

# Introduction to African American and African Studies: I

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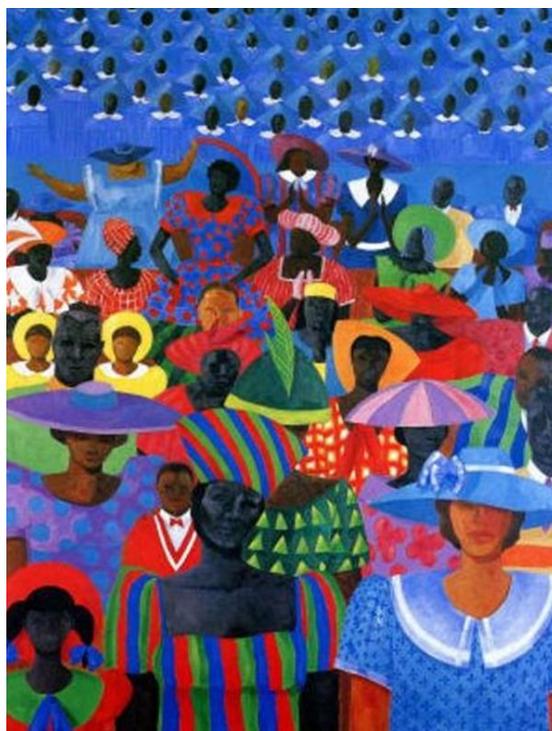
Fall 2017  
21:014:111:03  
Monday and Wednesday 4:00–5:20 PM  
Conklin 346

Instructor: Bernie Lombardi

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Office: Conklin 326

Office Hours: Wednesdays 3:00-4:00 PM and by appointment



This course is an introduction to the study of African and African diasporic cultures and societies with a special emphasis on the histories of colonialism and enslavement in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. We will spend the beginning of the term tracking the development and implementation of race ideology through multiple historical and geographic lenses and through a range of sources such as slave narratives, European fiction, and contemporary scholarship. We will then consider the ways notions of gender and sexuality inform the racialization of colonial and enslaved subjects and also the ways gender affects individual experience. Next, we will examine multiple and diverse forms of resistance carried out by enslaved and free Blacks in the diaspora.

During the first half of the term we will implement a comparative approach to examining local sites in the United States, Caribbean and Africa; we will begin the second half by considering the

transnational migration of peoples, cultures and ideas and the extent by which transnationalism characterizes our interpretations of Black culture globally in the time period covered during the class, but also now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We will do this by spending several weeks close reading two texts— Olaudah Equiano’s memoir and Yaa Gyasi’s novel *Homegoing*. Written and published in the last few years, and set over the timespan of multiple centuries, *Homegoing* will serve as a bridge into the final unit of the term where we will consider the ways histories of colonialism and enslavement and their legacies impact Black lives now. We will pay particular attention to the #BlackLivesMatter movement in the United States, but we will also consider it in relation to other movements throughout Africa and the African diaspora.

Central to our discussion throughout the term is an examination of the ways by which the terms “Blackness” and “Africa” have evolved and changed throughout time. In addition, we will consider the ways by which legacies of enslavement and colonialism inform our contemporary understandings of these terms. Lastly, this course will highlight ways we can connect themes and topics of African and African diaspora studies to current and future socio-political discourse.

### Course Objectives:

- Analyze African and African diasporic histories, cultures, and identities through multiple kinds of sources with awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of these sources
- Learn how to identify an author’s focus and main argument concisely
- Analyze the ways various sources tell different stories about race and racism and consider the power and agency of their writers
- Develop a rhetoric for discussing race that manifests sensitivity and care to the ways the histories of enslavement and colonialism affect Black lives in the present
- Interpret the various intersections of race, gender and sexuality
- Identify the contributions of African Americans, Africans and other African diasporic subjects to United States and world histories.
- Understand what a historical document can tell us about the context in which it was made
- Draw connections between readings across themes and historical periods
- Develop writing skills
- Develop close reading and critical thinking skills

**Note:** This syllabus may be subject to change. The instructor will make students aware of changes via email.

### Course Requirements

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#### ➤ Required Texts:

1. Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*. Oxford World’s Classics (ISBN: 9780199536016)
2. Gates, Henry Louis and William L. Andrews, editors. *Slave Narratives*. Library of America (ISBN: 9781931082112)
3. Gyasi, Yaa. *Homegoing*. Vintage (ISBN: 9781101971062)

These books are available at the Rutgers-Newark bookstore and online at Amazon.com. You may also be able to find these books at the library. However, you are required to obtain the exact editions (new or used) listed above so that we can easily reference passages during class discussion without having to worry about differing pagination.

