Course Overview

This course introduces students to interdisciplinary texts and approaches to understanding African/African American Studies, providing a deeper insight into the experiences of African and African diaspora peoples. Through critical inquiry, you’ll demonstrate the ability to analyze a wide range of historical and contemporary texts (including music) to facilitate our discussion of the formative developments of slavery, colonization, colonialism, and neo-colonialism/globalization. We will address issues of aesthetics and representation and explore how questions of race and gender impact the creative expression of writers and artists working within a variety of genres and cultural forms, as they reflect upon the forces of modernity.

We will begin by looking at the experiences of slavery in the United States by reading Harriet Jacobs’s slave narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. In addition to probing the notion of slavery as “social death,” we will question the degree and limits of agency experienced by slaves and the impact of gender and racial construction under Southern paternalism. We will also explore the issue of social justice and the color line, along with the concept of “double consciousness” for African Americans at the turn of the twentieth century, a few decades after emancipation by reading W. E. B. DuBois’s *The Souls of Black Folk*. We will then turn to look at the impact of a second wave of European colonization in Africa during the nineteenth century and its lasting impact. Turning back to the Americas, we will examine the impact of both slavery and colonialism, as well as the advent of globalization. As we conclude, we will examine questions about African diaspora identity and the lasting impact of modernity in relation to Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic: Double Consciousness and Modernity*, particularly his argument about the importance of black musical production in its transatlantic circulations.

Required Books*


*Additional texts/readings will be posted on Blackboard*
Aims and Objectives

• To have an introductory understanding of significant, interdisciplinary works in African/African-American Studies
• To recognize some of the historical, political, and cultural forces relevant to African/African-American Studies and the belief and practices by which people make sense of their experiences and the world around them
• To think critically about important concepts in the field

Attendance, Preparation, Participation

To prepare for class, read the assigned material, take notes, and prepare one question to enhance your thoughtful contributions to class discussions. Readings are due on the date they are listed; come to class with the appropriate text(s), which includes a hardcopy of any assigned Blackboard readings.

Attendance (10%): More than three absences/instances of tardiness is considered excessive. Three absences (for whatever reason) will not impact your grade; however, each subsequent absence/tardiness will result in a grade of WF/F for the course.

Participation (10%): Your attendance and participation are crucial to our success. Our course depends heavily upon discussion and therefore the prepared and active participation of all its members; this means that just showing up and paying attention isn’t nearly enough. You are expected to bring to class the readings to be discussed. A few texts have been placed on Blackboard (as indicated on your reading schedule) and must be printed and brought to class. In order to facilitate everyone’s engagement, I ask that you put all laptops, smartphones, and tablets away (as they are not permitted in our class).

Assignments

Twice a week, you will post a thoughtful question on Blackboard that will help to guide our upcoming class discussion. There will be a total of three essays (two short 4-5 page papers and a longer 5-7 page essay).

Blackboard Response Questions (10%): For Monday’s and Wednesday’s class meeting (unless a workshop is scheduled), you’re expected to submit to Blackboard one thoughtful discussion question—by 8 PM the night before class—that reflects upon the readings, and which will help to guide our in-class discussion. Late submissions will not receive credit.

Writing Workshops (5%): Writing workshops provide the opportunity to offer feedback on your classmate’s writing and to receive feedback for your own essay. Completion of the assigned task is required for receiving credit for the workshop, and class participation is accessed according to the quality of your offered feedback.
Essays (65%): Paper topics will be distributed for each essay assignment. The essay should be thesis-driven and should focus on one or two of the class’s primary texts, along with at least 3-4 secondary sources. Additionally, each essay should be double-spaced with MLA citations and a works cited page. Late papers are marked down by half of a letter grade for each class session that they are late. A digital copy of all essays should be submitted to Blackboard before the start of class, and a hard copy of the same version is due at the start of class. The two short essays will be worth 20% each and the longer essay worth 25% of your final grade.

For each essay, you must answer the specific question posed on the assignment sheet. Offer a clear and original thesis at the end of your introduction and spend the body paragraphs of the paper backing it up with literary evidence and your interpretation of that evidence, tying each individual body paragraph’s point back to support the larger thesis. Conclude by answering the “so what?” question; that is, how is your argument significant to a global understanding of the text, the region, or humanity? These short papers are opportunities to practice and develop your analytic and persuasive writing skills to make you a better critical thinker, reader, and writer.

