

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY & STUDIES

Instructor: Selfa A. Chew-Meléndez, PhD.
Office: LART 333
Office hours: M & W: **9:00 – 10:30 AM.**
E-mail: sachewsmithart@utep.edu
Phone: 915 747 7051

Syllabus

This course is an introduction to African American Studies focusing on the history, literature, arts, and material culture of people of African descent in the United States. Textbook, articles, and films will assist us to understand the role that African American men and women have in the history of the United States. Our analysis will center on the political, cultural, social, and economic strategies developed to challenge social relations of power affecting Black individuals. Activities are selected to examine persisting inequalities affecting African Americans as well as accomplishments in the struggle for equality. Prominent themes include the Reconstruction; African Americans' migration; the development of the modern civil rights movement and its aftermath; African American intellectuals; deindustrialization; and contemporary struggles. The intersections of gender, race, and class will be repeatedly visited in our analysis of African American History with an emphasis on the intellectual production of Black feminists.

Objectives are:

- To **critically** analyze the social, cultural, and political development of the African American communities in a global context.
- To identify the contributions of African American individuals and communities to the history, economy, and culture of the United States.
- To assess the importance of Black feminists in the construction of notions of human and civil rights and intersectional systems of oppression.
- To recognize diversity in experiences derived from gender, race, and economic class differences.
- To read historical texts and documents in order to use them as sources for clear, accurate, and informed discussion (in class and in your written reports);
- To learn in a cooperative environment the *relationship* and *significance* of historical persons, events, ideas, and concepts.
- To reflect on strategies to become effective educators.

At the end of this course I would like my students to be able to:

- Think critically about the social, cultural, and political development of the African American communities.
- Recognize the contributions of the African American community to the economy, culture, and history of the United States.
- Understand that “race” and “gender” are social constructions.
- Understand that racism is a real social structure that determines the quality of life of residents of the United States, intersecting with other relations of power, such as gender.
- Evaluate past events and social processes as factors that shape our present.
- Develop strategies to improve independent study and academic writing skills.

- Become familiar with social science terminology.
- Determine social and individual responsibilities in the democratization of society.

Timely Submission of assignments and participation in group discussions via Blackboard are compulsory to pass this course.

Students are responsible for all information provided in their textbook and documentaries. Students would be well advised to read several topics in advance of lectures and discussions. The primary textbooks for the course are:

Creating Black Americans: African American History And Its Meaning, 1619 to the Present, by Nell Irvin Painter. Oxford University Press, 2006. (CBA)

and

Liberating Minds Liberating Society: Black Women in the Development of American Culture and Society. Edited by Lopez D. Matthews, Jr. and Kenvi C. Phillips. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014. (LMLS)

In addition to this book, secondary scholarly essays will be provided through our UTEP virtual data base and other media. The reading assignments are by no means exhaustive; they will, however, provide clues to more detailed treatments of the great majority of issues and questions to be raised in the introductory course in African American Studies and History.

Our study of African American history necessitates an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on paradigms and critical theories, and understanding the humanizing nature of learning about and eradicating racism and other “isms” damaging to people. Material will not be introduced in strict chronological order.

Note also that films and sections of videos will be used to heighten our appreciation of historical eras and issues. As new material is emerging, our list of this type of resources may change. Course requirements are:

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Mid-term examination	25%
Final examination	30%
Homework and in-class quizzes	30%
Individual presentation	10%
Participation in classroom discussions	5%

Homework assignments and in-class quizzes will not be accepted after the dateline. When our class meets outside of our regular classroom to attend a lecture by a guest speaker, students will submit a question for our guest speaker. In addition, students will submit a report describing the event and its relevance to our class. An important component of our homework is the weekly submission of the review questions for each chapter of *Creating Black Americans*; and, your response to the prompt posted for the

readings assigned from *Liberating Minds*. Failure to submit more than four homework reports will result in a failing grade in this course.

Presentations will take a maximum of five minutes. A power point presentation is required and will be presented to your professor at least two weeks before scheduled time. It is your responsibility to submit the proposed presentation for review. Your last slide will contain an activity for the group which will be interactive. Submit your power point, along with a lesson plan through Blackboard to receive your grade. PPT file must be free of grammatical errors, and the text must be original (not just a copy-and-paste paragraph). Citation of sources must be provided in a separate slide. Sources must be academic considered reliable by your professor (not Wikipedia, ask.com). Please, consult with your professor if you find information in internet that is important, and no other academic source is validating it. Select persons, communities or events that are rarely included in K-12 textbooks and who are not studied in our *Liberating Minds Liberating Society* textbook.

