

“I hope that nobody has ever had to look at anybody they love through glass.”

James Baldwin. *IF BEALE STREET COULD TALK*. (1974)

“African American Community” is presented this term as a reading course focused on the historical development, social institutions, local and broad dynamics, black agency and cultural expression, and political economic issues and policies which have helped to define black lives in America from the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the present. An inter-disciplinary approach is used; and works by scholars, writers, and artists from sometimes intersecting fields and genres are brought into our calendar of readings. History, sociology, literature, music, and economics are included within a study pattern that is, for the most part, topical and not purely chronological. In addition to our readings, a documentary film series is incorporated. Classroom participation by students is welcomed and rewarded.

#### STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to attend each meeting of the class. Both a mid-term examination and a final examination are included as a part of our semester’s work. The format for examinations is as follows: roughly 30 to 40 per cent “fill-in-the-blanks”; and roughly 60 to 70 per cent essays. A research paper of 12 to 15 pages is also required. A list of suggested topics for the term paper will be provided and discussed during the second week of class. Research topics will be narrowed and refined in consultation with the professor and in individual office sessions. In class, students are encouraged to display careful reading of texts, to ask questions, and to add new materials and commentaries.

**BOOKS:** The following books have been ordered for your purchase at the Rutgers University Book Store, located on Halsey Street.

1. **ENSURING INEQUALITY: THE STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY.** By Donna Franklin. (Oxford) Revised Edition, 2015
2. **THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD.** By Colson Whitehead. (Anchor)
3. **THE SOCIAL LIFE OF DNA: RACE, REPARATIONS, AND RECONCILIATION AFTER THE GENOME.** By Alondra Nelson. (Beacon)
4. **NO ASHES IN THE FIRE.** By Darnell Moore. (Bold Type Books)
5. **MAKING ALL BLACK LIVES MATTER: REIMAGINING FREEDOM IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY.** By Barbara Ransby. (University of California Press)