**Point Distribution**

- Attendance: 10%
- Participation: 10%
- Blackboard Questions/Comments: 10%
- Writing Workshops: 5%
- Two Short Essays: 40%
- Longer Essay: 25%
- Total Points =100%

- A= 90% - 100%
- B= 80% - 89%
- C= 70% - 79%
- D= 60% - 69%
- F= Below 60%

**UCA Core Requirement**

This course is part of the Critical Inquiry component of the Lower-Division Core. Critical Inquiry courses promote the ability to analyze new problems and situations to formulate informed opinions and conclusions. For more information, go to [http://uca.edu/core](http://uca.edu/core).

**Critical Thinking** – questioning everything you read, hear, and experience, not only for plot, but for tone, intention, consequence, relationships, process, and technique. While many read only for entertainment or for information, in this course we will practice our skills at reading for what is in front of us as well as adjacent, above, below, and even figure out how whatever we’re reading got there in the first place. As
active critical thinkers, we will move away from taking anything at face value, whether it is the written word, the spoken word, the sensory world, the political, the economic, the musical, the physical, the visible—and, yes, even the invisible!

**Critical Reading** – is asking questions of a text while engaging with it, questions such as: who is the intended audience, whose cultural values are reflected, what is the tone, what is the intention, what are the consequences of reading the text, what truths are revealed in this text in regards to economics, politics, sociology, gender, or race and which truths are concealed, how does this text respond to its time period, what kind of philosophies does this text espouse or depend upon, which does it challenge? To practice and further develop our critical reading skills in this course, we will be actively taking notes as we read and underlining, highlighting, looking up words we don’t know and keeping a list of their definitions in our notebooks.

**Critical Writing** – engages the reader in a lively, well-researched, well-thought-out, and focused conversation. Rather than offering descriptive writing that takes no responsibility for entering a global conversation about its topic, we will focus on critical writing throughout the semester. Distinct from descriptive writing, which also assumes that all information presented is unequivocally true and takes the world at face-value without any consideration of alternative truths, critical writing demonstrates a clear, confident refusal to accept others’ conclusions without evidence and independent evaluation. Critical writing offers a clear presentation of one’s own evidence, argumentation, and conclusions while recognizing their limitations.

**Academic Integrity**
The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university’s Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction that the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student’s acceptance of this university policy.

**The Writing Center**
The Center will help you work on your writing at any stage of development. To make an appointment, submit a paper for online tutoring, or to find out about drop-in hours, visit [http://www.uca.edu/writingcenter/appointment.php](http://www.uca.edu/writingcenter/appointment.php). They also offer useful online resources at [http://www.uca.edu/writingcenter/online_resources.php](http://www.uca.edu/writingcenter/online_resources.php). The Academic Success Center is also available to help you with all aspects of college work. Check them out at [http://www.uca.edu/ucollege/asc.php](http://www.uca.edu/ucollege/asc.php).
University Policies
If you have questions about the university’s academic policies or any other matters, please consult the relevant sections of the UCA Student Handbook. UCA adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, contact the UCA Office of Disability Services at (501) 450-3135.

Emergency Procedures Summary
An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

Title IX Disclosure
If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to “student-on-student” or “employee-on-student”), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved. Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation. Each situation differs and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on those specific sets of circumstances. The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator. For further information, please visit: https://uca.edu/titleix. *Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required of the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.

Americans with Disabilities Act Statement
The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Disability Resource Center, 501-450-3613.

Evaluations
Student evaluations of a course and its professors are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking on the Monday of the thirteenth week of instruction through the end of finals weeks by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.
Schedule of Class Meetings, Topics, and Events

UNIT I.
THE UNITED STATES: SLAVERY AND ITS AFTERMATH

INTRODUCTIONS
Fri: Aug 21
○ Overview of the course

1) WEEK ONE
Mon: Aug 24
○ Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (pp. v-39)
Wed: Aug 26
○ Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (pp. 39-80)
Fri: Aug 28
○ Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (pp. 80-129)

2) WEEK TWO:
Mon: Aug 31
○ Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (129-end)
Wed: Sept 2
○ Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Excerpt available on Blackboard)
Fri: Sept 4
○ Paul Gilroy, “Masters, Mistresses, Slaves” in *The Black Atlantic* (pp. 46-71)
○ Handout of paper topics for Short Essay #1

3) WEEK THREE:
Mon: Sept 7
○ LABOR DAY
Wed: Sept 9
Fri: Sept 11
4) WEEK FOUR:
   Mon: Sept 14
     o Paul Gilroy, “Cheer the Weary Traveller”: W. E. B. Du Bois…” in *The Black Atlantic* (pp. 111-145)
   Wed: Sept 16
     o “Historical Trauma” (Available on Blackboard)
     o Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (pp. XV-51)
   Fri: Sept 18
     o Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (pp. 52-124)

