

HIST3390: Twentieth Century African American History

Section 501, TTH 5:30-6:45 pm, AH2 Room 1.204

Professor:

Dr. Kimberly Hill
B.A., U.T. Austin and U. Cape Town, 2002
M.A. and Ph.D., U.N.C. Chapel Hill, 2008

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“Leaving behind nights of terror and fear
I rise
Into a daybreak that’s wondrously clear
I rise
Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave,
I am the dream and the hope of the slave.
I rise
I rise
I rise.”

-- Maya Angelou, *And Still I Rise*, 1978

COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION:

A study of themes in the history of African-Americans in the twentieth century. The course will focus on the civil rights movement, though other themes will also be explored. Emphasis will be on African-American perspectives and the ongoing struggle for self-determination by African-Americans. Prerequisite: HIST 1301 or HIST 1302 or HIST 2301 or HIST 2330 or HIST 2331 or equivalent. (3-0) R

PURPOSE:

Our goal this semester is to gain insight into how Americans of African descent maintained meaningful lives during the 1900s. We will start our timeline in the 1890s to observe the segregation laws and racist violence that still influenced the United States decades later. Then we will apply a combination of social history, rhetorical analysis, and cultural studies to analyze relevant events in American history. Our historical journey will end at 2005 by examining the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the New Orleans flood. This course will train you to analyze historical documents in comparison with broader context. We will practice tracing change over time so that you can defend your own argument for the most meaningful aspects of life throughout this time period.

In addition to the weekly textbook and primary source readings, you will choose one of the five suggested books and focus on a major theme of your choice. The short response essays, quizzes, and participation activities will help you study the historical context of your theme. Then you will revise your essays to produce a final essay with your explanation of how your theme was significant to African Americans’ meaningful lifestyles.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Our reading material will include a textbook by the nation's most notable black historian and a selection of primary sources from a companion book.

- John Hope Franklin and Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, *From Slavery to Freedom*, ninth edition (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2011). ISBN: 0072963786
- Thomas C. Holt and Elsa Barkley Brown, *Major Problems in African-American History: From Freedom to "Freedom Now," 1865-1990s* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2000) ISBN: 0669462934

And your choice of ONE of the following five books:

- Dianne D. Glave and Mark Stoll, *To Love the Wind and the Rain: African Americans and Environmental History* (Pittsburgh: Univ. of Pittsburgh, 2006) ISBN: 0-8229-5899-6. Available as a free e-book through the library. **Themes: Environment, Urban Development, Public Health, Violence**
- Deborah Gray White, *Too Heavy a Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves, 1894-1994* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999) ISBN: 978-0-393-31992-7. **Themes: Gender, Feminism, Community Organizing**
- Gregory Kaliss, *Men's College Athletics and the Politics of Racial Equality* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2014) ISBN: 978-1439908570. **Themes: Sports, Social Justice, Youth, Education, Gender**
- Kimberly Phillips, *War! What is it Good For? Black Freedom Struggles and the U.S. Military from World War 2 to Iraq* (Chapel Hill: U. North Carolina, 2012) ISBN: 978-1-4696-1389. Available as a free e-book through the library. **Themes: Social Justice, Military, Music, Global History**
- Ruthe Winegarten, *Black Texas Women: A Sourcebook* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996) ISBN: 0-292-79100-3. **Themes: Local History, Gender, Arts, Religion**

ASSIGNMENTS:	GRADE PERCENTAGE	DUE DATE
Attendance and Participation	10%	Based on activities throughout the semester
Short Quizzes	24%	Based on 4 quizzes throughout the semester
Response Essay 1	8%	Thurs. Sept. 15
Response Essay 2	10%	Thurs. Nov. 3
Response Essay 3	12%	Thurs. Nov. 17
10 page Final Essay	36%	See Date of Final Exam

Each assignment helps you practice skills that will be useful in later assignments. The **in-class quizzes** will include fill in the blank, short answer, or multiple choice questions based on the textbook chapters. The **in-class activities** will help you review and compare the readings through group work. In each **response essay**,

you will use evidence from the assigned readings and your chosen book to answer one of the main questions from the syllabus. Finally, for the **final essay assignment**, you will revise your earlier arguments as part of a deeper analysis of your chosen theme.

CLASS SCHEDULE:

The class schedule may change during the semester. If so, changes will be announced ahead of time.

Week 1: Aug. 23-25 What is the history of #BlackLivesMatter?

