

University of Puget Sound
Introduction to African American Studies (AFAM 101) Fall 2005
Classroom: MC103
Class Time: TT 11:00-12:20pm

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Required Materials:

Du Bois, W. E. B.. *The Souls of Black Folk*. 1903. Eds. Henry Louis Gates Jr., and Terri Hume Oliver. New York: Norton, 1999.
Hayes, Floyd Hayes and Arlyne Lazerson. *A Turbulent Voyage: Readings in African-American Studies* [TV]. 3rd ed. San Diego, CA: Collegiate, 2000.
hooks, bell. *Salvation: Black People and Love*. New York: HarperCollins, 2001.
Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. New York: Harper & Row, 1990.
Washington, Booker T. *Up From Slavery*. 1903. New York: Penguin, 2000.

Course Description:

AFAM 101, is a thematic examination of what we have come to recognize as the discipline of African American Studies. We will identify the historical and political origins and objectives of what was originally Black Studies, the connection between Black Studies and the 1960s Black Liberation struggles, the early academic and social concerns of Black Studies advocates, the theoretical and critical approaches to Black Studies as a discipline, and the early objectives of Black Studies in relation to the present goals of multiculturalism. These goals include plurality, democracy, social and economic justice. To fulfill our objectives we will explore African American literature, history, politics, and popular culture (music, television, magazines, newspapers, movies, and film).

AFAM 101 meets the core requirements for Humanistic Approaches because it introduces students to multiple modes of interpretive methodologies used to explore, analyze, and represent African American and other African Diasporic experiences. So, for example, we will consider historical studies, literary scholarship, autobiographical writings, rhetorical analyses, and critical cultural studies approaches to the study of the African American life. To study and engage these humanistic approaches that seek to develop and discover knowledge we will utilize a variety of curricular approaches and materials including historical monographs, oral histories and memoirs, film and fictional texts. The course consists of readings, lecture/discussions, group projects, written assignments, and exams. The exams and the final project will measure your learning from the activities listed above.

Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- 1) Explain the role of African American studies in American social life;
- 2) Trace the origins and development of African American Studies;
- 3) Critically assess texts, practices, and policies to highlight their relative value in advancing efforts toward justice and equality;

- 4) Provide an overview of the experience of Africans in the Americas and be able to use this as a template for understanding minority groups seeking to survive and thrive among majority populations.

By meeting these course objectives, you will have the capacity to continue developing and refining your expertise in African American Studies far beyond the bounds of this course.

African American Studies and Community: Course Philosophy

A class in African American Studies has some distinctive features. As with other classes, students enroll for their own reasons, pursue their own objectives, and engage the course material with varying degrees of commitment and enthusiasm. But unlike some other classes, the subject matter of **AFAM 101** might evoke strong emotions among students. Discussions about “race” for example, have always been challenging for American audiences. Some may care more than others, some will be more knowledgeable than others, and some may be more committed to their opinions than others. Still, members of this scholarly community will speak to each other, listen thoughtfully to each other, and engage each other critically in discussions on matters about history, social practices, and policies. For this reason, we will constitute ourselves deliberately and expressly as a civil society, as a community.

A Climate of Mutual Respect: Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

Requirements and Expectations:

Attendance: Attend class. Be prompt.

Readings, Class, & Assignments: The *best way* to be successful in this class is to carefully complete assignments in a timely manner and engage in all class activities. To this end:

1. Complete assigned work on time.
2. Read assigned material **before** attending class.
3. Be prepared to discuss the material, to ask questions regarding concepts, principles or practices about which you are uncertain, and to participate in a variety of class exercises.

Emergencies (e.g., illness, other unforeseen, disruptive developments) may affect your workflow; if an emergency arises, please let us know and we will attempt to accommodate your circumstances.

Plagiarism: Failing to acknowledge the words or ideas of others will not be tolerated and may result in a failing grade. Examples of plagiarism include using the work of other students, or retelling the contents of a news article or academic article without providing attribution. If you have any doubts about how to acknowledge the work of others, please pose questions in class or during an office visit. Refer to the official statement of University

policy on this most serious matter of academic misconduct (see 2005-06 Academic Handbook).

Grades

To reflect the importance we place upon regular attendance and attention, a citizenship score representing 25 points (5% of your grade) will be computed at the end of the term based upon a formula measuring attendance, preparedness, and participation.

