The purpose of this course is to increase the student’s knowledge of the issues and problems that have most impacted peoples of the African diaspora in the years since the English outlawed the slave trade in 1808. As such, the focus will be thematic rather than chronological. The primary emphasis will be on the history of political, social, intellectual movements. Topics will include slave resistance, black nationalism, socialism, and anti-colonialism. Other topics to be covered include: the meaning of “freedom,” the construction of black “masculinities,” diasporic religious expressions, art and literature, and race and medicine.

Procedures and Requirements

1) The course will ask you to concentrate your efforts on weekly reading and discussion instead of regular exams or a lengthy research paper. As such, students will be expected to attend every class session/discussion section and to participate actively in section discussions. Students are allowed one unexcused absence from discussion during the course of the semester. All absences beyond the first one will result in one point off your final grade for each discussion missed. The reading assignments on the syllabus must be completed by the time of your discussion section each week.

2) Attendance will not be taken for class lectures; however, there will be several pop quizzes on lectures and assigned readings during the course of the semester. These quizzes will count for 15% of your final grade. Quizzes will be given in your weekly discussion sections. No make-up quizzes will be administered. If you miss a quiz or are late for class, you will receive a zero on that week’s quiz. No exceptions.

3) There will be two short written assignments during the course of the semester, both of which will be due in your discussion sections. The first will be due in week 3 and the second in week 11. The assignments for each of these papers are outlined in the syllabus. You will receive more detail on them in your sections.

4) All students will be required to write a final essay (10 pages), to be turned in during the exam week, answering the following questions: Given the disparate experiences of African-descended peoples in the Americas over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, what is it that unifies the African diaspora or “black Atlantic”? Is there a set of elements that suggest a broadly shared history of African-descended peoples in the Atlantic world during this period? Or, are the
The historical experiences of African-descended peoples are so diverse that the idea of a singular “African diaspora” is of little use? Explain your answer. Hint: Be comparative. Your answers should also account for change over time. Draw from readings and class lectures to formulate your answers.

5) The final grade will be determined as follows: map quiz (5%), primary source analysis (15%), pop quizzes (15%), Child of the Dark paper (15%), discussion section (20%), final paper (30%).

Readings

Miguel Barnet, Biography of a Runaway Slave (Curbstone Press, 1994)

Richard Graham, ed., The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940 (Univ. of Texas, 1990)

Carolina Maria de Jesus, Child of the Dark (Signet, 1983)

James Baldwin, No Name in the Street (Laurel, 1986)


Coursepack

Week 1 Introduction to the Course—Revolution and “Modernity”? 


9/6 Go over syllabus, course requirements. Defining “modern;” defining the African Diaspora. How do we delineate “modernity”? What is the African Diaspora, and how is it applicable to the late 19th and 20th centuries?

9/8 Lecture: The Haitian Revolution from Above…and Below. Importance of lens, etc.

What is the importance of the Haitian Revolution to the history of the African diaspora? To Western history more generally? Is it possible to tell the history of Haiti through the lens of Western history? Why, or why
not? To date, have scholars been successful in depicting the events of the Haitian Revolution? Illegal Slave Trade and the Continuing Importance of Africa: Cuba, Puerto Rico, Brazil

Week 2 Resisting Slavery

Reading: Miguel Barnet, Biography of a Runaway Slave, 1-57; João José Reis, Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia (Johns Hopkins, 1993), chapters 4 and 5


9/15 Lecture: Slave Rebellion after 1807..continued. Film clip: Amistad. To what extent was freedom “granted” by abolitionists, and to what extent did slaves demand/take freedom?

Amistad workshop. ESSAY DUE IN SECTIONS IN WEEK 3: For discussion section, all students must read the following 8 page document from the National Archives web site and write a 3-5 page paper analyzing the source. You will receive instructions in sections on how to analyze primary sources.


Week 3 Constructing Freedom

Reading: Barnet, 62-156; Sidney W. Mintz, “Panglosses and Pollyannas; or, Whose Reality are we Talking About?,” in Frank McGlynn and Seymour Drescher, eds., The Meaning of Freedom (Pitt, 1992), 245-256.

9/20 Lecture: The Multiple Meanings of Freedom: Brazil, Cuba, the US, and Jamaica. Salvador v. São Paulo. Film clip from “Abolição.” Assess the meaning of “freedom” for former slaves. Did freedom have a consistent meaning across time and space? How was it constructed differently in various settings?

9/22 MAP QUIZ ON AFRICAN DIASPORA

Week 4 Labor and Society
**Reading**: Francisco Scarano, “Labor and Society in the Nineteenth Century,” in The Modern Caribbean, eds. Franklin W. Knight and Colin A. Palmer (UNC, 1990), 51-84.

9/27 Lecture: Apprenticeship, Sharecropping, Debt Peonage, and Subsistence Farming. Did slavery really end? Film: “Rue Cases Negres” (Sugar Cane Alley).

9/29 “Sugar Cane Alley” continued.

