

World Cultures: The African Diaspora
V55.0532
Monday/Wednesday 9:30-10:45
Silver 714

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Over the course of this semester we will examine the African Diaspora as an historic phenomenon. What aspects of culture, politics, identity, and social formations are illuminated when we think critically about the African Diaspora and the forces that propel it? Beginning with the factors that initiate the early modern contact between Europe and West Africa, we will consider the trans-Atlantic slave trade, the formation of black communities in Europe and the Americas and the impacts of those communities on contemporary figurations of Africa both politically and ideologically.

Required Texts

The following texts are required and are available for purchase at Shakespeare & Co., on Broadway near Waverly Place. They have also been placed on Reserve at Bobst Library.

Rolph-Michel Truillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon, 1995) D16.9 .T85 1995

Michael Gomez, *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora* (Cambridge, 2005) DT16.5 .G66 2005

Michael Gomez, ed., *Diasporic Africa: A Reader* (DT16.5 .D54 2006

Eve Troutt Powell and John Hunwick eds. *The African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam* (Markus Weiner, 2002) HT1317 .H86 2002

Various articles and chapters posted on blackboard or accessible through a library search engine.

Please note, when you have a reading from blackboard you are required to print it out and bring it with you to class and recitation. Failing to do so will seriously affect your class participation grade.

Assignments

Our intention in the design of this course is two-fold: You should leave here with an introduction to the overlapping phenomena that comprise the history of the African Diaspora—modern economies, race, cultural practices, religious beliefs, and the mobilizing of power to both construct and oppose racial and economic hierarchies. You should also leave here with a clear understanding of what it means to write and read critically and analytically.

You have a series of written assignments due over the course of the semester. These assignments are designed to support classroom and recitation work and must be handed in on time. It goes without saying that all written work must be original, any plagiarism will result in an “F” in the course.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in any form. Please read NYU’s statement on Academic Integrity here: <http://www.nyu.edu/cas/map/guidelines/academicintegrity.html> , and visit Northwestern University’s website <http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html> on avoiding plagiarism for a comprehensive discussion of what plagiarism entails.

Papers must be written using standard Chicago Manual of Style (also known as Turabian) citation form. This form uses footnotes for references, not parenthesis. **Any paper that doesn’t follow standard citation guidelines will be returned to you without a grade.** Citation format is quite specific—even if you believe that you know how to construct your citations use this website <http://www.lib.duke.edu/libguide/citing.htm> as a starting point—go to “Turabian Footnotes” on the “citing sources within your paper” link.

We will see a few films this semester. You are required to hand in a 2 page discussion of the film in the recitation following the screening. These discussions should briefly describe the film, and then discuss how the film illuminates or interrupts the readings and lectures that precede it.

The primary source assignments are short papers, 3-4 pages, in which your objective is to describe the document, provide a short contextual overview—which requires you to do a bit of outside work—and then enumerate some of the questions and issues raised in the document.

You will hand in a critical review of *Silencing the Past*. This is a 6-8 page paper in which you outline the work's main argument, discuss how the author uses sources, and outline some of the questions that the work raises. We strongly suggest, if you have not written a paper of this type or if you've had feedback on writing that suggests that you need some extra guidance, that you contact the Writing Center for an appointment, well in advance of the due date on this paper.

http://www.nyu.edu/cas/ewp/html/writing_center.html

There will be one final exam. We reserve the prerogative to administer short quizzes, without notice, if we see the need.

Recitation Participation 25%

Primary Source Papers & film responses 25%

Critical Review 25%

Exam 25%

It is your responsibility to keep copies of all written work and to regularly check blackboard for any updates or changes to the course schedule.

Introductions and The Challenge of "Diaspora"

Jan 17

African Pasts

Jan 22 and 24

Readings: Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, Part 1, Old World Dimensions, pp. 7-58. Selections from Powell and John Hunwick eds. *The African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam*.

Encounters and Movement Cultures

Jan 29 and 31

Readings: Gomez, , Chap 4, "Transatlantic Moment," in *Reversing Sail*, 59-81; Philip Morgan, "The Cultural Implications of the Atlantic Slave Trade: African regional origins, American Destinations, and new world Developments," *Slavery & Abolition* 1997 18(1): 122-145 [blackboard]; El Hamel, "Blacks and Slavery in Morocco: The Question of the Haratin at the End of the 17th c.," in *Diasporic Reader*, 177-99; John Thornton, "Cannibals, Witches, and Slave Traders in the Atlantic World," *William and Mary Quarterly* 60 (April 2003) 272-92
<http://www.historycooperative.org//journals/wm/60.2;>

Enslavement—Labor, Power, and Violence

February 5 and 7

Readings: Gomez, chapter 5 "Enslavement," in *Reversing Sail*, 82-105; Knight, "In an Ocean of Blue: West African Indigo Workers in the Atlantic World to 1800," in *Diasporic Africa*, 28-44; Judith Carney, "This Was "Woman's Wuck," chap 4 in *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Harvard, 2001) blackboard.