All other texts are posted on the course's Blackboard site.

You must bring **HARD COPIES** of ALL readings to class. I reserve the right to ask any students who show up to class without hard copies of the readings to leave for the day.

### ➤ **Office Hours**

My office hours are for you. Stop by with any questions you have about assignments, readings, classroom discussions, other pertinent topics, or just drop by to say hello. The only thing I discourage is visiting to cover material from a missed class period; for that, consult fellow classmates. All else is warmly welcomed. This is an open and safe space for continuous dialogue, and there is no such thing as a "stupid" question. If your schedule conflicts with my office hours, we can set up an appointment at a mutually agreeable time.

Regarding emails, I will try and get back to students within 24 hours (many times, sooner) Mondays-Fridays. However, I may not respond to emails on Saturdays and Sundays.

### ➤ **Grade Breakdown:**

Attendance and Participation: 15%  
Leading Discussion: 10%  
Response Essays: 20%  
Quizzes (1-6): 25%  
Final Exam: 30%

### ➤ **Attendance**

Students must attend each class meeting having thoroughly read all assigned readings and prepared to discuss the material in class. Students must **bring printed copies** of readings to class.

Students may miss class three times without penalty. Missing more than three classes will negatively impact your final grade. You should be careful as to how you use these absences. If, for example, you use all three absences early in the semester just because you feel like taking the days off, you will be penalized for missing a fourth class even if you are ill and have proper documentation. Therefore, I recommend that you do not use your absences carelessly. The only exception for missing class more than three times is if you can provide proper documentation for all absences. However, these extreme circumstances will require us to meet and discuss your progress in the class. Also, note that you cannot make up quizzes and other assignments that are due on a day you miss class.

### ➤ **Participation**

You are evaluated in part on your contributions to the discussion. This is not only about quantity of participation, but also about thoughtful participation: selective comments that really move discussion forward and suggest careful engagement with the texts and questions under consideration. Active listening is also part of participating. Being present in the classroom, sharing ideas, and doing your best to make the time we have together productive is far more important than recording and memorizing what is said in lectures.

I do expect you to respect and engage with your peers' interests, as they can inform and expand your own in valuable ways. I will take note when you respond thoughtfully to other students, when you are open to different perspectives and points of view, when you call classmates by name, when you contribute to the classroom's energy with alert body language and responsive gestures. Students who routinely contribute to class discussion, show initiative in engaging with the material, and demonstrate their active listening will receive high marks for participation. A critical part of discussions is the posing of thoughtful questions.

Many of the topics this course covers are sensitive and require intellectually mature and respectful participants. Being respectful and open-minded is the best way to learn and grow. Individual and intellectual growth should always be goals while taking courses in college. If you ever feel disrespected or uncomfortable during course discussions, you should not hesitate to contact the instructor.

### ➤ **Leading Discussion**

Each student is required to lead the class discussion once during the semester. Leading a class discussion counts towards 10% of your grade for this class. You should always come to class having read the assignments and prepared to discuss the materials. However, the discussion leader will come prepared with at least four typed questions. Your questions should demonstrate a close reading of the material and an ability to relate the week's readings with previous assignments. Also, at least one question should demonstrate that you have either related the material to a current debate/event and/or that you have done a bit of outside research (i.e. bring in a music recording or film clip related to the topic being addressed). Your questions should be clear, concise, and should use proper citation. Questions should also demonstrate that you have given serious thought to your topic. Spell-check your work.

