

The African American in the History of the U.S. I
African American Studies 004
Summer 2023

Course Time: Monday-Thursday; 7:45-10:35 a.m./ 1:00-3:50 p.m.
Office Hours: By appointment
Email:

Course Description

This course is a survey of the social, economic, and political construction of the United States from its colonial origins through the formation of the United States constitutional government and its Civil War period. This course provides a background in the political and social development of the United States with a supplement of focused study on the evolution of the institution of slavery, to gain a better understanding of 17th, 18th, and 19th Century race construction in America.

Students will analyze historiographical issues in African American history and how black Americans were active agents in creating their history from Africa to the Civil War. Emphasis is placed on the African background of African Americans (Diaspora), the institution of slavery, the development of African American community institutions, and African American participation in, and impact on, the Civil War. These topics will be considered within the context of resistance, rebellion, and self-determination.

CLASS REQUIREMENTS

Attendance & Participation

Attendance for each class session is mandatory and will occasionally be recorded in the form of Response Memos. We will cover several topics during each session that will be crucial to your understanding and success in the course. If an emergency arises, you must contact me for an excused absence and contact a classmate to receive the notes from the missed class session. Unexcused absences will negatively impact your grade.

In addition to attendance, your participation is mandatory and imperative to our collective journey. We will do collaborative reading and writing over the term to deepen our understanding of the course material. Your unique contributions are necessary and important!

Village Presentations

The readings for each class meeting will be done collaboratively among your respective student groups. Each group will be responsible for completing the reading thoroughly

and presenting the portion of the text assigned to your group. In addition to discussing striking elements of the passage, group presentations should encompass the following questions:

What happened in your assigned portion of the text? When and where are the events taking place? How are the events significant or relevant to our understanding of the historical period? Why are these events taking place? What class themes or patterns emerge in your assigned portion?

Each group member should contribute to the presentation and prepare notes for your delivery. Your notes should be submitted at the end of your presentation to reflect your preparation and contribution. Presentations should not exceed 10 minutes.

Dialectical Journals: Each week students will be responsible for completing a dialectical journal that critically engages with the readings for the week. The term “Dialectic” means “the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer.” Think of your dialectical journal as a series of conversations with the texts we read during this course. The process is meant to help you develop a better understanding of the texts we read. Use your journal to incorporate your responses to the texts, your ideas about the themes we cover, and our class discussions. You will find that it is a useful way to process what you’re reading, prepare yourself for group discussion, and gather textual evidence for your Group presentations, class discussions, and final paper.

Your dialectical journal should have **at least three entries** labeled according to one of the following codes:

o (Q) Question – ask about something in the passage that is unclear o (C)

Connect – make a connection to your life, the world, or another text o (P)

Predict – anticipate what will occur based on what’s in the passage o (CL)

Clarify – answer earlier questions or confirm/disaffirm a prediction

o (R) Reflect – think deeply about what the passage means in a broad sense – not just to the characters in the story/author of the article. What conclusions can you draw about the world, about human nature, or just the way things work?

o (E) Evaluate - make a judgment about what the author is trying to say

Students should use this assignment to discuss key points and issues in the readings that deepen, complicate, or challenge their understanding of the course content. Please refer to your dialectical journal handouts for detailed instructions.

Final Paper: The final research paper will be centered on the deconstruction of slavery in the 19th Century. Using course material and two additional sources, you will

discern how a person, event, or policy changed the course of history and explain how. The student must then critically explain why they think this policy, person, or event changed history. The final paper must be 1250-1750 words and written in MLA format. Detailed instructions will be provided.

Diversity Statement Description

Addressing diversity is critical to the successful teaching of this course. The study of the history of African Americans, as well as understanding the contribution African-Americans have made to American history and government, is essential to building cultural sensitivity for students of all races and cultures. Understanding African American culture allows students, through a prism of their own diverse and competing interests (history, values, culture, ethnicity, gender, religion, education, ideology, age, race, sexual orientation, disability, socioeconomic status, etc.), to form new racial and cultural paradigms that promote greater understanding between races.

Academic Integrity and Ethics

USC takes matters of intellectual integrity very seriously. It is the responsibility of the student to uphold the academic integrity of the university. Cheating on examinations and plagiarism — including, but not limited to, submitting work done by another person or purchased from any source and failing to document ideas found in sources, whether phrases or sentences within quotation marks — are considered very serious offenses, and any student found in violation of this regulation will be required to leave the program.

It is particularly important to be conscious of citing the work of people whose knowledge has been dismissed, taken for granted, or unrecognized by the histories we are studying in this class. (See for example <https://www.citeblackwomenscollective.org>). Please consult with me if you have any questions about proper citation procedures.

Disability Accommodations

If you need an academic accommodation for a disability, please contact your Upward Bound program administrator. Once you have gotten in touch with the designated program administrator, you will need to follow up with me to confirm this accommodation. If you do not know who to contact, or if you're unsure of what accommodations are available to you, please contact me for support and guidance.

It is also important to acknowledge that many of the virtual accommodations we are now utilizing have been pioneered by disabled communities. Students, especially in the post-pandemic classroom, are benefitting from the efforts of disabled people who are often overlooked or disregarded in the traditional classroom. Please be mindful of this, and take the time to acquaint yourself with the principles of the disability justice movement: <https://www.sinsinvalid.org/blog/10-principles-of-disability-justice>.

Subject to Change Statement

You will receive a list of course readings each week. The course structure and syllabus readings are subject to change, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Course Grading

Participation- Response Memos: 10%

Dialectical Journals: 20%

Village Presentations (4): 30%

Final Research paper: 40%