

HUMANITIES 200: INTRODUCTION TO BLACK AND AFRICAN DIASPORA STUDIES

Time: Tuesday and Thursday 2:00–3:15 p.m.
 Classroom: Griffin 201
 Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 12:00–2:00 p.m.
 Office: Griffin 250

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COURSE OVERVIEW

This course serves as an introduction to the foundational theories and methods of Black studies—the study of Blackness and the ongoing projects of abolition and freedom—and African diaspora studies—the interdisciplinary study of peoples of African origin across the African diaspora. In this section, we will begin by investigating the meanings and operations of Blackness and racialization, especially in the United States, as well as the historical and cultural function of racism and antiracisms. Throughout the course, we'll analyze the power of Black cultural productions across time and space—from slavery and colonialism to the post-racial and even the post-human—foregrounding Black experiences and knowledges as central rather than peripheral. This course will introduce a variety of theoretical approaches to the field, including Black Marxism, Black feminism, queer of color critique, intersectionality, critical race theory, racial formation theory, Afrofuturism, Afropessimism, and posthumanism. This course is open to all students and will be of particular interest to students who may wish to pursue the Black and African Diaspora Studies minor.

COURSE TEXTS PROVIDED ON MOODLE

- Carmichael, Stokely [Kwame Ture], and Charles V. Hamilton. “Black Power: Its Need and Substance.” *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation in America*. New York: Random House, 1967. 34–56. Print.
- Césaire, Aimé. Selections from *Discourse on Colonialism*. Trans. Joan Pinkham. New York: Monthly Review P, 2005. 31–53, 74–78. JSTOR. Web.
- Crenshaw, Kimberlé [Williams]. “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics.” *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1 (1989): 139–67. *Chicago Unbound*. Web.
- Du Bois, W. E. B. “Of Our Spiritual Strivings.” *The Souls of Black Folk*. 1903. New Haven: Yale UP, 2015. 3–11. Print.
- Ferguson, Roderick A. “The Birth of the Interdisciplines.” *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2012. 19–40. Print.
- Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. Introduction. *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2007. 5–29. Print.
- Haley, Sarah. Introduction. *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2016. 1–16. Print.

- Harney, Stefano, and Fred Moten. "The University and the Undercommons." *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*. New York: Minor Compositions, 2013. 25–43. Print.
- Harris, Cheryl I. Selections from "Whiteness as Property." *Harvard Law Review* 106.8 (1993): 1709 and 1724–45. JSTOR. Web.
- Hartman, Saidiya V. Introduction. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford UP, 1997. 3–14. Print.
- . "The Burdened Individuality of Freedom." *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America*. New York: Oxford UP, 1997. 115–24. Print.
- HoSang, Daniel Martinez, and Oneka LaBennett. Introduction. *Racial Formation in the Twenty-First Century*. Ed. HoSang, LaBennett, and Laura Pulido. Berkeley: U of California P, 2012. 1–17. JSTOR. Web.
- Jackson, Zakiyyah Iman. Selections from "On Becoming Human." Introduction. *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World*. New York: New York UP, 2020. 1–21. Print.
- James, C. L. R. "The Rise of Toussaint." *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*. 1963. 2nd ed. New York: Vintage, 1989. 145–62. Print.
- Johnson, Sylvester. "Monstrosity, Colonialism, and the Racial State." *J19* 3.1 (2015): 173–81. *Project Muse*. Web.
- Keeling, Kara. Selections from "Black Futures and the Queer Times of Life: Finance, Flesh, and the Imagination." *Queer Times, Black Futures*. New York: New York UP, 2019. 1–24. Print.
- Marable, Manning. "Inequality and the Burden of Capitalist Democracy: A Point of View on Black History." *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society*. 1983. Cambridge: South End, 2000. 1–19. Print.
- Mignolo, Walter D. "Sylvia Wynter: What Does It Mean to Be Human?" *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*. Ed. Katherine McKittrick. Durham: Duke UP, 2015. 106–23. Print.
- Nash, Jennifer C. "Love in the Time of Death." *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality*. Durham: Duke UP, 2019. 111–31. Print.
- Nyong'o, Tavia. "A Race against Time?" Introduction. *Afro-Fabulations: The Queer Drama of Black Life*. New York: New York UP, 2019. 1–26. Print.
- Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. "The Theory of Racial Formation." *Racial Formation in the United States*. 3rd ed. New York: Routledge, 2015. 105–36. Print.
- Robinson, Cedric J. Introduction and "The Nature of the Black Radical Tradition." *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*. 1983. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 2000. 1–5 and 167–71. Print.

