

AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES 671: TOPICS: AFRO-AMERICAN HISTORY: AFRO-AMERICANS  
IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY, 1945-1980  
Fall 1992. Professor Plummer

SYLLABUS

This course focuses on the momentous changes in Afro-American life that became manifest after World War II. The subjects studied include urbanization, industrialization, civil rights, the Cold War, black nationalism, the welfare state, and others. Through careful, informed, and critical analysis, students will develop their own perspective on the continuing drama of Afro-American history. This history will be considered against the backdrop of continuing race, gender, and class oppression, as well as in the context of Afro-American cultural vitality and the struggle to overcome injustice.

**Approach.** The course adopts a world view which treats Afro-Americans as central actors in their history. Afro-American history is the product of interactions with U. S. society, which is itself is thoroughly and indelibly penetrated by the Afro-American experience. An effort will thus be made to explore correlations between events in the black community and changes in overall U. S. institutions, ideology, public policies, culture, and social norms.

**Organization.** The class format will mix lectures, discussions, media presentations, and student-initiated activity.

**Evaluation.** Attendance will be kept for each class session, and as students are responsible for each meeting's work, they are expected to be on time. Grades will be based on the following:

- 1) Three short papers, worth 30% of the total grade. (A hand-out on how to write these papers will be distributed separately.)
- 2) A midterm exam in essay format, worth 30% of the total grade.
- 4) A final examination worth 30% of the total grade.
- 5) Attendance/participation credits, worth 10% of the grade

**Texts.** Texts have been placed on reserve at College Library.

Thulani Davis, 1959 (Grove Weidenfeld, hardback)

Manning Marable, Race, Reform, and Rebellion (University Press of Mississippi, paper)

George Lipsitz, A Life in the Struggle (Temple University Press, paper)

JoAnn Robinson, The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It (University of Tennessee Press, paper)

Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet," Pacifica Radio Archive. (NOTE THAT THIS IS AN AUDIOCASSETTE.)

## COURSE SCHEDULE

Reading assignments are due for the next class meeting.

## WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION

Sept. 3 - Introduction

**Reading.** Marable, Dedication, Preface, Prologue. Robinson, Foreword, Preface, Prologue.

## WEEK 2: THE LEGACY OF WORLD WAR II

Sept. 8 - Veterans on the move.

**Reading.** Robinson, ch. 1

Sept. 10 - The new race relations.

**Reading.** Robinson, ch. 2; Marable, ch. 1.

## WEEK 3: CHANGES IN THE SOUTH

Sept. 15 - A growing electorate.

**Reading.** Robinson, chs. 3 and 4.

Sept. 17 - Watching King Cotton die.

**Reading.** Robinson, chs. 5 and 6.

## WEEK 4: AFRO-AMERICANS AND LIBERALISM

Sept. 22 - Consensus and the Democratic coalition.

**Reading.** Robinson, chs. 7 through 9.

Sept. 24 - The civil rights stalemate.

**Reading.** Marable, ch. 2

Sept. 24 - FIRST PAPER DUE

## WEEK 5: THE COLD WAR AND ITS IMPACT

Sept. 29 - Purging the ranks.

**Reading.** Marable, ch. 3.

Oct. 1 - The unconverted.

**Reading.** Davis, ch. 1

## WEEK 6: "FROM PLANTATION TO GHETTO?" — URBAN LIFE IN THE NORTH

Oct. 6 - Voting with their feet.

**Reading.** Davis, ch. 2

Oct. 8 - What the social scientists said.

**Reading.** Davis, ch. 3.

## WEEK 7: GENDER, CLASS, AND CULTURE IN THE 1940S AND 1950S, 1

Oct. 13 - A new Bohemia.

**Reading.** - no assignment

Oct. 15 - MIDTERM

**Reading.** Davis, ch. 4.

## WEEK 8: GENDER, CLASS, AND CULTURE IN THE 1940S AND 1950S, 2

Oct. 20 - R & B and social change.

**Reading.** Davis, ch. 5.

Oct. 22 - Black women 1945-1964.

**Reading.** Davis, ch. 6; Marable, ch. 4.

## WEEK 9: CULTURAL, SOCIAL AND INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

Oct. 27 - Roots in black communities.

**Reading.** Lipsitz, Introduction and ch. 1.

Oct. 29 - Other influences.

**Reading.** Lipsitz, ch. 2 and 3.

Oct. 29 - SECOND PAPER DUE

## WEEK 10: MASS MOBILIZATION, 1955-1960

Nov. 3 - From Montgomery to Greensboro.

**Reading.** Lipsitz, ch. 4

Nov. 5 - Women and civil rights.

**Reading.** Lipsitz, ch. 5.

WEEK 11: BLACK NATIONALISM AT MID-CENTURY

Nov. 10 - Black nationalism: the global context.

**Reading.** - Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet."

Nov. 12 - Integration or separation?

**Reading.** Lipsitz, ch. 6.

WEEK 12: CIVIL RIGHTS AS A NATIONAL MISSION, 1960-1968

Nov. 17 - Making civil rights a national mission.

**Reading.** Marable ch. 5.

Nov. 19 - The Great Society.

**Reading.** Lipsitz, ch 7.

WEEK 13: BLACK POWER

Nov. 24 - Black Power

**Reading.** Marable, ch. 6. (For Dec. 1]

Nov. 26 - No classes. Thanksgiving Day.

WEEK 14: AFRO-AMERICANS AND THE CONTEMPORARY STATE: SOME ISSUES

Dec. 1 - The history of distributive justice.

**Reading.** Marable, ch. 7 and Epilogue.

Dec. 3 - The history of minority drug use.

**Reading.** no assignment

Dec. 3- THIRD PAPER DUE

WEEK 15: RACE, CLASS, AND GENDER IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Dec. 8 - The Afro-American family since 1945.

**Reading.** Lipsitz ch. 8.

Dec. 10 - Contemporary feminism and the Afro-American community.

**Reading.** Lipsitz, ch. 9 and Epilogue.

WEEK 16: CULTURAL HISTORY OR HISTORICAL CULTURE?

Dec. 15 - Cultural History or Historical Culture?