

Introduction to Black Studies-Fall 2014
Professor Tabitha Jamie Mary Chester

Course Description:

This course serves as an introduction to the study of Black experience(s) in the United States of America. The course will survey the field by examining the various social institutions and movements that comprise Black U.S. life. Students will be introduced to fundamental issues in the study of Black religion, politics, economics and the family. Additionally, this course will pay special attention to the unique relationship of art and activism in Black experience(s). The experiences of Blacks in the United States of America stretches over 400 years, in order to fully understand these experiences we will begin in Africa, the birthplace of civilization and humanity. We will take an interdisciplinary approach to the study of Black experience(s) in the U.S. in order to explore some of the political, cultural, economic, artistic and social themes that have influenced the realities of Black people in the U.S. This course will be attentive to a range of concepts, including gender, sexualities, class, regionalisms, religion and faith and the intersectionalities through which Blacks in the United States live and embody these identifications alongside that of “race.”

Course Goals and Objectives:

The goal of this course is to give students an opportunity to critically examine some of the key concepts, theories, issues, people, moments and events related to Black experience(s) in the United States of America.

By the end of the course students will:

1. be introduced to the origins of Black Studies
2. learn about some of the key theories and theorists of Black Studies
3. be able to present a general historical overview of the history of Black people in the U.S.
4. enhance their critical analysis and research skills
5. be able to critically examine socio-cultural issues facing Black Americans using the framework of intersectional analysis
6. be able to articulate the significance of art and activism in various movements in Black communities
7. understand the continued significance of race in the 21st century and comprehend the struggle for Black Americans to gain full inclusion in the United States of America.

Required Texts:

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe, Anchor ISBN 978-0-385-47454-2

Buck by M.K. Asante, Spiegel & Grau, ISBN 978-0-8129-9341-7

Hear Our Truths Hear Our Truths by Ruth Nicole Brown, University of Illinois Press, ISBN 978-0-252-07949-8

Let Nobody Turn Us Around: An African American Anthology by Manning Marable and Leith Mullings, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers: 2nd Edition (LNTUS) ISBN 978-0-7425-6057-4

At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance--A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power by Danielle L. McGuire, Vintage ISBN 978-0-307-38924-4

Assata: An Autobiography by Assata Shakur, Lawrence Hill Books ISBN 978-1-55652-074-7

Color Purple by Alice Walker, Mariner Books ISBN 978-0-15-602835-6

Colored Museum by George C. Wolfe, Grove Press ISBN 978-0-8021-3048-8

Mis-Education of the Negro by Carter G. Woodson, Dover ISBN 978-0-486-44558-8

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Reading assignments:

Part of the purpose of this class is to make you a stronger reader, so that you can navigate and analyze a difficult essay or fictional work, and also identify strategies used by writers that you may want to employ. Take time with the readings, read carefully, take reading notes, and be prepared to discuss the reading in class. If there are aspects of the reading that interest you, or ideas you had while you were reading that are relevant to the course, please raise those ideas in class discussion. There may be changes to the calendar; students will be informed ahead of time.

Class Etiquette: Cell phones, iPods and MP3 devices are prohibited. Please leave them turned off (or silent).

Classroom Community: By nature of the course, we will be discussing materials that challenge conventions, question authority and cross boundaries. Be advised. I expect that we all will contribute to an atmosphere of respect. Aggressive, insensitive or judgmental behavior will not be tolerated. Should you, for any reason, feel disrespected please feel free to consult with me directly, or contact me anonymously.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance and participation are required. This course is premised on the active participation of all class members. Students must come to class with the correct course materials and prepared to fully participate. Students are expected to arrive on time. Please notify the instructor if you have to miss class PRIOR to the class meeting via email. If you have missed a class, it is your

responsibility to contact a classmate to get the notes and assignments. The first three absences will incur no penalties. After the first three absences, every absence will bring about a deduction from your class participation grade. Every three late arrivals will count as one absence.

Communication:

You must use your Denison email for this class. I will send emails via the class Blackboard regarding assignments and requirements. Please make the necessary forwarding arrangements to ensure you check/use your Denison email account. When emailing me please use BLST 250 and your section number as the subject and include your full name. I will respond to emails within 48 hours. If there are problems with your Denison account, in that you are not receiving emails, or cannot post properly to the Blackboard, you must resolve these issues. If you do not, your Attendance/Performance grade will be lowered.

Technology Issues:

Please contact ITS Help Desk at 740-587-6935 for technical/technology questions.

Changes

The course schedule and/or readings are subject to change at the instructor's discretion to enhance learning. Changes will be announced in class and/or via email. Students are responsible for checking their Denison University email regularly and adapting to any changes in due dates, exams, readings, and schedules.

Current Events: It is important to pay attention to current events and political developments, especially those that pertain to Black life in the U.S.

EVALUATION

Online Reviews (35%): Students will take four (4) online reviews over the course of the semester. Reviews will be available from 8pm, Wednesday at to 8pm, Sunday. The reviews will assess students' grasp of the concepts in the course. Reviews will be comprised of short answer, multiple choice and essay questions. Students are allowed to use their notes and readings, but students must work alone. Students will only be able to access the reviews once and must complete them within 120 minutes.

