



50:014:130 — INTRODUCTION TO AFRICANA STUDIES

Rutgers University—Camden
Spring 2023

Instructor:

Raven M. Moses, M. A.

raven.moses@rutgers.edu

Virtual Office Hours: Thursdays, 12:00 - 1:30pm (Zoom); and by appointment

Class:

Section 90; Online - Asynchronous

COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Description: Most people assume that Africana Studies concentrates on the history of African American people. While this is true in part, the discipline includes elements of philosophy, literature, psychology, sociology, and other areas of the humanities and social sciences. Of course, history is important, but we also have to consider the perspective from which we interpret that history. In the United States, as well as any location impacted by European imperialism, the way that most people are taught to understand anything tends to consider only one view—a ‘European’ view. Nigerian author Chimamanda Adichie asserts that to only have a “single story” in our minds is a danger for both Africana and non-Africana people. How do we foster connections across peoples when we only acknowledge the reality of a few? This is where Africana Studies makes an impact on the academy. Coming to shape in the late 1960s, the Black Studies Movement demanded a space in the academy dedicated to understanding and improving the lives of people of African descent. Over time the discipline of Africana Studies has become an organized and precise approach to studying Africana experiences, history, and culture in a way that offers perspectives, experiences, theories, and criticisms that are overlooked and suppressed by a white-culture dominant society.

The purpose of this particular course is to introduce students to the content, contours, and methodologies of Africana Studies as a discipline and field of inquiry. The course traces how the field evolved organically from an intellectual tradition into a formal discipline. It explores the intellectual, disciplinary and activist concerns and challenges associated with the discipline’s past, present and potential future. And the course explores how to best leverage the discipline’s vast intellectual tools in the ongoing struggle to solve real challenges faced by the contemporary Africana community.

To achieve the stated purposes of the course, we will examine the seminal debates that comprise the Africana intellectual tradition and we will explore the key concepts, paradigms and theories that guide the discipline’s approach to interpreting the Africana experience. And in doing so, we will pay particular attention to the dialectic between epistemology and politics: that is, how issues of race, racism, and racialization were studied, defined, and codified into knowledge, and how this study was foundational to Africana people’s activism, protest, and empowerment.

*The West African Adinkra symbol “Nea Onnim No Sua A, Ohu” means “he who does not know can know from learning.”
In Akan culture it is a symbol of knowledge, life-long education and a continued quest for knowledge.*



Course Goals: Upon completion of this course, you should:

- Understand how Africana people have and continue to uniquely engage broad phenomena, such as slavery, African dispersal, colonialism, race and racism, education, gender and sexuality, and capitalist exploitation
- Understand the dialectic between epistemology and politics in Africana life
- Be knowledgeable of the social, cultural, and political elements that have contributed to the development of Africana Studies as a discipline
- Be able to define, compare and apply the key concepts, paradigms, theories, and methods used in the discipline
- Be familiar with the various bodies of knowledge found within Africana Studies
- Be able to form your own methods of internalizing and applying what you learn in this course to the current issues facing Africana people in a way that is most conducive to your individual strengths and aspirations
- Demonstrate oral and written competency in analyzing Africana themes and experiences

Required Texts

- Various articles and media *all* available in Canvas

Recommended Texts

(these anthologies are recommended for Africana Studies majors and other serious students of the discipline who would like to learn more about Africana intellectual history and the development of Africana Studies as an academic discipline)

- Gates, Henry Louis and Jennifer Burton, Eds. *Call and Response: Key Debates in African American Studies*, 2010
- Nathaniel Norment Jr, Ed., *The African American Studies Reader*, 2nd edition, 2007.

COURSE POLICIES

Course Expectations: Successful completion of the course will require thoughtful engagement with the course material.

- **Reading:** In order to maximize success, completing as much of the assigned reading as possible is absolutely essential. *You should endeavor to complete all assigned readings during the week in which they are assigned. **Please be aware that I assign an average of 30 pages of reading per week.*** This amount of required reading may pose a challenge for some students. Also, I am well aware that your schedules may not allow for intense reading every week and not all readings will require the same level of engagement. So I encourage you all to schedule your time accordingly, take notes when you read, and to use varied reading strategies (***you all are college students, so you have to decide for yourselves what you can and will read carefully and what will have to be skimmed!***). I try to aid you in this process by providing guidance how how to read many of the individual selections (what parts to pay most attention to, questions to consider while reading, etc.). However, if you ever have difficulty with the readings or need help developing your reading strategies, I encourage you to come to me for assistance.

