INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND STUDIES
AFST 3390 - HIS 3329 – WS 3391

Instructor: Selfa A. Chew, PhD
E-mail: sachewsmithart@utep.edu
Session: Fall 2020
Class: On-line. Asynchronous
Office Hours: Virtually: Black Collaborate
M and W, 10:00 - 11:00 am
(Link: https://us.bbcollab.com/guest/b4240cf3059a4c5fafe835a395192052)
T and Th, 1:00 - 2:00 pm
(Link: https://us.bbcollab.com/guest/b48f098dae3d44e097167cbe6378d593)
Phone #: 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. Your instructor has selected activities to examine persisting inequalities affecting African Americans as well as accomplishments in the struggle for equality. Prominent themes include the origins of the African Diasporas; African civilizations; the African Diasporas; the Civil War; Reconstruction; migration; the development of the modern civil rights movement and its aftermath; intellectual and artistic developments; 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.

Learning modules:
This course is designed using a modular format—that is, each week is “packaged” as a single module so that all the materials, lecture notes, submission areas, discussion posts are in one area for a given week.

Timely submission of Blackboard and Packback assignments, participation in group discussions and completion of the final exam are compulsory to pass this course.

Students are responsible to acquire all materials needed to complete the course activities. Constant access to a computer and internet are required.

The primary textbooks for the course are:


and


In addition to the two books assigned, other texts and video material 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 a strict chronological order. Note 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 resources may change.
Grade distribution

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<td>Packback assignments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research presentation</td>
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<td>Blackboard discussion board</td>
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<td>Quizzes</td>
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<td>Final exam</td>
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90 – 100% = A  80 – 89% = B  70 – 79% = C  60 – 69% = D  59% and below = F

Assignments are designed to support your learning process in this class. When you do not submit your homework, your level of informed participation in the class is not the optimal. Missing more than five assignments, including journal entries and Packback submissions, will result in a failing grade or a withdrawal from the class. Every assignment must be proofread and processed through Microsoft Word Spelling and Grammar review system to ensure a college-level participation.

It is mandatory to visit Blackboard at least three times a week so you can complete your homework with ease. You can find your grades, post messages, form discussion groups and be reminded of tests, assignments, events, etc. through this platform. When your score is not perfect, make sure you read the feedback provided by your instructor in the field titled “my grades.” If the same errors in the same areas are repeatedly submitted, the rubrics applied to your work will be different, assigning a larger weight to the items in need of improvement.

**Research Presentation.** As part of the course requirement, you will propose a relevant topic to present to the class through a video clip. You can use Blackboard Collaborate, Zoom or any other media to record your presentation (and edit it, when necessary). The basic format to present a topic is a PPT but your creativity is the limit. Reading information from slides or a document is not an acceptable practice and will reduce your points. PPT slides must contain *power points* with minimal text, and they should integrate images (when appropriate). The video-clip required length is three minutes. **A primary source must be included in your presentation, and its relevance stated.** Submit your power point and script along through Blackboard two weeks before your presentation for approval, and stay in communication with your professor in case you need to adjust your presentation. Your PPT files 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 and in your lesson plan. Sources must be academic, considered reliable by your professor (not Wikipedia, ask.com, bio.com). Please, consult with your professor if you find information in internet that is important, when no other academic source validates the data.

**Discussion board:**
Every week, our entire group meets through our Blackboard discussion board to discuss topics related to our readings. Read the instructions and prompt for each discussion before posting your reflection. This original posting must indicate the sources of the information that supports your perspective. Students majoring in History must cite their sources following the Chicago/Turabian format, in footnotes. Other students may use any format, as long as the pages (or minutes) of the source is included with other pertinent information. After posting a reflection in at least 300 words, students will reply to two other postings (preferably they will not answer to previous replies so we can distribute the conversation evenly).
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 the cancellation of your grade.

“Good point” or “I agree” type answers will not earn points. All answers, including your peer replies, must be text-based and address the connections with other areas of the course or texts. If your score is less than perfect, read the feedback provided so you can improve this type of homework. Make sure you follow our discussions protocols: 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, when authorized, carry a 10% deduction per day, recorded at the end of the course.

**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 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.

Every module assignments (in Blackboard and Packback) must be completed by Friday, 11:59 PM.

**Late work policy:**

- **All assignments, including forum discussions and quizzes are due on or before the assigned dates.**
- **Packback assignments will receive zero points if not submitted on time.**
- **Late assignments will receive a 10% penalty per day.**

It is important that you understand the reasons why you receive the grade you do. Assignments are assessed according to rubrics. You can find the rubrics by clicking on the appropriate assignment link in Blackboard and choosing to “View Rubric” from the button beneath the Points Possible for the assignment. I encourage students to discuss graded papers, quizzes or exams with me, but such conversation can only take place 24-hours after students receive their scores.

