

Afro-Mexico: A History of Race and Gender Relations from the Colonial Period
AFST 3390, LABS 4301, WS 3390 AND HIST 3390

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Course description and objectives.

Identified as the “third root,” African cultures and histories have played significant roles in the formation of Mexico, from the colonial period to the present. The notion of mestizaje, however, left little to imagining and envisioning the history of so many women and men of African descent in Mexico. This course is an effort to explore Mexico’s history through the perspective of the African Mexican communities. Our review of a sample of the most significant scholarship in the field will assist us to identify and comprehend the multiple roles Africans and Afro-mestizos played in the nation’s political, economic, and socio-cultural development as well as in the transnational communities of which Afro-Mexicans are members. Race, gender, and class will guide us in reading, discussing, and constructing questions on an often neglected aspect of history accounting for the presence of persons of African descent living in metaphorical and geopolitical border regions.

Objectives

- To assess the importance of the African Diaspora in the construction of hybrid transnational communities in the American Continent.
- To analyze critically gender and race relations in the context of the cultural, and political development of Mexico.
- To identify the relation of history with other disciplines; and
- To learn in a cooperative environment the *relationship* and *significance* of historical persons, events, ideas, and processes affecting our present.

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

- Think critically about interlocking relations of power, including gender, race, and economic class.
- Evaluate past events and social processes as factors that shape our present.
- Reflect on their own academic responsibility and potential to affect positively their communities.
- Develop strategies to improve independent study skills.

Required Textbooks:

1. Vinson, Ben. *Black Mexico: Race and Society from Colonial to Modern Times*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2009.
2. Bristol, Joan Cameron. *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches: Afro-Mexican Ritual Practice in the Seventeenth Century*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007.
3. Horne, Gerald. *Black and Brown: African Americans and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1920*. New York: New York University Press, 2005.
4. Hernández Cuevas, Marco Polo. *African Mexicans and the Discourse on Modern Nation*, University Press of America, 2004.
5. Marquez, John. D., *Black-Brown Solidarity: Racial Politics in the New Gulf South*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 2014. (You don’t have to buy this text: it is in the library electronic resources).

All books are available through our bookstore or Amazon. Articles are available through our UTEP e-base (look through JSTOR or EBSCO), or our Blackboard platform.

Other articles will be accessed through our UTEP e-base or Blackboard links.

Attendance:

Regular attendance is crucial in a discussion-centered course such as this. Each student is allowed 1 absence without penalty; each subsequent absence will lower the final grade by 5%. More than FOUR absences will automatically result in a failing grade. Two times late will be equivalent to one absence. If you leave the classroom for a period longer than 10 minutes, your attendance points will also decrease. Unauthorized use of cell phones or computers will result in deductions from your attendance and participation points. You must consult your Blackboard records to make sure I have accurate attendance records. You have only 36 hours to inform me of any mistake in your attendance record. Quizzes and team work cannot be made up when you are absent.

Office appointments: Please, e-mail me or call me to cancel your appointment if you are not able to meet with me. If you miss an appointment participation points will be deducted from your final grade.

Class discussions. They are designed to encourage the class to express opinions, observations, share experiences, and ask questions. We should use this time to clarify understanding of concepts encountered in course materials.

Disabled student resources. A variety of services are available to students who need special accommodation for students to succeed and enjoy this class. Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please notify the instructor during the first week of class of any accommodations needed for this course.

Group activities will be arranged periodically to allow students to become acquainted with other class members and their ideas. They also provide opportunities for students to see the application of the principles introduced in course materials. The frequency and quality of the group activities largely depends on the cooperation of group members.

Grades will be determined by students' performance in the following areas:

Grading Policy:

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| • One paper | 15% |
| • Presentations | 10% |
| • Journals | 55% |
| • Chicago/Turabian citation style quiz | 3% |
| • Rapid evaluations | 7% |
| • Participation in class | 10% |

Final grades will be based on the total number of points earned in the course.

Grade Scale

A = 90 – 100%

B = 80 – 89%

C = 70 -79%

F = 69 and under

It is highly recommended to visit Blackboard periodically. You can find your grades, post messages, form discussion groups and be reminded of tests, assignments, events, etc.

Late work policy:

- **All assignments are due on or before the assigned dates.**
- **There will be no make ups for class participation or quizzes in class.**
- **Papers placed underneath the instructor's office door or in her box won't be accepted if they are late.**

It is important that you understand the reasons why you receive the grade you do. I encourage students to discuss the graded papers, quizzes or exams with me, but such conversation can only take place 24-hours after students receive their graded paper or quizzes.

