NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
CORE-UA 532
CULTURES and CONTEXTS:
THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

Fall 2018
Professor Michael Gomez
Office: Williams Hall, Suite 120
Office Hours: Tuesday, 12:30-2:00 pm, or by appt.
Office Phone: 212-998-8624
Email: michael.gomez@nyu.edu

BOOKS FOR PURCHASE
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Americanah (Anchor, 2014)
Robert J. Allison, ed., The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, 3rd ed (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2016)
Aimé Césaire, Discourse on Colonialism (Aakar Books, 2010)
María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno (and Daisy Rubiera Castillo), Reyita: The Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the Twentieth Century (Duke, 2000)
Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass (Norton Critical Editions, 2016)
August Wilson, Fences (Plume, 2016)

OVERVIEW

This course is an introduction into both seminal as well as cutting-edge scholarship on the subject of the African diaspora, a working definition of which is the dispersal of Africans and their descendants throughout much of the world. From antiquity, these communities and individuals have made their way through the Mediterranean and Europe, the central Islamic lands, Asia, and the Americas. At times voluntary, their movement was often compelled. Over
the longue durée of history, Africans have been both conqueror and conquered, slaveholder and enslaved. In every circumstance, they have made significant and enduring contributions - economically, culturally, and politically.

Diaspora Studies have rapidly emerged as a nexus of fields, and to be sure, there is plenty of disagreement among scholars concerning it, some of which will be explored in this course.

In following the historical progression of the African diaspora - in effect a series of diasporas, both temporally and thematically - our queries will include: With what issues has the scholarship been preoccupied? What leading theoretical perspectives have emerged, and what matters remain unresolved? What sorts of historical methods can be employed? How does the history of the African diaspora relate to such cognate fields as the Black Atlantic? What is gained by a transnational approach to history, and what is lost? How have notions of collective identity changed over time? To what extent have the experiences throughout the African diaspora converged/diverged?

While the African diaspora has garnered significant academic interest, the concept is by no means novel. Its formal study has been around for some time, going back at least to the early scholarship and activism of individuals like Edward Blyden, Adelaide Casely Hayford, and W.E.B. Du Bois. While this course is primarily concerned with history, the full study of the African diaspora is necessarily multi-disciplinary in scope, calling upon a range of erudition and experience for its successful pursuit.

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

All books for purchase are also on reserve in the library. All assigned readings not available for purchase will be made available electronically.

Grade Criteria

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage of Final Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>Response Papers</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<td>Attendance/Participation</td>
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Response papers are to be 3-4pp in length (double-spaced, normal font) and argumentative. Assignments will be issued approximately every 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.

Probit: 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 substantive understanding of the African Diaspora’s historical development.
- 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, 11:00-12:15pm

Lecture Location: 5 Washington Place, Room 101

Recitation Preceptors, Meeting Times, and Locations (all meet on Fridays):

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<tr>
<th>Preceptor</th>
<th>Time</th>
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<tr>
<td>002 (Khemani Gibson)</td>
<td>12:30-1:45pm</td>
<td>SILV 506</td>
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<td>003 (Khemani Gibson)</td>
<td>2:00-3:15pm</td>
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<td>004 (Shavagne Scott)</td>
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<td>SILV 504</td>
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<tr>
<td>005 (Shavagne Scott)</td>
<td>2:00-3:15pm</td>
<td>SILV 512</td>
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<tr>
<td>006 (Amarilys Estrella)</td>
<td>12:30-1:45pm</td>
<td>TISC LC1</td>
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<td>007 (Amarilys Estrella)</td>
<td>2:00-3:15pm</td>
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MEETING SCHEDULE

Sept 4 and 6               Egyptian Dawn/Nubian Ascendancy/Graeco-Roman World

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

Further Reading:  William Leo Hansberry, *African and Africans as Seen by Classical Writers* (excerpts)

Philip D. Curtin, Steven Feierman, Leonard Thompson, Jan Vansina, *African History: From Earliest Times to Independence*, 1-17

Sept 11 and 13  
**Africans in Judeo-Christian Sacred Writing**

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

**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 18 and 20  
**Classical Islam, Africa, and Africans in the Islamic Imagination**

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

**Further Reading:** Alexander Popović, The Revolt of African Slaves in Iraq in the 3rd/9th Century (excerpts)


John Hunwick and Eve Troutt Powell, eds., The African Diaspora in the Mediterranean Lands of Islam (excerpts)

**Further Reading:** Nehemia Levtzion, Ancient Ghana and Mali; Jamil Abun-Nasr,


Music: North Africa and Egypt; Gnawa

**Sept 25 and 27**

Global Slave Trades

Assigned Reading: Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, 59-81

Allison, ed., *Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*


**Oct 2**

Slavery and Resistance in the Americas

Assigned Reading: Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, 82-141
Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

David Walker’s *Appeal, in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, but in Particular, and Very Expressly, to Those of the United States of America, Written in Boston, State of Massachusetts, September 28, 1829*


Oct 4  Slavery and Resistance in the Americas (cont.)

