

HST 333: African American History to 1865, Fall 2002

Sample Syllabus

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Course Objective:

This course examines African American history since the arrival of the first Africans in the “New World,” throughout the era of African American emancipation and enfranchisement. It will focus on the transformation and transitions of African Americans and emphasizes their creation of a unique culture of struggle and resistance, as they fought to give meaning to the freedoms that were pronounced in America’s Declaration of Independence, and embedded in its Constitution. Key issues will include the emergence of African slavery as a powerful and “peculiar” institution in American history, creolization and the acculturation process, miscegenation, black culture and community building, the changing status of African American women, abolitionism, the emergence of black leadership, black protest movements, ideologies such as and Black Nationalism, and the emergence of race and racism as a powerful forces in American society.

Key Areas of Emphasis:

1. The first part of the course begins in Africa, where “the people who would become African Americans began their long, turbulent, and difficult journey, a journey marked by sustained suffering as well as perseverance, bravery, and achievement.” The course will then focus on the forced migration of millions of Africans to the Americas via the fierce “middle passage,” and their struggle to maintain their humanity and family ties, while forging communities and a distinct African American culture in the midst of a colonial society marked by slavery. This emphasis coincides with the coming of the American Revolution, the abolitionist movement, and the coming of the Civil War.

2. The second half of the course underscores change, conflict, and the creation of social, economic, and political structures of racial oppression in Civil War and post-Civil War America. It underscores African American’s struggle for equal rights as citizens during Reconstruction, and the massive resistance they faced. The course will close by examining the racial segregation and racially inspired violence that relegated black people to the bottom of America’s social, economic, and political system, but also stimulated African American insurgency and commitment to change.

Requirements:

Students are required to attend all lectures. 3 points is deducted from the final grade of every student whose absences exceed 3. Attendance is taken. Students must come to each class with a question and/or comment about the assigned reading for the day. It must be typed on one piece of paper, and have the student’s name and identification number, as well as the course prefix, title, time, days, room number, and professor’s name listed in the top right-hand corner. These comments and/or questions will collected promptly at the beginning of each class period (9:15am). Late questions and/or comments will not be accepted.

Students are also required to take midterm and final examinations, and prepare one 15-page, typewritten research paper on one of the major themes, events, issues, personalities, or organizations discussed during the course. “Incompletes” are not options and will not be given.

Examinations test the extent to which students have mastered the lectures, reading assignments, and films. Make-up exams are only considered after verification of a documented personal or family emergency (i.e. a signed physician’s note, etc.). Research papers are confined to the years between 1619 and 1865. Papers are a combination of primary and secondary sources, and require proper footnotes. Format details will be discussed further following the midterm examination. The paper, however, must be an original piece of work, that is typed in size “11” or “12” font,” double spaced, spell-checked, produced with one-inch margins, and written by the student for this class. Late

papers will be penalized one letter grade per day if submitted after the due date. Academic integrity is a must. Students who plagiarize, therefore, will receive an “E” for the course.

Inasmuch as ASU is an institution of higher learning, students will be required to be respectful of their fellow classmates. Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Cellular phones and pagers must be turned off prior to entering the class room. Students who engage in disruptive behavior, such as tardiness, flagrant combativeness, egregious vulgarity, talking out-of-turn, eating, reading, and answering cellular phones and pagers, are subject to failure and dismissal from the course at my desecration. For Arizona State University’s Student Code of Conduct, and it’s policy on academic integrity, contact Student Judicial Affairs in the Office of Student Life at (480) 965-6547, or www.asu.edu/studentlife/judicial.

Seven required texts comprise the assigned readings for the course. Participation grades are based on attendance and contributions to class discussion. Lectures on black historiography are essential. I will introduce students to a wide range of historians and their writings and varying interpretations. Films will be shown to emphasize particular dimensions of black history, culture and social movements, and the lives and experiences of key individuals. Discussions will follow each film. Throughout the course, students will be challenged to think critically and analytically about the intersection of race, gender, and class.

Students with special needs of any kind are expected to meet with me at the beginning of the semester.

Grading:		Scale:
Midterm Exam #1 (Multiple Choice/Essay)	25%	100-90 = A
Final Exam #2 (Multiple Choice/Essay)	25%	89-80 = B
Research Paper	25%	79-70 = C
Class Participation/Attendance	25%	69-60 = D
		59-50 = E

Required Reading Available at the Campus Bookstore:

Hine, Darlene Clark, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold. *The African American Odyssey, Volume One: to 1877, Second Edition*. Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall, 2002 . ISBN: 0130977942

Litwack, Leon, and August Meier, (eds.). *Black Leaders in the 19th Century* Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1991. ISBN: 0252062132

Morgan, Edmund S. *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1995. ISBN: 0393312887

O’Reilly, Kenneth. *Nixon’s Piano: Presidents and Racial Politics from Washington to Clinton* Boston: The Free Press, 1995. ISBN: 0029236851

White, Deborah Gray. *Ar’nt I a Woman: Female Slaves in the Plantation South, Second Edition*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999. ISBN: 039331482

Films:

1. African Americans in the Age of Revolution:
 - A) *Africans in American: America’s Journey Through Slavery, Part II - Revolution, 1750-1805*.
2. Biographies and Personalities:
 - A) Sallie Hemmings - *Jefferson’s Blood*.

