Afro-entrepreneurship and Solidarity Economy: a global perspective

"Difficult Dialogue"
( # 61860 )
Spring 2021

Dr. Marcelo Paixão – African and African Diaspora Studies Department (AADS) / Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies (LLILAS)

UT Blanton Museum of Art

Classes: T/Th, 3:30–5 p.m. – Online mode
A. Course Instructor and TA:

✓ Instructor: Dr. Marcelo Paixão (he/him/his)
✓ E-mail: marcelopaixao@utexas.edu
✓ Office Hours (online by Zoom): Tuesday 1:30-2:30 p.m.

✓ Teaching Assistant (TA):

B. Course Objectives

Historically and worldwide, the African Americans and Afro-descendant faced the grim reality of racism and racial discrimination with persistence, resistance, and creativity, including economic and financial terrain. The Signature Course, Difficult Dialogue, introduces the students to several economical alternatives pursued by the African American population to better off their personal, familiar, and community lives. Although the course will incorporate other minority groups, the primary reference will be the African American entrepreneurs. The class will study their struggle to become business owners or create alternative entrepreneurship forms based on cooperativism and solidarity economy. The course will also incorporate the experiences of other countries, mainly Brazil.

The first emerging question related to afro-entrepreneurship is the hostile business environment caused by racial and gender discrimination, chronic poverty, and discouragement. Then, the debate unfolds for alternatives that this group achieves to overcome these several hindrances: individual and familiar strategies of economic and financial survival; access to venture capital, credit, and microcredit; models for community development; Black Female entrepreneurship; and questions related to the formation of trust relations among economic agents. Throughout the semester, "Afro-entrepreneurship..." intends to awaken students’ interest in entrepreneurship issues, dilemmas, controversies or even inspire some of them to become entrepreneurs in the future.

The semester will center around twelve "sparkling issues" selected by the Instructor about Afro-entrepreneurship in the USA and globally. They will not exhaust the sum of issues that lurk over this subject, but they are some of the most emerging topics for this debate.

Coherently to the Difficult Dialogue course principle, the students are permanently summoned to participate in the class to debate sparkling questions through the working groups. The pedagogical materials are reference papers and book chapters, and documentaries. As far as possible, we intend to invite essential persons of the African American community who are entrepreneurs to talk to the class.
C. What are classroom and university rules?

*Classroom conduct.* Participation and questioning are welcome. The Instructor is committed to creating a class environment framed on student participation, creativity, critical thinking, respect, and mutual understanding. The Instructor will also attempt to guarantee a respectful and cheerful space of work and discussion. It is expected that the students - and the Instructor and the T.A. - attend the classes with a high spirit of tolerance, understanding, and openness to hear divergent opinions in the debate. Based on these principles, the Instructor encourages all the students to participate in the classroom, exposing their ideas and doubts honestly, asking questions, and expressing their opinions regarding each subject under discussion. Based on those same principles, the Instructor will not accept any derogatory or inappropriate behavior directed to all class participants. Moreover, all forms of discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, color, race, nationality, or any other kind of intolerance and mistreatment are strictly forbidden. The Instructor also asks the students to avoid napping or dozing off during the classes.

*Policy on scholastic dishonesty.* Students who violate University rules on academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the University’s integrity, academic dishonesty policies will be strictly enforced. Pay attention to the Canvas Turnitin option is turned on, allowing the Instructor and T.A. to detect plagiarism attempts. For further information, please visit the Office of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/).

*Students with disabilities.* The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic adjustments for qualified students with disabilities. The Sooner the student looks for this service, the sooner they will be assisted in their necessities. For more information, contact the Services for Students with Disabilities website: [http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/](http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/) and/or [http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/how-to-register-with-ssd/](http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/how-to-register-with-ssd/).

*Religious holy days.* A student who misses an examination, work assignment, or another project due to the observance of a religious holy day will be allowed to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence, provided that he or she has properly notified the T.A. and Instructor. The University of Texas’s policy at Austin is that the students must notify each Instructor at least one week before the classes scheduled that they will be absent to observe a religious holy day. For religious holidays that fall within the first two weeks of the semester, the notice should be given on the first day of the semester. The student may not be penalized for these excused absences, but the T.A. and Instructor may appropriately respond if they fail to complete the missed assignment or examination satisfactorily within a reasonable time after the excused absence.
Unauthorized attendance. Except previously allowed by the Instructor, no one else than the Instructor and the T.A., and the enrolled students in the course "Afro-Entrepreneurship ..." are authorized to stay in the Zoom meeting during the classes. In case of any unauthorized presence, this person will need to leave the Zoom meeting.

### Signature Course Mission:
The Signature Courses at the University of Texas at Austin will connect students with distinguished faculty members in unique learning environments. By way of this rigorous intellectual experience, students will develop college-level skills in research, writing, speaking, and discussion through an approach that is both interdisciplinary and contemporary.

### Difficult Dialogue Mission:
Founded in 2006 at the University of Texas, Difficult Dialogue began as part of a Ford Foundation initiative developed in response to reports of growing intolerance and efforts to curb academic freedom on U.S. campuses. The Difficult Dialogue seminars are distinctive in their focus on teaching students the skill they need to participate in constructive dialogue about controversial and divisive issues. The course focuses on the alternative of economic development for the African American community.

