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AAS 141H.01: Black: From Africa to Hip-hop

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AAS/HSTA 141HX - Black: Africa to Hip-Hop

Tobin Miller Shearer
Autumn 2015

Tuesdays/Thursdays 9:40-11:00 a.m. ED 312

Introduction

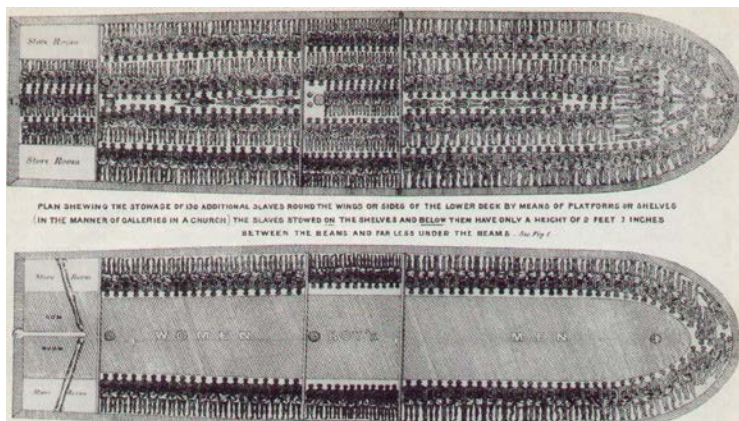
This course introduces students to the primary questions, themes, and approaches to African-American studies. For each major period examined, students will use a different lens to examine the African-American experience. Cultural and gender history will, for example, shape analysis of the slavery period while literary fiction will guide exploration of the latter twentieth century womanist movement. In addition to examining key historical periods such as Reconstruction, the Harlem Renaissance, and the Civil Rights era, students will encounter Hip-Hop, African-American film, African-American religion,



Rev. Clementa Pinkney was one of nine members of Emmanuel AME Church in Charleston, SC, murdered by Dylann Roof on June 17, 2015.

Assignments

In addition to participating in daily discussions and other in-class activities, students will take ten brief in class quizzes, take one mid-term, and take one cumulative final. Students will have ten minutes of class time to answer ten short questions for the quizzes. Both the midterm and the cumulative final include short identifications and short essays.



A drawing of a cargo hold used to ship enslaved Africans to the Americas.

and contemporary identity politics. This course concludes by discussing the reasons for and new directions in African-American studies including diasporic studies, Pan-Africanism, and post-colonial studies. Overall students will gain new insight into the social, cultural, political, and intellectual experiences of a diverse people and into the history and contemporary perspectives in the United States.

Objectives

Students will be able to –

- *identify* the central queries that drive African-American studies;
- *explain* the significance of the major historical movements and periods in African-American history;
- *analyze* African-American events and individuals from multi-disciplinary perspectives including literature, history, sociology, religious studies, music, and art;
- *synthesize* readings and lecture materials in order to answer three key African-American studies questions:
 - What is the legacy and present experience of the color line?
 - How has double consciousness influenced African-American experience?
 - Resistance, accommodation, movement, or creation – which metaphor best defines the African-American experience?

Books

- Butler, Octavia E. *Kindred*. Beacon Press, 2004.
- Du Bois, W. E. Burghardt. *Black Reconstruction in America: An Essay toward a History of the Part Which Black Folk Played in the Attempt to Reconstruct Democracy in America, 1860-1880*. New York: Russell & Russell, 1935, 1963.
- Larsen, Nella. *Quicksand*. New York: Knopf, 1928.
- Orejuela, Fernando. *Rap and Hip Hop Culture*. Oxford University Press, 2015.
- White, Deborah Gray. *Ar'n't I a Woman: Female Slaves in the Plantation South*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1985.
- Williams, Thomas Chatterton. *Losing My Cool: Love, Literature, and a Black Man's Escape from the Crowd*. New York: Penguin Books, 2010.