B) Frederick Douglass - *Frederick Douglass: When the Lion Wrote History*.

3. Images and Stereotypes:
Ethnic Notions.

Lectures and Assignments:

Part I: The Emancipation Era and the Rise of Crow

- Week 1** 8/26 Introduction:
- 8/28 Why Study History? Why Study African American History?
- 8/30 Reading: *The African American Odyssey*, Chapter 1.
- Week 2** 9/2 Classes are excused for Labor Day
- 9/4 Reading: *The African American Odyssey*, Chapter 2.
- 9/6 Discussion: The Impact of the Middle Passage on the “New World.”
- Week 3** 9/9 Reading: *The African American Odyssey*, Chapter 3.
- 9/11 Discussion: Africans, Creolization, Acculturation, and Miscegenation in Colonial America.
- 9/13 Africans and the American West...Reflections on the Earliest Patterns of Migration: African Americans in the American West.
- Week 4** 9/16 Discussion: The African Diaspora in North America
- 9/18 Film: *Africans in American: America's Journey Through Slavery, Part II... Revolution, 1750-1805*.
- 9/20 Unrestricted Course Withdrawal Deadline
Film: *Africans in American: America's Journey Through Slavery, Part II... Revolution, 1750-1805 (Continued)*
- Week 5** 9/23 Discussion: American Slavery, American Freedom.
Reading: *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (Entire Book)
- 9/25 Reading: *The African American Odyssey*, Chapter 4.
- 9/27 Reading: Reading: *The African American Odyssey*, Chapter 5; and *Black Leaders in the Nineteenth Century*, “Richard Allen and the African Church Movement.”
- Week 5** 9/30 Reading: *The African American Odyssey*, Chapter 6; and *Nixon's Piano*, Introduction and Chapters 1-3
- 10/2 Film: Sallie Hemmings - *Jefferson's Blood*.
- 10/4 Film: Sallie Hemmings - *Jefferson's Blood (Continued)*
- Week 6** 10/7 Reading: *The African American Odyssey*, Chapter 7.

- 10/9 Class Discussion: African Americans and the Social Construction of Race in Early America.
- 10/11 Reading: *The African American Odyssey*, Chapter 8; and *Black Leaders in the Nineteenth Century*, “Nat Turner,” “Harriet Tubman,” and “Mary Anne Shadd.”
- Week 7** 10/14 Reading: *The African American Odyssey*, Chapter 9
- 10/16 Discussion: Let Your Motto Be Resistance...African American Insurgency During the Antebellum Era.
Reading: *Ar’nt I a Woman: Female Slaves in the Plantation South, Second Edition* (Entire Book)

10/18

10/18 Midterm Examination (Multiple Choice/ Essay)

Part II: Disunity over Slavery, The Civil War, Emancipation, Black Reconstruction, and the Meaning of Freedom

- Week 8** 10/21 Discussion: Research Papers.
- 10/23 Library Tour.
- 10/25 In Their Own Words: The Voices of Free People Held in Bondage...Reading Excerpts from Berlin, Ira, Marc Favreau, Steve Miller, and Robin D. G. Kelley (eds.). *Remembering Slavery: African Americans Talk About Their Personal Experiences of Slavery and Freedom* New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1998.
- Blassingame, John W. ed. *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Dictations, and Autobiographies*. Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1977.
- Week 9** 10/28 Reading: *The African American Odyssey*, Chapter 10; and *Black Leaders in the Nineteenth Century* “Frederick Douglass.”
- 10/30 Film: Frederick Douglass - *Frederick Douglass: When the Lion Wrote History*
- 11/1 Restricted Course Withdrawal (Must be passing to obtain passing withdrawal)
Discussion: Abolitionism in Black and White.
- Week 9** 11/4 Reading: *The African American Odyssey*, Chapter 11
Submission of Research Paper Topics and Thesis Statements: (Each student will submit one typewritten page including a description of their topic, a thesis statement, a description of their sources, and an explanation of their topic’s significance).
- 11/6 Discussion: African Americans and the Civil War.
- 11/8 Reading: *The African American Odyssey*, Chapter 12.
- Week 10** 11/11 Veterans Day Observed: No Classes.

11/13 Discussion: The Promise of Reconstruction.

11/15 Reading: *The African American Odyssey*, Chapter 13.

Week 11 11/18 *Black Leaders in the Nineteenth Century*, “Three Reconstruction Leaders: Blanche K. Bruce, Robert Brown Elliott, and Holland Thompson.”

11/20 Discussion: Reconstruction...An Unfinished Revolution?

11/22 Library Day: Research and/or writing.

Week 12 11/25 Film: Ethnic Notions.

11/27 Discussion: Historical Images of African Americans from 1865 and Beyond.

11/28 Giving Meaning to Freedom: African Americans and the Construction of Community and Culture...Westward Migration During the Civil War Era.

11/29 Thanksgiving Day Observed: No Classes.

Week 13 12/2

12/02 Finals Papers Due

12/4 A Prelude to the “The Problem of the Twentieth Century,” African Americans and “the Color Line.” - W.E.B. Du Bois

12/6 Discussion: African American History from Colonization to 1865.

Week 14 12/9 Course Summary/Closing Remarks

12/11 Reading Day

**Final Examination (Multiple Choice/Essay)
Thursday, December 12, 2002 8:40-10:30am**