

Ethnic Studies 149/HIUS 139
African American History of the 20th Century
“Black Freedom Struggles”

Spring 2018
HSS 1128A
M,W,F 4:00-4:50pm

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*Please write “ETHN 149 or HIUS139” in the subject line or the e-mail might be directed to my spam folder.

Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:00-2:00pm and **by appointment**

Epigraph

“Encouraged by those Northern thinkers who insisted that Negroes were human, the black worker sought freedom by running away from slavery. The physical geography of America with its paths north, by swamp, river and mountain range; the daring of black revolutionaries like Henson and Tubman; and the extra-legal efforts of abolitionists made this more and more easy.”

- William Edward Burghardt Du Bois (*Black Reconstruction*, 13)

...

I have been locked by the lawless.
Handcuffed by the haters.
Gagged by the greedy.
And, if i know any thing at all,
it's that a wall is just a wall
and nothing more at all.
It can be broken down.

I believe in living.
I believe in birth.
I believe in the sweat of love
and in the fire of truth.

And I believe that a lost ship,
steered by tired, seasick sailors,
can still be guided home
to port.

- Assata Shakur, “Affirmation,”

“And it's no easy way out. We just got to wake up and face it folks. And if I can face the issue, you can too...But you see its poison. Its poison for us not speak what we know is right. As Christ said from the 17th chapter of Acts in the 26th verse says, ‘has made of one blood all nations, for to dwell on the face of the earth.’ Then its no different, we just have different colors. And brother you can believe this or not, I been sick of this system as long as I can remember!”

- Fannie Lou Hamer, “Mass Meeting Speech”

Course Description

African American History can be understood in part as a history of movements toward freedom. Ever since black people began arriving on the shores of North America, African and Americanized African peoples have been resisting the contexts of slavery, structural racism, oppression, and exclusion in which they found themselves; struggling to achieve freedom. In this class we will approach our study of African American History in the 20th Century by asking ourselves an important question: how do significant historical events of the 20th Century relate to the history (and genealogy) of black freedom struggles in the US? In other words, we will frame our study of Af. Am. history during the 20th c. within the prevailing historical contexts of black freedom struggles dating back to 1619.

Our class will focus predominantly on the first 75 years of the 20th c. This course will look at meaningful people, events, and processes in order to think about the ways in which black people defined ‘freedom’ and worked to achieve it in the 20th c. (What happens to a dream differed?) This course is not a broad survey class in which you will be asked to memorize dates and then repeat them on an exam. Instead you will be asked to think critically and creatively about structures, processes, and events - identifying similarities and differences over time. Most importantly, we will develop critical reading and writing skills as tools to help us cultivate a critical approach to the study of history. Furthermore, we will use the historic contexts elaborated in lectures and through assigned readings in order to analyze novels/auto biography. The goal is to foster an ability to think about history as alive, and active; something that structures and informs human relationships and interactions. Therefore, the assignments in the course including the take home midterm and final are intended to help students develop this approach to history.

Through reading both primary and secondary source materials, students will learn to analyze and interpret significant people, events, processes, and organizations in their proper historical contexts using standard scholarly methods. Each student will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of major historical events, processes, people, and groups including (but not limited to) Emancipation, Jim Crow, *Plessy v Ferguson*, The Great Migration, the Civil Rights Movement, the UNIA, the NAACP, Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee, The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense.
- Demonstrate an ability to analyze novels, auto-biography, speeches, and other cultural productions using secondary scholarly materials and ‘close-reading’ practices associated with literary criticism.

Logistics

You can reach me by email, in my office hours, or by appointment at any time during the quarter. I respond to students’ emails within 1 business day; however, I do not answer students’ emails on weekends.

This syllabus is subject to change; any changes will be announced well in advance in class and/or by email. **Computers of any type are not allowed in this class.**

ADA Statement: If you have a disability or condition that compromises your ability to complete the requirements of this course, **you should inform me as soon as possible of your needs.** I will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate you. If, as a result of a disability, you cannot accept the content or terms of this syllabus, you need to notify me in writing within one week of receiving it.