**Week 5** Scientific Racism, Whitening, and Mestizaje

**Reading**: Richard Graham, The Idea of Race in Latin America (all)


10/6 Lecture: Whitening, Mestizaje, and “Modernization.”

What were the impacts of racial science on the peoples of the Americas? How did governments and intellectuals respond to the challenges posed by European “science”? Assess the efficacy of policies like “whitening” and “mestizaje.” What were/are the limitations of these concepts?

**Week 6** Race and the (De-)Constructions of Black Masculinities


10/13 Lecture: Comparative Black Masculinities—Hip Hop, Bofos, Bichas, and the Crying Game; clips from “Black Is, Black Aint.”

In what ways are constructions of race and gender entangled? How do sexual stereotypes play into these formulations? Is it possible to talk about “racism” separately from “sexism”? How have white feminists addressed the race problem?
**Week 7**

**Nationalism Ascendant: Caribbean Inflections**

**Reading:** Winston James, “The Peculiarities of Caribbeans: Characteristics and Forces Conducive to Radicalization,” in *Holding Aloft the Banner of Ethiopia* (Verso, 1998), 50-91

10/18  Lecture: Caribbean Influences on Black Nationalism. HH Harrison, CLR James, Eric Williams, George Padmore, etc.

10/20  Lecture: Marcus Garvey and the UNIA. Video and Audio presentation. Garvey speeches, etc.

Describe the influence of Caribbean migrants on radical and civil rights movements in the US. What kinds of life experiences did Caribbean migrants bring to US civil rights movements? What was the appeal of the black nationalist message of Marcus Garvey? Who was most attracted to Garveyism? Why? What were the flaws of Garvey’s “back to Africa” movement?

**Week 8**

**Confronting Colonialism**


10/25  Lecture: Congo as a Case Study of Colonialism; The Psychoses of Racism and Colonialism; US Occupation of Haiti

10/27  Lecture: Responses to Colonialism: Negritude, Black Consciousness, Pan-Africanism. Clips from Cry Freedom, Lumumba, etc.

What were the psychological impacts of colonialism/racism? Compare and contrast the ways that colonized peoples responded.

**Week 9**

**Nationalism, Socialism, Pan-Africanism, or All of the Above?: Complicating the African Diaspora**

**Reading:** Walter Rodney, Robert Hill, Howard Dodson, Walter Rodney Speaks: The Making of an African Intellectual (all)

11/1  Lecture: Socialists, Pan Africanists, and those in Between: Shifting Currents in Approaches to Black Oppression. Video: Paul Robeson: Here I Stand

What explains the different shifts in ideology among some leading black political figures in the 20th century? Why did some become more nationalist and others more socialist? Were these two currents incompatible? Why do you think all of these figures were relentlessly harassed by various Western governments?

Week 10 Race, Gender, and Urban Poverty

Reading: Carolina Maria de Jesus, Child of the Dark (all)


11/10 City of God (continued)

3-5 PAGE ESSAY DUE IN DISCUSSION SECTION IN WEEK 11: How does urbanization impact sexual roles, “mothering”? How are men’s and women’s roles different in urban environments? Do ideas about childhood change? How do ideas about gender, childhood, etc., transform ideas about race, especially outside of favelas?

Week 11 Cultural Expressions in the African Diaspora: Religion and Music


11/15 Lecture: History, Cosmology, and Ritual Practice in Brazilian Candomblé. Film Clips: Bahia: Africa in the Americas or Divine Horsemen.


Compare and contrast African derived religious forms in the Americas. How have these religious practices changed over time? To what extent are these “authentic” African forms? Why does “authenticity” matter? Is music ever authentic to a particular culture, nationality, or race? Does anyone “own” culture?
Week 12  Literature and Art: James Baldwin and Beauford Delaney

**Reading:** James Baldwin, “Take Me to the Water,” in Baldwin, *No Name in the Street* (Dell, 1972), 3-81


11/24 THANKSGIVING

Week 13  Medical Malpractice and Responses in the Diaspora


11/29 Lecture: Medical Experiments and their Effects on Blacks in the Diaspora; film clip on Tuskegee; TB; Sickle Cell

12/1 Lecture: AIDS, Accusation(s), and “The River.” Debates over the origins of AIDS.

Historically, how have Africans and their descendants been treated by the scientific and medical communities? Compare and contrast the various responses of African descended peoples to their mistreatment—US (Tuskegee), Haiti (AIDS), and South Africa (AIDS).

Week 14  Memories of Slavery and the Reparations Debate


12/8 Motherland (continued)

How is slavery remembered in African-descended communities in the diaspora? Are there differences in the memories of Africans, African Americans, Brazilians? Are reparations economically feasible? How should they be distributed?

Do the subjects in the video “Motherland” have romanticized views of Africa? How do these views change over the course of the video? Is genetic science a useful tool for recovering the African past? What are its limitations?

Week 15 Comparative Race Relations in the Modern Nation State


12/15 Bus 174 (continued)