

Introduction to African American Studies – from Emancipation to present

Spring 2014 MW 2:30-3:50; 1:00-2:20 (Eng 209)

Instructor: L. Hunter

Office & Hours: MW 11:40-12:30 am (Conklin 320)

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Course description:

This course explores the historical and psychological impacts of the American experience on people of African descent in the United States, from the end of the Civil War to the present. Together, we will explore the intersections of the “color-line,” as W.E.B. Du Bois called it, with the American ideals of freedom, and democracy. We will explore the impacts of race and racial prejudice on people of African descent as they made their way out of slavery and into a society that struggled to embrace them. We will consider several questions related to this journey. Specifically, we will think about what freedom and democracy have meant to African American people in the United States, and the ways that they have creatively expressed these meanings over the course of a century.

Course Objectives:

At the end of this semester, you will:

1. Have a basic understanding of the ways in which the events following the American Civil War shaped the African American struggle for social, economic and political equality during the twentieth century.
2. Use your textbook, scholarly essays, and primary sources, to think critically about the African American experience during the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century.
3. Consider the psychological impacts of race and racial prejudice on African Americans after the Civil War and into the present.
4. Identify the major strategies African Americans employed post-Emancipation to undermine social and political oppression at the turn of the twentieth century, during two major World Wars and in contemporary times.
5. Identify the basic components of African American Literature.
6. Discuss and debate the importance of black literary expression to modern understandings of the African American experience and American race relations.
7. Evaluate and discuss the shifting meanings of freedom, equality, and national identity to African Americans from the late nineteenth century to the twenty-first.
8. Discuss and debate issues of race, gender and identity as we think collectively about the contributions of African Americans to modern American society.

Required Texts:

Mia Bay, Deborah G. White, Waldo E. Martin *Freedom on My Mind: A History of African Americans* Vol. 2 (New York: Bedford St. Martin's, 2013)

Toni Morrison *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage, 1992)

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In addition to these texts, some of your readings are posted on blackboard. You are responsible for reading them before their respective dates of discussion.

Grading in this course is based on the following raw points system:

Papers/Take Home Assignments (25 points): You will have two paper assignments this semester. One assignment will be a 5-6 page reading response worth ten points. The second paper will be a slightly longer formal assignment worth ten points. A detailed assignment sheet for each paper is available on Blackboard. **You must submit all papers in either APA or Chicago format with the honor pledge written or typed on it. I also ask that you all submit one electronic, and one hard copy of every assignment.** Failure to complete your papers on time will result in an overall lower grade.

Examinations (45 points): You will complete three major examinations in this course. Each examination will require you to demonstrate your understanding of the concepts and ideas we discuss together each week, and your ability to analytically apply those concepts and ideas to the present. Please see the reading schedule below for the dates of both.

Quizzes (20): You will take four quizzes over the course of the semester; each quiz will require you to demonstrate your understanding of the major people, places, trends and events we discuss throughout the course. Some of your quizzes will be announced, but not all; please keep this in mind. **Note: If you miss a quiz for any reason, you must make it up within two class sessions. After this time, you will lose the opportunity – except in cases of proven medical emergency. You cannot re-take a missed pop quiz.**

Participation (10 points): Consistent participation in this class is essential to excelling in it, and meaningful, honest discussions are the only ways to keep it interesting. To ensure this, we must all bring ourselves to every conversation. We must question, critique and carefully consider each other's points throughout the semester if we are to walk away with a strong command of the issues that shape the African American experience of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. I structured this course so that each of you feels comfortable enough to engage in, and contribute to, classroom conversation, through the following activity:

- *Oral History Project* –Beginning in week three of this semester, you will sign up to participate in an oral history project you will create with several of your classmates. This activity requires each of the members in the group you choose to interview one person whether they believe African American Studies should still be studied in today's world and why. Each group will be organized by a demographic segment of the African American population. You will choose one of these when you sign up for a group. Once your interviews are complete, you will collaborate to stitch your interviews together and organize them into either a documentary or multimedia presentation (i.e. power point, prezi, etc) to create a narrative about the demographic you have chosen. In the last three weeks, each group will take turns presenting their projects. A detailed guideline for this exercise is available on blackboard; please save/print a copy.

