Digital Tour Project Proposal. See the “Assignments” section on Canvas for details.  
- **Digital Tour Project Proposal DUE**

WEEK 11:  
[Apr. 5-9]  
**Community Work in Newark**  
- **Read:** “A Community’s Response to the Problem of Invisibility: The Queer Newark Oral History Project” by Darnell L. Moore, Beryl Satter, Timothy Stewart-Winter and Whitney Strub  
- **Explore:** The Queer Newark Oral History Project website. Choose one oral history to listen to from beginning to end and read each section of the website’s “About” page.  
- **Write:** Respond to the discussion questions posted on Canvas.

WEEK 12:  
[Apr. 12-16]  
**The African American Community & COVID-19**  
- **Read:** Excerpt from *We Still Here* by Marc Lamont Hill  
- **Create:** A 4-6 minute video or audio response to the reading and post it on Canvas.

WEEK 13:  
[Apr. 19-23]  
- **Watch:** Lecture 5 and take notes in your Google Doc for the class.  
- **Write:** Work on your Digital Tour Project draft. See the "Assignments" section on Canvas for guidelines on first draft requirements and submission.  
- **Digital Tour Project Draft 1 DUE**

WEEK 14:  
[Apr. 26-30]  
- **Write:** Work on your Digital Tour Project draft. See the "Assignments" section on Canvas for guidelines on first draft requirements and submission.  
- **Digital Tour Project Draft 2 DUE**
WEEK 15:  
- Finish your Digital Tour Project and email it to the instructor.
- **Final Draft Digital Tour Project DUE**

May 12  
**Final Project Portfolio DUE by midnight.** See the “Assignments" section for details and portfolio requirements.