

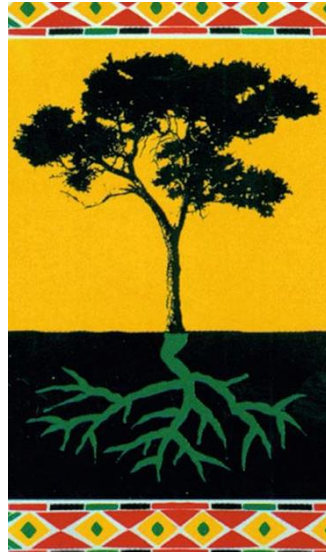
HISTORY 2135A

# African American History

Fall 2022

Tuesdays, 9:30am-11:30am, FNB 3210

**\*FLIPPED class: 2 hours of pre-recorded lecture, 2 hours of discussion in person each week\***



**Instructor: Associate Professor Laurel Clark Shire**

Office Hours on Zoom: **by appointment** Weds. 10am-12pm (and other times available – email me)

<https://westernuniversity.zoom.us/my/laurelshire>

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This course explores African American history from the era of slavery to today. We trace the diverse experiences of people of African descent in the United States, including slavery and the struggle to end it, the segregated Jim Crow period, the Black Freedom/civil rights movement, and more recent developments.

***Prerequisite(s):*** none

***Antirequisite(s):*** History 3311F/G, History 3313F/G.

**Successful students will be able to:**

- Describe the major themes, trends and chronology of African American history
- Describe aspects of the diversity of Black life and experience in the United States
- Describe the ways in which blackness (and other racial categories) is socially and culturally constructed and historically contingent, and how its meanings have changed over time

- Become proficient at reading secondary sources strategically for the argument, content, and ideas that interest you the most so that you will retain this information
- Practice analyzing primary historical sources

### **Course Materials:**

The following book will be used in this course (ordered some copies for Western bookstore, also available online in hard copy or e-book):

Kendi, Ibram X. and Keisha N. Blain, Eds., *Four Hundred Souls: A Community History of African America, 1619-2019*, Penguin/Random House, 2021

This course runs weekly from Wednesday to Tuesday – ending with the in-class meeting on Tuesday at 10:30am. Lectures and other course materials will be available by the prior Wednesday at 12:30 and you can engage with them at any time that week, but you must be prepared to participate in class beginning at 10:30 on Tuesday.

Each week, you will have things to watch, read, listen to, and write about before you arrive in class on Tuesday morning. All the materials for that week will be linked under the Week Number (with dates) on the course OWL site. We will use class time to discuss, question, debate, and analyze the readings and primary sources each week.

Recorded lectures: before class each week, please watch the pre-recorded lecture (at your own pace, whenever you have the time BEFORE CLASS DISCUSSION ON TUESDAY). It will give you needed context for the readings and for our class discussion. In class, we will discuss the readings, primary sources, **connection to the present**, and other materials provided for the topic that week.

Readings: the readings for this course are either in the Kendi & Blain book or will be posted as PDFs, or linked to an electronic copy at Weldon Library, on OWL.

Films, Podcasts and Other Media: Links to these (some required, some recommended) are also on OWL. In some cases, there may be a small fee to stream a film.

**Due to the violent history of anti-black racism, the materials for this course are sometimes disturbing, explicitly violent, and difficult. You are ALWAYS free to stop engaging with them if you feel unable to safely continue.**

### **Methods of Evaluation:**

Participation in discussions, in person: 25%

Reaction papers/Weekly Quizzes **on lecture and reading**: 20%

Midterm Essay: 20% Final

Final Exam: 35%

Students must **submit every assignment** in this course in order to pass.

**Attendance in person or online** is expected and required in order to be successful. If you are ill, please do not come to class in person. If you must miss class, please email your TA or Professor Shire and let us know the reason for your absence. If you require an extension, you must email us and request one as soon as you are able. Excessive and unexplained absences, as well as frequent tardiness, will harm your participation grade and will hamper your ability to be successful in the course. Family emergencies, religious holidays, games (for university athletes) and illness are excusable absences. It is up to you to provide explanations and supporting documentation, I will not remind you to provide them.