Students' responsibilities

- Students will complete all procedures required to drop the course if they desire to obtain a "W."
- Students will be active in their own learning process, obtain knowledge on their own, and share their knowledge with their peers and teacher.
- Students are expected to read assigned material prior to class. They should be prepared to answer questions related to material in the text and may be called on to do so. Students should also be prepared to ask questions about issues of interest or for clarifications of concepts during class.
- Students are expected to show respect for the instructor, guests and one another regardless of opinion, cultural values and other group differences.
- Communications with your peers and your professor must follow the protocol you will read at <http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor> Participation points will be deducted when your messages do not follow the conventions listed in the site referenced.
- When requested to meet with your professor in her office, you must schedule a meeting or meet her during office hours during the next 36 hours. Failing to meet with her in this case will result in a deduction of your participation points.
- Students should give one another equal opportunity to express opinions, experiences and ideas.
- All students should be supportive of a cooperative learning environment in the classrooms.
- Students are encouraged to attend all sessions, arrive on time, and remain in attendance until each session is formally ended. When a test is scheduled, students will not be allowed to leave the classroom before finishing the test, with the exception of documented medical problems. A significant proportion of the learning process originates from interaction with others and in the give-and-take discussions relevant to readings. Because our class represents a system of learning, your presence or absence affects and enables the learning process of every other class member.
- Students will not use cell phones or other electronic devices during our class sessions, or exams at all. Students must turn all electronic devices. In cases of emergency, students must notify the instructor of the need to answer a call and will be allowed to exit the classroom for a brief period of time to take the call. Students will not be allowed to use computer during class unless they have a documented need to use a laptop. In that case, the computer will be used exclusively to take notes and the student must use designated places for computer users.
- **Your classmates and your syllabus will be a good source to inquire on what you missed in class when absent.**
- **5% of your grade will be discounted from your final grade for each absence, after the first absence. For example, if your final grade is 100, but you missed four sessions your final grade will be 85. FOUR classes is the maximum amount of sessions you may miss. If you miss class five times you will fail this course.**

Participation (10%)

Your professor as well as the other members of your team will grade your participation. Evaluation will be based on punctuality, attendance, preparedness, number and quality of interventions, willingness to take notes for yourself and for your team, and collaboration with your team and the rest of the class to attain our learning goals. When you are absent you are missing information and making it more difficult for you to do well in the class and your participation points decrease. I believe that all of us need to contribute to the educational growth of the whole group. These are some of the basic points regarding participation followed by a basic description of participation points.

Follow these rules for an enjoyable class:

1. **Listen actively** -- respect others when they are talking.
2. Avoid pin-pong conversations or verbal duels.
3. Other students will be waiting for their **turn** to speak and we will respect the order.
4. Once you have intervened, allow the next student to express her/his opinion, even if that opinion is not directly related to your intervention.
5. Practice **timely attendance**.
6. Do not be afraid to **challenge respectfully one another** by asking questions, but refrain from personal attacks -- focus on ideas.
7. **Participate to the fullest of your ability** -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
8. **The goal is not to agree** -- it is about hearing and exploring divergent perspectives.

9. **Take charge of your education.** Read carefully, use your dictionary as needed, look for more information if topics are difficult to grasp.

One paper (15%):

You will present one paper with an extension of 10 pages. It will consist of an exploration of a topic using at least three of the readings listed in our course, and five journal articles or academic books not included in our reading list. Compliance with all the requirements for these specific assignments does not guarantee an A in this course for the entire course. Undergraduate students who fulfill the following conditions are exempted from submission of a final paper: students will have 1) 90 % of their journal entries timely submitted with a score of 8 or higher in each of their original entries, (they must be written using their own words); 2) a perfect attendance record; 3) a perfect score in their presentation(s) with a noticeable participation in all phases of the course; 4) all quizzes with a passing grade; 4) a high level of meaningful participation, and, 5) encourage other students to participate. Plagiarism will disqualify students to be exempted from final paper. Graduate students will not receive a final paper exemption and the extension will be 15-20 pages.

This paper is mandatory to pass this course for graduate students and students who failed to submit one or more journals in a timely fashion, regardless of the extra credit points they may accumulate. Papers must be submitted by the deadline through Blackboard.

