NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
HISTORY V55.0532

WORLD CULTURES: THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

Spring 2005
Professor Michael A. Gomez
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BOOKS FOR PURCHASE

Maria de los Reyes Castillo Bueno, Daisy Rubiera Castillo, *Reyita: The Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the Twentieth Century* (Duke U.)
Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (Monthly Review)
Harriet A. Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (Signet Classics)
Robert Levine and Jose Carlos Sebe Bom Meihy, *The Unedited Diaries of Carolina Maria de Jesus* (Rutgers U.)
Claude McKay, *Home to Harlem* (Northeastern U.)
Esteban Montejo, *Biography of a Runaway Slave* (Curbstone)
Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners* (Longman)
Reading Packet (available at New University Copy and Graphics, 11 Waverly Place)

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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Response Papers</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internet Project</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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**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.*

The **internet project** requires students to locate 15 (fifteen) internet sites that focus on a particular phenomenon in the African Diaspora. The subject must be contemporary (after 1990) and outside of the United States and the English-speaking Caribbean. The project can be organized around a particular theme, in which case multiple geographical locations can be included; or, the project can adhere around a subject in a single location, either expansive or restricted in scope, but clearly related (e.g., Europe or France). Examples of projects include: racism/xenophobia in France/Germany/Britain; vodoun in Haiti, the Garifuna; the influence of
hip hop in North Africa, Australia, Poland, etc.; concepts of beauty in Brazil; race and film in Latin America; sex workers and racial exploitation in Italy, etc. Printouts of a representative page of each site are to be accompanied by a one-page statement that introduces the subject and explains why the articles/sites were chosen. **The project is due at the beginning of class on April 14.**

**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**

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

**Website**

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

**Schedule**

**Lectures** meet Wednesdays and Thursdays, 8:00-9:15am, Silver 207.

**Recitation Schedules** and **Preceptors (TA’s)** are as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30-10:45am</td>
<td>Mon 002</td>
<td>Tisc LC1</td>
<td>(Tanya Huelett)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11-12:15pm</td>
<td>Mon 003</td>
<td>(Tanya Huelett)</td>
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<tr>
<td>12:30-1:45pm</td>
<td>Mon 004</td>
<td>Silver 701</td>
<td>(Edwina Ashie-Nikoi)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-3:15pm</td>
<td>Mon 005</td>
<td>Silver 408</td>
<td>(Edwina Ashie-Nikoi)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30-4:45pm</td>
<td>Mon 006</td>
<td>194M 202</td>
<td>(Devon Turner)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:55-6:10pm</td>
<td>Mon 007</td>
<td>Silver 406</td>
<td>(Devon Turner)</td>
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**Lecture Schedule**

**Jan 19 and 20**

**Assigned Reading**
Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, 1-17

**Further Reading**

**Jan 26 and 27**

**Assigned Reading**
Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, 18-28

**Further Reading**
*Kebran Negast* (or *The Queen of Sheba*) (reading packet)

**Feb 2 and 3**

**Assigned Reading**
Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, 29-55
Further Reading  

Feb 9 and 10  
**Assigned Reading**
Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, 57-81  
Robert J. Allison, ed., *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*

Further Reading  

Feb 16 and 17  
**Assigned Reading**
Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, 82-108  
Jacobs, *Incidents*

Further Reading  

Feb 23 and 24
Assigned Reading
Slavery in the Americas (continued)
Esteban Montejo, Biography of a Runaway Slave

March 2 and 3
Assigned Reading
Revolt
Gomez, Reversing Sail, 109-141
Further Reading

March 9 and 10
Assigned Reading
Freedom?
Gomez, Reversing Sail, 141-161
W.E.B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk (reading packet)
Verene Shepherd and Hilary Beckles, eds., Caribbean Freedom (reading packet)
Further Reading

March 14-18
SPRING BREAK

March 23 and 24
Assigned Reading
Reconnecting: Movement, Belief, Cultural Efflorescence
Gomez, Reversing Sail, 162-192
Amy Jacques-Garvey, Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey, excerpts (reading packet)
Further Reading
McKay, *Home to Harlem*

March 30 and 31
Assigned Reading
Reconnecting: A Latina Perspective
Castillo Bueno, *Reyita*

April 6 and 7
Assigned Reading
Post-World War Two Developments
Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, 193-219
Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*
LeRoi Jones, *Blues People*, excerpts (reading packet)

Further Reading

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### April 13 and 14
**Assigned Reading**
*Gender, Class, and Race in Brazil*
Levine and Sebe Bom Meihiy, *Unedited Diaries of Carolina Maria de Jesus*

**Further Reading**

### April 20 and 21
**Assigned Reading**
*Black Britons: One Aspect of the European Experience*
Selvon, *Lonely Londoners*

**Further Reading**

### April 27 and 28
**Assignment**
*Postmodern Meditations*
*Student Internet Projects*

### May 3
**Last Day of Classes**

### May 4
**Reading Day**

### May 5-12
**Final Exams**