

## Afro-Mexico: A History of Race and Gender Relations

**Instructor:** Selfa A. Chew-Melendez PhD.

**E-mail:** [sachewsmithart@utep.edu](mailto:sachewsmithart@utep.edu)

Session: Fall 2017

Classroom and time: On-line

Virtual Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 9:00 – 10:30AM

Office: LART 333

Phone: 747-7051

### **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. The contributions of Afro-Mexicans to the nation’s culture, economy and history, however, are gradually been recognized thanks to the efforts of activists and scholars. This on-line 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 examine primary and secondary sources.
- 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:**

- Read critically primary and secondary sources, and properly incorporate them into their research.
- Identify interlocking relations of power.
- Evaluate past events and social processes as factors that shape our present.
- Assess the validity of theories that explain the origin of current social behaviors.
- Develop strategies to improve independent study skills.
- Developing learning skills valued in graduate school.
- Become familiar with social science terminology.
- Ponder the possibility of contributing to the solution of social issues affecting their communities.

If you can't acquire your textbooks through our UTEP library, please, access an internet provider such as Amazon or Barnes and Noble. Other articles and films will be available through JSTOR or EBSCO sources, accessible through our on-line library.

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

**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.

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. Desk copies of some of these books are available through our UTEP reserved section at the library and at my office for short term use (one to two hours).

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

**Grading Policy:**

Course requirements are:

• Journal	65%
• Participation in forums	15%
• Team project	15%
• Chicago Style Format quiz	5%
Total	100%

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

<b>A = 90 – 100%</b>	<b>B = 80 – 89%</b>	<b><u>Grade Scale</u></b>	<b>C = 70 -79%</b>	<b>F= 69% and</b>
		<b>under</b>		

It is highly recommended to visit Blackboard on daily basis until the end of our course. You can find your grades, post messages, form discussion groups and be reminded of tests, assignments, events, etc.

**How to start:** 1) Click on the tab titled “Week 1.” 2) Click on the tab titled “Day 1.” 3) Click on the texts tab and read your assigned chapters or articles. 4) Click on each assignment for the day to see the instructions and submit your homework.

### **Late work policy:**

**This is not a self-paced course. Daily assignments must be posted through Blackboard on or before the assigned dates.**

### **Students' responsibilities**

Your instructor will provide structure, content, guidance, and assessment. Most learning, however, will occur through students' active participation in their own acquisition of knowledge.

- Students will submit journal entries and complete assessments on daily basis.
- Students will participate in daily class discussion forums.
- Students will complete all procedures required to drop the course when failing this course if they desire to obtain a "W."
- Students will be responsible for obtaining a syllabus, access to Blackboard, acquiring the reading material and following the course schedule.
- Students will reach their professor when in doubt before datelines.
- Students will be active in their own learning process.
- Students are expected to show respect for the instructor and one another regardless of opinion, cultural values and other group differences. When students show disrespect, use demeaning adjectives, make malicious comments, and "ad hominem" arguments (made personally against an opponent, instead of against the opponent's argument), points will be deducted from assignment. If behavior is repeated, students may be dropped from the course.
- Students must notify instructor of behavior they consider disrespectful immediately, meeting with instructor to address corrective measures.
- Students will correct terminology and concepts that have been learned in other contexts but are not acceptable in academia.
- Students will consider perspectives that originate in disfranchised social sectors, recognizing that this course intends to provide the views and knowledge of communities largely excluded from main stream narratives.
- Students will establish connections among all readings in this class, to increase their ability to examine Black feminism and the historical context producing it from non-Eurocentric perspectives.
- Communications with your peers and your professor must follow the protocol you will read at <http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor>. Assignment points will be deducted when your messages do not follow the conventions listed in the site referenced. Assignments sent through UTEP e-mail will not be read or graded without a proper polite message, with salutation, the reason for sending it the assignment through e-mail. All homework will be submitted as in-box text, not as attachments.
- All students should be supportive of a cooperative learning environment in the classrooms.

### **To get an "A" in this course:**

**Complete all assignments on time and meet requirements for every type of homework. If asked, reply to your professor messages and revise your texts if resubmission privileges are granted.**

### **Blackboard Journal Entries (65%):**

Journal entries are the backbone of our course. They will be submitted by midnight, daily. Late submissions will carry 10% deduction per day. Journal entries consist of one summary per text (**at least** 200 words per summary of text or film analyzed, if that covers the main points and argument. A maximum of 700 words per summary will be accepted). In addition to the two or three summaries (depending on the number of texts and films assigned), students will add one paragraph with comments about the texts (which does not count towards the 200 words required for the summaries). In general, students are expected to submit from two to three summaries every day. If a journal entry does not include all summaries, a partial grade will be assigned and deductions for late points will be applied if the missing part is submitted when the due date has passed.