You are required to **email the instructor your discussion questions by 6:00 pm the day before you are presenting**. This will ensure that everyone is prepared and will enable me to deliver my lecture with your questions in mind. **No make-ups will be given for leading discussion** (except for extreme illness or family emergency with relevant documentation). Do not take it upon yourselves to switch discussion leader dates with someone else. Any changes have to be cleared with me well in advance of the assigned date. It is your responsibility to remember your presentation date and to come prepared. Please do not hesitate to ask me if you have any questions.

I will do my best to assign you to a date/topic that appeals to your interests. Email me three choices, including date and author's last name, stating your preferences for leading class discussion. In selecting your three choices, consider which topics/readings most appeal to you and your schedule (i.e. don't select a date when you have a paper due in another class). You may also email me specific dates when you prefer not to lead discussion. In order to consider your preferences **I must receive your choices by Thursday, September 7 at 8:00 PM**. I will do my best to

accommodate everyone's preferences, but this will not always be possible. I will assign dates in the order in which I receive your emails. During the first couple class meetings I will act as discussion leader, demonstrating what it entails.

### ➤ Response Essays

Students are required to write two reading response essays throughout the semester. You must submit the first essay on one of the following dates by 4:00 PM: **September 18, 25, 27, October 4, 11, 16, or 18**. You must submit the second essay on one of the following dates by 4:00 PM: **October 23, 25, November 6, 27, 4, or December 6**. Your responses must be on a single text that is assigned for the date you choose to turn in the essay. For example, if you decide to submit your response essay on September 27, it must be about Frederick Douglass' *Narrative of the Life*, which is assigned for that day. If you choose to submit your essay on a date when there are multiple readings assigned, you can choose one text to write about. Be sure to state clearly which text it is you are discussing. (Note: you may not write about Jan Rogoziński's *A Brief History of the Caribbean*. If you choose to submit your essay on October 16, you should choose one of the other three readings to write about). If you decide to submit an essay on a date where we are discussing a text for a second time, you must write about the pages assigned for that class. For example, if you decide to submit an essay on *Homegoing* on November 27, your essay must be in response to pages 222-300 and nothing we already discussed in previous classes.

You are not allowed to submit an essay for the same date you are the discussion leader.

The review essays are worth 20% of the final grade; each is worth 10%. They should each be 1-2 pages in length (no less than one full page and no more than two full pages); realistically, a good essay will be closer to 2 pages. They must be written in 12 point Times New Roman or Cambria font, be double-spaced, and have 1 in. margins on all sides. You must hand in a hard copy of your essay at the beginning of class the day it is due.

Response essays should offer thoughtful and clear considerations of the material for that week. These are neither summaries nor are they exhaustive. You should choose one or two aspects of the text that interested you and explain why. These essays must display your capacity to read closely and think critically. See "How to Read" below.

### ➤ Quizzes

There will be six quizzes given throughout the semester making up 25% of your final grade. Each quiz is worth five points. This means that your lowest score will be dropped. Quizzes will vary in format. Some will consist of several short answer questions and others may be in the form of a single short essay. These questions will test both your attention to reading and engagement with class lectures/discussions.

Note that you **cannot** make up a quiz that you missed. If you are absent on the day a quiz is given, that quiz will count as your discarded lowest score.

Quizzes will be scored on the following scale:

4.5 – 5: A  
4: B+

3.5: B  
 3: C+  
 2.5: C  
 2: D  
 0 – 1.5: F

### ➤ **Final Exam**

There will be a final exam on Wednesday, December 20 beginning at 3:00 PM. You will have 3 hours to complete it. The exam is worth 30% of the final grade and will consist of several short answer and essay questions. The majority will be comparative in nature. You should not quote any text directly on the final exam, as this is an exam and not a formal essay. However, all responses must be written in paragraph form with complete sentences. You are permitted to come to the exam with one standard sized sheet of printer paper with **handwritten** notes to use during the exam. If you come with typed notes or more than one page, notes will be confiscated and you will have to take the exam with no notes.

