

AFST 110/HIST 110
INTRODUCTION TO AFRICANA STUDIES

FALL 2007

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OFFICE HOURS

Mon. 1:30-3:00pm
Thurs. 3:30-4:30pm
And by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course uses the critical methodologies of the humanities and social sciences to consider some of the questions provoked by African and African diasporan experiences. For example, is an African diaspora an objective reality or has it existed solely in response to American and European notions of racial difference? What have been the characteristics encompassed by that reality or those notions of race? Course materials will allow students to survey the lasting contributions of Africans and their descendants to the development of various world civilizations and examine historical relationships between the individual actors and larger ideological forces. The four major themes that we will use to comprehend African diasporan experiences are Agency, Community, Identity, and Race.

COURSE OBJECTIVES ARE:

- X to identify and analyze the ways in which history has been 'constructed' from primary sources;
- X to understand the historical and theoretical significance of social categories such as class (peasant, rich, farmer, entrepreneur), race, ethnicity, and gender;
- X to become familiar with some of the methodologies and critical perspectives employed by historians to understand and present the experiences of people of African descent;
- X to develop clarity of professional expression when writing and speaking about the major events and people in African-Diasporan socio-political history;
- X to see the efforts of people of African descent to form and participate in various types of communities; and
- X to consider AGENCY in historical change and continuity within the African Diaspora.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Mario Azevedo, *Africana Studies: A Survey of Africa and the African Diaspora*. 3rd. ed. 2005.

Carolina Maria De Jesus, *Child of the Dark* 2003

These works will be supplemented by several short articles, primary sources, and films.

HOW COLLEGE HISTORY COURSES DIFFER FROM HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY COURSES

(adopted from Dr. Sandra Bardsley)

For many of you, this will be the first history course you will have taken at college. Expectations of students in college-level history courses are considerably higher than they are in most high school courses. Here are some of the differences you may notice:

- You will be expected to read much more, and virtually all of this reading will take place outside the classroom. It will be impossible to do well in this course without doing the reading ahead of time. As you read, do not expect to memorize every detail. You should concentrate on general patterns of human behavior, by focusing on the particular situations that fit into the four course themes (Agency, Community, Identity, and Race). Skimming is o.k., but remember that you are looking for patterns that add to your ability to comprehend and debate the course themes.
- You can expect to work, on average, 6-8 hours per week outside of class preparing for this course. Some weeks will require less; others (especially before a lab assignment is due or a mid-term is scheduled) will require more.
- You will need to work on your note-taking skills. Many of our class sessions will consist mainly of lectures, in which I will present information, theories, and arguments about our topic for the day. I often may use a PowerPoint outline of the main topics to be covered (if you come in late, you may miss this). I suggest that you do not try to write down every word I say but rather that you note the most important information and arguments. Depending on the size of your writing, you should probably come away from class with 3-4 pages of notes each day. If you are having trouble with note-taking, I recommend that you visit the Learning Services Center and talk with the people there about note-taking strategies. You will often find that much of the material I cover is also discussed in some form in the textbook: the aim of my lectures is not to repeat information, however, but to help you reinforce it, synthesize it, and understand the most important patterns in it. In other words, please don't tune out because a particular topic is also covered in the textbook. By the same token, some assigned readings will not be treated in the lectures. **You are still responsible for all items listed on the syllabus.**
- Compared with high school, you will probably have fewer tests and exams. Each of these tests and exams, however, will count for a higher percentage of your grade. Because there are fewer exams, you will need to retain information longer and make broader comparisons and contrasts across time periods. The final exam will include a comprehensive question that will require you to reflect back on course material from throughout the semester. The purpose of this is that it will enable you to tie together material that you have learned and see the connections among different

places and periods.