5) WEEK FIVE:
   Mon: Sept 21
     o Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (pp. 125-195)
   Wed: Sept 23
     o Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (pp. 199-241)
   Fri: Sept 25
     o Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (pp. 242-277)

6) WEEK SIX:
   Mon: Sept 28
     o Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (pp. 281-End)
   Wed: Sept 30
     o Bring thesis statements and topic sentences for Short Essay #1 (*Writing Workshop #1*)
   Fri: Oct 2
     o Full Draft Workshop for Short Essay #1 (*Writing Workshop #2*)

UNIT II.
19TH CENTURY EUROPEAN IMPERIALISM AND AFRICA

(7) WEEK SEVEN:
   Mon: Oct 5
     o Chinua Achebe, “An Image of Africa” (Available on Blackboard)
     o Short Essay #1 is Due (at the start of class)
   Wed: Oct 7
     o Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Chapters 1-9)
     o Handout of topics for Short Essay #2
   Fri: Oct 9
     o Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Chapters 10-19)
8) WEEK EIGHT:
- **Mon: Oct 12**
  - Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Chapter 20-End)
- **Wed: Oct 14**
  - M. Nourbese Philip, *Looking for Livingstone* (Excerpt available on Blackboard)
- **Fri: Oct 16**
  - Sage Publications, “Apartheid” (Available on Blackboard)

9) WEEK NINE:
- **Mon: Oct 19**
  - Movie: *Tsotsi* (In-class viewing)
- **Wed: Oct 21**
  - Movie: *Tsotsi* (In-class viewing)
- **Fri: Oct 23**
  - FALL BREAK

UNIT III.
**COLONIALISM, NEOCOLONIALISM, AND DECOLONIALITY AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA**

10) WEEK TEN:
- **Mon: Oct 26**
  - C.L.R. James, “From Touissant L’Ouverture to Fidel Castro” in *The Black Jacobins*” (An essay available on Blackboard)
  - Jan Carew, “Our Home” (A poem available on Blackboard)
  - Andrew Salkey, “Remember Haiti, Cuba, Vietnam” (A poem available on Blackboard)
  - John Agard, “Waiting for Fidel” (A poem available on Blackboard)
- **Wed: Oct 28**
  - Faustin Charles, “Sugar Cane” (A poem available on Blackboard)
  - Opal Palmer Adisa, “Duppy Get Her” (A poem available on Blackboard)
- **Fri: Oct 30**
  - Dionne Brand, “From Epigrams to Ernesto Cardenal in Defense of Claudia” (A poem available on Blackboard)
  - Kendel Hippolye, “Jah-Son/ another way” (A poem available on Blackboard)
  - David Dabydeen, “Slave Song” (A poem available on Blackboard)
11) WEEK ELEVEN:

**Mon: Nov 2**
- Marcus Garvey, “Centenary’s Day” (A poem available on Blackboard)
- Peter Tosh, “African” (A poem/song lyric available on Blackboard)

**Wed: Nov 4**
- Paul Gilroy, “Living Memory and the Slave Sublime” in *The Black Atlantic* (bottom of pp. 205-223)

**Fri: Nov 6**
- Bob Marley and the Wailers (Selected songs will be played in class)
- **Essay # 2 is due**

UNIT IV.

POSTCOLONIALITY, NEOCOLONIALISM, AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

12) WEEK TWELVE:

**Mon: Nov 9**
- Louise Bennett, “Back to Africa” and “Colonization in Reverse,” (Available on Blackboard)
- **Handout essay topics, guidelines, due date for Essay #3**

**Wed: Nov 11**
- Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place*

**Fri: Nov 13**
- Kwame Nkrumah, “Neocolonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism”

13) WEEK THIRTEEN:

**Mon: Nov 16**
- Documentary Film: *Life and Debt* (In-class Viewing)

**Wed: Nov 18**
- Jean-Paul Sartre, “Preface” to Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* (Available on Blackboard)

**Fri: Nov 20**
- Frantz Fanon, “The Fact of Blackness” in *Black Skin White Masks* (Available on Blackboard)
14) WEEK FOURTEEN:
   Mon: Nov 23
   o “Diaspora” (Available on Blackboard)
   o Paul Gilroy, “The Black Atlantic as a Counterculture of Modernity” in *The Black Atlantic* (pp. 1-19)

   Wed: Nov 25
   o THANKSGIVING BREAK

   Fri: Nov 27
   o THANKSGIVING BREAK

15) WEEK FIFTEEN:
   Mon: Nov 30
   o Paul Gilroy, “The Black Atlantic as a Counterculture of Modernity” in *The Black Atlantic* (pp. 29-40)

   Wed: Dec 2
   o Review of key themes
   o Writing Workshop #3

   Fri: Nov 27
   o STUDY DAY