**\*\*Note:** The instructor will form exam questions based off of the course's readings and visual content and class lectures and conversations. It is crucial that when you are absent, you ask your classmates (and not the instructor) what you missed in class. I may show short clips or provide handouts during class, and you are responsible for this information on the final exam. In addition, an exceptional dialogue between students and the instructor may appear in question form on the final exam.

### ➤ **Notes on Late Assignments, Course Engagement, and Use of Electronics**

In the event that students know an assignment will be late, they should inform the instructor at least three days prior to the assignment due date. If the instructor considers a student's reasoning legitimate, he can choose not to penalize for lateness (this is completely up to the instructor's discretion). If students are ill or unable to complete an assignment due to a serious family matter, they should provide the instructor with appropriate documentation, such as a doctor's note.

Students should have a plan to ensure that they will have access to the internet on a daily basis throughout the semester. Technical problems, failed internet connections, and computer crashes are not excuses for not completing course work or submitting assignments late. You should make a plan for what you will do if you have any technical problems.

Electronic media is a welcome tool to aid learning in the modern classroom. However, used irresponsibly it can also be detrimental to learning when students lose the ability to focus on lectures or distract other students with it. Use of electronic media is therefore a student privilege, not a right, and may be revoked by the instructor under certain conditions. During class time certain electronic media—laptop computers and tablets, not cell phones—may be used only for the following purposes:

- to read required course texts (E-books or texts posted on Blackboard)
- to type notes on lectures and classroom discussions
- for all in-class exams, provided the student has first downloaded Respondus

Electronic media may NOT be used to browse the internet, answer email, check social media, or for any use that is not directly related to the course. If any student is found to be in violation of the

electronics policy—as witnessed by the instructor, the graduate assistant, or as reported by fellow classmates—that student will be banned from using any electronic media for the remainder of the course. If the student continues to use electronic media despite the ban, his or her final grade will be reduced a full letter grade at the conclusion. In extreme cases I reserve the right to ban the student from the classroom altogether. The student will be notified in writing if s/he has lost the privilege of using electronic media. Cell phones must be turned off during class time or set to “vibrate”.

### ➤ **Policy on Academic Integrity (Cheating and Plagiarism)**

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.

If I find that you have used other people’s ideas (e.g., Wikipedia, Amazon reviews, book jacket descriptions, etc.), I will not accept the assignment because I will not be able to consider it your own work. You will get a failing grade (0 points) for that assignment and will not be able to make it up.

You are expected to be familiar with and adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy, available at <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/>. Plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any use of the ideas or words of another person without proper acknowledgment of credit will result in penalties up to and possibly including a course grade of F. Likewise for cheating on exams and quizzes. Note that the uncited use of uncopyrighted material such as Wikipedia entries still constitutes plagiarism.

### ➤ **Policy on 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’ 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 contact the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219, by phone at [973-353-5375](tel:973-353-5375) or by email at [odsnewark@newark.rutgers.edu](mailto:odsnewark@newark.rutgers.edu).

### ➤ **How to Read** (adapted from [https://www.academia.edu/10274714/How\\_to\\_Read\\_and\\_View\\_A\\_Student\\_Worksheet\\_on\\_Close\\_Reading](https://www.academia.edu/10274714/How_to_Read_and_View_A_Student_Worksheet_on_Close_Reading))

**Close observation/close reading** involves slowing down and paying very close attention to what we are reading or viewing. We do this so that we can pull out big ideas or key images *as well as* identify the details of what is in front of us. When we closely observe something, we are dealing with the “WHAT” aspect of a given object: for instance, What am I seeing? What is happening here? What is the context in which this is taking place? When was it written or produced? What is the form in which a story or idea or image is being conveyed? When we closely observe something—