- Extra-credit opportunities are not offered in this course.
- Good writing matters a great deal in this course and in other history courses. Writing is a process (which many of you will be learning or will have learned in Writing 100 classes). This process involves revision and editing, and lab assignments which have not undergone revision and editing (in other words, warmed-over first drafts) will not receive high grades. It is up to you to schedule your time in such a way as to allow for thorough revision and proof-reading. I highly recommend taking drafts of your assignments to the Writing Center and asking the tutors there to help you look over them. (Do note that you need to make appointments with the Writing Center in advance.)
- Grades, on the whole, will be lower than you were accustomed to receiving in high school courses. The average grade in each of my 100-level classes in the last 4 semesters has been either a C+ or a B-. Grades of A or A- are rare and are reserved for work of true excellence. Please don't be hurt or offended when an assignment or exam which might have received an A in high school receives only a B- here: the standards at Moravian College are considerably higher than at most high schools. I include this information not to scare you but to alert you to the fact that there are some important differences between high school and college-level history courses. I really want to see you do well in this course and would be happy to talk with you individually: please email me to set up a time or come and see me during my office hours (listed on page 1 of the syllabus).

REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION:

Participation	20%
Midterm	15%
Final	25%
Reaction Papers (4)	40%

Participation - You are expected to come to class prepared to respond to the distributed discussion questions. Some of the responses may be collected as brief written submissions. This grade also is based on the quality and quantity of your provocative debate, insight, questioning, and the ability to respectfully allow others to do the same. This grade reflects your comprehension of the information associated with the readings, lectures, and films.

Reaction Papers (3-4 pages) Four times during the semester you will be asked to provide your comprehensive and critical reaction to a unit's presentation of the four course themes (Agency, Community, Identity, and Race). For example, if you are working on the theme of religious expression, you would use the course materials (readings, lectures, and films) to briefly describe examples of how religion fosters or limits change. You would then explain some of other important concepts that appear repeatedly in your sources. These might include animism, gender relations, rites of passage, and connections to political authority. You can also use your paper to ask questions that would help you to understand the theme better. As the semester progresses you

should make comparisons with course material discussed earlier in the semester. What is most important here is that you give me the opportunity to see you thinking independently. Please avoid simply repeating ideas that are not your own.

Midterm and Final Exams - Both will be heavily weighted toward essay responses. They also will include short identification questions that ask you describe briefly the historical significance of several items. You would explain the ways in which the item fosters, prevents, and/or reflects change. Exams also may include map and primary source evaluation sections. In all cases, prior to the exams you will receive a guide to possible items.

Attendance Policy: Success in the course will be closely linked to comprehension of the lectures and assigned materials, as well as the ability to question both. For these reasons, I will incorporate absence into your participation grade and lower your final grade by a letter grade for every three classes that you miss without an official excuse or for which you arrive late. If you plan to arrive more than five minutes late to class, you might consider making other arrangements or inform me in advance and arrive in a non-disruptive manner.

Also, as a courtesy, please set all personal communication devices to silent mode.

Submission Formats and Late Policy - All submissions should be typewritten, with one-inch margins on all sides. The bibliographies and outlines should be single-spaced. All other submissions should be double spaced. The font should be between 11 and 12 points. The student's name, course number, assignment number, and submission date should be typed in the upper left corner of the first page. After this header, one blank line should appear before the assignment title, which should be centered between the left and right margins. This title should be followed by one blank line before beginning the assignment. A hard copy of all submissions is required and electronic versions will be accepted only with prior approval from me.

All papers are due at the beginning of class on their due dates. **I will subtract 10 points for every day that an assignment is late beginning 10 minutes after the start of class.**

College Policies

A. Students with any physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability should privately contact me and Laurie Roth, Director of the Learning Center, to arrange the appropriate accommodation for full participation in the course. Ms. Roth can be reached at 610-861-1510 or by email, melmr01@moravian.edu. Please make these arrangements within the first few weeks of the course.

B. Moravian College expects its students and faculty to maintain a high level of academic honesty. Questions of academic honesty and plagiarism are addressed in the Student Handbook under the Academic Standards section. Professor Morrison will penalize any deviation from these standards in accordance with the policies outlined there.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

Aug. 28 - Introduction

Aug. 30 - Reading *AS*, chapter 2 “African American Studies and the State of the Art” and

<http://eawc.evansville.edu/essays/howard.htm>

Discuss film “Black Athena.”