Class Participation (15%) You are expected to be engaged and participate in class. This includes (but is not limited to) participating in discussions, in-class activities, coming to class prepared and arriving on time. Failure to perform the expectations will cause your grade to

suffer.

We Speak Your Name Presentation (10%): In groups, students will create a poetic presentation based upon Pearl Cleage’s “We Speak Your Name” poem. Guidelines will be provided at a later date

Excursions (20%) Students will be responsible for attending five (5) events that focus on history, politics, education, culture or some other aspect of the Black experience. Students must get permission from the instructor via e-mail prior to attendance. Events can include: BSU meetings, films, cultural events, volunteering, etc. Students should write a 2-page report on the event and how it ties into the course themes. Papers should be submitted on Blackboard.

Final (20%): Students are responsible for a 7-10 page research paper. Students will be given a list of topics to choose from after fall break.

Late Work Policy: Assignments are due on that date specify. No late work will be accepted.

GRADING SCALE

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D	F
94 - 100%	90 - 93%	87 - 89%	84 - 86%	80 - 83%	77 - 79%	74 - 76%	70 - 73%	60 - 69%	<60%

Writing Guidelines

All written assignments MUST be type and double-spaced All assignments will be graded on both content and writing style. PROOFREAD. Grammatical errors, spelling errors, typos, incorrect punctuation, and the like will be deducted from your total grade for a written assignment. Do not rely on spell-check. Written assignments should follow MLA style. See http://www.denison.edu/library/research/citation_guides.html All written assignments are due on Blackboard the midnight before the class session. Students must bring a copy of all submitted assignments to class.

Writing Center

The Writing Center (Barney Fourth Floor, 587-5681) is available to assist you with your writing. Please contact them regarding your writing assignments if necessary.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism:

The students and faculty of Denison University are committed to academic integrity and will not tolerate any violation of this principle. Academic honesty, the cornerstone of teaching and learning, lays the foundation for lifelong integrity. Academic dishonesty is, in most cases, intellectual theft. It includes, but is not limited to, providing or receiving assistance in a manner not authorized by the instructor in the creation of work to be submitted for evaluation. This standard applies to all work. Students must clearly cite any sources consulted— not only for quoted phrases but also for ideas and information that are not common knowledge. Neither ignorance nor carelessness is an acceptable defense in cases of plagiarism. It is the student's responsibility to follow the appropriate format for citations. As is indicated in Denison's Student Handbook, available through mydenison.edu, instructors must refer every act of academic dishonesty to the Associate Provost, and violations may result in failure in the course, suspension, or expulsion. For further information about the Code of Academic Integrity, see <http://www.denison.edu/about/integrity.html>

Academic Accommodations

Any student requiring special consideration because of any type of disability must inform me as soon as possible within the first week of the course to discuss her or his specific needs. I rely on the Academic Support & Enrichment Center to verify the need for reasonable accommodations based on documentation on file in that office.

Course Schedule

September 1: Introduction to the Course

September 3: Why Study African American Studies? (BB)

- “Questions and Answers About Black Studies” by Nathan Hare
- “Black Studies: Discipline or Field of Study? By Philip T.K. Daniel
- “The Field and Function of Black Studies” by James B. Stewart
- “Black Studies: An Overview” by Darlene Clark Hine

September 8: The African Way of Life: *Things Fall Apart* Part I

September 10: *Things Fall Apart* Part II & III

September 15: Slavery and Abolitionism

- “On Being Brought from Africa to America,” Phillis Wheatley, 1768
- “The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano,” Olaudah Equiano, 1789
- “The Founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church,” Richard Allen, 1816
- “The Statement of Nat Turner,” 1831
- “Slaves Are Prohibited to Read and Write by Law”
- “What if I am a Woman?” Maria W. Stewart, 1833
- “A Slave Denied the Rights to Marry,” 1833
- “The Selling of Slaves, 1835

September 17: Slavery and Abolitionism

- Solomon Northrup Describes a New Orleans Slave Auction, 1841
- Cinque and the *Amistad* Revolt, 1841
- “A’n’t I a Woman?” Sojourner Truth, 1851
- A Black Nationalist Manifesto, Martin R. Delany, 1852
- “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” Frederick Douglass, 1852
- “No Rights That a White Man is Bound to Respect”: The Dred Scott Case and Its Aftermath
- The Spirituals: “Go Down, Moses” and “Didn’t My Land Deliver Daniel”

Excursion #1

September 22: Reconstruction and Reaction

- Henry McNeal Turner, Black Christian Nationalist
 - Black Urban Workers during Reconstruction
 - “The Democratic Idea is Humanity,” Alexander Crummell, 1888
 - “A Voice from the South,” Anna Julia Cooper, 1892
 - The National Association of Colored Women: Mary Church Terrell and Josephine St. Pierre Ruffin
 - “I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings,” Paul Laurence Dunbar
 - Booker T. Washington and the Politics of Accommodation
 - William Monroe Trotter and the *Boston Guardian*
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- Ida B. Wells-Barnett, Crusader for Justice
- William Edward Burghardt Du Bois