*The West African Adinkra symbol “Nea Onnim No Sua A, Ohu” means “he who does not know can know from learning.”
In Akan culture it is a symbol of knowledge, life-long education and a continued quest for knowledge.*



- **Lectures:** Introducing students to an entire discipline is a very broad endeavor, and because of this, the amount of reading you will do over the course of the term is actually very limited in comparison with the amount of information available. Therefore, to give you an adequate survey of the discipline, ***my lectures will contain a lot of information not presented in the readings.*** Given this, it is incumbent upon you to watch all lecture videos, listen carefully, take notes and ask questions whenever necessary (by email or during virtual office hours). In all of your assignments you will be expected to demonstrate your absorption of concepts presented within the lectures.
- **Writing:** The course will also require a decent amount of writing, both formally and informally. As this is not a grammar course, my primary interest will be in the development of your critical inquiry and argument skills. In other words, I primarily want you to show me how well you *think!* However, I will also provide feedback on traditional writing elements (organization, clarity, etc.) in an effort to help you develop your academic writing skills.

Class Conduct: In order to be a viable intellectual community, all class participants must agree to certain principles that will guide our interaction with each other.

- **Inclusiveness:** We will respect the rights of others to express their views, no matter how different from our own. We will also create an atmosphere wherein everyone feels comfortable expressing his/her/their views without censor or the threat of personal attack.
- **Openness:** Some materials and discussions may make some feel uncomfortable or emotional. We must be open to discussing these subjects in the appropriate intellectual context. Some of you may find some of the readings or student comments controversial or challenging. Our purpose in this class is to explore this subject matter deeply and consider multiple perspectives and arguments. You are expected to treat one another respectfully, but of course are free to respectfully disagree with views expressed in online discussions or in readings.
- **Debate:** While it is important that everyone has the chance to express his/her/their views, it is equally important that everyone has the chance to challenge others' ideas. As such, we will provide a forum where everyone is comfortable analyzing others' viewpoints.

Email Policy: Student emails will be responded within 48 hours, Monday thru Thursday. All messages should be conveyed using professional tone and structure.

Canvas: All of you must ensure that you have access to our Canvas course. All of the required reading assignments and lecture materials listed in the course schedule will be available in Canvas, and all required assignments and activities must be submitted through Canvas. You are also responsible for signing on to Canvas regularly to check for any announcements and updates.

*The West African Adinkra symbol "Nea Onnim No Sua A, Ohu" means "he who does not know can know from learning."
In Akan culture it is a symbol of knowledge, life-long education and a continued quest for knowledge.*



UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Statement on Academic Freedom: Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has adopted a policy on Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy #03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link: https://womens-studies.rutgers.edu/images/Announcements/RU_60.5.1-current.pdf

Academic Integrity: The following section is quoted verbatim from the University's Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students: "Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source stored in print, electronic or other medium is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: "to paraphrase Plato's comment..." and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member." Students can learn more about Rutgers Academic Integrity policies and procedures [here](#).

Disability Statement: This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact The Office of Disability Services (ODS) at (856) 225-2722 in Armitage Hall, Room 235 to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.



COURSE WORK AND GRADING

Grade Distribution

Final grades for this course will be comprised of the following:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Weekly Activities & Discussions — <i>(variable total; drop lowest 20% of grades)</i> | 15% |
| Weekly Response Journal — <i>(10 total; drop 2 lowest grades)</i> | 30% |
| Reflection Paper — | 10% |
| Study Guide “Exams” (3) — | 30% |
| Case Study — | 15% |

Grading Scale

Final grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

| | |
|-----|--------------|
| A: | 90 - 100 |
| B+: | 85 - 89 |
| B: | 80 - 84 |
| C+: | 75 - 79 |
| C: | 70 - 74 |
| D: | 60 - 69 |
| F: | 59 and below |

Grading Policy: If you feel that you will be turning in an assignment late, please let me know ***at least 24 hours in advance***. If you fail to tell me in advance, I will ***not*** accept late assignments. There is *no* extra credit in this course.

Incomplete Grades: “I” grades will be assigned only for those students who have earned the minimum passing grade of 60 points (“D”) by the last scheduled day of instruction. Only students submitting written documentation of legitimate emergency situations will be granted an incomplete grade.

STUDENT RESOURCES

Rutgers-Camden Learning Center: The RCLC offers academic assistance in the form of one-on-one tutoring, peer-led review sessions, academic coaching and learning assistance, writing assistance, online resources, disability services, and a variety of academic support, organizational, and study skills workshops. Students are encouraged to visit the RCLC for help with developing academic skills necessary for the successful completion of this course, including, but not limited to, time management, effective studying, critical reading and academic writing.

