

AAS100: Introduction to African American Studies
T/Th, 1:20pm-2:50pm, Swart 240
Prof. Norlisha Crawford
Office hours, 12:00 (noon)-1:00pm, T/Th, Radford Hall #209
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Unless otherwise noted, all selected chapters and essays will be available on e-reserves.

- Jan. 30: Introduction to course; selections from film, “Ethnic Notions”
- Feb. 1: Jacobs, Harriet, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl and “The Cult of True Womanhood”; discussion
- 6: Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave; discussion
- 8: John Hope Franklin, selection, From Slavery to Freedom; discussion
- 13: W.E.B. DuBois, “Of Our Spiritual Strivings”; in-class writing exercise
- 15: Angela Davis, Women, Race and Class, selected chapters; discussion
- 20: Sharon Harley, “When Your Work Is Not Who You Are,” discussion
- 22: Alain Locke, “The New Negro”; discussion; first exam
- 27: Chester Himes, If He Hollers Let Him Go, chapters 1-8; discussion
- Mar. 1: Himes, cont’d, chapters 9-15, discussion
- 6: Himes, cont’d, chapters 16-close of novel; in-class writing exercise.
- 8: Manning Marable, Race, Reform and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in Black America, 1945-1982, selected chapters; discussion
- 13: Film, “Eyes on the Prize”
- 15: Martin Luther King, Jr., “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” discussion
- 20: Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet”; discussion
- 22: Midterm exam

- 27: June Jordan, “Nobody Mean More to Me than You and the Future Life of Willie Jordan”; discussion
- 29: Leonard Pitts, Jr., “The Gift of Oppression”; discussion
- Apr. 3: film, Spike Lee, “Do the Right Thing”; discussion
- 5: completion of film; second exam
- 10: Lisa Jones, Bulletproof Diva: Tales of Race, Sex, and Hair; bell hooks, “Black Beauty Black Power”; discussion
- 12: Film, African-American Women Writers, a second Renaissance
- 17: Toni Morrison, Sula, part I up to “1922”; discussion
- 19: Morrison, Sula cont’d, “1922” up to “1939”; discussion
- 24: Morrison, Sula, “1939” to close of novel; discussion of novel
- 26: Patricia Hill Collins, Black Sexual Politics, chapter selection discussion; in-class writing exercise
- May 1: Paul C. Taylor, “Does Hip Hop Belong to Me? The Philosophy of Race and Culture”; some music selections from field hollers to hip-hop; discussion of final exam
- 3: film, “Crash”
- 8: film, “Crash, cont’d; discussion of final exam
- 10: final exam

*******The syllabus may change at the discretion of the instructor.**

Participation in discussions is strongly advised so that ideas are offered from a variety of perspectives. Participation includes questions you contribute and in-class small group discussion participation.

Attendance is mandatory. Two unexcused absences will result in an automatic reduction in your overall grade by one full letter grade.

About the course: In addition to being an introductory survey course, this is a core course for the Minor in African American Studies. We will read a variety of texts, across several disciplines so that you will have a general sense of the issues and experiences that have affected African Americans over time. Because study of the African-American

experience spans subject areas including (but not exclusively) history, economics, sociology, literature, political science, culture, religion, language, all of the creative arts and behavioral sciences, an interdisciplinary mix is appropriate.

We will begin our study with excerpts from two slave narratives written in the mid-19th century. They each will give historical backdrops for understanding the subsequent works that we will read and discuss. There is no one particular theme that ties the diverse works on the syllabus together. And yet, they share conceptual and contextual connections that help to define some of the contours of the African-American experience in the United States from 1619 until the present. The materials you will read are for the most part works that many people interested in knowing about African Americans' ethnic and national experience will read; they are important texts in the African-American intellectual and cultural canon. The issues raised within the various forms may sometimes be difficult to discuss because often they deal with suffering, discrimination and injustice, or seemingly intractable problems of crime, violence, distrust, and racism. But you probably also will find new ways of understanding with more complexity both our shared society and the human experience because the texts also deal with love and pride and happiness, endurance, creativity and joy. Studying in this course will help each of you primarily as critical thinkers but also in becoming better informed citizens in our nation and the world.

I urge each of you to read carefully, to think as you read, and to always come prepared to participate in discussions in class, including asking questions. Feel free to contact me via email, during my office hours, or by appointment for discussion of your ideas as well as any problems that may come up in the course.

The final grade breakdown is:

2 exams	@ 15% each	30%
Midterm exam	@20%	20%
3 in-class writing exercises	@10% each	30%
Final exam	@20%	<u>20%</u>
Total for final grade		100%

I will give more detailed instructions about the exams and writing exercises as we move along in the semester.

In-class writing exercises will be 1-2 page responses to specific critical questions that I will give you in class. Other than reading as scheduled, no other advance work will be necessary for the exercises.