Presentations (10%):

Your team make a formal presentation using multimedia technology to address the main topics of this course in two sections. Your team, thus, will select one article or chapter from the syllabus not previously presented. The lecture section will cover only five minutes, a maximum of three slides with 3-5 summarized ideas in each slide, in a bulleted list. You can one citation per slide, maximum three lines. The text must be readable from a distance of 30 feet when projected onto the screen. Reading a text during presentation is not acceptable. The second section consists of an activity designed to review the main concepts of the chapter or article. The activity must include materials, and encourage students to learn as a team, as well as use their senses, beyond memorization or discussing a question. Each activity must be different from other activities designed by other teams. You can submit your lesson plan early to make sure your activity will be approved.. Graduate students will make one solo presentation and a second one with a team. Students will submit a lesson plan one week before their presentation, providing the names of the members of the team, information on the media used, questions explored, activities, and objectives. A power point presentation must be submitted and uploaded in Blackboard at least 24 hours before the class takes place. Your professor will submit comments. When necessary, corrections must be done before presenting.

Journal (55%):

This section of the course includes two entries per week through your Blackboard journals section. During the first three weeks, students will submit an additional printed copy of their journals. They will be exchanged with other students for review and feedback. Journal entries consist of a summary of each article or chapter scheduled to read. Each summary will have a minimum extension of twenty sentences. In addition, each entry will include a one-paragraph critical comment on the readings assigned for class with a minimum of 10 sentences. This exercise will prepare you for our discussions in class. Occasionally, I will submit a list of questions to answer in lieu of your summary. You must use Chicago style to cite quotations, pages, and also your works-cited section. Journals carry the largest weight of your grade; therefore, students should take great care and pride when writing them. Missing more than four assignments will result in a failing grade. Expectations are:

1. A clear thesis and logical organization.
2. Write concisely.
3. Avoid passive constructions. Tell who is performing the action you describe.
4. Quotations must be used sparingly.
5. Strive for gender-neutral phrasing.
6. Use carefully the term "race." Remember, race is a social construction. Avoid derogatory language.
7. Incorporate new terms learned but use your own words, demonstrate that you understood the text.

8. Students will accrue 0 points when they use the patchwork method to write a journal entry. Patchwork means to take a fragment of the text and paste with other phrases in one sentence. Research the term.
9. Ask questions in your comment section if you feel you are not understanding a concept.

Notice that our readings are not in strict chronological order, and that some topics are repeated. This apparent repetition should elicit analytical comparisons in terms of primary sources and scholarly interpretations. Keep in mind that historical processes or intellectual processes are not linear; therefore, you will exercise your ability to establish relationships among periods, events, and issues.

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Quiz on Chicago Style (3%):

As a student of history you must learn to use the Chicago /Turabian citation style when writing your sources and your bibliography. Students will have an in class quiz.

Rapid evaluations (7%):

Periodically, you will answer a set of questions in class related to the material previously presented to you during lecture or included in your mandatory readings. There are no make-ups for these quizzes. When absent, students will not earn points for missed evaluations.

Graduate Students Coursework:

Graduate students will submit two extended journal entries per week, 2 – 4 pages (versus 1 – 2 pages submitted by undergraduate students). Graduate students will submit a final paper with an extension of 18 -20 pages (versus 10 pages submitted by undergraduate students). It consists of an exploration of a topic using at least three of the readings listed in our course, plus their selection of five journal articles or monographs not included in our reading list. Graduate students must design a lesson plan and teach a class, individually.

Extra points: Students may earn a maximum of 8 extra points when attending special events. However, when more than five journal entries are missed, or if your final paper earns a grade lower than 70, extra points will not be added.

Schedule:

This schedule is for your mandatory readings mainly. Our readings are not following a strict chronological order in the treatment of topics. All texts in this schedule must be included in the submission of journals. Students must submit an entry per chapter or article. Students must bring a printed copy of each chapter or article to class as scheduled. Students must read the texts before their discussion in class. I will provide other texts through Blackboard or will give you hand-outs. Check your Blackboard Calendar for specific datelines. Several guests' presentations, movies and group discussions, among other events will take place during the term and the topics will be integrated into your exams.

Week 1 Introduction. (Journals 1 and 2)

Wilkins, Ron. "Mexico Welcomed Fugitive Slaves..." <http://imdiversity.com/villages/hispanic/mexico-welcomed-fugitive-slaves-and-african-american-job-seekers/>

Official recognition of Afromexicans: <http://wordondastreet.com/mexico-officially-recognizes-their-afro-mexican-black-population-on-their-census-forms-for-the-1st-time-in-history/>

Gehman, Mary. The Louisiana-Creole Mexican Connection. <http://www.marygehman.com/la.-creole-mexican-connection.html>

Gonzalez, Cesar. "The Secret History of Black Baseball Players." <http://remezcla.com/features/the-secret-history-of-how-mexico-pushed-baseball-toward-racial-integration/>

Make sure you have ordered your books by this date.

Week 2 Recovering Memories (Journals 3 and 4).