Extra Credit: Over the course of the semester, I will provide at least one additional assignment as a means of earning extra credit. This assignment is optional and will be announced in class.

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Attendance & Punctuality: Besides active participation, being in class is a key component to excelling in this course. Understandably, there will be times when each of us may be late or absent. In this case, let's agree to keep each other posted at least 24 hours AHEAD of time when we can. If this is not possible, and your late attendance or absence is not due to an emergency, it will count against you. Three incidences of lateness will equal one absence; each unexcused absence after this will lower your final grade by one half grade. 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.

Academic Integrity:

Rutgers University treats cheating and plagiarism as serious offenses. The standard minimum penalties for students who cheat or plagiarize include failure of the course, disciplinary probation, and a formal warning that further cheating will be grounds for expulsion from the University. You are **REQUIRED** to insert an academic integrity pledge on ALL of your submitted work this semester. The pledge should read as follows: "On My honor I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this assignment."

Reading Schedule: *(Note: schedule subject to change)*

WEEK 1

(Jan. 22) Introduction to the course

Reconstruction & the Challenges Ahead, 1880-1915

WEEK 2 (Jan. 27-29)

(Jan. 27) Read: *Freedom on My Mind* Ch. 8 pp. 376-390 & DOCUMENTS pp.409-413

(Jan.29) Read: *Freedom on My Mind* Ch. 8 pp. 390-408 & DOCUMENTS pp.415-418

Blackboard Readings: Blackboard Readings: Booker T. Washington "The Atlanta Compromise Speech"

Jim Crow in the Twentieth Century, 1915-1940

WEEK 3 (Feb. 3-5)

(Feb. 3) Read: *Freedom on My Mind* Ch. 9 pp. 430-460 & DOCUMENTS pp.473-74

(Feb 5) Read: *Freedom on My Mind* Ch. 10 pp. 492- 510

Blackboard Reading: Richard Wright "Blueprint for Negro Literature"

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Early Civil Rights Strategies & the “Double V” – 1939-1948

WEEK 4 (Feb. 10-12) Extra Credit Opportunity: MTW Conference

First reading response due Feb 12.

Review Sheet posted on blackboard

(Feb. 10) Read: *Freedom on My Mind* Ch. 10 pp. 510-527

Blackboard Readings: Marita Bonner’s “On Being Young – A Woman – and Colored” & Claude McKay “If We Must Die”

(Feb. 12) Read: *Freedom on My Mind* Ch. 11 pp. 550-578 & VISUAL DOCUMENTS pp. 593-601

Cold War Politics and Civil Rights – 1947-1963

WEEK 5 (Feb. 17-19) Last day to turn in a document analysis paper.

(Feb. 17) Read: *Freedom on My Mind* Ch. 12 pp. 604-635 & DOCUMENTS pp. 638-639

Blackboard Reading: Anne Moody “The Jackson Sit-in”

(Feb. 19) **EXAM 1**

African American Psychology: introduction and [re] considering the Past

WEEK 6 (Feb. 24-26)

(Feb. 24) Blackboard Reading: Maulana Karenga “Black Psychology” in *Introduction to Black Psychology* (Los Angeles: University Sankore Press, 1993)

(Feb. 26) Blackboard reading: Ana S. Q. Liberato, Dana Fennell, & William L. Jeffries “I Still Remember America: Senior African Americans Talk About Segregation” in *Journal of African American Studies* (2008) & Kelly, Shalonda, et al. “African American communities and family systems: Relevance and challenges.” *Couple And Family Psychology: Research And Practice* 2, no. 4 (December 2013)

“We People Who Are Darker than Blue:” Race, community and Identity

WEEK 7 (Mar.3-5)

(Mar. 3) Blackboard Readings: Mary C. Waters “The Role of Lineage in Identity Formation Among Black Americans,” in *Qualitative Sociology* Vol. 14 No. 1 (1991) & Brian Thomas “Under the Guise of Self: Racial Identity, Self-Respect & Recognition,” *Philosophia Africana* Vol. 13 No. 4 (2010)