September 24: *The Mis-Education of the Negro*

Review #1 Available

September 29: World War I/ The Great Migration

- Black Conflict over World War I
- “If We Must Die,” Claude McKay, 1919
- Black Bolsheviks: Cyril V. Briggs and Claude McKay
- Marcus Garvey and the Universal Negro Improvement Association
- “Women as Leaders,” *Amy Euphemia Jacques Garvey, 1925*

October 1: The Harlem Renaissance

- Langston Hughes and the Harlem Renaissance
- “The Negro Women and the Ballot,” *Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson, 1927*
- James Weldon Johnson and Harlem in the 1920s
- *Color Struck* by Zora Neale Hurston (BB)

Excursion #2

October 6: The Great Depression, World War

- Black Workers in the Great Depression
- The Scottsboro Trials, *1930s*
- “You Cannot Kill the Working Class,” *Angelo Herndon, 1933*
- Hosea Hudson, Black Communist Activist
- Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. and the Fight for Black Employment in Harlem
- Black Women Workers during the Great Depression
- Southern Negro Youth Conference, *1939*
- Phillip Randolph and the Negro March on Washington Movement, *1941*
- Charles Hamilton Houston and the War Effort among African-Americans, *1944*
- “An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!” *Claudia Jones, 1949*
- “The Negro Artist Looks Ahead,” *Paul Robeson, 1951*
- Thurgood Marshall: The *Brown* Decision and the Struggle for School Desegregation

October 8: The Civil Rights Movement

- Roy Wilkins and the NAACP
- The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, *1957*
- Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee and the Sit-In Movement, *1960*
- Freedom Songs, *1960s*
- “We need Group-Centered Leadership,” *Ella Baker*
- Martin Luther King, Jr. and Nonviolence, *1957 and 1963*

- “The Revolution Is at Hand,” *John R. Lewis*, 1963
- “The Salvation of American Negroes Lies in Socialism,” W.E.B. Du Bois
- “The Special Plight and the Role of Black Women,” *Fannie Lee Hamer*
- “SNCC Position Paper: Women in the Movement,” 1964

October 13:

At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance--A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power Chapters 1-5

Review #2 Available

Excursion #3

October 15: *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance--A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power Chapters 6-8, Epilogue*

October 20: Black Power movement

- Elijah Muhammad and the Nation of Islam
- Malcom X and the Revolutionary Black Nationalism
- Black Power
- “Core Endorses Black Power,” Floyd McKissick, 1967
- Huey P. Newton and the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense
- “The People Have to Have the Power,” *Fred Hampton*
- “I Am a Revolutionary Black Woman,” *Angela Y. Davis*, 1970
- Attica: “The Fury of Those Who Are Oppressed,” 1971
- “My Sight is Gone But My Vision Remains,” *Henry Winston*

October 22: Black Arts Movement

There is No Revolution Without the People, *Amiri Baraka*, 1972

Additional Readings *TBA*

October 27: Black Feminism Thought

- Black Feminisms: Combahee River Collective Statement, 1977
- “*I Am Your Sister*,” Audre Lorde, 1984
- “Shaping Feminist Theory,” *bell hooks*, 1984
- The Anita Hill Clarence Thomas Controversy, 1991
- Barbara Smith (BB)
- Jacquelyn Grant (BB)
- Shirley Chisholm (BB)
- June Jordan (BB)
- Evelyn Hammonds (BB)
- Elizabeth Higginbotham (BB)

October 29: Contemporary African American Thought

- “Afrocentricity,” *Molefi Asante*, 1991
- “Race Matters,” *Cornel West*, 1991

- “Crime-Causes and Cures,” *Jarvis Tyner, 1994*
- Louis Farrakhan: The Million Man March, *1995*
- “A Voice from Death Row,” *Mumia Abu-Jamal*
- “Let Justice Roll Down Like Waters,” *African-American Prisoners in Sing Sing, 1998*
- African Americans Respond to Terrorism and War
- The Cosby vs Dyson Debate, *2004-2005*
- Hurricane Katrina Crisis, *2005*
- Barracks Obama’s Presidential Campaign, *2007-2008*
- “‘Quare’ Studies Or (Almost) Everything I Know About Queer Studies I Learned From My Grandmother “ by E. Patrick Johnson (BB)
- Additional Reading TBA

November 3: *Hear Our Truths Hear Our Truths* Chapters 1-3

November 5: *Hear Our Truths Hear Our Truths* Chapters 4, 5 & Conclusion

Review #3 Available

Excursion #4

November 10: *Assata: An Autobiography* Chapters 1-12

November 12: *Assata: An Autobiography* Chapters 13-21 & postscript

November 17: *Buck: A Memoir* Chapters 1-25

November 19: *Buck: A Memoir* Chapters 25-45

November 24: No Class

November 26: No Class

December 1: *The Color Purple*

December 3: *The Color Purple*

December 8: TBA

Review#4 Available

Excursion # 5

December 10: Final Presentation

December 18: Final Paper Due