**Engagement:** Due to the size of this class, there are several ways in which you can participate. First, you can raise your hand and ask questions or offer your ideas and opinions (informed by course materials) in class. Second, you can write comments and questions (about the course materials, themes, and topics) into an email that you share with me and with your TA prior to class discussion. Participation in class will be graded based on the quality, not the quantity, of your contributions. It should demonstrate that you have read/watched the assignments for that day, and reflected on them in the context of the course: how do they illustrate broader themes? How do they expand or challenge what we have already learned about this topic? How do you connect them to the weeks before? Cumulative participation marks will be posted every 4<sup>th</sup> week in Gradebook on OWL.

**Late Assignments:** Some assignments will not be accepted after the deadline, such as weekly quizzes or reactions (see below). Essays will be accepted up to 7 days after the due date, with a 5 point penalty for every day late. If you know in advance that you will have difficulty meeting a deadline, please request an extension at least 3 days before an assignment is due. Most requests for an extension will be granted, so please ask.

**Short Reaction Papers/Weekly Online Quizzes:** Each week, you will either be required to write a short reaction paper, or you will be required to complete a weekly quiz on the reading (the week's assignment will be on OWL). **THESE ARE DUE BEFORE CLASS MEETS AT 10:30AM ON TUESDAY AND WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED LATE.** When reaction papers are assigned, you will be required to write a one page (300-350 word, informal, double-spaced, 1 inch margins) reaction to the readings and other materials that week – there will be a specific writing prompt given on OWL. Your reaction can be in any form – an informal essay, a letter, a journal entry, song lyrics, even a full-page cartoon or image that you draw. It should demonstrate that you have read/watched the assignments for that day, and reflected on them in the context of the course: how do they illustrate broader themes? How do they expand or challenge what we have already learned about this topic? How do you connect them to the weeks before? ALL text-based reactions should be double-spaced with 2.54cm margins in 12-pt font (if text based) and should conform to the page requirements. Please turn these in on OWL in either a .pdf or .docx format. When weekly quizzes are assigned, these will be on OWL, 10-15 questions each week, based on the assignments that week, and **due before class meets on Tuesday**. The two lowest quiz/reaction grades will be dropped from your quiz average at the end of the term.

\*\*\*Due dates and times: reactions and quizzes are due on OWL before class begins on the date they are assigned. **These will not be accepted late.**\*\*\*

**Midterm Essay:** Once during the semester you will write an essay in response to a prompt. This is an analytical assignment in which you will use what you have learned to answer the prompt using as many primary and secondary sources from the course as needed. Write a 3-4 page essay (double-spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 pt font) that supports your thesis argument with evidence drawn from course materials and discussions. You are strongly discouraged from using outside sources, as this assignment is designed to measure your ability to analyze sources yourself. If you simply copy someone else's analysis, you will lose points. If you plagiarize someone else's analysis (copy it without giving them credit) you will fail this assignment and the course.

**Exam:** There will be one comprehensive final exam in this course. Date TBA.

**Extra Credit:** If you attend one or two of the American Studies or History Speakers' talks (I will announce these in lecture and on OWL) I will apply up to 2 extra points to your overall participation mark (1 per lecture you attend). Please see me at the lecture and be sure I note your attendance. (Or say hello in the Zoom chat).

### **Course Schedule and Readings:**

12 weekly meetings, with lecture and discussion of readings and primary source each week. These are always subject to change given current events, public health rules, or other concerns.

### **Sept. 8-13 - Introductions and Expectations. What is African American History?**

Weekly themes and assignments

How does decolonization/indigenization apply to this course?