Grading Standards:

- A **Superior** performance; meets assignment requirements, and demonstrates exceptional execution of those requirements; reflects outstanding insight and depth; grammatically and stylistically excellent; would be considered a model example of assignment completion.
- B **Good**, solid performance; meets assignment requirements, and demonstrates competent execution of those requirements; reflects insight and depth; grammatically and stylistically strong; may have one or more problem areas.
- C **Average** performance; meets assignment requirements, minimally; grammatically and stylistically adequate; may have two or more problem areas; paper has more than two errors per page.
- D **Below average** performance; does not meet minimal assignment requirements; has several problem areas; has several errors throughout the paper.
- F **Inferior** performance; does not meet assignment requirements; not deserving of credit.

Grading Policy

All assignments will be graded according to the following scale:

A = 94-100%	B = 83-86%	C = 73-76%	D = 63-66%
A- = 90-93%	B- = 80-82%	C- = 70-72%	D- = 60-62%
B+ = 87-89%	C+ = 77-79%	D+ = 67-69%	F = 0-59%

Evaluation of Work:

Professors must evaluate work based on the end result of your performance (written and oral). Evaluations cannot be based on the time you spent on the assignment (although, often there is a direct relationship between preparation and good performance), or on how challenging you found the assignment to be, or on your good intentions.

If you have questions about your grade, by all means make an appointment to discuss the grade with me. Before our discussion, make sure you:

- (a) Read and reflect on explanations offered for the evaluation;
- (b) Review the assignment description detailing expectations for the assignment;
- (c) Present your questions/appeal in writing.

Ineffective rhetorical strategies for discussing grades include the following:

1. Comparing your grade to that of another student
2. Insisting that sheer effort should be worth an improved grade.
3. Generalizing that you "expected to do better" or "have never received such a low grade" without offering specific reasons *why* your work merits a better grade.

4. Explaining that you were preparing for a more important assignment in another course.
5. Explaining that this grade will keep you out of a graduate program or will negatively influence your scholarship money.
6. Or, explaining that you did not think a 100-level course would be so challenging.

Guidelines to Course Assignments and Grade Value

Written assignments must be double-spaced, and must use a standard 11 or 12 point type.

Short Paper: (Five pages) **DUE September 20.**

Part I of A Turbulent Voyage (TV) is a collection of essays exploring the academic discipline we identify variously as Africana Studies, Black Studies, African Diasporic Studies, or African American Studies. Your assignment is to use a minimum of two of these essays and two others from the additional reading list to write a definitional essay answering the question, What is African American Studies? A definition of African American Studies will be useful to our understanding of the discipline, as it will lay out in clear terms the elements that make up this entity. Still, developing such a definition is a challenging task. A typical essay will begin with a basic definition and then provide full explanation and defense of the various parts of this definition. As you approach this task make use of the essays in TV. Additionally your definitional essay should address issues of the scope and function of African American Studies: What is it? What is its role? What is its history? What is its future? How does it operate?

Your short essay must adhere to the following:

1. Must be 5 pages
2. Must use a minimum of four sources, two that we have read and two from the additional reading list.
3. Must have a bibliography following the MLA style of citation.
4. Must cite the sources that you use following the MLA format.
5. Pages must be stapled together with details such as your name and the identification of the class and the assignment on the top of the first page. No cover sheet necessary!

Group Research Project **DUE October 6 & 11**

You will be divided into groups each group has to develop a project exploring a local or regional African American organization. Such an institution might be active or now defunct.

To complete such a study you must engage the people and documents of the organization as necessary. Interviews, on site visits etc., may be necessary. In other words, your research must use *primary* sources. Begin your work immediately. The group must present an expository, mixed media report to the class. However, your report can take any form, for example—oral report, power point or other slide shows, transparencies, video, photographic displays etc.

In your report you must answer such questions as What is it? Where is it? Why does it exist? When was it founded? Who were the founders? What are its goals and objectives? What is its membership? What are its achievements? You must also do some assessment or interpretive work and address the question—What is its significance to communities of color and to the broader community?

Your presentation must be accompanied by a 2-3-page process report. This report along with your presentation in electronic format or otherwise, ie., disc, printout etc, must be turned in before your presentation. This means that if you must have at least two copies of your presentation. Your report will document how you organized your group and how you accomplished your tasks including who did what.

Research Options

- **Group One.** Media –newspapers, magazines, radio stations.
- **Group Two.** Social institutions --churches, schools,
- **Group Three.** Businesses, banks, stores, restaurants (**NOT SOUTHERN KITCHEN**), etc.
- **Group Four.** Political organizations--, labor unions, political organizations, fraternities, sororities, other clubs or interest groups.
- **Group Five.** Entertainment, bands, dance groups, theatre groups etc.

