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AAST 141HX.50B: Black - From Africa to Hip-Hop

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AAST 141HX- Black: From Africa to Hip-Hop

Tobin Miller Shearer

Summer Session 2020

On-line class, May 11-June 19, 2020

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, 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.

Figure 1 Alicia Garza is one of the co-founders of the Black Lives Matter movement. She is credited with coining the "blacklives matter" hashtag in early 2013.



Assignments

Students will complete fourteen lessons (one every other weekday) focusing on the session's topic and featuring short video lecture segments, brief responses, and other activities. Students will also post and respond 3x a week to a discussion forum, take 5 on-line quizzes, and complete one midterm and one final. Students have the option to do creative projects instead of writing final exam essays. Readings appear below.

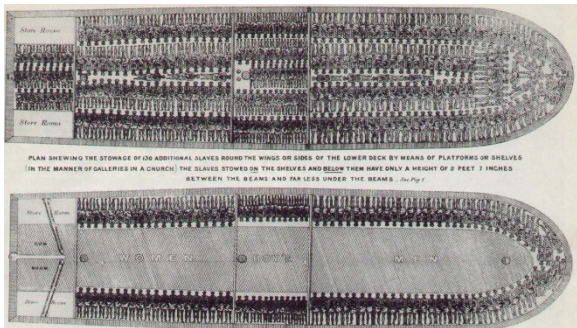


Figure 2 A drawing of a cargo hold used to ship enslaved Africans to the Americas.

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 evaluate texts or artifacts within their historical and/or cultural contexts and 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.
- Larsen, Nella. *Quicksand*. New York: Knopf, 1928.
- Laymon, Kiese. *Heavy: An American Memoir*. New York: Scribner, 2018.
- 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.

Coursepack (available on course Moodle site)

- [Coates, Ta-Nehisi. "The Case for Reparations." *The Atlantic*, June 2014. \(accessed February 19, 2016\).](#)
- Du Bois, W. E. Burghardt. "Reconstruction and Its Benefits." *American Historical Review* 15 (1910): 781-99.
- 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.
- 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.



Figure 3 Robert F. and Mabel Williams. Robert was a civil rights era advocate of armed self-defense.

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: students/default.php for a full review <http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/dean-of>



Figure 4 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

Aspect of Grade	Percentage
Participation	30%
Quizzes	15%
Mid-Term	25%
Final	30%

Participation is broken down as follows:

- weekly Lesson completion 15%
- weekly discussion posts & responses 15%

This course is one of the elective classes that count towards the Major and the Minor in **Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies**. If you enjoy this course and would like to know more about the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program, please contact me or drop by the office, LA 138A-B, or visit the [Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies website](#).

This course is also one of the core classes for the Major, Minor, and certificate in **African-American Studies**. If you enjoy this course and would like to know more about the African-American Studies Program, please contact me, drop by the AAST office, LA 262, or visit the [African-American Studies website](#).

Professor Contact

My virtual office hours are on Wednesdays from 2-4 pm.

406-662-8227 (text and voice)

Email: tobin.shearer@umontana.edu

My goal is to respond to email messages within 24 hours during the week and within 48 hours during the weekend.

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 October 29, 2018.

Grade Scale

Grade	Percentages
A+	98%+
A	97-93%
A-	92-90%
B+	89-87%
B	86-83%
B-	82-80%

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentages</i>
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, cultural, or administrative officials.



Figure 5 Alice Walker, a Pulitzer-prize winning novelist and poet.

Course Schedule

Unless otherwise noted, quizzes are available from 6:00 a.m. on the first day of the indicated session until 11:55 p.m. on the last day of the indicated session.

Sessions	Date	Topic	Reading	Discussion Posts Due	Discussion Responses Due
1A	5/11-12	Why study African-American studies?	Fairchild, Pentony		Monday, May 11, 11:55 p.m.
1B	5/13-14	Africa (3150 BCE-1440 CE) and the Maafa (1441-1808)	White, 1-91		Wednesday, May 13, 11:55 p.m.
1C	5/15-17	The Experience of Slavery (1441-1865) – Continuity <i>and</i> Disruption; Resistance <i>and</i> Survival	White, 92-190	1 (on all chapters of White and the Fairchild and Pentony articles)	Friday, May 15, 11:55 p.m.
2A	5/18-19	Reconstruction (1865-1877) – Change <i>and</i> backlash	Butler (Prologue, The River, The Fire)		Monday, May 18, 11:55 p.m.
2B	5/20-5/21	Harlem Renaissance (1915-1929): Methodologies (art, history, etc.) How to reach the core of a people?	Butler (The Fall, The Fight)		Wednesday, May 20, 11:55 p.m.
2C	5/22-24	Popular Front (1930-1939) – Racial Uplift <i>and</i> Racial Revolution	Butler (The Storm, The Rope)	2 (on all chapters of Butler)	Friday, May 22, 11:55 p.m.
3A	5/27-28	Black Freedom Struggles (1944-1978) – Civil Rights <i>and</i> Black Power	Laymon , pp. 1-116		Wednesday, May 27, 11:55 p.m.
3B	5/29-5/31	Hip Hop Movement (1973-today) – Politics <i>and</i> Culture	Laymon , pp. 119-241	3 (on all chapters of Laymon)	Friday, May 29, 11:55 p.m.
3C	6/1-7	Black Film – Propaganda <i>and</i> Art; Midterm exam	Mid-term [on sessions 1A through 3C]: Available from 6:00 a.m. on Monday, June 1, through Sunday, June 7, 11:55 p.m. - 5 identifications (timed; closed book; no notes)		

Sessions	Date	Topic	Reading	Discussion Posts Due	Discussion Responses Due
			- 2 short essays (untimed, open book, 4-5 paragraphs each, typed)		
4A	6/8-9	Womanist challenge – Women <i>and</i> men	Williams , Chapters 1-4		Monday, June 8, 11:55 p.m.
4B	6/10-11	Contemporary Thought I – Sociology <i>and</i> Psychology	Williams , Chapters 5-6		Wednesday, June 10, 11:55 p.m.
4C	6/12-14	Contemporary Thought II – The future <i>and</i> the past	Williams Chapters 7-9; Epilogue	4 (on all chapters of Williams)	Friday, June 12, 11:55 p.m.
5A	6/15-16	Black Religious Experience – Christianity <i>and</i> Islam			Monday, June 15, 11:55 p.m.
5B	6/17-6/18	The Future of Reparations and Black Studies – Academics <i>and</i> Politics	Coates	5 (on Coates)	Wednesday, June 17, 11:55 p.m.
5C	6/19-21	Final exam [cumulative through the summer session]:	Available from Friday, June 19, at 6:00 a.m. through Sunday, June 21, at 11:55 p.m. 10 of 12 identifications (timed - 50 minutes; closed book; no notes) 1 of 2 short essays (untimed, open book, 4-5 paragraphs, typed and uploaded to Moodle as a Word document) 1 long essay (untimed, open book, 7-8 paragraphs, typed and uploaded to Moodle as a Word document) See Moodle site for alternative creative assignments to writing essays for the final exam.		