Connection to the present: weekly highlight

**WEEK 1. Sept. 13. Concepts and History.** What is "race" and what is "racism"? How did slavery and colonialism help create them? Read:

Kendi & Blain, Introduction (pp. xiii-xvii) and selections from Part One, pages 3-7 (Arrival), 11-14 (Whipped for Lying with a Black Woman), 18-21 (Black Women's Labor), 30-33 (Unfree Labor), 13 pages

\*Omi and Winant, "Racial Formations" (pp. 9-15) 6pp

Optional: \*Smedley and Smedley, "Race as Biology is Fiction, Racism as a Social Problem is Real" (pp. 16-26, 8.5pp of text)

**Connection to the present:** Primary source: Ancestry and 23 and Me Advertisements

\*\*Brian Resnick, "The limits of ancestry DNA tests, explained," *Vox.com*, updated May 23, 2019

Watch: <https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/2019/1/28/18194560/ancestry-dna-23-me-myheritagescience-explainer>

**Due before class from ALL STUDENTS:** brief response (150-200 words) – what does it mean to say that race is a social construction or a social formation? Why is this an important concept for the study of history?

**WEEK 2. Sept. 20. The Life and Times of Enslaved People** This week includes explicitly violent texts. Reading: Kendi & Blain, selections from Parts Two, Three, and Four - pages 39-42, 47-67, 77-92, 96-100, 111-114, 119-125, 135-140 (47 pages) Primary source:

\*selections from Northup, Solomon. 12 Years A Slave (1853), Chapters 1, 3 and beginning of 4 (Eliza's story), 6, 12, 18, 22. Find the full text online for free here:

<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/45631/45631http://www.gutenberg.org/files/45631/45631-21h/45631-h.htmh/45631-h.htm>

Optional - Watch: "12 Years a Slave" (2013), 134 minutes Connection to the present: Tourism at former plantations.

### **WEEK 3. Sep 27. Free People of Color and the Abolition Movement.**

Reading: Kendi & Blain, selections from Parts Five and Six, pages 153-180, 187-217 (57 pp)

Primary sources:

\*David Walker's "Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World"

\*Maria Stewart, "There Are No Chains So Galling as the Chains of Ignorance"

Connection to the present: abolitionism today

### **WEEK 4. Oct. 4. The Civil War & Reconstruction.**

Reading: Kendi & Blain, selections from Part Seven, 225-243 (18 pp) Primary

Sources:

\*"We Are Left in a More Unpleasant Condition than Our Former" \*"Black Codes"

\*"Georgia Labor Contract"

Watch: "Glory" (1989), 122 minutes (Netflix)

Connection to the present: Confederate flags and statues in history, memory, current US cultural debates

### **WEEK 5. Oct. 11. The Violence of Jim Crow America: Lynching and Segregation** This is a very intense and explicitly violent set of readings and images.

Reading: Kendi & Blain, selections from Part Seven, 244-261 and Part Eight, 271-282 (28pp) Primary sources:

\*Ida B. Wells-Barnett, "The Lynch Mob's 'Thread-Bare Lie'" and "A Negro's Life is a Very Cheap Thing in Georgia"

\*Theodore Rosengarten, *All God's Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1975, excerpts

Optional, as these are disturbing, violent, and explicit - \*\*View some of the Lynching images at \*\*

<http://withoutsanctuary.org/main.html>

Recommended read: Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns* (nonfiction, but almost reads like a novel)

Connection to the present: see OWL

### **WEEK 6. Oct. 18. Survival, Resistance, Migration: African Americans Struggle Against Jim Crow**

Reading: Kendi & Blain, selections from Part Eight, 267-270, 283-286 (7 pages) Primary sources:

\*W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903) (<http://www.bartleby.com/114/>): read the

Forethought and chapters I, III, and VI

\*Booker T. Washington, “The Atlanta Compromise,”

\*Marcus Garvey, “Africa for the Africans”

Optional Watch: “The 24<sup>th</sup>” (2020), 113 minutes (Amazon Prime rental)

Connection to the present: debates today about Black education and individual/collective “advancement.”