Research Groups

- **Group One** -Mikael Bangcaya, Anna Beers, Nikki Brokmeyer, Justin Brooke
- **Group Two** - Joanna Cohen, Cody Dean, Lauren Fenn, Ellen Fisher
- **Group Three** - Lilah Gliksohn, Patrick Patten, Kyra Johnson, Jess McPhee-Hayes
- **Group Four** - Kari Gray, Stephen Wilson, Meghan Schimanski, Amber Short
- **Group Five** - Ashley Thrasher, Peter Ryan, Yusuf Word

Group Book Presentation DUE November 22, 29, & Dec 1.

You will be divided into six groups each of which will be assigned a portion of one of three books that we will study in weeks 12, 13, & 14. Your group is to study the book and develop a creative mixed media presentation as a way of teaching the class the contents of the book. Each book will be presented and discussed in a single class session. Each group will have 25 minutes for presentation and 10 minutes for discussion. Your presentation may take any form but it must include some kind of handout for the class. This handout may be an outline of the chapters.

Book Presentation Groups

- Group One - Stephen Wilson, Anna Beers, Lauren Fenn
- Group Two - Joanna Cohen, Cody Dean, Nikki Brokmeyer, Ellen Fisher
- Group Three - Lilah Gliksohn, Yusuf Word, Kyra Johnson,
- Group Four - Kari Gray, Mikael Bangcaya, Meghan Schimanski,
- Group Five - Ashley Thrasher, Peter Ryan, Patrick Patten
- Group Six - Justin Brooke, Jess McPhee-Hayes, Amber Short

Research Essay DUE November 22

You are required to write a 10-page essay on an area of African American history or culture based on the materials covered in our texts for the course or on other subjects related to the Black experience in the Americas. Your essay must reference a minimum of eight sources.

Choose one topic from one of the following categories:

Critical Biography: David Walker, Maria W. Stewart, W. E. B. Du Bois, C. L. R. James, Angela Davis, Ida B. Wells, Shirley Chisholm, Malcolm X, Audre Lorde, Arthur Ashe, James Baldwin or Zora Neale Hurston.

Critical Book Review: *Race Matters*, Cornel West; *Black Looks*, bell hooks; *Race Rebels*, Robin Kelly; *Sula*, Toni Morrison; *Centering Ourselves*, Marsha Houston and Olga Davis; or *The Content of Our Character*, Shelby Steele, *Wretched of the Earth*, Franz Fanon, *Black Jacobins*, C.L.R. James.

Research Paper: Topics. “The Role of Slavery in the Making of America;” “Naming and the Identity of African Americans;” “Blacks and Education in the United States;” “The Black Experience in the Americas Beyond the United States;” or “African American Studies and the Academic Curriculum in the United States.”

Exams: There will be two exams a **mid term** (October 13) and a **final** (Dec 12). These will include short essays and may incorporate a combination of multiple choice and identification questions. Exams will be over items presented in reading assignments, lectures, films, discussions, and other class materials.

Grading Formula:

5% Citizenship	25 points
10% Short Paper	50 points
15% Group Book Presentation	75 points
20% Research Essay	100 points
20% Group Project	100 points
15% Midterm Exam	75 points
15% Final Exam	75 points
100%	500 points

COURSE SCHEDULE

Complete assigned readings prior to the class period. Make notes from your readings. This is an effective way to prepare for class and for exams.

Week 1: Aug. 30 & Sept 1

READINGS

T - Introduction to Course Syllabus

Th - Introduction to The Field TV Part I: Preface to Students (xi-xviii), Commentary: "AFAM Studies, Trends, Developments & Strategies"; & chapters 1 & 2 (1-14).

Week 2: Sept. 6 & 8

T - What is African American Studies? TV Part I: "The Politics of Black Women's Studies" & "Black Studies, Multiculturalism & the Future of American Education" (15-36).

Th - Africa & the Diaspora TV Part II "Africa & the Diaspora," & "African History & Western Civilization," Boniface Obichere, (37-57).

Week 3: Sept. 13 & 15

T - Library Lecture Meet in Library (Collins 118)

Th - Africans in the Americas View and Discuss—The first of a five-part video production *The Terrible Transformation. Africans in America*. Boston, MA: WGBH Education Foundation, 1998.