Read:

- Lerone Bennett, Jr., "Carter G. Woodson, Father of Black History," 2005. Available [here](#) and on E-Learning.

Week 2: Aug. 30-Sept. 1 How did African Americans respond to Jim Crow segregation and terrorism? (1880-1910s)

Read:

- *From Slavery to Freedom*, Ch. 12 to p. 274
"Black Southerners Appeal to President William McKinley for Federal Protection, 1898-1900" (p. 94-96) in *Major Problems*.
- Ida B. Wells, "The South's Position" and "Self-Help" chapters from *Southern Horrors*, 1892. Available [here](#), on p. 158 of *Major Problems*, and on E-Learning.

Week 3: Sept. 6-8 What was the impact of Black schools, churches, and organizations? (1890s-1910s)

Read:

- *From Slavery to Freedom*, Ch. 13 to p. 306
- W.E.B. Du Bois, "A Negro Schoolmaster in the New South," 1899. Available [here](#) and as a [printable version](#) on E-Learning.

Thurs: In-Class Film: "The Great Debaters"

ASSIGNMENT: Participation Activity this week

Week 4: Sept. 13-15 What roles did African Americans play in U.S. imperialism? (1880s-1920s)

Read:

- *From Slavery to Freedom*, Ch. 12, p. 275-286
- Sylvia M. Jacobs, "African-American Women Missionaries and European Imperialism in Southern Africa, 1880-1920." *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 13 no. 4 (1990), 381-394. Available [here](#) and on E-Learning.

Thurs: In-Class Documentary: "Black in Latin America" by Dr. Henry Louis Gates

ASSIGNMENT: Response Essay 1 Due Thurs.

Week 5: Sept. 20-22

How did industrialization and capitalism change African Americans' lives? (1880s-1920s)

Read:

- *From Slavery to Freedom*, Ch. 13 p. 306 to 326
- Tera Hunter, "The Politics of Labor" (p. 115-124) in *Major Problems*

ASSIGNMENT: Quiz 1 Thurs.

Week 6: Sept. 27-29

What roles did black Americans play in the expansion of the nation's military and economy? (1914-1920s)

Read:

- *From Slavery to Freedom*, Ch. 14
- W.E.B. Du Bois, Excerpt from "Close Ranks," *The Crisis Magazine*, vol. 16 (July 1918) Available [here](#) and on E-Learning
- "Migrants' Letters, 1917" (p. 128-131) in *Major Problems*

Week 7: Oct. 4-6

How did black Americans address the trials of urbanization and poverty? (1900-1930s)

Read in *Major Problems*:

- Irma Watkins-Owens, "Caribbean Connections" (p. 144-153)
- "Nate Shaw Aims to Make a Living Farming, 1907-1908" (92-93)
- Chart: "Black Population in Selected Cities, 1910-1930" (128)

ASSIGNMENT: Quiz 2 Thurs.

Week 8: Oct. 11-13

What innovations came from the New Negro? (1919-1930s)

Read:

- *From Slavery to Freedom*, Ch. 15
- Major Problems*:
- Zora Neale Hurston Takes Her University Training Home, 1927" (p. 198-199)
 - Ella Baker and Marvel Cooke Describe Exploitation of Black Women Workers, 1935" (p. 252-254)

ASSIGNMENT: Response Essay 2 due Wed.

Week 9: Oct. 18-20

How did black families deal with racial prejudice, instability, and war? (1930s-1940s)

Read:

- *From Slavery to Freedom*, Ch. 17
- Major Problems*:
- "Charles Hamilton Houston and John P. Davis Critique the Lily-White Tennessee Valley Authority," 1934 (222-224)

ASSIGNMENT: Participation Activity this week

Week 10: Oct. 25-27

How did the "Good War" and the Cold War address racism? (1940s-1950s)

Read:

- *From Slavery to Freedom*, Ch. 18 to p. 466
- "A Marine's Letter to A. Philip Randolph About Discrimination in the Marine Corps, c. 1943," in *Major Problems*, 229-230
- "I am at Home" Interview with Paul Robeson in the Soviet Union, *The Daily Worker*, 1935. Link available [here](#) and on E-Learning.
- Browse 5 editorial cartoons: Oliver Harrington, "Dark Laughter" Comics (Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, 1960). Available [here](#) and on E-Learning.

ASSIGNMENT: Quiz 3 Thurs.