Week 2

Sept. 4 - How do we imagine Africa? Reading *AS*, chapter 3 “Africa and the Genesis of Humankind” and

http://www.wsu.edu:8080/~wldciv/world_civ_reader/world_civ_reader_2/leo_africanus.html

Discuss film Basil Davidson’s “Africa” vols. 3 and 4.

Sept. 6 - Reading *AS*, chapter 1 “African Studies and the State of the Art”

Reaction Paper Due - What does the previous material suggest that Africana Studies attempts to teach the typical Moravian student?

Week 3 Slave Trade

Sept. 11 - Reading *AS*, chapter 4, “Legitimate Trade, Diplomacy, the Slave Trade;” and

http://history.hanover.edu/texts/equiano/equiano_contents.html - chapters 1 and 2.

Sept. 13 - Reading Handout ; and Discussion of film, “Roots” vol 1.

Week 4 Slavery in the Americas

Sept. 18 - Reading *AS*, chapter 5 “Diaspora Africans and Slavery”

<http://www.blackpast.org/?q=1792-prince-hall-charge-delivered-brethren-african-lodge> (skim)

<http://www.blackpast.org/?q=1797-prince-hall-speaks-african-lodge-cambridge-massachusetts>

Sept. 20 - Readings, Handout, and

http://www.slaveryinamerica.org/geography/slavery_abolition_us.htm (review some of the laws)

Discuss film “Xica;”

Week 5 The Black Family in Slavery and Beyond

Sept. 25 - Reading *AS*, chapter 21, “The African American Family”; Discuss film “Rosewood”

Sept. 27 - Reading *Child of the Dark*, Preface, “1955” and Afterword;

Week 6

Oct. 2 - Readings *Child of the Dark* (to page 90); Discussion of Film “Quanto Vale”

Oct. 4 - Theme - African-based Religion, reading *AS*, chapter 22, “Religion in Africa”

Reaction Paper Due - The Black Family

Week 7

Oct. 9 - No Class

Oct. 11 - Reading Handout Murphy and Discussion of Film “Pierre Verger”

Week 8

Oct. 16 - Reading *AS*, chapter 23, "Religion in the Diaspora," and Discussion of film "Go Tell It on the Mountain."

Oct. 18 - Midterm

Week 9 Black Music,

Oct. 23 - Reading *AS*, chapter 14, "Music in Africa and the Caribbean"

Oct. 25 - Reading *AS*, chapter 15, "African American Music," and Discussion of film

Week 10 Images of Women

Oct. 30 - Reading *AS*, chapter 26 "Lifting as We Rise: Black Women in America" and <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/sojtruth2.html>

Nov. 1 - Readings <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,905896,00.html>

Angel Davis, "I am a Revolutionary Black Woman" and Discussion

Week 11

Nov. 6 - Reading, *AS*, chapter 25, "Women of the Caribbean" and

http://www.boston.com/yourlife/fashion/articles/2005/12/15/tressed_for_success/

Discussion of film

Nov. 8 -

Reaction Paper - Images of Black Women

Week 12 The Sports Option

Nov. 13 Reading *AS*, chapter 19, "Contributions in Science, Business, Film, and Sports"

Nov. 15 Reading Handout C.L.R. James and Discussion of Film "Wondrous Oblivion"

Week 13

Nov. 20 Reading Handout and Discussion of Film "When We Were King."

Reaction Paper Due - Sports and Social Mobility

Nov. 22 - Thanksgiving, No Classes

Week 14 The Politics of Community

Nov. 27 - Reading Handout Coniff and Davis

Nov. 29 - Reading *Child of the Dark* "1959" and discuss Film "Bus 174."

Week 15

Dec. 4 - Reading Handout Coniff and Davis; discuss film

Dec. 6 - Reading *AS*, chapter 12, "Contemporary Diaspora and the Future"