Week 4: Sept. 20 & 22

T - The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade TV Part II: "The Transatlantic Slave Trade..."
Transporting Humans/Cargo? CLR James (58-82).

SHORT ESSAY DUE

Th -Slavery & Freedom TV chaps by "Reflection on the Black Woman's Role..." Angela Davis; "Symptoms of Liberty..." Vincent Harding, "To Make Them Stand in Fear," Kenneth Stamp (83-118, 293-297)

Week 5: Sept. 27 & 29

T -Black Family -- Historical context TV Part V Commentary & "Historical Backgrounds of the Negro Family," Andrew Billingsley (305-310, 311-336).

Th - The Black Family-- Economics TV Part V "The Black Family ...," Glenn Loury & "The Dependent Status of Black Families ...,"

William Darity et al. (354-362, 364-375).

Week 6: Oct 4 & 6

T - What's Love Got to do with it? hooks, *Salvation*

Guest Juli McGruder

Th- GROUP PROJECTS DUE Group Presentations – 1, 2, & 3

Week 7: Oct 11 & 13

T- GROUP PROJECTS DUE Group Presentations – 4 & 5

Th -Midterm Exam

Oct 17 --Fall Break

Week 8: Oct 18 & 20

T - Black Culture and the Arts

TV Part III Commentary, “Africanisms in ...,”
Portia Maultsby & “Black Beauty, Black Confusion
...” Nelson George (149-155, 156-176, 200-217) and
“Voices From The Margins” in *Black Noise*, Tricia
Rose (1-20) (On blackboard).

Th - Black Culture and the Arts

TV Part III “The Black Arts ...,” Larry Neal &
“Unspeakable Things ...,” Toni Morrison (236-245,
246-267)

Week 9: Oct 25 & 27

T - Blacks, Education, & School

TV Part VI Commentary & “Learning to read ...”
Frederick Douglass (379-384, 385-392) *Road to Brown*
(video production)

Th- Blacks, Education, & School

TV Part VI, “Betrayal ...,” Jewell Mazique &
“Teaching Theory ...,” Joy James (392-398, 412-423)

Week 10: Nov 1 & 3

**T -- Black Oppositional Culture,
Work, & Organized Labor**

TV Part VII Commentary & “The
Demand for Black Labor ...,” (431-434, 435-462)

Th - The Civil Rights Movement

TV Part VIII Commentary, “Racist Ideology,” Lewis
Gordon & “Letter from ...,” Martin Luther King ,
Jr., (499-504, 505-509, 510-520)

Week 11: Nov 8 & 10

T - Black Power, (Inter)
Nationalism and the U.S.
Political System.

TV Part VIII “Sister Act,” Kathleen Neal Cleaver,
& “All Power ...” Floyd Hayes III and Frances
Kiene III (534-545, 546-560)

Th - Black Power, (inter)
Nationalism and the U.S.

TV Part VIII, “Anatomy of a Rebellion ...,” Oliver et
al (562-579)

Week 12: Nov 15 & 17

T - African Americans and the
American Justice System

Essay by Ida B Wells on Blackboard

Th - African Americans and the
American Justice System

TV Part VIII, “Police Brutality ...,” Judson L Jeffries
& “The Crisis of ...” Maulana Karenga (580-587,
588-603)

Week 13: Nov 22

T -- Gender & Womanism

Their Eyes Foreword through chap 10

GROUP ONE BOOK PRESENTATION

Gender & Womanism

Their Eyes chap 11- Afterword

GROUP TWO BOOK PRESENTATION

Research Papers DUE

Nov 24-27

THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14: Nov 29 & Dec 1

T - Black Progress in Post Reconstruction US
Blacks Looking From Below

Up From Slavery chaps 1-XI

GROUP THREE BOOK PRESENTATION

Black Progress in Post Reconstruction US
Blacks Looking From Below

Up From Slavery chaps XII-end

GROUP FOUR BOOK PRESENTATION

Th - Double Consciousness at the Turn of the
20th Century Blacks Looking From Behind
the Veil

Souls of Black Folk --88

GROUP FIVE BOOK PRESENTATION

Double Consciousness & Modernity
Blacks Looking at Blacks and at Whites

Souls of Black Folk 89-164.

GROUP SIX BOOK PRESENTATION

Week 15: Dec 6

T - Review for Final Exam Course Evaluation

Week 16: Tuesday Dec 13 Final Exam 12:00-2:00 PM