**Course evaluation:**

Our university administration will send you a message to request your course evaluation. Submit it using the link provided in the message. Once completed, you will receive another message stating that you have completed the evaluation. Copy that statement and upload it through Blackboard to receive the points assigned to this activity. Please, ponder carefully the meaning of each question in the evaluation since it is seriously considered by our administration.

**Packback Questions**

Participation is a requirement for this course, and the Packback Questions platform will be used for online discussion about class topics. Packback Questions is an online community where you can be fearlessly curious and ask open-ended questions to build on top of what we are covering in class and relate topics to real-world applications.
**Packback Requirements:**
Your participation on Packback will count toward 20% of your overall course grade.

There will be a weekly Friday at 12:00AM MST deadline for submissions. In order to receive your points per week, you should submit the following per each deadline period:

- 1 open-ended Question per week with a minimum Curiosity Score of 50, each worth 4pts of each assignment grade
- 2 Responses per week with a minimum Curiosity Score of 50, each worth 6pts of each assignment grade
- Half credit will be provided for questions and responses that do not meet the minimum curiosity score.

**How to Register on Packback:**
An email invitation will be sent to you from help@packback.co prompting you to finish registration. If you don’t receive an email (be sure to check your spam), you may register by following the instructions below:

1. Create an account by navigating to https://questions.packback.co and clicking “Sign up for an Account”
   Note: If you already have an account on Packback you can log in with your credentials.
2. Then enter our class community’s lookup key into the “Looking to join a community you don't see here?” section in Packback at the bottom of the homepage.
   Community Lookup Key: 8df22030-e283-416e-aa8b-cb822f8502c
3. Follow the instructions on your screen to finish your registration.

Packback requires a paid subscription. Refer to [www.packback.co/product/pricing](http://www.packback.co/product/pricing) for more information.

**How to Get Help from the Packback Team:**
If you have any questions or concerns about Packback throughout the semester, please read their FAQ at [help.packback.co](http://help.packback.co). If you need more help, contact their customer support team directly at help@packback.co.

For a brief introduction to Packback Questions and why we are using it in class, watch this video: [vimeo.com/packback/Welcome-to-Packback-Questions](http://vimeo.com/packback/Welcome-to-Packback-Questions)

**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 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](http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor). The format to address your professor is “Dr. Chew.” 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, you must schedule a meeting or meet her during virtual 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. Students will respond according to their turn, not in a ping-pong mode, or in a two-person discussion. The goal is not to win a discussion but to reflect on the information and perspectives presented during our group conversations.

• All students should be supportive of a cooperative learning environment in the classrooms.

• Students will acquire their materials during the first week of class, including their textbooks and subscription to Packback.

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**Technology requirements**

Course content is delivered via the Internet through the Blackboard learning management system. Ensure your UTEP e-mail account is working and that you have access to the Web and a stable web browser. Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox are the best browsers for Blackboard; other browsers may cause complications. When having technical difficulties, update your browser, clear your cache, or try switching to another browser.

You will need to have access to a computer/laptop, scanner, a webcam, and a microphone. You will need to download or update the following software: Microsoft Office, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Windows Media Player, QuickTime, and Java. Check that your computer hardware and software are up-to-date and able to access all parts of the course.

If you do not have a word-processing software, you can download Word and other Microsoft Office programs (including Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and more) for free via UTEP’s Microsoft Office Portal. Click the following link for more information about [Microsoft Office 365](https://www.office.com) and follow the instructions.

The University of Texas at El Paso provides free 24/7 Helpdesk support to academic students and faculty members teaching on-line. The Help Desk can provide answers to questions about using technology and services as well as technical support. Please visit the technical support page for more information.

**How are we going to communicate with our professor?**

Because this is an online class, we won’t see each other in the ways you may be accustomed to: during class time, small group meetings, and office hours. However, there are a number of ways we can keep the communication channels open:

• **Office Hours:** We will not be able to meet on campus, but I will still have office hours for your questions and comments about the course. My office hours will be held on Blackboard Collaborate and during the following times:

  M and W, 10:00 - 11:00 am
  (Link: https://us.bbcollab.com/guest/b4240cf3059a4c5fafe835a395192052)

  T and Th, 1:00 - 2:00 pm
Blackboard course messages: We will use our Blackboard message system to communicate. I will make every attempt to respond to your e-mail within 24-48 hours of receipt.

