

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE
(AFR 301, ANT 310L, TD 311T, AMS 315)
Fall 2010

Room: UTC 4.134
Instructor: Dr. Edmund T. Gordon
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will provide students with the analytical tools to critically explore and consciously and constructively participate in the ongoing process of the construction of African American Culture. The course focuses on Black cultural as politics. The first section of the course will begin with an interrogation of key concepts such as race, culture, blackness, power and politics. Then we will go on to briefly explore the history of African Americans cultural politics. The second section of the course will focus in on cultural spheres that are components of African American culture. In each we will look at their evolution, contemporary expression, and alternatives with special attention to the social and political processes both inside and outside Black communities of which they are a part.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. **Class Attendance and Participation (10 pts).** Students are required to attend class (6pts) and participate in class discussion (4pts). Attendance will be taken at every class meeting. Students attending 90% or more of classes will receive 6 pts. Those attending between 66% - 90% of classes will receive their percentage of classes attended of the 6 available points. Those attending between 50% and 66% of classes will receive 2 pts. **ANY STUDENT WHO MISSES MORE THAN 50% OF THIS COURSE'S CLASSES WILL AUTOMATICALLY FAIL THE COURSE.** Participation points will be jointly determined by the instructor and TAs. Class participation will be calculated on the basis of participation in class discussion, discussion with instructor and TA after class, and discussion that takes place with instructor and TA during office hours.

2. **Two Exams (60 pts.)** There will be two in-class exams, one at the end of each section of the course testing only materials covered during that section. Each exam is worth 30 pts.

3. **Two Quizzes (10 pts.)** There will be two in-class quizzes, one will test knowledge of African-American history and the other will test knowledge of the history of Blacks at the University of Texas. Materials for these quizzes will not be covered in class. They are available on line and on electronic reserves. There is a study guide for on electronic reserves. Both quizzes will be administered 9/30/10. Each quiz is worth 5 pts. Each quiz can be taken a second time to improve ones grade. Students wishing to retake these quizzes must make arrangements with the Prof. and/or TA's to do so.

4. **Two Participation/Research Essays (20 pts.)**. We will provide a constantly updated list of approved events having to do with the African American experience on and off campus. You may also petition the instructor for permission to attend and write about an event of your choice. You are required to attend at least two of these events. After each you will write an essay providing a **summary and critical review of the event and relate it to materials presented in this course**. Essays must also include **title, time, place, and sponsor of the event**. These essays will be no less than three and no more than four double-spaced typewritten pages. These essays must be submitted accompanied by proof of attendance. Your first essay is due 10/7/10 in class and the second essay 11/18/10 in class. Essays may be turned in at any time before the last due date for each. Each essay is worth 10 pts.

Readings for African American History Quiz on line at:

www.blackpast.org

<http://www.lib.washington.edu/subject/History/tm/black.html>,

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/aahtml/exhibit/aointro.html>,

<http://afroamhistory.about.com/mbody.htm>

ALL OTHER READINGS WILL BE AVAILABLE ON ELECTRONIC RESERVES

<http://reserves.lib.utexas.edu/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=4972>.

(Reading for Black UT History Quiz: Marsh Duran (1979) 5-26)

SEQUENCE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Introduction to the Course

Section I: Race, Culture, Power, Blackness, Black Culture

Topic I: Race and Blackness

1) Race?

Readings: <http://www.understandingrace.org/home.html>

2) Racism and social inequality based in race, class, and gender.

Readings: Macintosh (1989) 10-12; <http://sociology.ucsc.edu/whorulesamerica/book.html>

Video: *Rosewood*

3) Blackness, who is Black and who is not.

Reading: Fanon (1967) 109-140;

Video: *Black is Black Ain't*

Topic II: Culture and Power

4) Culture, what is it? Culture and power = hegemony. What is cultural politics?

Readings: Williams (1983) 87-93; Hebdige (1989) 1-19

Topic III: African-American Culture

5) Is there a Black culture? What does it consist of and how does it relate to Anglo culture.

Reading: Dubois (1973), Frazier (1939)

6) The (re)creation of African American culture in the Americas.

Readings: Holloway (1990) 1-18

Exam I (tentatively scheduled 10/14/10)

Section II African American Cultural Forms: Pathology - Alternatives

Topic I: Racism, Black Culture and the Culture of Poverty

7) Gendered Stereotypes through Black History

Readings: TBA

8) Moynihan, Moyers and Black Cultural Deficiency

Reading: Moynihan (1965) 1-55

Video: *Vanishing Black Family*

9) From Biological to Cultural Racism

Reading: Kelley (1997) 15-42

Topic II: Black Family and Social Organization

10) The Black Family

Reading: Hill (2003) 107-149

Topic III: Politics of Black Gender and Sexuality

11) Black Male Cultural Form

Reading: Gordon (1997)

12) Black Female Cultural Form

Reading: Davis (1981) 4-29

Topic IV: The Politics of Black Expressive Culture

13) Graphic Arts and Black Representation

Reading: TBA

Video: *Bamboozled*

14) Black Music

Reading: West (1988) 177-187

EXAM II (12/02/10)