

African American History II (21:521:234:01) From Emancipation to the Age of Obama

**Monday and Wednesday 4:00-5:20 PM
Smith Hall Room 242**

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Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday: 2:30-3:30 pm and by appointment.

Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of African American history post-Emancipation. Special focus will be given to parts of the African American historical experience which may be less familiar to students. For example, many students may come in with broad knowledge of the Civil Rights movement (Montgomery bus boycotts, Brown vs. Board of Education, March on Washington, nonviolence movement) but not the larger trajectory of the movement before and after the 1950s and 1960s. Students in this course should begin to understand the advances made in the years following the Civil War and Emancipation as well as the challenges facing African Americans in the 150 years since the 13th Amendment.

For the purpose of this course I will use Jacquelyn Dowd Hall's call for a "Long Civil Rights Movement" and other scholars conception of the Long Black Freedom Movement to challenge students to conceptualize broad moments in African American history in a more continuous and fluid manner. Some of the topics covered here will and should be unfamiliar to many students entering with some prior knowledge of African American history

Core Goals

- 1) Relate topics to current events, contemporary moments, and build on student's entry knowledge of the history.
- 2) Examine the ways that the study of African American history has evolved through time by demonstrating growing importance of certain topics (for example, pinpointing the emergence of new scholarship on the carceral state/mass incarceration as a new "turn" in African American history).
- 3) Students should learn how to analyze historical readings and make linkages between common and recurring themes in both written assignments and examinations.
- 4) Students should be able to identify key eras in African American history, challenge common misconceptions, and recognize the evolution of the African American

experience in the United States as it changed in the years since Emancipation to the election of the first African American president.

Grading will be on a point scale:

Class participation/Attendance: 20 points

Attendance is mandatory and is beneficial for your class participation grades. According to official university policy: "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 instructor may ask for written evidence of the cause of absence.

Per departmental guidelines, 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. Please try to arrive at class on time and inform the instructor in advance if you anticipate being absent or if an emergency prevents you from being in class on-time. Arriving more than 15 minutes late to class will be considered a half-absence.

Class participation is an essential part of developing vibrant and engaging class discussion. Students are encouraged to ask questions engage their classmates in respectful dialogue about the readings and lectures.

Class Debates (10 points) – Debate groups will be organized at the beginning of the semester. Students will, in groups of 2-3 persons, debate another group on a topic based on the primary documents and themes presented throughout the semester. Students will be expected to draw not just on the knowledge of their specific readings but also on the previous readings, and related research. Each side will have 10 minutes to present their view and then the debate will be opened up to the rest of the class. The debates should emphasize current events and correlations to present-day discussions. Details for this assignment and a listing of topics will be posted on Blackboard.

In-class quizzes: 15 points

There will be five unannounced quizzes throughout the semester. Students will be expected to explore concepts, themes, events, or persons in detail.

One Formal Essay: 20 points

Students will write one formal essay during this course. These papers will be 5-7 pages and discuss in-depth one of the central themes/topics of the course to that point. Students can use the lecture titles to guide their thinking. Essay topics and detailed instructions will be posted on Blackboard in the first half of the semester. Papers must use both the required reading from the course. Additional sources must be approved by the instructor.

Students are encouraged to discuss their proposed topics early in the semester with the instructor. Late papers without a valid, documented excuse will receive a deduction of one letter grade for every day it is late. Students are expected to adhere to the University honor code. Plagiarism is a serious offense and will be dealt with according to Rutgers University guidelines.

Midterm and Final Exams: 45 points

There will be two exams: a midterm and a final. The exams will cover assigned readings, class lectures, videos, and any other official class assignments. Students will be expected to identify and link common themes we have covered in the course. One half of these exams will be identifications of key terms, the other half will be an essay addressing broad themes of the course. The final exam will be **comprehensive**, covering the entire semester.

Extra Credit:

Students will have the opportunity to earn a maximum of five points of extra credit throughout the semester. I will post extra credit opportunities on Blackboard and a due date for each assignment.

Policy on Academic Integrity (Cheating and Plagiarism):

Rutgers University treats cheating and plagiarism as serious offenses. Cheating is both a moral and an ethical offense. 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.

All students are required to sign the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. To receive credit, every assignment must have your signature under the following phrase: "On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination / assignment."

Resist the urge to cut and paste, either literally or figuratively by using other people's ideas. If you use other people's ideas or work (ex: Wikipedia, Amazon reviews, book reviews from journals, book jacket descriptions, etc.), I will not accept the assignment because I will not be able to consider it your own work. Also, please do not copy ideas and words from your fellow classmates. You will get a failing grade (0 points) for that assignment and will not be able to make it up.

Readings

Students should complete all the readings for class and come prepared to discuss them at length. The assigned books are available at the bookstore and any other readings are available online on the course Blackboard site.

Classroom Etiquette

University classes are a collective endeavor based on mutual respect and shared discussion. It is essential not only that you come on time, but that during class you devote your full attention to the class itself, therefore laptop, tablet, and cell phone use is banned during class. Please be prepared to bring paper and writing utensils to class to take notes.

Course Books

Bay, Mia. Martin, Waldo E, and White, Deborah Gray. *Freedom On my Mind: A History of African Americans with Documents.*, **Vol.II** First Edition.