E-mail. If I do not respond during the next 48 hours, e-mail me through our UTEP system at sachewsmithart@utep.edu When e-mailing me, be sure to email from your UTEP student account and please put the course number in the subject line. In the body of your e-mail, clearly state your question. At the end of your e-mail, be sure to put your first and last name, and your university identification number.

Discussion Board: If you have a question that you believe other students may also have, please post it in the Help Board of the discussion boards inside of Blackboard. Please respond to other students’ questions if you have a helpful response.

Announcements: Check the Blackboard announcements frequently for any updates, deadlines, or other important messages.

Phone calls. I will not have access to our UTEP phone system; therefore, this should be your last resource to contact me. When calling, please, clearly state your complete name, student id number, course number, and reason of your message. I will answer through our e-mail system within the next 24-48 hours.

Netiquette
As we know, sometimes communication online can be challenging. It’s possible to miscommunicate what we mean or to misunderstand what our classmates mean given the lack of body language and immediate feedback. Therefore, please keep these netiquette (network etiquette) guidelines in mind. Failure to observe them may result in disciplinary action.

- Always consider audience. This is a college-level course; therefore, all communication should reflect polite consideration of other’s ideas.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to the instructor at all times. No harassment or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- When reacting to someone else’s message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.
- Blackboard is not a public internet venue; all postings to it should be considered private and confidential. Whatever is posted on in these online spaces is intended for classmates and professor only. Please do not copy documents and paste them to a publicly accessible website, blog, or other space.

Attendance and participation
Attendance in the course is determined by participation in the learning activities of the course. Your participation in the course is important not only for your learning and success but also to create a community of learners. Participation is determined by completion of the following activities:

- Reading/Viewing all course materials to ensure understanding of assignment requirements
- Participating in engaging discussion with your peers on the discussion boards (grading rubric provided in the “grading information” area of each forum)
- Participating in Blackboard and Packback forums.
- Other activities as indicated in the weekly modules

Because these activities are designed to contribute to your learning each week, they cannot be made up after their due date has passed.
Excused absences and/or course drop policy
According to UTEP Curriculum and Classroom Policies, “When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent to such a degree as to impair his or her status relative to credit for the course, the instructor may drop the student from the class with a grade of “W” before the course drop deadline and with a grade of “F” after the course drop deadline.” See academic regulations in the UTEP Undergraduate Catalog for a list of excuse absences. I may not drop you from the course. However, if you feel that you are unable to complete the course successfully, please let me know and then contact the Registrar’s Office to initiate the drop process. If you do not, you are at risk of receiving an “F” for the course.

Make-up work
Make-up work will be given only in the case of a documented emergency. Note that make-up work may be in a different format than the original work, may require more intensive preparation, and may be graded with penalty points. If you miss an assignment and the reason is not considered excusable, you will receive a zero. It is therefore important to reach out to me—in advance if at all possible—and explain with proper documentation why you missed a given course requirement. Once a deadline has been established for make-up work, no further extensions or exceptions will be granted.

Alternative means of submitting work in case of technical issues
I strongly suggest that you submit your work with plenty of time to spare in the event that you have a technical issue with the course website, network, and/or your computer. I also suggest you save all your work (answers to discussion points, quizzes, exams, and essays) in a separate Word document as a back-up. This way, you will have evidence that you completed the work and will not lose credit. If you are experiencing difficulties submitting your work through the course website, please contact the UTEP Help Desk. You can email me your back-up document as a last resort.

Incomplete grade policy
Incomplete grades may be requested only in exceptional circumstances after you have completed at least half of the course requirements. Talk to me immediately if you believe an incomplete is warranted. If granted, we will establish a contract of work to be completed with deadlines.

Accommodations policy
The University is committed to providing reasonable accommodations and auxiliary services to students, staff, faculty, job applicants, applicants for admissions, and other beneficiaries of University programs, services and activities with documented disabilities in order to provide them with equal opportunities to participate in programs, services, and activities in compliance with sections 503 and 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADAAA) of 2008. Reasonable accommodations will be made unless it is determined that doing so would cause undue hardship on the University. Students requesting an accommodation based on a disability must register with the UTEP Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS). Contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services at 915-747-5148, or email them at cass@utep.edu, or apply for accommodations online via the CASS portal.