Policy on Late Papers and Make-up Assignments: With exceptions for emergencies, I do not allow late papers and do not allow make-up assignments. You have the syllabus well enough in advance to know what is due and when.

Primary Ground Rules: (a) The number one ground rule to which we will all adhere is to engage in respectful and considerate discussion in the classroom. You will be expected to approach this course with a patient, open mind, ready to absorb new facts and new ideas about topics that are, by their nature, subjects of controversy and disagreement. A good classroom environment should stimulate you to think for yourselves and raise critical questions based upon a thorough survey of the evidence before you (readings and other assigned materials). Please take note that abusive and harsh language will not be tolerated in this classroom. These ground rules are reflected in the UCSD Principles of Community to which we are all expected to adhere (<http://www-vcba.ucsd.edu/principles.htm>).

(b) Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form. This means plagiarism and other forms of dishonesty such as producing assignments for others. Please become familiar with the UCSD Policy on Academic Integrity (<http://senate.ucsd.edu/manual/Appendices/app2.htm>). Any academic work that you submit in this course, which violates the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship will automatically receive an “F” for the assignment and may result in you failing the course.

Other Ground Rules: All phones and portable electronic devices (PDA/ Smartphones/ iPads/etc.) must be turned off and may not leave your bag in the classroom. With the exception of students with a documented need for accommodation, laptop computers cannot be used in lecture. Students with permission to take notes on their laptops must mute all sounds, disable their wireless connections, and sit in the front row of class. For all cases of students texting/facebooking/instant messaging, I have a zero tolerance policy: you will promptly be asked to leave class and your participation/attendance grade will drop 5 percent. The same goes for students who are sleeping or reading non-relevant materials.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Nella Larsen, *Quicksand* (1928)

Toni Morrison, *Home* (2012)

Assata Shukur, *Assata: An Autobiography* (1987)

Selected chapters and journal articles will be placed on our TritonED course website and/or emailed to you directly.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance, Participation, Reading, and Writing:

1. I expect each student to attend all class sessions. You may miss **three (3) class sessions**, no questions asked. **But if you have more than 3 unexcused absences you will fail the course.**
2. Since each regular class session will consist of a lecture and discussion it is vital that you keep up with the reading so that you can contribute to the class. You should expect to spend **about four hours per week on the assigned readings**. (There are 168 hours in a week.)
3. **You are responsible for checking the TED website and your UCSD email frequently (at least once a week, though I recommend daily).**

Please feel free see me to discuss strategies for productive reading for the course.

Critical Reading Questions: Students are expected to submit **5 critical reading questions** over the course of the quarter. More information will be distributed at the end of Week 1.

In-Class Writing: We will often spend time writing in class responding to a prompt in order to help us develop our ideas and aid in conversation. This will be a time where you can engage with assigned reading materials in depth before sharing with your fellow classmates.

Midterm: For your midterm exam you will write a short essay (about 5 pages) analyzing and engaging with Nella Larson's novel *Quicksand*. I will introduce the technique of 'close reading' to you and you will be asked to use it on your midterm assignment. The midterm will help you prepare for your final paper. The Midterm is Due Friday, May 4 in class.

Final Paper: Students will be required to write a literary analysis paper in which you analyze a novel in depth, using themes, ideas, and concepts developed in lecture, discussion and through the assigned course materials. More information will be distributed beginning in week 5. The Final is due Thursday, June 14 at 5 pm.

Grade Distribution

Attendance: 5% (more than 3 absences will result in a failing grade)

Participation: 10%

Critical Reading Questions: 15%

In-Class Writing: 20%

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final Paper: 25%

General Grading Standards:

A = **Superior** performance; meets assignment requirements, and demonstrates exceptional execution of those requirements (meaning that your work exceeds the ordinary effort and execution); reflects outstanding insight and depth; grammatically and stylistically excellent; would be considered a model example of assignment completion.

B = **Good**, solid performance; meets assignment requirements, and demonstrates competent execution of those requirements; reflects insight and depth; grammatically and stylistically strong; may have one or more problem areas.