whether we are reading a novel or short story, watching a movie, engaging a scholarly text, listening to a political speech, or even scanning the side of a cereal box!—we are better able to grasp how complex that object is, which makes us better able to practice critical thinking. **Critical thinking** demands that we ask ourselves questions about the ideas, images, stories, and forms we are encountering in order to better understand the motivations, intentions, and consequences of certain arguments or viewpoints. Critical thinking deals with the “HOW” and the “WHY” of a given object: for example, How is this story or this set of ideas being communicated to me? How are these ideas being organized into an argument or claim about the world? Why has the author or creator decided to communicate a set of ideas in one specific way, instead of another? Why am I seeing or reading about some things while others are masked, ignored, or overlooked? What are the consequences of these omissions? In other words, critical thinking demands that we ask what the purpose of a given text is, and how its particular presentation of stories, ideas, forms, values, or perspectives have different effects on the world. Ultimately, when we think critically, we refuse to take the world at face value but instead always question what we see, hear, read, and engage with in a spirit of generosity and curiosity. Critical thinking is a way of caring about the world deeply.

The point of exercising close observation and critical thinking together is to develop the ability to make substantial and meaningful claims or arguments about the world around you. We call this **analysis**, or sometimes **critique**. When we analyze or critique something, we are using intelligent and focused observation of a given object to form arguments about how and why it works the way it does. For example, we might be trying to explain how a movie puts forward a particular set of ideals to its audience through its distinct use of plot and cinematography; how a writer uses specific rhetorical or narrative techniques to make a statement about gender, race, class, or sexuality; or how a scholar organizes a specific argument or invents a concept to explain something about the world that remains under-studied. Answering these kinds of questions demands that we transform our initial close observations into *interpretations* that can be supported by evidence present in the object we are studying. Interpretation is the act of making meaning from the form and content of a story, an idea, a worldview, or an image.

In literary studies, we often call this practice **close reading** (as opposed to reading closely). Close reading is the practice of developing multiple interpretations of a given text, object, or phenomenon, based on evidence collected from close observation and critical thinking. It is important to remember that critique is not the same thing as criticism (or what we think of as negative judgment) though it may involve some amount of that; rather, critique involves explaining, in your own words, how a certain set of ideas, forms, representations or values function in a given context and to respond to them with your own fully articulated position. **In other words, analysis and critique describe the activity of forming and articulating your own ideas, which allows you the freedom to have an effect on the world, rather than being a bystander to it all.**



➤ **Course Schedule:**

**Introductions**

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**Wednesday, September 6:**

**\*No Reading\***

Introduction to the class

**Watch:** Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story”

**Monday, September 11: Beginnings**

1. Barbara Jeanne Fields, “Slavery, Race and Ideology in the United States of America”
2. “The Rise of the Atlantic Slave Trade” and “The Long Middle Passage” in *Freedom on My Mind* ed. White, Bay, Martin **(p. 10 - 33)**

**Unit 1: Historicizing Race Ideology: Comparative Perspectives**

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**Wednesday, September 13: Christianity and Consciousness in Colonial South Africa**

1. Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa* **(p. 96-109)**
2. Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa: Volume 1* **(p. 198-206, 223-230, 243-251, 304-308)**

### **Monday, September 18: Africa, the “Dark Continent”**

1. Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* Parts I and II (p. 103-160)

### **Wednesday, September 20: Africa, the “Dark Continent” cont.**

1. Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* Part III (p. 161 – 187)
2. Chinua Achebe, “An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*”

### **Monday, September 25: Afro-Creoles in the Caribbean**

1. Gordon K. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: The Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in its Ideological Aspects, 1492-1900* (p. 1 – 16)
2. Richard Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean* (Ch. 1: p. 13-46)

#### **\*Quiz #1\***

### **Wednesday, September 27: Enslavement in the United States**

1. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life in Slave Narratives* (Preface – Ch. 9: p. 269 – 320)

### **Monday, October 2: Enslavement in the United States cont.**

1. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life in Slave Narratives* (Ch. 10 – Appendix: p. 320 – 368)

## **Unit 2: Race and Gender**

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### **Wednesday, October 4: Women, Race and Enslavement in the United States**

1. Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* in *Slave Narratives* (Preface, Ch. 1-2, 5, 10, and 14: p. 745-760, 773-776, 799-804, 822-825)

#### **\*Quiz #2\***

### Monday, October 9: Women, Race and Enslavement in the United States (cont.)

1. Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* in *Slave Narratives* (**Ch. 17, 21, 29, 39-41: p. 840-843, 859-863, 892-901, 931-945**)
2. Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I a Woman?"

