

## African American Voices

History 254, Spring 2007

Professor: Joel Sipress

Office Hours: Sundquist 215—Mondays and Fridays, 10:00-12:00; Tuesdays, 9:00-10:00; Wednesdays, 2:00-3:00; Thursdays, 2:30-3:30, and by appointment.

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### **THEMES**

This course explores the African-American experience over the past two centuries with an emphasis on social, political, and cultural discourse. We will focus on issues of identity and liberation as expressed in black political thought, literature, and popular/folk culture.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The objective of the course is for students to become familiar with major ideas in African-American thought, to understand the social, economic, and political factors that have shaped these ideas, and to come to informed judgments regarding these ideas.

### **SKILLS**

To achieve the course objectives, we will concentrate on developing certain key skills, the most important of which are:

1. Reading-- identifying the central ideas and argument of an author.
2. Analysis-- coming to informed judgments regarding the implications and persuasiveness of the ideas of others.
3. Writing-- presenting your own conclusions effectively on paper.

### **COURSE COMPONENTS**

- I. Readings-- At the heart of the course are a series of readings from major figures in African-American thought. A weekly schedule of reading assignments is included on the syllabus. It is vital to student learning in the course that reading assignments be completed by the due date. Failure to complete assigned readings on time will significantly hurt your learning and the learning of other students.

Four books are to be purchased at the University Bookstore:

-Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass

-Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God

-The Autobiography of Malcolm X

-bell hooks, Ain't I a Woman

A photocopied coursepack of materials is also to be purchased at the University Bookstore. Additional required readings have been placed on electronic reserve at Hill Library.

- II. Lectures-- We will examine the ideas of our authors in an historical context. This context will be provided through occasional lectures and "mini" lectures.
- III. Discussion-- Much of the real work of this course will take place in discussion. Through discussion, we will develop and share our ideas and receive feedback from each other.
- IV. Journal-- You will be required to keep a journal. The journal will provide an opportunity to reflect upon the ideas of the authors we will be reading. Journals will be collected on a regular basis and evaluated on a check/check minus basis. Additional guidance regarding the journal will be provided in class. To pass the course, you must receive a passing grade on your journal.
- V. Unit Papers-- Writing is the primary form in which academic communication takes place. This course is therefore writing intensive. At the end of each unit, you will complete a 2-4 page essay that addresses the central ideas of the unit. Paper assignments will be handed out in advance. Due dates are indicated on the course schedule.
- VI. Take-Home Final- There will be a take-home final exam. The exam will ask you to write responses to a pair of questions that address central issues of the course. The take-home questions will be handed out toward the end of the semester.

**GRADING**

Each Unit Paper--	15%
Take-Home Final--	25%
Journal--	15%

## COURSE POLICIES

1. Plagiarism-- Plagiarism (the theft of someone else's words or ideas) is the most serious of all academic offenses and will not be tolerated in this class. Any student found guilty of plagiarism will receive an automatic failing grade for the course. More serious sanctions may be pursued in particularly egregious cases. See section of the syllabus entitled "Plagiarism and Proper Citation" for a detailed explanation of plagiarism and how to avoid it.

2. Attendance-- Attendance is not a component of your grade. You are, however, responsible for all material covered during all class periods. You are also responsible for turning in your journal on days that journal entries are due, regardless of whether you are present in class.

3. Extensions-- Extensions will be granted for reasons related to family, work, and illness, or religious faith. Except in cases of emergency, extensions will only be granted if requested (either in person or by phone) prior to the date that the assignment is due. In cases of emergency, the instructor must be contacted (either in person or by phone) as soon as possible. Failure to notify the instructor promptly may result in refusal to grant an extension. No extensions will be granted for the last paper, except in cases of emergency.

4. Class Cancellations-- Students will be informed of weather-related class cancellations via the media. Please do not call Campus Safety.

5. Accommodation of Students with Disabilities-- Adaptations of methods, materials, and testing will be made to reasonably accommodate full educational participation by students with documented disabilities. For such accommodations to be made, the student must provide the instructor with a signed copy of the FAF (Faculty Accommodation Form) provided by Disability Support Services (DSS). Students must identify themselves and their reasonable accommodation needs (via the FAF) at the beginning of the semester or within a reasonable time period before such accommodations will be required. The DSS office is located in 134 Main and may be contacted at 394-8515 or [disability@uwsuper.edu](mailto:disability@uwsuper.edu).

An information sheet that summarizes UW-Superior's academic policies is located at <http://www.uwsuper.edu/provost/StdInfo-SyllabusAtt.pdf>.

## **COURSE SCHEDULE**

### **Introduction**

### **Identity and Liberation**

#### **Week One (January 22)**

Thursday-- The Autobiography of Malcolm X, pp. 1-46

#### **Week Two (January 29)**

Tuesday-- The Autobiography of Malcolm X, pp. 47-270

Thursday-- The Autobiography of Malcolm X, pp. 271-440

### **Unit One**

### **Slavery and Freedom**

#### **Week Three (February 5)**

Thursday-- Excerpts from Walker's Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World (Coursepack); The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, pp. 3-33

#### **Week Four (February 12)**

Tuesday-- The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, pp. 34-86

Thursday-- Slave Culture Documents (Coursepack)

#### **Week Five (February 19)**

FIRST PAPER DUE THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22!