C = **Average** performance; meets assignment requirements, minimally; grammatically and stylistically adequate; may have two or more problem areas; papers may have multiple

factual, conceptual, and/or grammatical errors.

D = **Below average** performance; does not meet minimal assignment requirements; has several fundamental problem areas; has multiple errors throughout the paper.

F = **Inferior** performance; does not meet assignment requirements; not deserving of credit.

*****If you are taking this course P/NP, you must take the quizzes, take the midterm, and submit a final paper, attend class and participate in order to get a passing grade*****

Schedule

Week 1 (Apr. 2) — Up From Slavery

Course Introduction and Overview

- W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction* “The Propaganda of History,” (18p)
- W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction* “Looking Forward,” (54p)

Week 2 (Apr. 9) — Up From Slavery & Migration

- F. J. Griffin, *Who Set You Flowin’* “Intro” and “Chpt 1” (44p)
- F. J. Griffin, *Who Set You Flowin’* “Chpt 2” (44p)
- [1] Angela Y. Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* “I used to be your sweet mama,” (37p); [2] St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton *Black Metropolis* “The Great Migration,” (7p)

Week 3 (Apr. 16) — Migration & Urbanization

- Angela Y. Davis, *Women Race & Class* “Chp. 7 Women Suffrage at the Turn of the Century,” and “Chp. 8 Black Women and the Club Movement” (26p)
- **St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton *Black Metropolis* “Race Riot and Aftermath” & “Between Two Wars,” (32p)
- Shana L. Redmond, *Anthem* Chp. 1 “From Race to Nation,” [UNIA] (41p)

Week 4 (Apr. 23) — Migration & Urbanization pt.II - Quicksand

- Nella Larsen, *Quicksand* chp. 1 – 7 (45p)
- Nella Larsen, *Quicksand* chp. 8 – 16 (49p)
- Nella Larsen, *Quicksand* chp. 17 – 25 (40p)

Week 5 (Apr. 30) — Organization & Advancing the Race

- Shana L. Redmond, *Anthem* Chp. 2 “Extending Diaspora,” [NAACP] (35p)
- St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton *Black Metropolis* “Advancing the Race,” (38p)

MIDTERM EXAM due Friday, May 4

Week 6 (May 7) — Black Women, Organizing, and Activism

- Theoharis, Woodard, and Gore, *Want to Start a Revolution?* “Intro,” (25p)
- Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement* “Intro,” and Chp. 3 (53p)
- Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement* Chp. 4 (42p)

Week 7 (May 14) — Home

- Toni Morrison, *Home* chp. 1 – 3 (38p)
- Toni Morrison, *Home* chp. 4 – 8 (49p)
- Toni Morrison, *Home* chp. 9 – 16 (52p)

Week 8 (May 21) — Black Women, Organizing, and Activism pt.II

- [1] Jeanne Theoharis, *Want to Start a Revolution?* Chp. 5 “A Life History of Being Rebellious: The Radicalism of Rosa Parks,” (23p) [2] Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the BFM* Chp. 6 (26p)
- Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement* chp. 8 “Mentoring a New Generation of Activists,” (34p)
- Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement* chp. 9 “The Empowerment of an Indigenous Southern Black Leadership,” (26p)

Week 9 (May 28) — From Civil Rights to Black Power

*Memorial Day – No Lecture Monday, May 28

- Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement* chp. 10 “Mississippi Goddamn,” (31p)
- Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement* chp. 11 “The Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party and the Radical Campaigns of the 1960s and 1970s,” (27p)
- Joy James, *Want to Start a Revolution?* Chp. 6 “Framing a Panther: Assata Shakur and Black Female Agency,” (23p)

Week 10 (Jun. 4) — Assata / Final Prep.

- Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography* (Selections TBA)
- Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography* (Selections TBA)
- Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography* (Selections TBA)

Week 11 (Jun. 11) — Final

***FINAL EXAM DUE Thursday, June 14 at 5 PM**