NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

HISTORY V55.0532

WORLD CULTURES:

THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

Spring 2004
Professor Michael Gomez
Office: King Juan Carlos I Center 511
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10:30am-12:30pm, Tuesdays
Office Phone: 212-998-8624

BOOKS FOR PURCHASE

Reading Packet (available at New University Copy and Graphics, 11 Waverly Place)
Robert J. Allison, ed., *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*
Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
John Hunwick and Eve Troutt Powell, eds., *The African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam*
Esteban Montejo, *Biography of a Runaway Slave*
Robert Santiago, ed., *Boricua: Influential Puerto Rican Writings - An Anthology*
Benedita da Silva, *An Afro-Brazilian Woman's Story of Politics and Love*
Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants of the Harlem Community*

OVERVIEW

This course will introduce students to the history of the African Diaspora; that is, the history of the dispersal of Africans and their descendants throughout much of the world. From antiquity, such populations have made their way through the realms of the Mediterranean and Europe, Islam, Asia, and the Americas. At times their movement has been voluntary; often it was compelled. Throughout the long history of the African Diaspora, the African has been both conqueror and conquered, slaveholder and enslaved. In all circumstances, Africans and their progeny have made significant and lasting contributions to the economies and cultures of the societies into which they have been introduced.

We will attempt to follow the progression of this Diaspora, in effect a series of diasporas, both temporally and thematically. Our queries are multiple: What were the conditions that led to their dispersals? What were the circumstances under which Africans were received? If introduced under conditions of inequality, what are the
legacies of those inequalities? How was the fabric of the society in question altered? What have been the cultural manifestations of the African presence? How have technologies and industries been impacted by their contributions? How have notions of collective identity changed over time? To what extent have the experiences throughout the African Diaspora converged/diverged?

Throughout the course, students will be assigned readings, but will need to attend the weekly lectures and recitations, which will establish continuity and a framework for understanding both the readings and the particular historical period within which the text is embedded. All readings should be prepared prior to class.

Grade Criteria

Response Papers   - 80% of final grade
Final Exam       - 20% of final grade

Response papers are to be 3pp in length (double-spaced, normal font) and argumentative. Assignments will be issued every two to three weeks, and will be graded on an A-F scale. All assignments must be completed to pass the course.

Policies

Recording and Transcription: Audio-taping and other methods of mechanized recording are not permitted unless authorized by the professor.

Late Work: Any work submitted after the particular due date will suffer the loss of one whole grade. Late work will not be accepted after the due date and time of the final assignment.

Probity: Violations of academic probity will meet with a response in conformity with official university policy. See attached addenda on academic guidelines and integrity.

Objectives

as a result of completing History V55.0532, each student will have:

- demonstrated a familiarity with the historical development of the African Diaspora.
- critically read primary texts.
- successfully written analytical response papers.
- successfully completed a final examination.

Website

Please regularly consult Blackboard for syllabi, addenda, assignments, suggested readings, and all information pertinent to the course.
Schedule

**Lectures** meet Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 2:00 to 3:15pm, Silver 714. 
**Recitation Schedules** and **Preceptors** are as follows:

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>002</td>
<td>Fri</td>
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<td>003</td>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>11:00-12:15pm</td>
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<td>004</td>
<td>Mon</td>
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<td>005</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>11am-12:15pm</td>
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<td>006</td>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>3:30-4:45pm</td>
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<td>007</td>
<td>Mon</td>
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**Lecture Schedule**

**Jan 20 and 22**

**Assigned Reading**

Frank Snowden, excerpts from *Before Color Prejudice* (packet)

**Further Reading**


**Jan 27 and 29**

**Assigned Reading**

Kebra Negast (or *The Queen of Sheba*) (packet)

**Further Reading**

Feb 3 and 5
Assigned Reading
The Classical Islamic World and Africa
Hunwick and Troutt Powell, *African Diaspora*

Further Reading

Feb 10 and 12
Assigned Reading
*Africans in the Islamic Imagination and Experience*
Hunwick and Troutt Powell, *African Diaspora*

Further Reading

Feb 17 and 19
Assigned Reading
*Global Slave Trades*
Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks* (packet)
Robert J. Allison, ed., *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*

Further Reading

Feb 24 and 26
Assigned Reading
*Slavery in the Americas*
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Further Reading
Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán, *La población negra de México*: 

March 2 and 4
Assigned Reading
Slavery in the Americas (continued)
Esteban Montejo, Biography of a Runaway Slave

March 9 and 11
Assigned Reading
Revolt
Carolyn Fick, The Making of Haiti, 15-45, 91-134 (packet)

Further Reading
March 15-19
SPRING BREAK

March 23 and 25
Assigned Reading
Freedom?
W.E.B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk (packet)
Verene Shepherd and Hilary Beckles, eds., Caribbean Freedom,

Further Reading
12-20, 132-140, 192-214, 238-244, 274-283 (packet)
W.E.B. Du Bois, Black Reconstruction; Ada Ferrer, Insurgent Cuba: Race, Nation, and Revolution, 1868-1898; Aline Helg, Our Rightful Share: The Afro-Cuban Struggle for Equality, 1886-1912; Leon F. Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery; Albert J. Raboteau, Slave
March 30 and April 1
Assigned Reading
Reconnecting: Movement and Belief
Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants of the Harlem Community*

Further Reading

April 6 and 8
Assigned Reading
Cultural Efflorescence
Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations*
Amy Jacques-Garvey, *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey*, excerpts (packet)

Further Reading

April 13 and 15
Assigned Reading
Post-World War Two Developments
Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*
LeRoi Jones, *Blues People*, excerpts (packet)

Further Reading

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<tr>
<td>April 20 and 22</td>
<td>Post-World War Two Developments (continued)</td>
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<td>Santiago, Boricua: Influential Puerto Rican Writings</td>
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<td>Benedita da Silva, An Afro-Brazilian Woman's Story of and Love</td>
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<td>Julia Alvarez, How the Garcia Girls lost Their Accents;</td>
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<td>Cristina Garcia, Dreaming in Cuban; Esmeralda Santiago, When I Was Puerto Rican.</td>
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<td>May 3</td>
<td>Last Day of Classes</td>
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<td>May 4</td>
<td>Reading Day</td>
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<td>May 5-12</td>
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