When designing your PPT list main ideas in very few words that can be read from the last row of the classroom, with a maximum of five slides. Videos should not exceed two minutes. As part of our **in-class quizzes**, at the end of the class, all students will submit a piece of information presented by the team and which they consider important in our understanding of African American History and Culture. It is the presenters' responsibility to make sure they complete this assignment as scheduled. If postponed, due to changes in our syllabus, students will reschedule with their professor to present before the final exam date.

Exams. Two exams will be provided. Students must submit a response that includes the historical significance of the event, persons, communities described. Responses must be formulated in the student's own words. Significance of each event, process or person must be provided to obtain full credit for the answer. The objective is to reflect on the information learned, to establish connections with contemporary social processes.

Participation in class discussions must generate respectful conversations. Avoid replying directly to other students and wait until all other students speak to take again your turn, even if the conversation takes a different direction. Conversations will always be unfinished, hopefully, as our aim is to generate permanent reflection on the topics at hand and to reflect as we are learning through our readings, lectures, and documentaries. We may disagree with other person's opinion but the objective is to ponder other perspectives. Participation points will not be accrued when students are absent.

The grading scale is:

A=90-100

B=80-89

C=70-79

D=60-69

F=59 or less

Absences will result in a deduction of 5% points from the student's final grade, with the exception of the first absence. Lateness, or leaving the classroom for more than 5 minutes, or leaving the class before its conclusion, will cause a loss of 2.5% points from the final grade, per instance, after the first event. It is particularly important to attend our special guest lectures punctually. Jury duty, UTEP official representation in sports or academic events, and military orders to leave the city are the only instances in which absences may be excused. Four or more unexcused absences can result in the student receiving a failing grade for the course. When excused absences are excessive or limit the ability of the student to submit homework or demonstrate mastering the content of our texts and lectures, students will be dropped

from the course or will receive a failing grade. Please review your student handbook for policies pertaining to plagiarism. The policies will be adhered to strictly. The assignments and format for the tests will be discussed more thoroughly within the first week of the semester. Welcome!

Week 1	Introduction. <i>Creating Black Americans</i> (CBA) Chapter 1: Africa and Black Americans
Week 2	<i>Creating Black Americans</i> (CBA) Chapter 2: Captives Transported Video “A Son of Africa.”
Week 3	<i>Creating Black Americans</i> (CBA) Chapter 3: A Diasporic People Student Presentations start. <i>Liberating Minds Liberating Society</i> (LMLS). Chapters 1 and 2.
Week 4	<i>Creating Black Americans</i> (CBA) Chapter 4. Those Who Were Free. <i>Liberating Minds Liberating Society</i> (LMLS). Chapters 3 and 4.
Week 5	<i>Creating Black Americans</i> (CBA) Chapter 5: Those Who Were Enslaved. <i>Liberating Minds Liberating Society</i> (LMLS). Chapters 5 and 6.
Week 6	<i>Creating Black Americans</i> (CBA) Chapter 6: Civil War and Emancipation <i>Liberating Minds Liberating Society</i> (LMLS). Chapters 7 and 8.
Week 7	<i>Creating Black Americans</i> (CBA) Chapter 7: The Larger Reconstruction <i>Liberating Minds Liberating Society</i> (LMLS). Chapters 9 and 10.
Week 8	<i>Creating Black Americans</i> (CBA) Chapter 8: Hard-working People in the Depths of Segregation. <i>Liberating Minds Liberating Society</i> (LMLS). Chapters 11 and 12.
Week 9	<i>Creating Black Americans</i> (CBA) Chapter 9: The New Negro <i>Liberating Minds Liberating Society</i> (LMLS). Chapters 12 and 13.
Week 10	<i>Creating Black Americans</i> (CBA) Chapter 10: Radicals and Democrats <i>Liberating Minds Liberating Society</i> (LMLS). Chapters 14 and 15.
Week 11	<i>Creating Black Americans</i> (CBA) Chapter 11: The Second World War and the Promise of Internationalism <i>Liberating Minds Liberating Society</i> (LMLS). Chapters 16 and 17.
Week 12	<i>Creating Black Americans</i> (CBA) Chapter 12: Cold War Civil Rights <i>Liberating Minds Liberating Society</i> (LMLS). Chapters 18 and 19.
Week 13	<i>Creating Black Americans</i> (CBA) Chapter 13: Protest Makes a Civil Rights Revolution Video “Brother Outsider: Bayard Rustin”
Week 14	<i>Creating Black Americans</i> (CBA) Chapter 14: Black Power Video “The Black Power Mixtape” Audio “Dr. Martin Luther King. Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence.”

Week 15 *Creating Black Americans* (CBA) Chapter 15: Authenticity and Diversity in the Era of Hip-Hop.
Liberating Minds Liberating Society (LMLS). Chapter 20

Week 16 Final Exam.

This syllabus is subject to modifications. If videos are not available they will be substituted.