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. Informed responses to her comments will also earn points.

Summaries are the "objective part of the journal entry." Comments are the "subjective" area in which you can critique, evaluate, or express other thoughts in relation to the material. Your summary will start by the name of the author, the title of the text, and the author's argument. This information will be followed (in the same paragraph) by the sources used to support the argument, and the main points or concepts. Summaries must be clearly separated using lines to build paragraphs. Comments should also be separated from summaries.

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. Each journal entry must have footnotes and bibliography (Chicago style). 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. It is recommended to use SafeAssign report before submitting your homework.

### **Chicago Style Format Assessment (5%)**

It will evaluate the students' ability to use the Chicago citation format, used to write papers in the field of History and other related areas. Such practice will help you develop a skill that can be transferred to other citation formats and academic disciplines. It is programmed during the last week of class. There are multiple sites where you can find the guidelines, including manuals edited by professional organizations, which you may find at UTEP library. A simple guide on this citation format is here [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools\\_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

### **Blackboard forums (15%):**

Forums are sites where the entire group meets for conversations on topics related to our readings. Read the instructions and prompt for each forum discussion before posting your reflection. In general, students will write a reflection on the relationship between the two areas studied in our course: the United States and Latin America, as described in the texts and films assigned for the class. This original posting must indicate (through footnotes) the sources of the information that supports your perspective. After posting a reflection in at least 200 words, students will reply to two peer's text (preferably they will not previous replies so we can distribute the conversation) in at least 150 words. Students must submit their original text before reading their peers' assignments. Opening the forum before posting your first entry will result in a cancellation of your grade.

"Good point" or "I agree" type answers will not earn points. All answers must integrate the knowledge acquired through our readings. Blackboard will alert you of replies to your posting. Read them so you can improve future journal entries and forum reflections. Make sure you follow the guidelines for discussions: they are basically a request to respect all opinions, use academic language, and keep in mind that ours is a scholarly forum, distant from facebook, tweeter and other media in scope and

purpose. Late postings carry a 10% deduction per day, recorded at the end of the course. Failure to submit your posting on time five times will result in an F.

**Team project (15%):**

Students will film a mini-documentary focusing on the contributions of persons of African descent to the culture and history of Mexico. Students will submit their proposed topic by September 15. Minimum length (excluding credits): five minutes. The documentary will use academic sources, properly cited and mentioned in the narrative.

**Graduate students:**

Summaries in journal entries will have an extension of 300 words. In addition to our final project, graduate students will submit a mandatory final paper of 15 pages, individually. Grades will be granted as follows: 10% for team project (documentary), and 10% for final paper.

**Follow these rules for an enjoyable class:**

1. Do not be afraid to **respectfully challenge one another** by asking questions but refrain from personal attacks -- focus on ideas. Labeling an idea as “silly,” “stupid,” “ridiculous,” or applying it to imaginary situations in an attempt to elicit the same derogatory labeling to other persons’ ideas, counts as a personal attack.
2. **Participate to the fullest of your ability** -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
3. **The goal is not to agree** -- it is about considering and exploring divergent perspectives.
4. **Submit your assignments on time, participate in our forums and complete your assessments before the dateline, following all instructions.**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be reported to the Dean of Students. Your journal entries and assignments must be your own. Always cite your sources and use quotation marks if you are integrating a segment from the texts. Be conscious of patchwork plagiarism which is the process of selecting certain phrases from different parts of the text and add them to your journal entry or paper as if they were yours (that is an unacceptable practice in this class). Students must demonstrate a complete understanding of the text through original writing and extraction of the most important points. Should you need information on how to avoid plagiarism you may consult the following source <http://www.plagiarism.org/> I recommend to use as often as possible SafeAssign (in Blackboard/Course tools) to verify that your text is free of plagiarism.

This syllabus is subject to modifications.

**Office Hours:** Stay in contact with your professor via e-mail or Blackboard. Read your forums and journal entries feedback and respond to them for continued personal conversations on your progress and areas to improve. Make sure you have all software needed in your computer to use the chat feature. If chat doesn’t work, contact your instructor by phone, or by e-mail (if during office hours, she will respond during the next minutes, unless she has other students waiting). All software related to UTEP sites for online courses will be provided by UTEP, contact helpdesk/IT if you have any problem using any Blackboard feature.

**UTEP Library Room 300 (Technicians can assist you during person-to-person meetings.)**

Phone: 915.747.4357 (HELP)

Email: [Helpdesk@Utep.Edu](mailto:Helpdesk@Utep.Edu)

**Information on how to use Blackboard:**

<http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=74327>

### **Week 1. Common histories: A deep relationship**

#### **Journal 1.**

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

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

Restall, Matthew. "Black Conquistadors: Armed Africans in Early Spanish America," *The Americas* 57:2 (October 2000).