### **WEEK 7. Oct. 25. Black Arts and Black Artists: from the Harlem Renaissance to the 1970s**

#### **Midterm essay due Friday Oct. 28**

Kendi & Blain, pages 287-305, and Part Nine 307-324 (35 pages)

Primary sources:

\*Langston Hughes, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain”

\*Alain Locke, “The New Negro”

\*Zora Neale Hurston, selected short stories

Watch: TBA

Connection: Black arts and artists today

#### **Nov. 1 – no class, study week. Midterm essay due Friday Oct. 28**

### **WEEK 8. Nov. 8. The “Civil Rights Movement,” or, the Moment When White People Finally Start Paying Attention to the Black Freedom Struggle**

Reading: Kendi & Blain, Part Nine, 325-329 (5 pages)

\*John D’Emilio, “Remembering Bayard Rustin,” *OAH Magazine of History*, 2006, 12-14. Primary sources:

\*Fannie Lou Hamer, “And I Said...”

\*Bayard Rustin, “Nonviolence v. Jim Crow,” and ““Through Non-Violence, Courage Displaces Fear,” the Student Sit-Ins of 1960-61”

Watch: “John Lewis: Good Trouble” (2020), 97 minutes (YouTube rental) Connection to the present: the GOP attack on voting rights since 2013

### **WEEK 9. Nov. 15. The Black Freedom Movement in the Context of Global History and the Cold War**

\*Mary L. Dudziak “Brown as a Cold War Case,” *The Journal of American History* 91, (June, 2004), pp. 32-42.

Primary sources:

\*Martin Luther King, “Vietnam: ‘A Time Comes When Silence is Betrayal’” (1967)

\*Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” (1964)

Optional watch: “Brother Outsider,” (2002), 83 minutes (Vimeo) and/or “MLK/FBI” (2021), 104 minutes

Connection to the present: Global context of BLM, Defund the Police, Prison Abolition – how are these also decolonizing movements? Or how might they become so?

**WEEK 10. Nov. 22. Say It Loud: Black Power** Reading:

Kendi & Blain, Part Nine, 330-349 (20 pages) Primary

Sources:

\*Listen and read: \*Nina Simone, “Mississippi Goddam,” 1964

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVQjGGJVSXc>

\*Black Panther Party, “We Believe This Racist Government Has Robbed Us,” the BPP Platform and Program

\*Michelle Wallace, “Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwoman” (this is appended to Matthews’ article in the pdf on OWL)

Watch: “Judas and the Black Messiah” (2021), 125 minutes

Connection to the present: how have some portrayals of BLM drawn on the old misrepresentations of Black Power leaders? How many of those people are still in prison or in exile?

**WEEK 11. Nov. 29. The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration, Policing, and Race in America Today**

Reading: Kendi & Blain, Part Ten, 351-386 (35pp)

If you’ve never seen it, watch: 13th, Dir. Ava DuVernay, Netflix, 2016 Primary sources

\*\*BLM “What We Believe” <http://blacklivesmatter.com/guiding-principles/>

Connection to the present: Anti-black violence at the hands of the state and police; what should we do about all the folks still in prison for marijuana violations? If most of them were white, would we have already expunged those records and let them go home?

**WEEK 12. Dec. 6. Wrapping It Up: What Did You Learn?**

\*James Baldwin, “My Dungeon Shook: Letter to My Nephew on the One Hundredth Anniversary of Emancipation,” from *The Fire Next Time* (Vintage, 1962), 1-10

\* Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations”

<http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/05/the-case-forreparations/361631>

Primary sources: anti-black racism at Western and in Canada

\*\*Desmond Cole, *The Skin We’re In* excerpt

\*\*Eternity Martis, *They Said This Would Be Fun*

\*\* Robyn Maynard, *Policing Black Lives*

Connection to the present: your turn – what has this course helped you to understand better about the world we live in today in 2021?

**Use of Electronic Devices:**

Unless you are taking an accommodated exam that allows the use of a computer, no electronic devices (phones, tablets, computers) will be permitted during the final exam.

**Additional Statements:**



Please review the Department of History Course Must-Knows document,

<https://www.history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/Docs/Department%20of%20History%20Course%20Musthttps://www.history.uwo.ca/undergraduate/Docs/Department of History Course Must-Knows.pdf> for additional information regarding:

- Academic Offences
- Accessibility Options
- Medical Issues
- Plagiarism
- Scholastic Offences
- Copyright
- Health and Wellness