Fannie Lou Hamer, an important civil rights movement organizer, leading freedom songs.

Coursepack (available on course Moodle site)

- Fairchild, Halford. "Why Black History Is Not Just for Blacks." *Los Angeles Times*, February 5, 1995, M5.
- Hall, Stuart. "What is this 'Black' in Black popular culture?" In *The Black Studies Reader*, Jacqueline Bobo, Cynthia Hudley and Claudine Michel, eds., 255-63. New York: Routledge, 2004.
- Hine, Darlene Clark. "The Black Studies Movement: Afrocentric-traditionalist-feminist Paradigms for the Next Stage." In *The African American Studies Reader*, edited by Nathaniel Norment, Jr., 311-20. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2007.
- Honey, Michael. "The Popular Front in the American South: The View from Memphis." *International Labor and Working-Class History*, no. 30 (1986): 44-58.
- Kelley, Robin D. G. "We Are Not What We Seem': Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South." *The Journal of American History* 80, no. 1 (1993): 75-112.
- Pentony, De Vere E. "The Case for Black Studies (1969)." In *The African American Studies Reader*, edited by Nathaniel Norment, Jr., 9-15. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2007.
- Raboteau, Albert J., and David W. Wills. "Rethinking American Religious History: A Progress Report on 'Afro-American Religious History: A Documentary History Project'." *Council of Societies for the Study of Religion Bulletin* 20, no. 3 (1991): 57-61.

Academic Honesty

Stealing someone else's ideas is the same as stealing someone's property. Cite others' ideas in standard footnote or endnote format (in written work and all projects). Paraphrase whenever possible. In general, a paraphrase uses no more than three of the same words in a sentence as the original source. See: <http://ordway.umt.edu/SA/VPSA/index.cfm/name/StudentConductCode> for a full review of the [University of Montana's student conduct code](#).



Robert F. and Mabel Williams. Robert was a civil rights era advocate of armed self-defense.

Accessibility

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students. If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommason Center 154 or 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.

Grading

Participation – 30% Mid-term – 25%
Quizzes – 15% Final – 30%

Professor Contact

My office hours are Wednesdays from 2-4 pm (but 3-5 pm on 9/30 and in October) and ten minutes before and after every class.

LA 262

406-243-6225

[Email: tobin.shearer@umontana.edu](mailto:tobin.shearer@umontana.edu)

A word on my teaching style

The scholarship on teaching and learning makes clear that we learn best by talking and writing about that which we have read, heard, and seen. This class is built on that basic research observation. In general the course is structured on a weekly two-part cycle. Day 1 will usually focus on lectures and integrated activities designed to enhance the lecture experience. Day 2 will usually involve extended discussion and activities designed to enhance the discussion experience. Thus, reading is indispensable to successful participation in this course. If you keep up with the readings and apply yourself in class, you will do well.

Two goals guide the manner in which I structure class time. I will:

- 1) seek to provide context for the primary documents, novels, movies, recordings, artwork, literature, and interpretive texts that you encounter in this course; and
- 2) guide you through analysis and evaluation of the readings.

Come to class each day prepared to engage in discussion, analysis, debate, and other creative teaching activities. Even on days that I lecture, I will regularly ask you to discuss a problem I am posing in my talk.

Grade Changes or Drops

Unless in the case of a documented major life emergencies (death of a loved one, extended illness, etc.), this class may not be dropped and grading options may not be changed after the university deadline of November 2, 2015.

Grade Scale

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
A+	98%+
A	97-93%
A-	92-90%
B+	89-87%
B	86-83%
B-	82-80%
C+	79-77%
C	76-73%
C-	72-70%
D+	69-67%
D	66-63%
D-	62-60%
F	≤59%

Missed quizzes and exams

Make-up quizzes and exams will not be offered unless they are arranged along with appropriate documentation from medical, athletic, or administrative officials.