### **Unit Two**

### **From Emancipation to Jim Crow**

#### **Week Six (February 26)**

Tuesday-- Excerpts from Ida B. Wells, Crusade for Justice (Coursepack)

Thursday-- W.E.B. DuBois, "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" (Coursepack)

#### **Week Seven (March 5)**

Tuesday-- Booker T. Washington, "The Atlanta Exposition Address"; W.E.B. DuBois, "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others" (Coursepack)

**Week Eight (March 12)**

SECOND PAPER DUE TUESDAY, MARCH 13!

**Unit Three**

**From Plantation to Ghetto**

**Week Nine (March 26)**

Thursday-- Marcus Garvey, "African Fundamentalism" and "A Dialogue" (On Reserve)

**Week Ten (April 2)**

Tuesday-- Langston Hughes Poetry (Coursepack)  
Thursday-- Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God, pp. 1-31

**Week Eleven (April 9)**

Tuesday-- Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God, pp. 32-184

THIRD PAPER DUE TUESDAY APRIL 17!

**Unit Four**

**Civil Rights, Black Power, and Beyond**

**Week Twelve (April 16)**

Thursday-- Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter From Birmingham Jail" (On Reserve)

**Week Thirteen (April 23)**

Thursday-- Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton, "Black Power: Its Need and Substance" (On Reserve); Martin Luther King, Jr., "Black Power" (On Reserve);

**Week Fourteen (April 30)**

Tuesday-- Martin Luther King, Jr. "Beyond Vietnam" (Coursepack)

FOURTH PAPER DUE THURSDAY, MAY 3!

**Week Fifteen (May 7)**

Tuesday-- bell hooks, Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism, 1-49, 87-117, 159-196.

**TAKE HOME FINAL DUE—Tuesday, May 15—1:00 P.M.**

## PLAGIARISM AND PROPER CITATION

### What Is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism occurs when an individual, either intentionally or unintentionally, takes credit for work or ideas that are not his or her own. Copying from another student's paper is plagiarism. So is copying from a book. Taking the ideas from a book without proper citation is also plagiarism. Writing a paper in partnership with someone else and then handing it in under your name alone is also a type of plagiarism.

Plagiarism is theft. It is the academic equivalent of robbing a bank. It is a very serious offense.

It is a common misconception that you can take a passage from a book, change a few words around, and put it in your paper without being guilty of plagiarism. This is not the case. You must either quote the passage directly, paraphrase it and footnote it, or put it completely in your own words. Here is an illustration of this kind of plagiarism:

The book says-- "*As a moral document, the Emancipation Proclamation, which in fact freed no slaves, was inadequate. As a political document, it was nearly flawless.*"

You write-- *The Emancipation Proclamation was not adequate as a moral document because it freed no slaves. It was nearly flawless, however, as a political document.*

THIS IS PLAGIARISM!

### How Do I Avoid Plagiarism?

The easiest way to avoid unintentional plagiarism from a book or article is to take notes in your own words. Take down the useful information that the source provides, but put it in your own words-- even during the notetaking process. If you think that you may want to quote the source, take down the quote exactly and indicate clearly in your notes that it is a direct quote.

In this course, you are allowed to discuss your ideas with other students and even show papers to each other for feedback. You must, however, come up with your own ideas and do the writing yourself. Taking the ideas from another student's paper and changing a few words around is still plagiarism-- so don't do it. Remember, if you plagiarize from a friend's paper, you will be implicating him or her in your crime.

### What Is Citation?

Citation is a method used to give credit for ideas that you have borrowed and to let the reader know where you are getting your information from. A properly cited paper contains both a bibliography (also known as a works cited page) and footnotes.

### **What Items Should Be Included in the Bibliography?**

The bibliography lists every source that you used in writing your paper. It lets the reader where your information comes from. Every book, article, or other source that you consulted in writing your paper must be included. Sources that you looked at but decided not to use do not need to be included. You do not need to list class lectures in your bibliographies for this course. Other professors, however, may have a different policy. It never hurts to ask.

### **What Needs to Be Footnoted?**

Footnotes are used to give credit for ideas that you have borrowed. All direct quotes and paraphrases must be footnoted. You must also footnote any idea that you borrow from another author.

Footnotes are also used to let the reader know where information that is not "common knowledge" comes from. Information that is widely known ("common knowledge") does not need to be footnoted. You would not, for example, have to footnote the fact that Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation on September 22, 1862. Information that is not widely known, however, must be footnoted. You would, for example, have to footnote the fact that by July 1862 Lincoln had reached the conclusion that he had no alternative but to issue an emancipation proclamation and that he told this to two close advisors.

### **What Footnote Form Must I Use?**

Any standard form of citation (including parenthetical citation) is acceptable in this course. Footnotes do not have to be placed at the bottom of the page. They may be listed on a special footnote page at the end of the paper.

### **What If I Have Questions?**

If you have any questions about plagiarism and proper citation, please ask the professor.