*The West African Adinkra symbol “Nea Onnim No Sua A, Ohu” means “he who does not know can know from learning.”
In Akan culture it is a symbol of knowledge, life-long education and a continued quest for knowledge.*



COURSE SCHEDULE

This schedule in its entirety is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. All changes will be announced in Canvas and posted in the online syllabus.

| Week | Dates | Topic / Lecture | Readings | Assignments <i>(All weekly assignments are due by SUN @ 11:59 pm)</i> |
|--|----------------|------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1 | Jan 17 - 22 | Course Introduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gates and Burton (2011) "Timeline" <i>(for reference only)</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 1 Activities & Discussions • Week 1 Response Journal |
| | | Black Studies Epistemology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarke (1984) "Africana Studies: A Decade of Change, Challenge and Conflict" | |
| Unit 1: Genealogy of Africana Intellectual Thought & Activism | | | | |
| 2 | Jan 23 - 29 | Positioning the Key Debates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gates (2011) "Forty Million Ways to be Black" • Burton and Gates (2011) "Thematic Introduction: The Politics of Difference" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 2 Activities & Discussions • Week 2 Response Journal |
| | | "The Negro Problem" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gates and Burton (2011) "Key Debate: Nature, Culture, and Slavery" (up to 1954) | |
| | | The Government | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gates and Burton (2011) "Key Debate: The Government: Civic Rights and Civic Duties" (up to 1954) | |
| 3 | Jan 30 - Feb 5 | Education | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gates and Burton (2011) "Key Debate: Education" (up to 1954) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 3 Activities & Discussions • Week 3 Response Journal |
| | | Race & Class | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gates and Burton (2011) "Key Debate: Race and Class" (up to 1954) | |
| | | Migration & Emigration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gates and Burton (2011) "Key Debate: Migration and Emigration" | |

*The West African Adinkra symbol "Nea Onnim No Sua A, Ohu" means "he who does not know can know from learning."
In Akan culture it is a symbol of knowledge, life-long education and a continued quest for knowledge.*



| | | | | |
|--|----------------|--|--|--|
| 4 | Feb 6 - 12 | Strategies for Change | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gates and Burton (2011) "Key Debate: Strategies for Change" (up to 1954) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Week 4 Activities & Discussions Week 4 Response Journal |
| | | Separatism vs. Integration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gates and Burton (2011) "Key Debate: Separatism versus Integration" (up to 1954) | |
| | | The Politics of Art | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gates and Burton (2011) "Key Debate: The Politics of Art" (up to 1954) | |
| Unit 2: Development of the Discipline | | | | |
| 5 | Feb 13 - 19 | The Black Campus Movement: Historical Context | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kendi (2012) <i>The Black Campus Movement</i>, Introduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EXAM 1 DUE Week 5 Activities & Discussions |
| | | The Black Campus Movement: Goals, Demands & Protests | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rojas (2007) "Revolution at San Francisco State College" | |
| 6 | Feb 20 - 26 | A New Discipline: Institutionalization and Early Challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hall (1999) "Struggle Outward: Barricades and Ivory Towers" Young (1984) "The Struggle and Dream of Black Studies" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Week 6 Activities & Discussions Week 6 Response Journal |
| Unit 3: Disciplinary Methodologies | | | | |
| 7 | Feb 27 - Mar 5 | Key Concepts: Worldview & Culture | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carroll (2012) "Worldview: Clarifying a Concept, Framework & Nomenclature" Smedley & Smedley (2005) "Race as biology is fiction, racism as a social problem is real..." | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Week 7 Activities & Discussions Week 7 Response Journal |
| | | Key Concepts: Race, Racism & White Supremacy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leonardo (2004) "The Color of Supremacy: Beyond the Discourse of 'White Privilege'" | |

The West African Adinkra symbol "Nea Onnim No Sua A, Ohu" means "he who does not know can know from learning." In Akan culture it is a symbol of knowledge, life-long education and a continued quest for knowledge.



| | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|---|--|--|
| 8 | Mar 6 - 12 | Structure of the Discipline | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carroll (2012) "Defining Africana Studies--Subject Matter, Perspective, and Goal/Function" Little, Leonard & Crosby (1981) "Black Studies and Africana Studies Curriculum Models in the United States" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CASE STUDY PROPOSAL DUE Week 8 Activities & Discussions Week 8 Response Journal |
| | | Paradigms & Perspectives | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hall (1999) "Struggle Inward: Whither, Then, and How?" | |
| 9 | Mar 13 - 19 | Spring Break | | |
| 10 | Mar 20 - 26 | Paradigms & Perspectives (cont.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hall (1999) "Alternative Approaches in African American Studies" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Week 10 Activities & Discussions Week 10 Response Journal |
| | | Theories & Methods | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> McDougal (2017) "Theory" & "Applying Theory to Social Phenomena" | |
| Unit 4: Disciplinary Content | | | | |
| 11 | Mar 27 - Apr 2 | Subject Areas: History | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wainaina (2005) "How to Write About Africa" Kendi (2019) "The Historical Significance of 1619" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EXAM 2 DUE Week 11 Activities & Discussions |
| | | Subject Areas: Sociology, Politics & Economics | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watson (1976) "The Idea of Black Sociology: Its Cultural and Political Significance" Dawson (2001) "Historical Tendencies in Black Political Thought" Burden-Stelly (2018) "The Capitalist Foundations of Racialization" | |
| 12 | Apr 3 - 9 | Subject Areas: Psychology | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teo (2011) "Bibliography--Race and Racism" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Week 12 Activities & Discussions Week 12 Response Journal |
| | | Subject Areas: Religion & Spirituality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easterling (2016) "Conjure--Survival of African Religious Structure" | |
| | | Subject Areas: Aesthetics & Creative Production | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gayle (1971) <i>The Black Aesthetic</i>, "Introduction" | |