Snorton, C. Riley. Introduction. *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2017. 1–14. Print.

Spillers, Hortense J. “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book.” *Diacritics* 17.2 (1987): 64–81. Print.

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. “Black Lives Matter: A Movement, Not a Moment.” *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*. Chicago: Haymarket, 2016. 153–90. Print.

Wilderson, Frank B., III. “For Halloween I Washed My Face.” *Afropessimism*. New York: Liverlight, 2020. 3–17. Print.

COURSE COMPONENTS

Reading Quizzes: Our texts in this course are complex and challenging. Please read carefully in order to contribute to class discussion and to succeed on course assignments. I’ll randomly check your attendance in and preparation for class in the form of reading quizzes given at five unannounced points across the course of the semester. Reading quizzes are low-stakes: they’re designed to provide an entry into class discussion rather than to test what you don’t know.

Close Readings: Because academic writing is the main method by which scholars share research and advance knowledge, you’ll complete two writing assignments over the course of the term. These roughly 1,000-word essays are designed to develop your skills of close reading, synthesizing, and responding to critical texts. I’ll distribute a prompt for each assignment in class at least two weeks in advance of the due date.

Examinations: There will be both a midterm and a final examination. The midterm examination will cover texts and concepts from the first half of the course, and the final examination will be cumulative. Because they are composed primarily of essay questions, you’re welcome to use hard copy course texts and notes during the examinations. We’ll discuss what to expect and how to prepare for the examinations in more detail as they approach.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Reading Quizzes	15%
Close Reading #1	20%
Close Reading #2	20%
Midterm Examination	20%
Final Examination	25%

GRADE SCALE

A: 100%–90%
B: 89%–80%
C: 79%–70%
D: 69%–60%
F: 59%–0%

While individual assignments may receive half letter grades (pluses or minuses), final grades are calculated according to the above scale.

COURSE VALUES

Basic Needs: I'm committed to ensuring that you have access to the living conditions that you need to succeed in this course. If you face challenges securing food or housing, please contact the Dean of Students and me, if you feel comfortable doing so, for support. That way, I can provide you with any resources I have access to.

Cancellations: Please check your email regularly in case of class cancellations. If class is cancelled, I'll send information about completing our planned class work via email.

Disabilities: I'm committed to ensuring that you have access to the learning conditions that you need to succeed in this course. If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, please contact me as well as the Office of Disability Services as soon as you're able. More information can be found at <https://disability.louisiana.edu>.

Late Assignments: I encourage you to submit assignments on time. That being said, life happens. If you're having trouble submitting an assignment on time, please contact me as soon as you're able so that we can make alternate arrangements.

Participation: Attendance and participation are acts of solidarity with your classmates. Because discussion is a collective enterprise, your active participation is vital to everyone's intellectual growth. Please strive to: 1) be on time to and actively present in class; 2) prepare for and meaningfully contribute to communal inquiries and discussions; and 3) show mutual respect for your classmates. If electronic devices are fundamental to your learning process, please feel free to use them in seminar. That being said, please be mindful of your ability to distract yourself and others when using electronics for other purposes during class time.

