NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
MAP-UA 532

CULTURES and CONTEXTS:
THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

Fall 2013
Professor Michael Gomez
Office: King Juan Carlos I Center 502
Office Hours: Thursdays, 9:00-11:00am
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Email: michael.gomez@nyu.edu

BOOKS FOR PURCHASE

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*
Michael Gomez, *Reversing Sail*
Esteban Montejo, *Biography of a Runaway Slave*
Nancy Prince, *A Black Woman's Journey through Russia and Jamaica*
Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants of the Harlem Community*

OVERVIEW

This course is an introduction 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 their long history, Africans have been both conqueror and conquered, slaveholder and enslaved. In all circumstances, they have made significant and lasting contributions to the economies and cultures of the societies into which they were 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?

All assigned readings should be prepared prior to class to fully engage the learning experience. However, assigned readings are designed to complement the weekly lectures and recitations, providing continuity, context, and interaction. Student attendance is therefore expected.

Grade Criteria

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Response Papers</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Response papers are to be 2-3pp 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: Audiotaping 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 once the Final Exam Period begins.

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.

NYU Classes

Please regularly consult NYU Classes for syllabi, addenda, assignments, and all information pertinent to the course.

Lecture Schedule: Tuesday and Thursday, 11:00am-12:15pm

Lecture Location: 5 Washington Place, Room 101
Recitation Preceptors, Meeting Times, and Locations (all meet on Fridays):

002 (Alaina Morgan): 12:30-1:45pm, 12 Waverly Place, Room L111
003 (Alaina Morgan): 2:00-3:15pm, 12 Waverly Place, Room L111
004 (Ebony Jones): 12:30-1:45pm, 7 East 12th, Room 121
005 (Ebony Jones): 2:00-3:15pm, 7 East 12th, Room 121
006 (Tyesha Maddox): 12:30-1:45pm, Paulette Goddard Hall (GODD), Room B01
007 (Tyesha Maddox): 2:00-3:15pm, Paulette Goddard Hall (GODD), Room B01

LECTURE SCHEDULE

Sept 3 and 5
Assigned Reading: Egyptian Dawn/Nubian Ascendancy/Graeco-Roman World
Gomez, Reversing Sail, 1-17
William Leo Hansberry, African and Africans as Seen by Classical Writers (excerpts)


Sept 10 and 12
Assigned Reading: Africans in Judeo-Christian Sacred Writing
Gomez, Reversing Sail, 18-28
Kebra Negast (or The Queen of Sheba)

Further Reading: St. Clair Drake, Black Folk Here and There: An Essay in History and Anthropology, 2 vols.; Steven Kaplan, The Beta Israel (Falasha) in Ethiopia: From Earliest Times to the Twentieth Century; Sergew Hable Sellassie, Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History to 1270; Donald N. Levine, Greater Ethiopia: The Evolution of a Multiethnic Society; Cain Hope Felder, Troubling Biblical Waters: Race, Class, and Family; Charles B. Copher, Black Biblical Studies: An Anthology of Charles B. Copher; James Cone, For My People: Black Theology and the Black Church.
**Documentary:**  
*Wonders of the African World*

Sept 17 and 19  
**Assigned Reading:**  
The Classical Islamic World and Africa  
Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, 29-45  

**Further Reading:**  

**Music:**  
*North Africa and Egypt; Gnawa*

Sept 24 and 26  
**Assigned Reading:**  
Africans in the Islamic Imagination and Experience  
Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, 45-55  

**Further Reading:**  

**Documentary:**  
*Saints and Spirits*

Oct 1 and 3  
**Assigned Reading:**  
Global Slave Trades  
Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, 59-81  
Robert J. Allison, ed., *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*

**Further Reading:**  
Joseph C. Miller, Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830; Guy A. Settipane, Columbus and the New World: Medical Implications.

Oct 8 and 10
Assigned Reading: Slavery in the Americas
Gomez, Reversing Sail, 82-108
Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass


Film
Sankofa

Oct 15
Fall Break- No Class

Oct 17
Assigned Reading: Slavery in the Americas (continued)
Esteban Montejo, Biography of a Runaway Slave

Film
Sankofa

Oct 22
Assigned Reading: Diaspora, DNA, and the Intersection of History and Science
Fatimah C. Jackson, “How Genetics Can Provide Detail to the Transatlantic African Diaspora,” in J. Sweet and T. Olaniyan, eds., The African Diaspora and the Disciplines, 75-100


Carlos D. Bustamante, et al., “Genome-wide patterns of populations structure and admixture in West Africans and African
Americans,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 107(2) 12 January 2010: 786-91
http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2818934/


http://rd.springer.com/article/10.1007/s00439-006-0261-7#page-1

Further Reading: Chris Stringer, *Lone Survivors: How We Came to be the Only Humans on Earth* (Times Books, 2012)

Fatimah Jackson, “Ethnogenetic Layering (EL): an alternative to the traditional race model in human variation and health disparity studies,” *Annals of Human Biology* 35(2) 2008: 121-44
http://informahealthcare.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03014460801941752

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3257290/


http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2675968/


Oct 24 and 29

**Assigned Reading:**

Revolt and Forms of Resistance

*Gomez, Reversing Sail*, 109-141

*Prince, A Black Woman's Journey through Russia and Jamaica*

**Further Reading:**


Oct 31

No Class

Nov 5 and 7

**Assigned Reading:**

Freedom (?)

*Gomez, Reversing Sail*, 141-161


Verene Shepherd and Hilary Beckles, eds., *Caribbean Freedom*, 12-20, 132-140, 192-214, 238-244, 274-283 (excerpts)

**Further Reading:**


**Music:** Negro Spirituals, Blues, and Gospel
Nov 12 and 14
Reconnecting: Movement and Belief
Assigned Reading:
Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, 162-175
Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations: Caribbean Immigrants of the Harlem Community*
LeRoi Jones, *Blues People*, (excerpts)

Further Reading:

Documentary: *Ilê Aiyê*
Music: *Early Jazz*

Nov 19 and 21
Cultural Efflorescence
Assigned Reading:
Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, 175-192
Irma Watkins-Owens, *Blood Relations*
Amy Jacques-Garvey, *Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey* (excerpts)

Further Reading:

Documentary: *Against the Odds*
Music: *The Progression of Jazz*
Nov 26 and 28  Thanksgiving Break

Dec 3 and 5  Post-World War Two Developments
Assigned Reading:  Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, 193-203
Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*

**Film:**  *Daughters of the Dust*
**Music:**  Genres from Latin America and the Caribbean

Dec 10 and 12  Diaspora as a Broader and More Recent Expanse
Assigned Reading:  Santiago, *Boricua: Influential Puerto Rican Writings* (excerpts)
Benedita da Silva, *An Afro-Brazilian Woman’s Story of Politics and Love* (excerpts)

**Film:**  *Chocó*
**Music:**  Music and Politics

Dec 13  Last Day of Classes

Dec 14 and 15  Reading Days

Dec 16 thru 20  Fall Semester Exams