The West African Adinkra symbol "Nea Onnim No Sua A, Ohu" means "he who does not know can know from learning." In Akan culture it is a symbol of knowledge, life-long education and a continued quest for knowledge.



| Unit 5: Evolution of Africana Intellectual Thought & Activism | | | | |
|--|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| 13 | Apr 10 - 16 | New Debates: Intersectionality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oluo (2018) "What is Intersectionality and Why Do I Need It?" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Week 13 Activities & Discussions • Week 13 Response Journal |
| | | New Debates: Gender | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lorde (1984) "Age Race Class and Sex" | |
| | | New Debates: Sexuality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harris (2009) "Marginalization by the Marginalized: Race, Homophobia, Heterosexism, and 'the Problem of the 21st Century'" | |
| 14 | Apr 17 - 23 | Applied Africana Studies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The readings and activities assigned for this week will be based on your chosen Case Study topic; see Canvas for instructions</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REFLECTION PAPER DUE • Week 14 Activities & Discussions |
| Unit 6: The Future of Africana Studies | | | | |
| 15 | Apr 24 - 30 | Current Challenges | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carr (2011) "What Black Studies is Not: Moving from Crisis to Liberation in Africana Intellectual Work" | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CASE STUDY DUE • Week 15 Activities & Discussions |
| | | Future Evolution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asante (1992) "African American Studies: The Future of the Discipline" • Patton (2012) "Black Studies: 'Swaggering into the Future'" | |
| 16 | May 1 - 7 | Course Wrap Up | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • none | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EXAM 3 |

*The West African Adinkra symbol "Nea Onnim No Sua A, Ohu" means "he who does not know can know from learning."
In Akan culture it is a symbol of knowledge, life-long education and a continued quest for knowledge.*



ASSIGNMENTS

Weekly Assignments: As this course requires you to engage with complex concepts, exclusive focus on regurgitation of facts is not conducive to actively engaging with and internalizing the course material. Therefore, one of the primary methods of assessment for the course will take the form of regular written Class Discussions and Response Journal entries. Both will be graded according to provided rubrics.

- **Activities & Discussions — 15%:** There will be required *activities* and/or *discussion boards* in each weekly Canvas module. For discussion boards you are required to post at least one (1) response to each prompt; however, you are encouraged to use the board as a place to engage in ongoing discussion with me and classmates by offering responses to other students' posts or by posting additional comments and questions wherever desired. Think of these boards as akin to traditional in-class discussions.
- **Response Journal — 30%:** In most weeks you will also be required to post an entry in your *individual response journal*. Every student will have a dedicated discussion board that *only* they and I have access to. Individual response journals will be used as a space for each student to summarize, comment upon, analyze and interrogate the weekly course topics. The overall purpose of the journal is to provide a space to work out your ideas about the course material and practice comprehending, analyzing and interrogating ideas in a low-stakes environment. *You are required to write a minimum of 500 words in response to each weekly journal prompt.* Think of these as mini informal essays.

Reflection Paper — 10%: Toward the end of the semester you will be required to write and submit a short paper where you review and reflect on the progression of your overall Response Journal. Specific assignment details will be distributed at a later date.

Study Guide “Exams” — 30%: At three (3) points in the semester you will be required to complete a non-cumulative “exam study guide.” The completion of the study guide will serve as your exam. These “exams” will be open-book and you will have the entire week (*Monday - Sunday*) to complete them (*specific exam weeks are indicated in the syllabus and Canvas*). Specific questions, templates, and grading rubrics will also be provided.

Case Study — 15%: As a culminating project, you will be required to write a 5-7 page case study paper. You must choose a contemporary issue facing Africana people, conduct research on the issue, summarize and present a critical analysis of it using specific disciplinary methodologies discussed during the term. As part of the project, you will be required to submit a short topic proposal that I must approve prior to your beginning work on the project. Specific due dates for the proposal and paper are listed in the syllabus and Canvas. Additional assignment details will be distributed at a later date.

*The West African Adinkra symbol “Nea Onnim No Sua A, Ohu” means “he who does not know can know from learning.”
In Akan culture it is a symbol of knowledge, life-long education and a continued quest for knowledge.*