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(Mar. 5) Blackboard Readings: Stephanie Coard “Perceptions of and Preferences for Skin Color, Black Racial Identity, and Self- Esteem among African Americans,” *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* Vol. 31 No. 11 (Nov. 2001) & Jacquelin Rahman “The N-Word: It’s History and Use in the African American Community,” *Journal of English Linguistics* Vol. 40 No. 137 (July 2011)

Is self love the first law of preservation? Black identity and Body Image

WEEK 8 (Mar. 10-12) DEBATE SESSION III Formal paper assignment handed out Mar. 10

(Mar. 10) Blackboard Readings: Excerpts from *Ain’t Nobody Worrying: Masculinity in Black America* & Karisman Robert-Douglas & Harriet Cutis-Boles “Exploring Positive Masculinity Development in African American Men: A Retrospective Study” in *Psychology of Men and Masculinity* Vol. 14 No. 1 (2013)

(Mar. 12) Blackboard Readings: Satoshi Kanazawa “Why Are Black Women Less Physically Attractive than Other Women?” in *Psychology Today* (2011) & Justine Reel, Sonya SooHoo & Julia Summerhays “Age Before Beauty: An Exploration of Body Image in African American and Caucasian American Women,” in *Journal of Gender Studies* Vol. 14 No. 4 (2008)

WEEK 9 (Mar.17-19)

SPRING BREAK! ENJOY!!!!!!!!!!!!

Why are all the Black Kids Sitting at the Same Table? Black Psychology & Education

WEEK 10 (Mar. 24 - 26)

(Mar. 24) Blackboard Readings: Excerpts from Beverly Tatum’s *Why are All the Black Sitting At the Same Table in the Cafeteria?* & Ogbu, John U. "Collective Identity and the Burden of "Acting White" in Black History, Community, and Education." *Urban Review: Issues And Ideas In Public Education* 36, no. 1 (March 1, 2004)

Multiple Meanings of Freedom & Considering Black Literary Expression, 1963-1975

WEEK 11(Mar. 31 - Apr.2)

(Mar. 31) Read: *Freedom on My Mind* Ch. 13 pp.662-681

Blackboard Readings: Excerpts from Eldridge Cleaver’s *Soul on Ice* & Eldridge Cleaver “Requiem for Nonviolence” & SNCC “The Basis of Black Power”

(Apr. 2) Read: *Freedom on My Mind* Ch. 13 pp. 681-693 & *Playing in the Dark* Preface

The Legacy of Black Power & Black Arts, 1968-2000

WEEK 12 (Apr.7-9) Formal paper assignment due on Apr. 7 at the beginning of class.

(Apr. 7) Read: *Freedom on My Mind* Ch. 14 pp. 720- 731 &

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Blackboard Readings: Bill Cosby's "Pound Cake Speech"

(Apr. 9) *Freedom on My Mind* Ch. 14 pp. 731-50 & DOCUMENTS PP. 758-759

Telling Our Own Stories, 1963-1975

WEEK 13(Apr.14-16)

(Apr. 14) Read: *Playing in the Dark* Ch.1 PRESENTATION 1

Blackboard Reading: See Black Short Stories Folder 1

(Apr. 16) Blackboard Reading: See Black Short Stories Folder 2 PRESENTATION 2

Telling Our Own Stories cont. –1968-2000

WEEK 14(Apr. 21-23)

(Apr. 21) Read: *Playng in the Dark* Ch. 2 PRESENTATION 3

(Apr.23) Read: See Black Short Stories Folder 3 PRESENTATION 4

Black Narratives in the "Age of Obama," 2000-present

WEEK 15(Apr. 28-30)

(Apr. 28) Read: *Freedom on My Mind* Ch. 15 pp.774-785

Blackboard Reading: Excerpts from *The Persistence of the Color Line: Racial Politics and the Obama Presidency*

(Apr. 30) Read: *Freedom on My Mind* Ch. 15 pp. 796-805 & *Playing in the Dark* Ch. 3
PRESENTATION 5

Blackboard Reading: Blackwell, Jacqueline A. "African-American Literature and "Post-Racial" America. Or, You Know, Not." *Inquiry* 16, no. 1 (March 2011)

WEEK 16 (May 5)

(May 5) FINAL EXAM REVIEW

(May 7) Reading Day – NO CLASS

FINAL EXAM

May 12, 2012 8:30-11:30 am (Hill 102)