COURSE DESCRIPTION

A powerful and preoccupying factor in the history of the United States since its founding in the seventeenth century has been the matter of color. Echoing Du Bois’ pronouncement at the beginning of the last century that the “problem of the 20th century is the problem of the color line”, renowned historian John Hope Franklin states that “Without any pretense of originality or prescience ... I venture to state categorically that the problem of the 21st century will be the problem of the color line.” Although, African-Americans have played a crucial role in the historical development of the United States they continue to simultaneously experience acculturation and alienation in American society. W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963) summarized this contradiction as follows: "One ever feels his two-ness: an American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body ... The history of the American Negro is a history of this strife..." The constant conflict between being an intimate part of the American experience and being alienated economically and politically from the majority, is one of the most salient features of the Black experience in America. With the ascendency of Barack Obama to the presidency, the United States is at a potentially transformative moment in race relations. The implications of Obama’s historic victory for the Black experience in America will be critically examined in the course.

The course offers an inter-disciplinary examination of the Black experience in the United States focusing of the themes of acculturation, alienation, oppression and resistance. While the course surveys the Black experience from slavery to the present, the subject matter is not approached in a simple chronological manner. The various issues and individuals discussed are situated in the context of the struggle of African-Americans for political rights, economic justice and cultural accommodation.

The course begins with a brief look of the position of Africa and the fledgling United States in the emerging international economic order of the 15th and 16th centuries and how the enslavement of Africans related to economic and political processes of this era. The course then proceeds to examine the institutionalization of slavery in the United States and the subsequent struggles for emancipation. The attempts by African-Americans to gain socio-cultural equality and political and economic rights in the aftermath of the slave experience make-up the remainder of the course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

In addition to the reading assignments, there will be an in class mid-term examination, a short written assignment and a final examination. The course is structured such that the lectures, video documentaries and readings complement one-another. In no way are they mutually exclusive. It is therefore imperative that lectures are attended and readings are completed on time.
Attendance: If you expect to miss classes on certain dates, you must report your absence through the School of Arts and Science Absentee Reporting System.

Academic Integrity: Principles of academic integrity require that every Rutgers University student: properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others properly acknowledge all contributors to a given piece of work make sure that all work submitted as his or her own in a course or other academic activity is produced without the aid of unsanctioned materials or unsanctioned collaboration obtain all data or results by ethical means and report them accurately without suppressing any results inconsistent with his or her interpretation or conclusions treat all other students in an ethical manner, respecting their integrity and right to pursue their educational goals without interference. This requires that a student neither facilitate academic dishonesty by others nor obstruct their academic progress uphold the canons of the ethical or professional code of the profession for which he or she is preparing. Adherence to these principles is necessary in order to insure that: everyone is given proper credit for his or her ideas, words, results, and other scholarly accomplishments all student work is fairly evaluated and no student has an inappropriate advantage over others the academic and ethical development of all students is fostered the reputation of the University for integrity in its teaching, research, and scholarship is maintained and enhanced. Failure to uphold these principles of academic integrity threatens both the reputation of the University and the value of the degrees awarded to its students. Every member of the University community therefore bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld. See http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers for further details. You may also take a 20 minute interactive-tutorial on Plagiarism and Academic - http://www.scc.rutgers.edu/douglass/sal/plagiarism/intro.html.

REQUIRED READING MATERIALS


(The above book may be purchased at the Livingston College book store. Other materials listed will be posted on Sakai or e-mailed to you)

Recommended


GRADE DISTRIBUTION

1. Quizzes 30 Points
2. Mid-Term 30
3. Final Examination 40
GRADE ALLOCATION

A  90 and above
B+  85-89
B   80-84
C+  75-79
C   70-74
D   65-69
F   64 and below

COURSE CONTENT

PART 1  AFRICA AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA (Jan 23 – 30)

This section will examine the political and economic structures of Africa prior to European colonization and the manner in which Africa was incorporated into the emerging international division of labor of the 15th and 16th centuries within which the slave trade will be contextualized.

Jan 23:  Introduction and Overview


Jan 28 - 30:  Race, Empire and Modernity

Jan 28


The Place of Africa in History and Scholarship: A Conversation with Ivan van Sertima, *The Black Experience in America*, pp. 7 - 12.


Cornel West “The Pitfalls of Racial Reasoning” (On Sakai).
Jan 30


**PART 11 SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES** (Feb 4 - 13)

The reasons for the institutionalization of slavery and its subsequent political and economic ramifications will be analyzed in this section. The dilemma of constructing a democratic order in the U.S. in light of the history of slavery will also be addressed.

**Feb 4: The Institutionalization of Slave Labor in the United States and its Impact on the Black Community**

Morrison, T. "On the Backs of Blacks", *Time Magazine* (On Sakai)


The Ghost of Slavery in Toni Morrison’s Beloved, *The Black Experience in America*, pp. 72-77

The Dred Scott Decision, *The Black Experience in America*, p.136


**Feb 6 – 13 Resistance to Slavery**

**Feb 6**


**Feb 11**


Feb 13


What if I am a Woman? Maria Stewart *The Black Experience in America*, pp. 131 - 134

A’n’t I a Women? Sojourner Truth, p.135.

PART 111 FREEDOM, THE RESURGENCE OF WHITE SUPREMACY, AND STRATEGIES FOR TRANSFORMING THE STATUS QUO (Feb 18 - Mar 13)

The section will examine the attempts to address the legacies of slavery, the subsequent re-assertion of white supremist ideology and the various strategies for resisting and transforming the racial status quo. Particular attention is paid to the debate between Du Bois and Booker T. Washington over how to address with racial oppression in the United States.

Feb 18 - 20: The Post Civil War Period and the Reconstructive Efforts


*Memories of the Civil War in Popular Song, Black Experience in America*, pp. 171 - 185.


*Plessy v. Ferguson & Justice Harlan’s Dissent, The Black Experience in America*, pp. 141 - 142


Mar 4


*Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others, pp. 208-214*
Mar 6

The Forethought, *The Black Experience in America*, p.204

Of Our Spiritual Strivings, *The Black Experience in America*, pp.204 – 208


Mar 11 - 13: Marcus Garvey and Black Nationalism


Selected Writings/Speeches by Marcus Garvey (Electronic Handout)

***** MARCH 13TH, 2013 - MID-TERM EXAMINATION *****

PART IV THE LEGACIES OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ERA (Mar 25 – Apr 17)

This section focuses on the post World War II developments in the U.S., especially the conditions that precipitated the mobilization in the 1950s and 1960s against discriminatory laws. The gains and limitations of the Civil Rights Movement will be explored in this section.

Mar 25 – April 8: The Civil Rights Movement

Mar 25


Mar 27


Apr 1 - 3


Apr 8


Apr 10 - 17: The Black Power Movement and The Memory and Legacy of Malcolm X


West, C. (Race Matters, Chapter 8, Malcolm X and Black Rage pp 93-105) (Electronic Handout)
PART V  SOCIETAL CHANGES AND THE BLACK COMMUNITY  
(Apr 22 – May 1)

This section will identify some of the socio-political and economic transformations in contemporary society and examine their implications for the African-American community within the United States.

**Apr 22:  Race and Societal Changes**


**Apr 24:  Democracy and the Politics of Identity**


**Apr 29/May 1:  Race and Global Change**


**FINAL EXAMINATION – May 10th, 2013 (4 – 7PM)**