Johnson, Gaye Theresa. "Sobre las Olas: A Mexican Genesis in Borderlands Jazz..." *Comparative American Studies*, Vol. 6. Num. 3, September 2008, 225-240

News article on census: <http://wordondastreet.com/mexico-officially-recognizes-their-afro-mexican-black-population-on-their-census-forms-for-the-1st-time-in-history/>

Chew, Selfa. "The Memory of Black Womanhood in Mexico: *La Mulata de Córdoba*," accepted for publication in *Sites of Memory in Spain and Latin America*. Marina Llorentes, Díaz de León, A. and Salvi, M. Lexington Books, November, 2015.

Week 3 Reconstruction. The Gendering of the Black Body. (Journals 5 and 6)

Reading: Kellogg, Susan. "Depicting Mestizaje: Gendered Images of Ethnorace in Colonial Mexican Texts." *Journal of Women's History* 12, no. 3 (2000): 69-92.

Johnson, Charles. "A Phenomenology of the Black Body." In *The Male Body: Features, Destinies, Exposures*, ed. Laurence Goldstein. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994.

You must have your book *Black Mexico* by Ben Vinson by Friday.

Week 4 Entering the Colonial World and Resistance to the Colonial Order. (Journals 7 and 8)

Vinson, Ben. *Black Mexico: Race and Society from Colonial to Modern Times*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2009. Entering the Colonial World: Introduction and Chapters 1 and 2 (Slave Rebellion – Negotiating Two Worlds); and Black Conquistadors by Matthew Restall, "Black Conquistadors: Armed Africans in Early Spanish America," *The Americas* 57:2 (October 2000).

Vinson, Ben. *Black Mexico*. Chapters 3 and 4 (Black Aliens and Black Natives - From Dawn 'til Dusk).

You must have your book *African Mexicans and the Discourse...* by Marco Polo Hernández Cuevas by Friday.

Week 5 The language of exclusion (Journals 9 and 10)

Hernández Cuevas, Marco Polo. *African Mexicans and the Discourse on Modern Nation*. Introduction and Chapter 1. The Revolution and Invisibility.

Hernández Cuevas, Marco Polo. *African Mexicans and the Discourse on Modern Nation*. Chapter 2 (The Erased Africaness).

Week 6 Racial identities (Journals 11 and 12)

Vinson, Ben. *Black Mexico*. Entering the Colonial World: Chapters 5 (Mulatto Identity).

Marquez, John. D., *Black-Brown Solidarity: Racial Politics in the New Gulf South*. Introduction. Hybrid Subjectivities. (This book is in our UTEP electronic library you don't need to buy it. Access the library data base).

You need to have your book *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches* by Friday.

Week 7 Strategies for Freedom. (Journals 13 and 14)

Bristol, Joan Cameron. *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches: Afro-Mexican Ritual Practice in the Seventeenth Century*. Introduction, and Chapters 1 and 2.

Chaves, Maria Eugenia. "Slave Women's Strategies for Freedom and the Late Spanish Colonial State." In *Hidden Histories of Gender and the State in Latin America*, ed. Elizabeth Dore and Maxine Molyneux. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

Week 8 Cultural Identity. (Journals 15 and 16)

Bristol, Joan Cameron. *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches*. Chapters 3 and 4.

Gonzalez, Anita. "Roots of Jarocho's Dance" in *Jarocho's Soul: Cultural Identity and Afro-Mexican Dance*. Dallas: University Press of America, 2004.

Video: The Father of Son Jarocho Revival. <https://vimeo.com/150230191>

Week 9 Desired Women. (Journals 17 and 18)

Bristol, Joan Cameron. *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches*. Chapters 5 and 6.

Cruz-Janzen, Marta I. "Latinegras: Desired Women-Undesirable Mothers, Daughters, Sisters, and Wives." *Frontiers - A Journal of Women's Studies* 22, no. 3 (2001): 168.

Week 10 African Americans and the Mexican Revolution. (Journals 19 and 20)

Horne, Gerald. *Black and Brown: African Americans and the Mexican Revolution*. Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2.
LeFalle Collins, Lizetta and Shifra M. Goldman. "The Mexican Connection: The New Negro Border Crossings" in *In the Spirit of Resistance: African American Modernists and the Mexican Muralist School*. American Federation of Arts.

Week 11 African American Soldiers Cross the Border. (Journals 21 and 22)

Horne, Gerald. *Black and Brown*. Chapters 3 and 4.
Horne, Gerald. *Black and Brown*. Chapter 5.

Week 12 Engaging Modernity. (Journals 23 and 24)

Hernández Cuevas, Marco Polo. *African Mexicans and the Discourse on Modern Nation*. Chapter 4, *Angelitos Negros*.
Márquez, John. D., *Black-Brown Solidarity: Racial Politics in the New Gulf South*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 2014. Introduction and Chapter 1.