Missed Classes

Class absences can be excused if proper document from medical, athletic, or administrative officials is supplied. You will be counted as late if you are more than five minutes late for class and be marked down for that day's class participation grade. Attendance is recorded weekly on the class Moodle site.



Alice Walker, a Pulitzer-prize winning novelist and poet.

Classroom Behaviors

I expect that all students will join me in creating an effective learning environment by:

- turning off all cell phones (and thus doing no texting, e-mailing or instant messaging);
- using laptops only for note taking;
- not doing crosswords, reading newspapers, or engaging in other recreational activities;
- not talking with fellow classmates unless instructed to do so.

During lectures, I will give you my complete attention. I ask the favor of the same from my students. We will decide together what the consequences will be for failing to follow these guidelines. Should a student's behavior (such as texting or talking in class) continue after those consequences have been implemented, the student will be issued a warning in writing and docked a letter grade on his or her most recent quiz. Any subsequent disruptive behaviors will be turned over to the University's disciplinary committee.

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Quiz
Students are responsible to have completed each week's assigned readings before class meets on Thursday unless class does not meet that day in which case the assigned reading will be due before class meets on Tuesday. Quizzes will be given on Thursdays unless otherwise noted with an asterisk (*) below.				
1	9/1, 3	Why study African-American studies?	Fairchild, Pentony	
2	9/8, 10	Africa, Middle Passage – Pan-Africanism vs. Diaspora Studies	White, 1-91	
3	9/15 (No class on 9/17, reading day)	The Experience of Slavery (1441-1865) – Continuity vs. Disruption and Resistance vs. Survival	White, 92-190	1* (Quiz on Tues.)
4	9/22, 24	Reconstruction (1865-1877) – Change and backlash	Du Bois , Chapters 1, 7, 9, 10, 16, & the following: first page of Chapter 2; first three pages of Chapter 3; last paragraph of Chapter 13; p. 624	2
5	9/29, 10/1	Harlem Renaissance (1915-1929): Methodologies (art, history, etc.) How to reach the core of a people?	Larsen	3
6	10/6, 8	Popular Front (1930-1939) – Racial Uplift vs. Revolution	Honey; Orejuela , Chapters 1, 2	4
7	10/13, 15	Civil Rights Movement and the Black Power Movement (1944-1978) – Integration vs. Nation	Kelley; Orejuela , Chapters 3, 4	5
8	10/20, 22	Black Religious Experience –Islam; Guest lecture, Professor Jervette Ward Black Women in Reality TV	Raboteau and Wills; Orejuela , Chapters 5, 6	
9	10/27, 29	Black Film – Propaganda vs. Art; Midterm exam (Thursday)	Orejuela , Chapter 7	Mid-term [on weeks 1-8]
10	11/3, 5	Hip Hop Movement – Politics vs. Culture Required to attend at least one Historical Trauma or Diverse U session during class time on Thursday. Earn 20 points extra credit if you attend a second Diverse U workshop at least 50 minutes in length on Wednesday, 11/4 or Thursday, 11/5. http://www.umt.edu/diverseu/	Orejuela , Chapters 8, 9	6* (quiz on Tues. covers Chapters 5-9)
11	11/10, 12	Hip Hop Movement – Politics vs. Culture; Womanist challenge – Women vs. men?	Butler	7
12	11/17, (no class on 11/19 – reading day)	Contemporary Thought – Sociology vs. Psychology	Williams , Chapters 1-6	
13	11/24 (no class on 11/26 – Thanksgiving break)	Contemporary Thought II – The future vs. the past	Williams Chapters 7-9; Epilogue	8* (on Tues.)
14	12/1, 3	Identity Politics – Individual vs. group <i>AAS Soup and Pie Night, Wednesday, December 2, 6-9 pm</i>	Hall	9
15	12/8, 10	The Future of African-American Studies/Black Studies – Focus vs. Dispersion	Hine	10
Final exam (cumulative through the semester): Tuesday, December 15, 10:10 am -12:10 pm regular classroom				