Robinson, Eugene. *Disintegration: The Splintering of Black America*. Anchor Press, 2011

Note: You are to read all of the assigned chapters or sections as well as the documents assigned for each class.

Readings marked with an asterisk () are available on Blackboard site.

Course Schedule

Week 1: (Jan. 21) Introduction and Overview of Course

We will go over the syllabus, discuss the themes of the course, and begin a preliminary discussion about what “African American History” means after Emancipation and the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments.

Week 2: The early years of Freedom

(Jan. 26) Readings: Ch. 8 “Reconstruction: The Making and Unmaking of a Revolution”

(Jan. 28) Readings: Ch. 8 Documents: Letters to the Freedman’s Bureau/Race, Sex and the Vote

*Tera W. Hunter. “Dancing and Carousing the Night Away.” in *To Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women’s Lives and Labor After the Civil War*.

Week 3: Freedom’s First Generation

(Feb. 2) Readings: Ch. 9 “Black Life and Culture 1880-1915”

1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission Powerpoint

(<http://www.history.ncdcr.gov/1898-wrrc/powerpoint/powerpoint.htm>)

(Feb. 4) Ch. 9 Documents: On Lynching and Debt Peonage

*Sarah Haley, “Like I Was a Man: Chain Gangs, Gender, and the Domestic Carceral Sphere in Jim Crow Georgia.”

Week 4: The New Negro

(Feb. 9) Readings: Ch.10 “The New Negro” (492-515) and Documents: Explorations in Black Identity and Black Socialism and Communism

*Robin D.G. Kelley “A New War in Dixie: Communist and the Unemployed in Birmingham, Alabama 1930-1933”

(Feb. 11) Readings: Ch.10 Visual Sources: Representations of African Americans in Film

Week 5: The Great Migration

(Feb. 16) Readings: *Joe Trotter, "African Americans in the City: The Industrial Era, 1900-1950" in *The New African-American Urban History*

(Feb. 18) Readings: *Darlene Clark Hine "Black Migration to the Urban Midwest, The Gender Dimension"

Week 6: World War II and the Beginning of the Civil Rights Era

(Feb. 23) Readings: Ch. 11 "Fighting for a Double Victory"

(Feb. 25) Readings: Testimony from the Front/African Americans and the Tuskegee Experiments

*Robin D.G. Kelley. "The Riddle of the Zoot: Malcolm Little and Black Cultural Politics of World War II"

Week 7: Cold War Civil Rights, Anticommunism and McCarthyism

(Mar. 2) Readings: Ch.12 Sections: Anticommunism and the Postwar Black Freedom Struggle

(Mar. 4) Readings: Documents: Murder of Emmitt Till

*Mary L. Duziak. "Coming to Terms with Cold War Civil Rights" from *Cold War Civil War Rights: Race and the Image of American Democracy*

Week 8: The Battle to End Legal Segregation

(Mar. 9) MIDTERM EXAM

(Mar. 11) Readings: Ch. 12 Sections: The Transformation of the Southern Civil Rights Movement/Civil Rights: A National Movement

*Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement"

WEEK 9 NO CLASS

Week 10: The Expansion of the Movement/Black Power

(Mar 23) Readings: Documents: We Are Not Afraid

Readings: *Charles Payne "Give Light and the People Will Find the Way" in *I've Got the Light of Freedom*

(Mar. 25) Ch. 13 Sections: The Emergence of Black Power, The Struggle Transforms
Documents: The FBI & COINTELPRO

Week 11: Radicalism and the Fight for Economic Justice

(Mar. 30) Readings: Ch. 13 Sections: Economic Justice and Affirmative Action; War, Radicalism and Turbulence

*Martin Luther King Jr. "Why I Oppose the Vietnam War"

(Apr. 1) Readings: Documents: Black Families, Black Women and the Moynihan Report

*Ta-Nehisi Coates and Jonathan Chait Debate on “Culture of Poverty”

Week 12: The Rise of Conservatism and the Emergence of the Black Middle Class
(Apr. 6) Readings: Ch. 14 “The Challenges of Conservatism in an Era of Change”

(Apr. 8) Readings: *Disintegration* Chapter 1-2
*****Formal Essays Due*****

Week 13: Diversity in Black America
(Apr. 13) *Disintegration* Chapters 3-4

(Apr. 15) *Disintegration* Chapters 7-8

Week 14: The 1980s, the War on Drugs and the emergence of the carceral state
(Apr. 20) Readings: Ch. 15 Sections: Diversity and Racial Belonging/Trying Times
*Heather Ann Thompson, “Why Mass Incarceration Matters”

(Apr 22) Readings: *Disintegration* Chapter 5, Chapter 9

Week 15: The 1990s-Present, Hurricane Katrina, The Election of Barack Obama
(Apr 27) Readings: Ch. 15 Sections: Obama Comes to America
*Ta-Nehisi Coates “The Case for Reparations” *The Atlantic*

(Apr 29) *Disintegration* Chapter 10
Documents in *Freedom on my Mind*: Hurricane Katrina/The Trayvon Martin Case
*Michelle Alexander “The New Jim Crow” in *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*

Week 16: FINAL EXAM Review

(May 4) Readings: *Blair LM Kelley. “Like Dred Scott, Michael Brown was denied his right to live—and to live as an American”

– Review for the Final EXAM

FINAL EXAM – May 13th, 1145AM -245 PM