Week 13 Afro-Mexico in the Popular Culture. (Journals 25 and 26)

Cuevas Hernández, Marco Polo. *African Mexicans and the Discourse on Modern Nation*., Chapter 5 and conclusion.
Phyllis Dill, Lakai Erika. "Where Ebony Meets Poverty," Chapter 2 of *The Black Other...*, Thesis.
Universidad de las Américas, Puebla
Jim Crow Museum: Understanding Memín Pinguin. <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/question/feb10/>
Course Questionnaire. Peers evaluation.

Week 14 Black and Brown Solidarity. (Journals 27 and 28).

Márquez, John. D., *Black-Brown Solidarity*. Chapter 2.
Márquez, John. D., *Black-Brown Solidarity*.. Chapter 3.

Week 15. Black and Brown Solidarity. (Journals 29 and 30)

Márquez, John. *Black-Brown*. Chapter 4 and conclusion.
Chew, Selfa. "The politics of historical death: Black Womanhood in Mexico." In process.

Final exam date: Submission of your final paper. Mandatory for graduate students and undergraduate students not officially exempted.

This syllabus is subject to change.

Recommended Readings:

- Andersen, Margaret L. and Patricia Hill Collins. "Systems of Power and Inequality." In *Race, Class, and Gender*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, 2006.
- Bass, Amy. *Not the Triumph but the Struggle: The 1968 Olympics and the Making of the Black Athlete*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.
- Bennett, Herman L. *Colonial Blackness. A History of Afro-Mexico*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009.
- Boyer, Richard and Geoffrey Spurling, eds. *Colonial Lives: Documents on Latin American History, 1550-1850*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Bueno, Eva Paulino. "Carolina Maria De Jesus in the Context of Testimonios: Race, Sexuality, and Exclusion." *Criticism* 41, no. 2 (1999): 257.
- Carrera, Magali M. "Imagining Identity in New Spain: Race, Lineage, and the Colonial Body. " In *Portraiture and Casta Paintings*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003.
- Cummins, Thomas B.F. "Casta Painting: Images of Race in Eighteenth-Century Mexico." *The Art Bulletin* 88, no. 1 (2006): 185.

- Fisher, Andrew B. "Creating and Contesting Community: Indians and Afromestizos in the Late-Colonial Tierra Caliente of Guerrero, Mexico," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 7 (Spring 2006 online version).
- González, Anita. *Afro-Mexico. Dancing Between Myth and Reality*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010.
- Hill, Collins, Patricia. "Why Black Sexual Politics?" In *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism*. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Lavrin, Asunción, ed. *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989.
- Landers, Jane. "Felipe Edimboro Sues for Manumission, Don Francisco Javier Sánchez Contests." In Boyer, Richard and Geoffrey Spurling, eds. *Colonial Lives: Documents on Latin American History, 1550-1850*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Edgar F. Love, "Marriage Patterns of Persons of African Descent in a Colonial Mexico City Parish," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 51 (February 1971): 79-91.
- Mulroy, Kelvin. *Freedom on the Border: The Seminole Maroons in Florida, the Indian Territory, Coahuila and Texas*. Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1993.
- Palmer, Colin. "Afro-Mexican Culture and Consciousness During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries." In *Global Dimensions of the African Diaspora*, ed. Joseph E. Harris (Washington, DC, 1993), 125-35.
- The First Passage. Blacks in the Americas, 1502-1617*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Perkins, Maureen. "Thoroughly Modern Mulatta: Rethinking "Old World" Stereotypes in a "New World" Setting." *Biography* 28, no. 1 (2005): 104.
- Restall, Matthew. "Black Conquistadors: Armed Africans in Early Spanish America," *The Americas* 57:2 (October 2000).
- Rodriguez, Ileana. *House/Garden/Nation: Space, Gender, and Ethnicity in Post-Colonial Latin American Literatures by Women*. Translated by Rodriguez, Ileana and Robert Carr. Durham: Duke University Press, 1994.
- Vasconcellos, Ramon Julian. "Blacks in Colonial Veracruz: Race, Ethnicity, and Regional Development." *The Western Journal of Black Studies* 29, no. 1 (2005): 575.
- Vinson, Ben. "Free Colored Voices: Issues of Representation and Racial Identity in the Colonial Mexican Militia." *The Journal of Negro History* 80, no. 4 (1995): 170.
- Von Germeten, Nicole. *Black Blood Brothers: Confraternities and Social Mobility for Afro-Mexicans*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006.