Film  *Sankofa*

Oct 9  Legislative Day – No Class

Oct 11 Slavery and Resistance in the Americas (cont.)

Assigned Reading: Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, 109-141

de los Reyes Castillo Bueno, *Reyita: The Life of a Black Cuban Woman*

Market, 1790-1880; Carolyn Fick, The Making of Haiti; C.L.R. James, The Black Jacobins; Toussaint Louverture and the San Domingo Revolution; Gabriel Debien, Les esclaves aux Antilles françaises, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles; João José Reis, Slave Rebellion in Brazil: The Muslim Uprising of 1835 in Bahia; Richard Price, Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas.

Oct 16 and 18

“Freedom”

Assigned Reading: Gomez, Reversing Sail, 141-161

W.E.B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk (excerpts)

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

Hilary McD. Beckles, “Return to the Scene of the Crime”: Address before the British House of Commons, 16 July 2014

Further Reading:


Music:

Mento, Calypso/Kaiso, Ska, Rocksteady, Soca, Reggae, Dancehall

Oct 23 and 25

Reconnecting: Movement and Belief

Assigned Reading: Gomez, Reversing Sail, 162-175

Watkins-Owens, Blood Relations

LeRoi Jones, Blues People, (excerpts)

Further Reading:


Music: Negro Spirituals, Blues, Gospel

Oct 30 and Nov 1 Cultural Efflorescence
Assigned Reading: Gomez, Reversing Sail, 175-192
Watkins-Owens, Blood Relations
Amy Jacques-Garvey, Philosophy and Opinions of Marcus Garvey (excerpts)

Further Reading: Arna Bontemps, The Harlem Renaissance Remembered; Tyler Stovall, Paris Noir: African Americans in the City of Light; Maureen Warner-Lewis, Maureen, Guinea’s Other Suns: The African Dynamic in Trinidad Culture; David Levering Lewis, When Harlem Was in Vogue.

Documentary: Against the Odds
Music: Jazz

Nov 6 and 8 Post WW II and The Great Migration North
Assigned Reading: Gomez, Reversing Sail, 193-203
Césaire, Discourse on Colonialism
August Wilson, Fences


Documentary: Fences

Nov 13 and 15 The Afro-Latin@ Experience

Assigned Reading: Gomez, Reversing Sail, 203-19

Fidel Castro, History Will Absolve Me (La historia me absolverá)

Miriam Jiménez Román and Juan Flores, The Afro-Latin@ Reader: History and Culture in the United States, excerpts

Further Reading: Cristina Garcia, Dreaming in Cuban; Esmeralda Santiago, When I Was Puerto Rican; Benedita da Silva, An Afro-Brazilian Woman’s Story of Politics and Love; Roberto Santiago, Boricua: Influential Puerto Rican Writings; Piri Thomas, Down These Mean Streets (1997).

Music: Bomba y Plena, Palo, Samba, Son, Salsa, Rumba, Tango, Merengue, Bachata, Reggaetón

Film/Documentary: Negrita (o Black in Latin America)

Nov 20 and 22 Thanksgiving Break

Nov 27 Diaspora, DNA, and the Intersection of History and Science

Assigned Reading: 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/

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3056271/
[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3009670/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3009670/)

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2712685/](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2712685/)

### Nov 29

**Marginalization and “Movement” within Spiritual Contexts**

**Documentaries:**  
*Saints and Spirits; Ilê Aiyê*

**Dec 4 and 6**

**Politics in the Americas**

**Assigned Reading:**  
Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *The Atlantic* (June 2014)


Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*, 191-220 (chapter 7)


**Further Reading:**  
Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (2010); Ta-Nehisi Coates,
Between the World and Me (2015); ____, We Were Eight Years in Power: An American Tragedy (2017); Ibram X. Kendi, Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America (2017)

Documentary: When We Were Kings

Music: Soul, Motown, Funk, “Stax,” R & B, Hip Hop

Dec 11 and 13 Africa, America, and Europe: “Diasporas” in Conversation and Contrast

Assigned Reading: Adichie, Americanah


Media: An African City

Documentary: Guangzhou Dream Factory

Dec 14 Last Day of Classes

Dec 15-16 Reading Days
Dec 17-21  Fall Semester Exams