

History 262:
AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY SINCE 1945

Dr. Rhonda Y. Williams

Course Information:

Semester: Fall 2009
Time: T-R, 1:15-2:30 p.m.
Room: Clark Hall 103

Professor Information:

Office: Mather House 216
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Office Hours: T/R, By Appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

African-American History relays stories of change, oppression and resistance, and interracial conflict and cooperation. History 262 will survey the major topics that have shaped African-American life, culture, and struggle since 1945. They will include: 1) race and the post-industrial city; 2) black freedom struggles; and 3) contemporary challenges. In addition, we will examine the complexity of black experiences by paying keen attention to gender, class, and sexuality.

This intensive course is designed as a combination of lecture and discussion. Students should be ready to read some excellent material in good quantity and are expected to engage in INFORMED dialogue regularly.

Note on Attendance and Participation:

Attending class is important. If you are absent from class, you miss information, can not participate, and more than likely will not perform well on assignments. Discussions, in particular, provide the space for you to critically engage the material—in other words, to test ideas, clarify unclear points, and express concerns. My hope is that you not only learn from lectures, but through exchanges with each other. Poor attendance not only affects your learning experience, but also your peers’.

Missing four classes (the equivalent of 2 weeks) will result in a “0” for the attendance and participation portion of your grade. Missing an additional two classes (the equivalent of another week) will result in an automatic “F” in the course. Moreover, merely attending class does not ensure an “A.” You must come prepared and be ready to actively engage the material.

Finally, there are very few reasons why any absence may be excused (such as a documented illness or death in the family). You must inform me in a timely manner, and sole discretion is mine.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Discussion Presentation:

Each student will help lead a discussion section by starting us off with a 10-15 minute presentation. Your presentation should incorporate the following components:

- 1) An assessment of the reading. You don't simply want to tell the class word for word what they have already read. Your presentation should highlight the major themes in the reading and how they relate to the guiding theme for the week.
- 2) A newspaper/magazine article, a poem, editorial cartoon, or artwork from the time period that relates to the reading, but expands our knowledge about the time period under study. In your presentation, explain why you chose it. You should provide copies for each member of the class.

Take-home Exams:

You will have to complete two take-home exams. These exams will be based on material covered in course readings, films, and lectures prior to the exam's due date.

Due Dates: 1st on October 22; 2nd on November 19.

LATE EXAMS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Do not email or fax exams.

Final Assignment:

Each student will be required to write a 10 page research paper based on two oral histories and a combination of primary sources like newspaper/magazine articles, cartoons, photographs, films, etc., from the time period under discussion.

Since we are studying a historical period that still allows us to access living people, your research paper must draw on at least two oral history interviews. One of the best things about oral histories is that they allow us to gather memories, relive segments of histories through testimonials, and witness the conflicts, viewpoints, and perceptions of people. You can choose any topic that falls between 1940 and the 1970s. The topic and people you decide to interview must be discussed with me first.

Your paper must have a thesis. What is it you are trying to argue? What point are you trying to make? What do you want to prove? Feel free to discuss your thesis statement with me.

POLICIES

NO LATE EXAMS or PAPERS will be accepted.

NO FAXED or EMAILED EXAMS or PAPERS will be accepted. You must turn in a hard copy at the beginning of class.

DO NOT PLAGIARIZE. *Plagiarism* is a serious violation of ethical conduct and academic integrity. Plagiarism need not be intentional. All cases of plagiarism – the theft of words, ideas, sources, and conclusions whether from written, audio, oral, or digital materials – will not be tolerated and will be reported to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

GRADES:

Class attendance/participation	20%
Discussion presentation	10%
Take-home Exams (20% each)	40%
Final Assignment (10 pages)	30%

REQUIRED READINGS:

James Baldwin, *No Name in the Street*

Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*

Manning Marable, *Race, Reform, and Rebellion* (3d edition, 2007)

Paul Robeson, *Here I Stand*

Michelle Wallace, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*

The rest of the required readings will be on Reserve in Kelvin Smith Library with the exception of a few very short pieces, which may be distributed in class.

Scheduled Meetings and Assignments

Aug. 25 Introductions/Course Overview

Aug. 27 In the Eye of the Storm

Reading: Marable, Chapter 1 “Prologue: The Legacy of the First Reconstruction”

The Second Great Migration

Sept. 1 In-class Documentary Viewing & Discussion: “The Promised Land” Part 1

Sept. 3 In-class Documentary Viewing & Discussion: “The Promised Land” Part 2

Reading: James N. Gregory, “The Second Great Migration: A Historical Overview,” in *African American Urban History since World War II*, edited by Kusmer and Trotter, pp. 19-38.

