COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Almost three decades ago, anthropologist and pioneer of African Diaspora Studies, St. Clair Drake, asserted, “the diaspora analogy…needs constant critical analysis if it is to be a useful guide to research as well as a striking metaphor.” This seminar is designed to introduce students to the variety of ideas that underlie the articulation of the construct of the “African diaspora.” Although structured through the understanding of the African diaspora as an historical formation, the focus is on the African diaspora as a distinct intellectual project as well as a political one. As such, we will explore the ways scholars have conceptualized and theorized the “diasporadic condition” of Black peoples, and how the community is imagined. These questions have undergirded the contemporary struggle over the meanings of race, place, identity, and consciousness within the African diaspora. Thus, their full examination necessitates intensive discussions and explorations of a number of issues.

In our engagement with theorizations of the African diaspora, we will explore, among other things, global/transnational understandings and articulations of Blackness; the (indispensable?) role of Africa in diasporic identity formations; the relationship between politics and Black cultural production and expression; the interrelationship of race, culture, gender, sexuality and ethnicity; notions of “roots” and “routes” in structuring the diasporadic condition; issues of cultural syncretism and hybridity; the unstable contradiction between notions of “essentialist” origins and social constructions of Black identities; and the “Austin School Manifesto” – a collective living document and approach to Diaspora scholarship and praxis developed over the years by UT Department of Anthropology’s African Diaspora Graduate Program.

This seminar meets the Dept. of Anthropology’s core requirement. As a “sixth” core course, it addresses both the anthropology and archaeology of the African Diaspora.
COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA:

1) Attendance Policy: Attendance is required, and roll will be taken. Seminar participants are allowed one absence (excused or unexcused). Each additional (unexcused) absence will result in a 10-point deduction. Please note: a tardiness of 15 minutes or more will be considered an unexcused absence.

2) Seminar Coordination/Discussion Leading (10 points each = 20 points): Seminar participants will each lead or co-lead two class discussions and prepare a 1-2 page outline for distribution at the beginning of class. Each outline should briefly summarize key points/arguments for the day’s reading(s) and provide questions/comments for group discussion.

3) Critical Essay (15 points): This 3-5 pp. essay should critically assess the readings for “SECTION I: Framing the Discourse; Foundations”, which represent the various theories, political positions, and perspectives of the diaspora that constitute the foundations and early trajectories of African diaspora scholarship. DUE DATE: Friday, February 18.

4) Annotated Bibliography (30 points): Seminar participants will submit an annotated bibliography consisting of 10-12 sources. It is hoped that this assignment will either help students prepare for written exams, fellowship/grant applications, or to begin organizing chapters for the dissertation. DUE DATE: Friday, April 8. (Although this assignment is not due until April, it is advised that work begin on these at the start of the semester.) Please follow the instructions below in completing this assignment.

Compiling the Annotated Bibliography:
A) Choose 10-12 sources mostly from the seminar readings.
B) Each entry of the bibliography should: 1) summarize the author’s argument and type of approach, and 2) provide an example of each from the text for clarification. When preparing your citations, you might consider the following questions. How does the argument of each author compare to the others? Do their approaches emulate any aspects of the approaches taken by the authors discussed in class? Take care to use proper terminology and define the methodological terms. No single entry should be longer than one half of a single-spaced page.
C) Form: The annotated bibliography should be single-spaced within each individual entry and double-spaced between entries.

5) Conference Paper (35 points): The final assignment consists of a conference paper of 8-9 pp. maximum. The paper topic should reflect the themes discussed in this course and its intersection with individual student research interests and the necessary outside readings. Papers will be presented to the class. DUE DATE: April 26, May 3.

Policy on late assignments: A late assignment will only be accepted with prior approval from the instructors. In this case, only a one-week extension of the deadline will be granted and 5 points will be deducted from the assignment grade.
COURSE MATERIALS:

Articles posted on Blackboard:

All readings save for the books below will be posted on Blackboard under “Course Documents”.

Required Texts:

(The following books will be available at the UT Co-op.)


Recommended Text:

**SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS**

**January 18**  
Introduction; Syllabus Overview

**SECTION I**  
Framing the Discourse; Foundations

**January 25**  
Anthropology and the African Diaspora


**February 1**  
Framing Diaspora; Conceptualizing the *African* Diaspora


**February 8**  
Ethiopianism, Pan-Africanism, African Nationalism, Negritude


Blyden, Edward (1887), “Ethiopia Stretching out her hands unto God; or, Africa’s Service to the World”
February 15

**Syncretism/Cultural Continuities, Afrocentrism**


Frazier, E. Franklin (1942), “Significance of the African Background”


**SECTION II**

**Archaeology’s Interventions**

February 22

**African Diaspora Archaeology**


**SECTION III**

**Blackness and Global Racial Formations**

March 1

**Theorizing Blackness (Pt. I): Navigating the “Black Atlantic”**

Gilroy, Paul (1993), *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*

March 8 Theorizing Blackness (Pt. II): Race, Place, and Identity

Hall, Stuart (1994), “Cultural Identity and Diaspora”

March 15 SPRING BREAK

SECTION IV Fieldwork and Ethnographies in the Diaspora

March 22 Politics of Diaspora Fieldwork

“The Austin Manifesto”
Baber, W. “St. Clair Drake: Scholar and Activist”

March 29
Wekker, Gloria (2006), The Politics of Passion…

April 5

April 12
Anderson, M. (2009), Black and Indigenous…

April 19
Browning, B. (1998), Infectious Rhythm…

SECTION V (Re)Envisioning African Diaspora Studies – Our Conference

April 26 Conference Papers – Panel 1

May 3 Conference Papers – Panel 2; course evaluations; final words!