Plagiarism: Because academic writing creates new knowledge, plagiarism is considered a serious ethical violation. For this reason, plagiarism results in, at a minimum, a failing grade for the assignment, and, at a maximum, dismissal from the university. The university's official definition of plagiarism is: "a specific type of cheating. It occurs when a student claims originality for the ideas or words of another person, when the student presents as a new and original idea or product anything which in fact is derived from an existing work, or when the student makes use of any work or production already created by someone else without giving credit to the source. In short, plagiarism is the use of unacknowledged materials in the preparation of assignments." If you have any questions or concerns about plagiarism, please contact me as soon as you're able.

Safety: Your physical, mental, and emotional safety are of the utmost importance to me. In this COVID-19 crisis, please put yours and your loved ones' safety first. If you're in need of alternate arrangements for any aspect of this course, please contact me as soon as you're able. In addition, for everyone's health and wellbeing, please strive to adhere to social distancing standards when you're in our classroom, including maintaining six feet of distance from your classmates and wearing a face covering at all times. We will try to meet outside whenever possible. If you're feeling even a hint of illness, please stay home.

COURSE SCHEDULE

DATE	READINGS	DEADLINES
	<i>The History & (Un)Discipline of Black and African Diaspora Studies</i>	
Tuesday 8/18	Syllabus and Ferguson, "The Birth of the Interdisciplines" (Moodle)	
Thursday 8/20	Harney and Moten, "The University and the Undercommons" (Moodle)	
	<i>Colonialism & Slavery</i>	
Tuesday 8/25	Johnson, "Monstrosity, Colonialism, and the Racial State" (Moodle)	
Thursday 8/27	Hartman, Introduction (Moodle)	
	<i>Revolution & Emancipation</i>	
Tuesday 9/1	James, "The Rise of Toussaint" (Moodle)	
Thursday 9/3	Hartman, "The Burdened Individuality of Freedom" (Moodle)	
	<i>Jim Crow</i>	
Tuesday 9/8	Du Bois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" (Moodle)	Close Reading #1
Thursday 9/10	Haley, Introduction (Moodle)	
	<i>Anticolonialism & Black Power</i>	
Tuesday 9/15	Césaire, Selections from <i>Discourse on Colonialism</i> (Moodle)	
Thursday 9/17	Carmichael and Hamilton, "Black Power" (Moodle)	
	<i>Mass Incarceration & the Movement for Black Lives</i>	
Tuesday 9/22	Gilmore, Introduction (Moodle)	
Thursday 9/24	Taylor, "Black Lives Matter" (Moodle)	
	<i>Black Marxism</i>	
Tuesday 9/29	Marable, "Inequality and the Burden of Capitalist Democracy" (Moodle)	
Thursday 10/1	Robinson, Introduction and "The Nature of the Black Radical Tradition" (Moodle)	
Tuesday 10/6		Midterm Examination
	<i>Black Feminism</i>	
Thursday 10/8	Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" (Moodle)	
Tuesday 10/13	Nash, "Love in the Time of Death" (Moodle)	
	<i>Racial Formation Theory</i>	
Thursday 10/15	Omi and Winant, "The Theory of Racial Formation" (Moodle)	
Tuesday 10/20	HoSang and LaBennett, Introduction	
	<i>Critical Race Theory & Intersectionality</i>	
Thursday 10/22	Harris, Selections from "Whiteness as Property" (Moodle)	
Tuesday 10/27	Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex" (Moodle)	
	<i>Queer of Color Critique</i>	
Thursday 10/29	Snorton, Introduction (Moodle)	Close Reading #2

Tuesday 11/3	Nyong'o, "A Race against Time?" (Moodle)	
	<i>Afrofuturism & Afropessimism</i>	
Thursday 11/5	Keeling, "Black Futures and the Queer Times of Life" (Moodle)	
Tuesday 11/10	Wilderson, "For Halloween I Washed My Face" (Moodle)	
	<i>Posthumanism</i>	
Thursday 11/12	Jackson, Selections from "On Becoming Human" (Moodle)	
Tuesday 11/17	Mignolo, "Sylvia Wynter" (Moodle)	
Thursday 11/19		
Finals Week (exact date and time to be announced)		Final Examination