Please start reading for next week!

Life in the Promised Land & Residential Segregation

Sept. 8 “This Ain’t Quite Heaven”

Reading: Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*, pp. 19-95

Sept. 10

Reading: Finish Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun*, pp. 96-151; Thomas J. Sugrue, "Crabgrass Politics, Race, Rights, and the Reaction against Liberalism in the Urban North, 1940-1964," *Journal of American History* 82 (September 1995), pp. 551-578. (Available online through KSL eJournal portal)

Sept. 15

Reading: Arnold R. Hirsch, "'Containment' on the Homefront: Race and Federal Housing Policy from the New Deal to the Cold War," *Journal of Urban History*, 26 No. 2 (January 2000), pp. 158-189 (Available online through the KSL eJournal portal.)

Freedom Struggles and Civil Rights Movements

Sept. 17 Origins of the Modern Civil Rights Movement

Reading: Marable, Chapter 2 "The Cold War in Black America, 1945-1954" and *Documents*: A. Philip Randolph and the Negro March on Washington, 1941; Charles Hamilton Houston and the War Effort among African Americans, 1944; "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!" by Claudia Jones, 1949, from *Let Nobody Turn Us Around* anthology (on Blackboard)

Sept. 22/24 The Cold War, Black Radicalism, and Internationalism

Reading: Paul Robeson, *Here I Stand*

Sept. 29 1950s & Domestic Civil Rights

Reading: Marable, Chapter 3 "The Demand for Reform, 1954-1960"
Documents: TBA

Oct. 1 Early to Mid-1960s

Reading: Marable, Chapter 4 "We Shall Overcome 1960-1965"
Documents: Martin Luther King Jr. and Nonviolence; Malcolm X and Revolutionary Black Nationalism; Fannie Lou Hamer, The Special Plight and the Role of Black Women, from *Let Nobody Turn Us Around* (on Blackboard)

Oct. 6/8 James Baldwin, *No Name in the Street*

From "Freedom Now" to "Black Power"

Oct. 13 In-class Documentary Viewing: Excerpt, Eyes on the Prize II, "Power!"

Reading: Marable, Chapter 5 "Black Power, 1965-1970"

Oct. 15 Black Women and Black Power
Reading: Rhonda Y. Williams, "Something's Wrong Down Here" in *African American Urban History Since World War II*, edited by Kusmer and Trotter, pp. 316-336.

Oct. 20 **Fall Break**

Oct. 22** ** Take-home Exam Due

In-class Discussion regarding Final Assignment

** Please come prepared with a one-page proposal of your final assignment topic including the two people you want to interview and why, a list of other primary sources, and a bibliography of secondary sources.

Oct. 27 In-class Documentary Viewing: Eyes on the Prize II, "A Nation of Law"
Reading: Marable, Chapter 6 "Black Rebellion: Zenith and Decline, 1970-1976"

Oct. 29 Discussion of Documentary and Readings
Reading: **TBA**

Nov. 3 Black Feminism & Gender Politics
Reading: Michelle Wallace, *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman*, Intro and Part I, "Black Macho"

Nov. 5 Wallace, Part II, "The Myth of the Superwoman"

The Post-Civil Rights Era

Nov.10 1970s & 1980s
Reading: Marable, Chapters 7 "From Protest to Politics: The Retreat of the Second Reconstruction, 1976-1982" & Chapter 8 "Reaction: Black Society and Politics during Reagan Conservatism, 1982-1990"

Nov. 12 1990s
Reading: Marable, Chapter 9 "Into the Wilderness: The Twilight of the Second Reconstruction, 1990-2001"
Documents: The Children's Defense Fund Assesses the Life Chances of a Black Child in America, 1994; The New Face of Racism: Racial Profiling, 1999; The New Face of Racism: The Ordeal of Haitian Immigrants, 1998 (on Blackboard)

Nov. 17/19** **No Class/Independent Research Days**

**Nov. 19 Take-home exam due

Nov. 24/26 **No Class/Thanksgiving Holiday**

African Americans in the New Millennium

Dec. 1 In-class Viewing of *Belly of the Basin* (2008)

Reading: Marable, Chapter 10, "The New Racial Domain: The Politics of Racial Inequality, 2001-2006"

Dec. 3 In the Wake of Hurricane Katrina & the Obama Presidency

Final Assignment Due, Friday, December 4