Make sure you have ordered all your books by this date.

### **Week 2 Recovering Memories: A Recognizable Population**

#### **Journal 2.**

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

#### **Journal 3.**

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

### **Week 3 Reconstruction. The Gendering of the Black Body**

#### **Journal 4.**

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

#### **Journal 5.**

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

Make sure you have acquired *Black Mexico* by Friday.

### **Week 4 Entering the Colonial World and Resistance to the Colonial Order**

#### **Journal 6.**

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.

#### **Journal 7.**

Vinson, Ben, ed. *Black Mexico: Race and Society from Colonial to Modern Times*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 2009. Entering the Colonial World: Chapters 1 and 2 (*Slave Rebellion – Negotiating Two Worlds*).

Make sure you have acquired your book *African Mexicans and the Discourse...* by Marco Polo Hernández Cuevas.

### **Week 5 Labor and migration**

#### **Journal 8.**

Vinson, Ben, ed. *Black Mexico*. Chapter 3 (Black Aliens and Black Natives)

#### **Journal 9.**

Vinson, Ben, ed. *Black Mexico*. Chapter 4 (From Dawn 'til Dusk).

Make sure you have acquired *Black and Brown Solidarity*, by John D. Márquez.

### **Week 6 Racial identities**

#### **Journal 10.**

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

“The Texas Slave...” <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/06/25/the-texas-slave-who-conned-everyone-as-a-mexican-millionaire.html>

#### **Journal 11.**

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

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

### **Week 7 Strategies for Freedom**

#### **Journal 12.**

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

#### **Journal 13.**

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**

#### **Journal 14.**

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

#### **Journal 15.**

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>

Questionnaire

### **Week 9 Desired Women**

#### **Journal 16.**

Bristol, Joan Cameron. *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches*. Chapters 5 and 6. (N/A)

#### **Journal 17.**

Horne, Gerald. *Black and Brown: African Americans and the Mexican Revolution*. Introduction and Chapter 1. (N/A)

### **Week 10 African Americans and the Mexican Revolution**

#### **Journal 18.**

Horne, Gerald. *Black and Brown: African Americans and the Mexican Revolution*. Chapter 2 and 3.

#### **Journal 19.**

Pancho McFarland. "Chicano Rap Roots: Black-Brown Cultural Exchange and the Making of a Genre." *Callaloo* 29, no. 3 (2006): 939-55. <http://0-www.jstor.org.lib.utep.edu/stable/4488380>.

### **Week 11 Diasporic Peoples Working Together**

#### **Journal 20.**

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

#### **Journal 21.**

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.

Araiza, Lauren. "In Common Struggle against a Common Oppression": The United Farm Workers and the Black Panther Party, 1968-1973." *The Journal of African American History* 94, no. 2 (2009): 200-23.

### **Week 12 Engaging Modernity**

#### **Journal 22.**

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

#### **Journal 23.**

Hernández Cuevas, Marco Polo. *African Mexicans and the Discourse on Modern Nation*. Chapter 4, ("Angelitos Negros").

### **Week 13 Afro-Mexico in the Popular Culture**

#### **Journal 24.**

Hernández Cuevas, Marco Polo. *African Mexicans and the Discourse on Modern Nation*. Conclusion.

#### **Journal 25.**

Phyllis Dill, Lakai Erika. "Where Ebony Meets Poverty," Chapter 2 of *The Black Other...*, Thesis. Universidad de las Américas, Puebla

Jim Crow Museum: Understanding Memin Pinguin. <http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/question/feb10/>

**Course Evaluation: find the link in your student e-mail, submit.**

### **Week 14 Black and Brown Solidarity I**

#### **Journal 26.**

Márquez, John. D., *Black-Brown Solidarity: Racial Politics in the New Gulf South*. Austin, University of Texas Press, 2014. Introduction and Chapter 1.

#### **Journal 27.**

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

Questionnaire

**Course Evaluation: find the link in your student e-mail and submit.**

### **Week 15. Identity politics**

**Course Evaluation: find the link in your student e-mail and submit.**

#### **Journal 28.**

Márquez, John. D., *Black-Brown Solidarity*. Chapter 4 and conclusion

#### **Journal 29.**

Chew, Selfa. "The Politics of Historical Erasure: Black Womanhood in Mexico." Accepted for publication. *Journal of Popular Culture*. Editing in process.

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.

**Final exam date (see your official calendar): Submission of your final paper and final team/peer evaluation. Mandatory for graduate students and undergraduate students not officially exempted.**

This syllabus is subject to modifications.

**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.
- 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.