### Wednesday, October 11: Colonial Ideology and the Intersections of Race, Gender and Sexuality

1. Sander L. Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness* (**p. 79 - 93**)
2. Clifton Crais and Pamela Scully, *Sara Bartman and the Hottentot Venus: A Ghost Story and a Biography* (**Introduction: p. 1-6**)

## Unit 3: Resistance and Revolution

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### Monday, October 16: Comparative Perspectives on Slave Resistance in the United States and Caribbean

1. Nat Turner, *The Confessions* in *Slave Narratives* (**p. 245-266**)
2. David Walker's Appeal
3. Maria W. Miller Stewart, "Lecture Delivered at Franklin Hall"
4. Jan Rogoziński, *A Brief History of the Caribbean* (**p. 154 - 164**)

### \*Quiz #3\*

### Wednesday, October 18: The Haitian Revolution

1. Laurent Dubois and John Garrigus, *Slave Revolution in the Caribbean, 1789-1804: A Brief History with Documents* (**p. 7 - 40**)
2. The Free Citizens of Color's "Address to the National Assembly" October 22, 1789
3. Philadelphia General Advertiser's "Report from the Insurrection" October-November 1791
4. Olympe de Gouges, preface to *The Slavery of the Blacks* 1792

### \*Final opportunity to submit first response essay\*

## **Unit 4: Transnational Narratives: Then and Now**

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### **Monday, October 23: Equiano**

1. Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life in Slave Narratives* (Ch. - 3: p. 37 - 93)

**\*Quiz #4\***

### **Wednesday, October 25: Equiano**

1. Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life in Slave Narratives* (Ch. 4 - 6: p. 94 - 145)

### **Monday, October 30: Equiano**

1. Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life in Slave Narratives* (Ch. 7 - 10: p. 146 - 206)

### **Wednesday, November 1: Equiano**

1. Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life in Slave Narratives* (Ch. 11 - 12: p. 207 - 242)

### **Monday, November 6: *Homegoing***

1. Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing* (Effia and Esi: p. 3 - 49)

**\*Quiz #5\***

### **Wednesday, November 8: *Homegoing***

**\*No Class\* - read *Homegoing***

### **Monday, November 13: *Homegoing***

**\*No Class\* - read *Homegoing***

**Wednesday, November 15: *Homegoing***

1. Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing* (Quey, Ness, James, Kojo, Abena, H: p. 50 – 176)

**Monday, November 20: *Homegoing***

1. Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing* (Akua, Willie: p. 177 – 221)

**Wednesday, November 22: *Homegoing***

**\*No Class\* - read *Homegoing***

**Monday, November 27: *Homegoing***

1. Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing* (Yaw, Sonny, Marjorie, and Marcus: p. 222 – 300)

**Unit 5: Historicizing Slavery in the Era of #BlackLivesMatter**

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**Wednesday, November 29: The Prison System and Racial Inequality in the United States**

**\*No Reading\***

View in class: Ava DuVernay's *Thirteenth*

(Plan to stay about 30 minutes later than usual to finish the film; any students that must leave at the class's usual end time is responsible for finishing the film on their own)

**Monday, December 4: The Prison System and Racial Inequality in the United States cont.**

1. Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow* (Introduction: p. 1 -19)
2. We will also discuss *Thirteenth*

**\*Quiz #6\***

**Wednesday, December 6: #BlackLivesMatter in the United States and South Africa**

1. Alicia Garza, "A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement"
2. Claudia Rankine, "The Condition of Black Life is One of Mourning"
3. Gabeba Baderoon, "Remembering Slavery in South Africa"

**\*Final opportunity to submit second response essay\***

**Monday, December 11: Remembering the Enslaved and Black Belonging**

1. Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (Prologue, Ch. 4 and 12: p. 3-18, 84-100, 211-235)

**Wednesday, December 13:**

Review

**Wednesday, December 20:**

**\*Final Exam\***

**3:00 – 6:00 PM**