

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND STUDIES

AFST 2300, AFST 3390, ANTH 4370, HIS 3329

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Session: Fall 2018
Class: LART 303 M – W, 1:30 – 2:50 PM
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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.

Only one section of this course under any department can be taken for credit, regardless of the term in which the enrollment took place. Students are responsible for dropping this course or a section to avoid duplication of credits. Students can retake this course, or another section, when a failing grade was recorded.

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. Late submission of homework will result in a deduction of 10% of the grade per day.

Students are responsible for all information provided in their textbooks, lectures, audio recordings 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) 978-0195137569

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 the two books assigned, 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:

Journal	20%
Mid-term examination	20%
Final examination	25%
Chapter questionnaires	10%
In-class activities and forums	5%

Team presentation	10%
Participation in classroom discussions	5%

Assignments are designed to support your learning process in this class. When you miss assignments, your level of informed participation in the class is not the optimal. Missing more than five journal entries or questionnaires will result in a failing grade or a withdrawal from the class.

Journal entries: Journal entries consist of two parts: a) summaries of the texts assigned, b) a paragraph with comments. The main focus of our journal entries is *Liberating Minds*, in addition to other articles and films assigned for reading. Our journal **entries will not include** *Creating Black Americans*. Journal entries usually include two chapters, do not upload them separately. They will be submitted through Blackboard, using the “Write submission” tab, not the comments tab, as in-text, not as an attachment. The summaries are the objective section of your journal entry (they are not essays), your comments’ paragraph may include opinions, reflections, and critiques. Every summary must contain 250 words (minimum). Start your summary by citing the name of the author, the title of the text (chapter, film, or article) and the argument or objectives. Provide the specific context (time period and geographical location) for the person or event in question. Specific achievements, contributions to the democratization of our society, perspectives and theories must be detailed in your report. In addition, include the type(s) of social injustice issues the person or group in the text addressed. In your comments, which must consist of at least 100 words, state the relevance of the information to contemporary issues. Every summary must include at least two footnotes with citations providing the publication information and page where we can locate the ideas you are referring to.

Don’t get discouraged if you receive a low score. Your professor will provide feedback to improve your future submissions. Students are required to read such comments and to write subsequent journal entries according to the feedback submitted. The opportunity to resubmit journal entries is earned through adherence to her instructions to improve journal entries. When mistakes are repeated, your professors will not grant you the opportunity to resubmit your work for a higher grade. Informed responses to her comments will earn extra points.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and journal entries with patchwork (pasting sentences which are directly copied from the texts) will earn zero points. Journal entries must be coherent and demonstrate understanding of the text as a whole. Five instances of late submission or omission will produce a failing grade. Journal entries will be submitted through the “write submission” tab, not the “comments” section. Journal entries submitted late will receive a 10% per day.

There are no make-up sessions for in-class quizzes and graded activities.

Forum discussions will also be occasionally assigned as homework through Blackboard and graded. An original post and two replies to other students will be required.

Every Monday, students will submit their responses to a specific set of questions (from three to six) from *Creating Black Americans* (CBA). The questions contained in our CBA textbook are only prompts to expand on. Students are expected to write detailed answers in their own words, making connections between the information requested and other chapters, presentations, and documentaries, stating why the information provided is important to understand African American experiences. Copying the answer directly from the text will not accrue points.

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.

Presentations: the lecture portion will take a maximum of five minutes. A power point presentation is required and will be submitted at least two weeks before scheduled time for review. Your last slide will contain an activity for the group which will be interactive. Every member of the team must be familiar with the entire content of the presentation and able to answer questions during the Q and A session. Reading information from a text or the slides is not an acceptable practice. The slides must contain power points, minimal text, and images (when appropriate). The activity segment will take between 5 and 10 minutes. 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 three slides. Videos should not exceed two minutes. It is the presenters' responsibility to make sure they complete this assignment as scheduled. If postponed, due to changes in our syllabus, students will present during the following session, with the other team scheduled for that session. All teams must present before the final exam date and must stay in contact with their professor to ensure they have a spot in our class sessions. .

Exams. Two exams will be provided. Students must submit responses that include 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 and 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. Academic terminology to describe communities must be practiced. When in doubt about a term, consult with your professor. 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 or when exhibiting a disrespectful demeanor.

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 a class session 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.

Cell phones, computers, and earphones, must be stored in your back pack or purse, away from your desk during our class time, exams, group work, and special events. Your writing area must be used to write or perform activities directly related to the class.

Reading and assignments schedule:

Assignments must be submitted each Tuesday, by midnight. Additional materials may be assigned.

- Week 1 Introduction. *Creating Black Americans* (CBA) Chapter 1: Africa and Black Americans
Race: The Power of an Illusion. Documentary. Episode 1.
<https://utep.kanopy.com/video/race-power-illusion-0>
- Week 2 *Creating Black Americans* (CBA) Chapter 2: Captives Transported.
Video “A Son of Africa.”
- Week 3 *Creating Black Americans* (CBA) Chapter 3: A Diasporic People
Liberating Minds Liberating Society (LMLS). Chapters 1.
- Week 4 *Creating Black Americans* (CBA) Chapter 4. Those Who Were Free.
Liberating Minds Liberating Society (LMLS). Chapters 3.
- Week 5 *Creating Black Americans* (CBA) Chapter 5: Those Who Were Enslaved.
Liberating Minds Liberating Society (LMLS). Chapters 5.
Research report submission.
- Week 6 *Creating Black Americans* (CBA) Chapter 6: Civil War and Emancipation
Liberating Minds Liberating Society (LMLS). Chapters 7.
- Week 7 *Creating Black Americans* (CBA) Chapter 7: The Larger Reconstruction
Liberating Minds Liberating Society (LMLS). Chapters 9.
- Week 8 *Creating Black Americans* (CBA) Chapter 8: Hard-working People in the Depths of
Segregation.
Liberating Minds Liberating Society (LMLS). Chapters 11.
Research report submission.
- Week 9 *Creating Black Americans* (CBA) Chapter 9: The New Negro
Liberating Minds Liberating Society (LMLS). Chapter 13.
- Week 10 *Creating Black Americans* (CBA) Chapter 10: Radicals and Democrats
Liberating Minds Liberating Society (LMLS). Chapters 15.

- Week 11 *Creating Black Americans* (CBA) Chapter 11: The Second World War and the Promise of Internationalism
Liberating Minds Liberating Society (LMLS). Chapters 17.
- Week 12 *Creating Black Americans* (CBA) Chapter 12: Cold War Civil Rights
Liberating Minds Liberating Society (LMLS). Chapters 19.
- Week 13 *Creating Black Americans* (CBA) Chapter 13: Protest Makes a Civil Rights Revolution
Video “Brother Outsider: Bayard Rustin”
- Week 14 *Creating Black Americans* (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. Submission of your final research report.

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