COVID-19 Accommodations
Students are not permitted on campus when they have a positive COVID-19 test, exposure or symptoms. If you are not permitted on campus, you should contact me as soon as possible so we can arrange necessary and appropriate accommodations.
**Scholastic integrity**

Academic dishonesty is prohibited and is considered a violation of the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures. It includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Cheating may involve copying from or providing information to another student, possessing unauthorized materials during a test, or falsifying research data on laboratory reports. Plagiarism occurs when someone intentionally or knowingly represents the words or ideas of another as ones' own. Collusion involves collaborating with another person to commit any academically dishonest act. Any act of academic dishonesty attempted by a UTEP student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. All suspected violations of academic integrity at The University of Texas at El Paso must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution (OSCCR) for possible disciplinary action. To learn more, please visit HOOP: Student Conduct and Discipline.

**Class recordings**

Our use of such technology is governed by the Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and UTEP’s acceptable-use policy. You may not share recordings outside of this course. Doing so may result in disciplinary action.

**Test proctoring software**

The final exam will make use of Respondus Lock Down Browser and Respondus Monitor inside of Blackboard to promote academic integrity. You are encouraged to learn more about how to use these programs prior to the first test.

Please review the following guidelines:

- The assessment will only be available at the time identified on the course calendar.
- You may take the test at any time during the 24-hour window.
- A reliable Internet connection is essential to completing the exam. If you must go to a location to take the exam (such as the library), be sure to follow their health and safety requirements.
- You have 2 attempts to take the test. Once the window closes, your answers will be saved, and no changes can be made. The higher score will be recorded.
- Respondus Lockdown Browser will require that all internet tabs are closed prior to the start of the test.
- Respondus Monitor requires a webcam and microphone.
- You will be required to show the webcam your student ID prior to the start of the test.
- Your face should be completely visible during the test. Blocking the camera will disable the test.
- No notes or textbook materials are permitted during the test. Respondus Monitor requires you to take a video of your surrounding area (desk, chair, walls, etc.)
- You should not have conversations with other people and/or leave and return to the area during the test.

**Plagiarism detecting software**

Some of your course work and assessments may submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.
Copyright statement for course materials
All materials used in this course are protected by copyright law. The course materials are only for the use of students currently enrolled in this course and only for the purpose of this course. They may not be further disseminated.

Covid-19 precautions
You must STAY AT HOME and REPORT if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID-19, (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or (3) have had recent contact with a person who has received a positive coronavirus test. Reports should be made at screening.utep.edu. If you know of anyone who should report any of these three criteria, you should encourage them to report. If the individual cannot report, you can report on their behalf by sending an email to COVIDaction@utep.edu.

For each day that you attend campus—for any reason—you must complete the questions on the UTEP screening website (screening.utep.edu) prior to arriving on campus. The website will verify if you are permitted to come to campus. Under no circumstances should anyone come to class when feeling ill or exhibiting any of the known COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, and alternative instruction will be provided. Students are advised to minimize the number of encounters with others to avoid infection.

Wear face coverings when in common areas of campus or when others are present. You must wear a face covering over your nose and mouth at all times in this class. If you choose not to wear a face covering, you may not enter the classroom. If you remove your face covering, you will be asked to put it on or leave the classroom. Students who refuse to wear a face covering and follow preventive COVID-19 guidelines will be dismissed from the class and will be subject to disciplinary action according to Section 1.2.3 Health and Safety and Section 1.2.2.5 Disruptions in the UTEP Handbook of Operating Procedures.

Course resources: Where you can go for assistance
UTEP provides a variety of student services and support:
Technology Resources
  • Help Desk: Students experiencing technological challenges (email, Blackboard, software, etc.) can submit a ticket to the UTEP Helpdesk for assistance. Contact the Helpdesk via phone, email, chat, website, or in person if on campus.

Academic Resources
  • UTEP Library: Access a wide range of resources including online, full-text access to thousands of journals and eBooks plus reference service and librarian assistance for enrolled students.
  • University Writing Center (UWC): Submit papers here for assistance with writing style and formatting, ask a tutor for help and explore other writing resources.
  • Math Tutoring Center (MaRCS): Ask a tutor for help and explore other available math resources.
  • History Tutoring Center (HTC): Receive assistance with writing history papers, get help from a tutor and explore other history resources.
  • RefWorks: A bibliographic citation tool; check out the RefWorks tutorial and Fact Sheet and Quick-Start Guide.

Individual Resources
  • Military Student Success Center: Assists personnel in any branch of service to reach their educational goals.
  • Center for Accommodations and Support Services: Assists students with ADA-related accommodations for coursework, housing, and internships.
• Counseling and Psychological Services: Provides a variety of counseling services including individual, couples, and group sessions as well as career and disability assessments.

This syllabus may be subject to modifications.