AAST 141H.01: Black - From Africa to Hip-Hop

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

Tobin Miller Shearer
Autumn 2021
Tuesdays/Thursdays 9:30-10:50 a.m.

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.

Objectives
Students will be able to –
- identify the central queries that drive Af-Am studies;
- explain the significance of the major historical movements and periods in Af-Am history in order to synthesize ideas and information in order to understand the problems, causes, and consequences of historical developments and events;
- analyze Af-Am events and individuals from multi-disciplinary perspectives including literature, history, sociology, religious studies, music, and art; in order to place human behavior and cultural ideas into a wider (global/indigenous) framework, and enhance their understanding of the complex interdependence of nations and societies and their physical environments; demonstrate an awareness of the diverse ways humans structure their social, political, & cultural lives; and analyze and compare the rights and responsibilities of citizenship in the 21st century including those of their own societies and cultures;
- synthesize readings and lecture materials in order to critically analyze and evaluate primary sources – such as texts, pictorial evidence, oral histories, music, and artifacts- within their respective historical contexts and answer three key Af-Am 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?

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

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.

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

Coursepack (available on course Moodle site)

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://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students/default.php for a full review of the University of Montana’s student conduct code.

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


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%

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 http://hs.umt.edu/wgss/.

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 http://hs.umt.edu/aas/.

Robert F. and Mabel Williams. Robert was a civil rights era advocate of armed self-defense.
My office hours are Wednesdays from 1-3 pm and ten minutes before and after every class. LA 262
406-243-6225 (voice only)
406-662-8227 (text and voice)
Email: 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’s announced deadline.

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

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

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.

Missed Classes
Class absences can be excused if proper document from medical, athletic, cultural, 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. For a full description of the university’s cultural and ceremonial leave policy, see: http://catalog.umt.edu/academics/policies-procedures/

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

Students are responsible to have completed each week’s assigned readings and take the quiz before class meets on Thursday. Quizzes are available from after class on Tuesdays until class begins on Thursdays. Quizzes are open book and study guides are provided but students have only ten minutes to take the quiz.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/31, 9/2</td>
<td>Why study African-American Studies?</td>
<td>Fairchild, Pentony</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>9/7, 9</td>
<td>Africa (3150 BCE-1440 CE) and the Maafa (1441-1808) – Pan-Africanism and Diaspora Studies</td>
<td>White, 1-91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/14, 16</td>
<td>The Experience of Slavery (1441-1865) – Continuity and Disruption; Resistance and Survival</td>
<td>White, 92-190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/21, 23</td>
<td>Reconstruction (1865-1877) – Change and backlash</td>
<td>Du Bois</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>9/28, 30</td>
<td>Harlem Renaissance (1915-1929): Methodologies (art, history, etc.) How to reach the core of a people?</td>
<td>Larsen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>10/5, 7</td>
<td>Popular Front (1930-1939) – Racial Uplift and Racial Revolution</td>
<td>Honey</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10/12, 14</td>
<td>Civil Rights Movement (1944-1978) – Civil Rights and Black Power</td>
<td>Kelley</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10/19, 21</td>
<td>Hip Hop Movement (1973-today) – Politics and Culture</td>
<td>Laymon</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>10/26, 28</td>
<td>Black Film – Propaganda and Art</td>
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<td>Mid-term [on weeks 1-8]</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>11/2, 4</td>
<td>Womanist challenge – Women and men</td>
<td>Butler</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>11/9 (no class on Thursday, Veteran’s day)</td>
<td>Contemporary Thought I – Sociology and Psychology</td>
<td>Williams, Chapters 1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11/16, 18</td>
<td>Contemporary Thought II – The future and the past</td>
<td>Williams Chapters 7-9; Epilogue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11/23 (no class on Thursday, Thanksgiving Day)</td>
<td>Black Religious Experience – Islam</td>
<td>Raboteau and Wills</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11/30, 12/2</td>
<td>Identity Politics – Individual and group</td>
<td>Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>12/7, 9</td>
<td>The Future of Reparations – Academics and Politics</td>
<td>Coates</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Final exam** (cumulative through the semester):
Wednesday, December 15, 2021, 10:10 a.m. – 12:10 p.m., regular classroom