New World Political Economies (Slavery in the Americas—Crafting a Past)

**February 12 and 14* *Primary Source paper due on February 12th.*

Readings Bluett, *Some Memoirs of the Life of Job, Son of Solomon* (1734) <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/bluett/bluett.html>;

Alexander X. Byrd, "Eboe, Country, Nation, and Gustavus Vassa's Interesting Narrative," *The William and Mary Quarterly* January 2006

<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/wm/63.1/byrd.html>;

Reis, "Batuque: African Drumming and Dance between Repression and Concession: bahia, 1808-55," 45-63 in *Diasporic Reader*.

Radical Enlightenments (Slavery in the Americas--Political Formations)

**February 19 and 21 Age of Revolutions *Review of Truillot due on 19th*

Readings: Michel-Rolph Truillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*.

**February 26 and 28 Abolitionism *Primary Source paper due on 26th.*

Readings: Jermaine Archer, Bitter Herbs and a Lock of Hair: Recollections of Africa in Slave Narratives of the Garrisonian Era," 84-104 in *Diasporic Reader*, David Walker's *Appeal*

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/nc/walker/walker.html>

Tradition & Metaphysics (Religiosity—Circuits of Practice and Belief)

March 5 and 7

Readings: Wyatt MacGaffey, "Dialogues of the deaf: Europeans on the Atlantic coast of Africa": in Schwartz ed. *Implicit Understandings. Observing, Reporting and Reflecting on the Encounter Between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern era* (Cambridge, 1994) [blackboard]; Sweet, "The Evolution of Ritual in the African Diaspora: Central African Kilundu in Brazil, St. Domingue and the United States, 17th-19th centuries," 64-80 in *Diasporic Reader*. Selections from Powell and John Hunwick eds. *The African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam*.

March 12 and 14th Spring Break

**March 19 and 21 Condomble and Santeria

Screening: Bahia: Out of Africa, 1 hour, VCA 7471J.

Readings: Lorand Matory, "The English Professors of Brazil: On the diasporic Roots of the Yoruba Nation," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 41 (January 1999): 72-13 [j-stor];

The Political Thought of Black Modernities (Ideologies)

**March 26 and 28th Garveyism, Primary Source Paper due on 26th, Response to film due in recitation.

Screening: Marcus Garvey: Look for me in the Whirlwind, 90 min. VCA 11127

Readings: Amy Jacques-Garvey, *Our Women and What They Think*, Selections. on blackboard; McDuffie, "[She] devoted twenty minutes condemning all other forms of government but the Soviet: Black Women radicals in the Garvey movement and in the Left during the 1920s," 219-50, in *Diasporic Africa*.

April 2 and 4 Black Nationalism

Readings: E. Frances White, "Africa on my Mind: Gender, Counterdiscourse, and African-American Nationalism" in *Dark Continent of Our Bodies: Black Feminism and the Politics of Respectability* (Temple University Press, 2001) [blackboard]; Thevenin, "Boundaries of Law and Disorder: The 'grand design of Eldgridge Cleaver and the "overseas revolution' in Cuba." 251-70 in *Diasporic Africa*. May Joseph, "Soul, Transnationalism, and imaginings of Revolution: Ujamaa and the Politics of Enjoyment," in *Soul: Black Power, Politics, and Pleasure* [blackboard]

Black Cultural Formations

**April 9 and 11

Screening: In and Out of Africa (59 min) VCA 4139

Readings: Angela Davis, "Afro Images: Politics, Fashion, and Nostalgia," in *Soul: Black Power, Politics, and Pleasure*; (NY: New York University Press, 1997) Blackboard; Keith Mayes, "'A Holiday of Our Own: Kwanzaa, Cultural Nationalism, and the Promotion of a Black Power Holiday, 1966-1985," in Peniel E. Joseph ed. *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era* (NY: Routledge, 2006) Blackboard.

Legacies of Violence and Remembrance

April 16 and 18 Contemporary Racisms

Readings: Malcolm Gladwell, "The Warren Harding Error: Why we Fall for Tall Dark and Handsome Men" [Blackboard]; Angel-Ajani, "Displacing Diaspora: Trafficking, African Women, and Transnational Practices," 290-304 in *Diasporic Reader*.

**April 23 and 25 Struggles over Africa. *Primary Source assignment due on 23rd*, readings from current *NYTimes* on African political developments.

Readings: Saidiya Hartman, The Time of Slavery, *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 101.4 (2002) 757-777

http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/south_atlantic_quarterly/v101/101_4hartman.html Other readings TBA.

April 30 Reiterations and Final Thoughts

Final Exam Wednesday 5/02 8:00AM-9:50AM