Week 11: Nov. 1-3

How can we describe black leaders, expatriates, entertainers, and radicals abroad? (1920-1960s)

Read:

- *From Slavery to Freedom*, Ch. 16 p. 381-412
- "Marcus Garvey, 1922" (p. 169-170) in *Major Problems*
- Ron Flatter, "Jack Johnson Boxed, Lived on His Own Terms," ESPN.com. Available [here](#) and on E-Learning.
- W.E.B. DuBois, "Letter of Application to the Communist Party," 1961. Available [here](#) and on E-Learning.

ASSIGNMENT: Participation Activity this week

Week 12: Nov. 8-10

What social movements helped make the Civil Rights Movement possible? (1930s-1950s)

Read:

- *From Slavery to Freedom*, Ch. 19

Major Problems:

- "Charles Hamilton Houston Lays Out a Legal Strategy for the NAACP, 1935" (256-257)

Week 13: Nov. 15-17

What did the Civil Rights Movement contribute to the concept of American citizenship? (1950s-1970s)

Read:

- *From Slavery to Freedom*, Ch. 20
- Septima P. Clark, "Literacy and Liberation," 1964. Available [here](#) and on E-Learning.
- Your choice of excerpts from a Civil Rights Movement interview. Southern Oral History Program, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Browse the collection [here](#) or on E-Learning.

ASSIGNMENT: Quiz 4 Thurs.

Week 14: Nov. 22-24

FALL BREAK

Week 15: Nov. 29-
Dec. 1

What are the similarities between Jim Crow and the modern criminal justice system?

Read:

- *From Slavery to Freedom*, Ch. 21
- Excerpt from Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2012). Available [here](#) and on E-Learning.

Thurs: In-Class Documentary: "Let the Fire Burn" (PBS, 2013)

ASSIGNMENT: Response Essay 3 due Thurs.

Week 16: Dec. 6

How did globalization and post-racialism redefine black communities? (1980s-2010)

Read:

- *From Slavery to Freedom*, Ch. 22 p. 600-611 and Ch. 23 p. 618-633
- Major Problems:*
- "The United States Congress Investigates Rap Music" (1994), 351-355
 - "The Borders of Black America: The New 'Black' Immigrants" (1999), 359-362

Final Essay

ASSIGNMENT: Submit your final essay in paper and email form by the end of your scheduled final exam session. There will be no final test. See your finals schedule on Galaxy.

GOALS:

Successful students will:

- ✓ understand the evolution and global influence of the African American population in the United States since 1900
- ✓ analyze the effects of social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on the development of African Americans
- ✓ improve their writing skills
- ✓ analyze various interpretations of major developments in African American history
- ✓ differentiate and analyze documentary and statistical historical evidence and differing points of view
- ✓ use a variety of resources to learn about the American past and answer history-based questions

My Responsibilities: I will do my best to provide informative lectures and academic guidance throughout the semester. Each class will begin with a lecture outline to guide your note taking. Though I cannot provide lecture notes, I will remain accessible during office hours and by e-mail to discuss history, class work, academic issues, and college resources. Unless there is an emergency, I will check e-mail twice a day between 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. except for weekends.

Quizzes, midterms, and written assignments will be graded and returned within two weeks of the due date.

Your Responsibilities: You are expected to uphold the standards of student conduct. Come to class prepared to take notes, ask questions, and discuss the assigned readings. You should attend every class session because lectures will include information not covered in the readings. Also, we gain a better understanding of people in the American past from listening and responding to each other's diverse perspectives.

Copy the lecture outlines and key terms for each class session. Ask a classmate for notes if you miss a class. If you have trouble understanding reading assignments or exam questions, ask Dr. Hill for help and sign up for free on-campus tutoring. As a courtesy to other students, please sit near the door if you need to leave class early. Do not cross the front of the classroom if you arrive late; choose a seat near the side or the back. Please step outside if you must call or text and keep cell phones off or on vibrate during class. Do not use phones or other devices during exams.

ATTENDANCE AND LATE ASSIGNMENT POLICIES:

Call my office ahead of time if you must miss your exam or assignment deadlines. An unexcused absence on the day of your exams or essay assignment will result in zero credit for the assignment. Make-up exams will only be offered in exceptional and unavoidable circumstances, and you will need documentation such as a doctor's note. No late reading exercises will be accepted. No late essay assignments will be accepted without prior notice in writing. The grades for late essays will be reduced by one letter grade for each additional day. Do not plagiarize others' work; your entire course grade may be withheld. If you need to drop the course, contact the Registrar's office for the appropriate forms. I will not drop students from this course based on attendance.