

Introduction to African American Culture Fall 2010

AFR 301 35235 ANT 310L 30035 AMS 315 29550 TD 311T 25395

Instructor

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Teaching Assistants

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***"Where are we and whose country is this anyway?"***

***June Jordan, 1985***

## ***Course Description/Objectives:***

This course is an exploration of African American culture that provides students with analytical tools to critically examine and consciously participate in the ongoing construction of African American culture. Particular attention is given to key terms such as race, culture, Blackness, hegemony, aesthetics, and politics. Emphasis is placed on Black agency as demonstrated through the social, political, and representational choices made by African Americans.

## ***Readings:***

Nell Painter, *Creating Black Americans: African American History and Its Meanings, 1619 to the Present*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

On Electronic Reserve at <http://reserves.lib.utexas.edu/eres/>

## ***Assignments:***

**Essays:** You will write three critical reviews based your attendance at three different events sponsored by the Warfield Center for African and African American Studies or approved by Dr. Jones. A list of Warfield Center events will be provided throughout the semester. The critical review will consist of a brief summary of the event and a discussion of the relationship between the event and the concepts/ideas presented in the course. Each essay must reference and define at least two theories/ideas/concepts discussed in class. You will be assessed on your understanding of the theories you examine, and the quality of your writing. Each essay will be 3 full, double-spaced typewritten pages using Times New Roman 12 pt. font with standard margins. The third page of the essay must cover at least ¾ of the page. Be sure to staple your essays, and include a header with your name and page numbers on each page. **Each essay is due no later than one week after the event being reviewed. Essays must be handed in during class hours on the assigned due dates.** A grading rubric for the essays will be provided.

**Exams:** There will be three in-class exams. The second and third exams are cumulative with respect to theories/concepts/ideas, but are not cumulative with respect to events and dates. The test material will come from class discussion, the required text, the readings on e-reserve through the UT library. The exams will include objective questions as well as short essays.

**Attendance:** You are allowed two unexcused absences. If you go beyond two unexcused absences, your final grade will be lowered by one letter. If you come to class 10 minutes late or if you leave class early, you will be considered absent. **It is your responsibility to insure that the Teaching Assistants have marked you as present. Disputes over attendance will not be considered.** By UT Austin policy, you must notify Dr. Jones of your pending absence to observe religious holy days at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance for the holy days. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

**Class Discussion:** You can earn a maximum of 5 points for in-class discussion. Contributing to the ideas presented during class is a vital part of your education. In addition to spontaneous contributions, each student will be asked to give a one-minute report on some aspect of the readings. These assignments will be given during the class period before they are presented and are worth one point.

### **Grading Scale**

|                        |          |             |   |   |
|------------------------|----------|-------------|---|---|
| 3 Essays (3 x 14 pts.) | 42 pts.  | 90-100 pts. | = | A |
| 3 Exams (3 x 14 pts.)  | 42       | 89-80 pts.  | = | B |
| Class Discussion       | 6        | 79-70       | = | C |
| Attendance             | 10       | 69-60 pts.  | = | D |
| TOTAL                  | 100 pts. |             |   |   |

## ***Course Guidelines***

### **Classroom Protocols—**

\*You must display your class card during each class. If you do not have your card, you must make a new one. If it is not displayed, you will be counted as absent.

\*No electronic devices may be used during class time.

\*Students engaged in non-class activities during class time will have a reduction in their overall grade for the course.

\*During discussion, everyone will observe the guidelines for hearty, respectful debate that we will establish together.

\*When called upon, you are expected to respond with a respectful intelligent answer.

\*Bring the text to every class period except when there will be an exam, a film, or a guest speaker.

### **For Assignments—**

\*Students will observe the University of Texas Honor Code: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

\*Students cheating on exams or plagiarizing papers will be reported to the Dean of Liberal Arts for academic sanctions. If you are suspected of cheating, you will not receive a grade for the questionable exam or paper.

\*Late assignments will not be accepted.

\*Papers must be handed in to the appropriate Teaching Assistant during class time on the day the paper is due. Email essays will not be accepted.

\*No make-up exams will be given, except in cases of documented emergency, serious illness, or legitimate conflicts with other classes. Having more than one exam or project on the same day does NOT constitute an emergency. If you anticipate a conflict, contact Dr. Jones one week prior to the test date. If an emergency arises, contact Dr. Jones, Ms. Martin, or Ms. Kpotie immediately.

\*Grade disputes must be initiated within seven calendar days from the receipt of the grades. After that time, disputes will not be considered.

### **Course Support—**

\*Email is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your email for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible for keeping the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>.

\*The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone).

\*The UT Learning Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/utlc/>

\*Undergraduate Writing Center: <http://uwc.utexas.edu/>

\*Counseling & Mental Health Center: <http://cmhc.utexas.edu/>

\*Career Exploration Center: <http://www.utexas.edu/student/careercenter/>

\*Student Emergency Services: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/>

***NOTE: On the course schedule, use the following key—***

Last names are authors whose work can be found in the EReserve for this class.

Items in quotations marks are films we will view in class.

Chapters refer to the chapters in *Creating Black Americans*.

***ALSO NOTE: The course schedule is a guide to our work this semester. Readings and dates may change as we allow for spontaneous rigorous classroom discussions.***

## **Course Schedule**

|            |    |                                             |                                |
|------------|----|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>AUG</b> | 26 | Introduction to African American Culture    |                                |
|            | 31 | Begley, Angier, hooks                       |                                |
| <b>SEP</b> | 2  | “Ethnic Notions”                            |                                |
|            | 7  | Chapters 1 & 2                              |                                |
|            | 9  | Holloway, Jones                             |                                |
|            | 14 | Hebdige, Williams                           |                                |
|            | 16 | Macintosh, Chapter 8                        |                                |
|            | 21 | Appiah, Fanon                               |                                |
|            | 23 | “Rosewood”                                  | <b>ESSAY I—No Later Than</b>   |
|            | 28 | “Rosewood”                                  |                                |
|            | 30 | Chapter 9                                   |                                |
| <b>OCT</b> | 5  | <b>EXAM I</b>                               |                                |
|            | 7  | Kelley                                      |                                |
|            | 12 | DuBois                                      |                                |
|            | 14 | Combahee River Collective (EReserve)        |                                |
|            | 19 | Davis                                       |                                |
|            | 21 | “A Place of Rage”                           | <b>ESSAY II—No Later than</b>  |
|            | 26 | Moynihan (1965) 1-55                        |                                |
|            | 28 | Asante, Chapter 14                          |                                |
| <b>NOV</b> | 2  | <b>EXAM II</b>                              |                                |
|            | 4  | Literature and Music                        |                                |
|            | 9  | Guest Lecture                               |                                |
|            | 11 | Chapter 3                                   |                                |
|            | 16 | “Black Is, Black Ain’t”                     |                                |
|            | 18 | “Sinbad,” “Marching Bands”                  |                                |
|            | 23 | Chapter 15                                  | <b>ESSAY III—No Later Than</b> |
|            | 25 | <b>THANKGIVING HOLIDAY – NO CLASS</b>       |                                |
|            | 30 | Epilogue in <i>Creating Black Americans</i> |                                |
| <b>DEC</b> | 2  | <b>EXAM III</b>                             |                                |