### D. Class Materials and Communication

Canvas will be the primary tool for communication ([http://canvas.utexas.edu/](http://canvas.utexas.edu/)). Log into the Canvas system with UT EID, click on the class link under "Courses." If a student has any problem to access the materials, please contact the T.A. or the Instructor.

All reading materials (and grades) will be uploaded to Canvas. Videos will be available on U.T. Libraries Kanopy Video Streaming or YouTube. To access the Kanopy website ([https://utexas.kanopystreaming.com/](https://utexas.kanopystreaming.com/)), log in with your U.T. e-mail and password. On Canvas, the student will find the link to access the videos.

The student will have to upload all the assignments (Weekly Summary and Final Work) on Canvas. The Instructor can be contacted through Canvas or by e-mail marcelopaixao@utexas.edu. The class’ messages will be answered up to 48 hours. Please, take note of the T.A. and Instructor office-hour to have a face-to-face conversation. Please, do not feel intimidated to contact the Instructor and T.A., who will be very receptive and open to hearing the class’ questions, doubts, problems, and suggestions. We also encourage the class to be in permanent contact with the T.A.

### E. University Lectures Series

The "University Lecture Series" is a mandatory requirement of all Signature Courses. Students must attend at least one of the five Lecture Series events organized by the School of Undergraduate Studies (UGS). During Fall 2021, the Lectures Series are:
How Self-Compassion Can Help Us to Thrive in the Midst of Challenge. Kristin Neff, Ph.D., educational psychology March 2, 8-9 p.m.


The students need to write a half-page, double-spaced summary of at least one lecture and upload it on Canvas. Although this summary will not be graded, its quality and coherence will be evaluated. In this case, the student will need to attend another lecture to replace the previous one.

The class can get further information on the Fall 2021 Lectures Series here: https://ugs.utexas.edu/uls

F. Class Dynamic

On Tuesdays and Thursdays, classes will begin at 3:30 p.m. and will finish at 4:50 p.m. Each class will have a ten-minute break.

On the first day of the week, the Instructor will introduce the week’s topic. The Instructor will explain the concepts, controversies, and problems of each debate. On Thursdays, in the first 30 minutes, the lecture may continue, or the class will watch a video or listen to an invited speaker and debate its content in the classroom.

From the third week of classes until the fourteenth, in the last 45 minutes, it will take place In-Class Group Presentation and Commentaries. Mediated by the Instructor and T.A., a group of three students will present their readings, doubts, and reflections on the week’s topic to their colleagues. After another group of three students will comment on this presentation. Finally, the presenter group will answer or counterargument these emerging points.

During the class, the students’ computer camera can be set on or off. However, when participating in one debate, at the beginning of this one, the student will turn on the computer camera to show their face and say hello to their classmates.

G. Grading Method

G.1. Weights

The "Afro-Entrepreneurship..." course will grade the students based on five variables:

✓ In-Class Group Presentation (15% of the final grade)
✓ In-Class Commentator Group (10% of the final grade)
✓ Individual Weekly summary (20% of the final grade)
✓ Final Group Presentation (15% of the final grade)
✓ Final Comments for Group Presentation (10% of the final grade)
✓ Final Individual Essay (30% of the final grade)

G.2. Grading Scale (valid for each assignment and the final grade)

Approving:  
A = 94-100 / A- = 90-93 / B+ = 87-89 / B = 84-86 / B- = 80-83 / C+ = 77-79 / C = 74-76 / C- = 70-73 /

Failing:  
D+ = 67-69 / D = 64-66 / D- = 60-63 / F = 00-60

Delays and Attendance Rules

From the beginning until the 15th minute of each class the TA will take the class' attendance. If a student needs to leave class earlier, the TA must be informed at the beginning of class. If not, student’s attendance will be nullified.

Attendance is mandatory, and the maximum number of unexcused absences is eight (8) classes. After this, the student will have a penalty of one point per absence in the final grade (read grading method in section G and presentations rules in section H). Students will automatically be failed if they have more than twelve (12) unexcused absences. It is considered an excusable absence the impossibility to attend class for legal or health problems. In the case of a legal issue, it must be followed by legal documentation signed by a lawyer. If the matter is a health issue (personal or family) the student simple need to send TA a message.

If a student has any restriction to attend class, deliver the weekly assignment or make the in-class presentations by the appropriate deadline due to healthy troubles, family issues, religious, civil, or political reasons; please inform the TA and Instructor as soon as possible.

Deadlines are no-negotiable. All assignments must be submitted as a PDF file, using Times New Roman 12, double space with one-inch margins and adhere to Chicago citation format.

The Weekly Summaries need to be uploaded on Canvas every Friday by 11:59 pm. Late assignments will result in a one-point deduction per day of delay in the grade of the assignment.

In-Class Presentations and In-Class Commentators are mandatory. There will be no makeup for In-Class Presentations and Commentators.

The Final Work is mandatory. Late assignments will result in one-point deduction per day of delay in the grade of the final work. We will not accept Final Works more than seven days late.

The class shall have all assigned readings - and all other available pedagogical resources - completed before the beginning of weekly class. It is a fundamental step to guarantee the dynamism the class’s interest in its content.
H. Assignments

By January 26, the T.A. will let the class know about their two classmates who will be part of their group until the end of the semester. If any student does not feel comfortable being part of any group, they need to communicate with the T.A. by the latest February 11 to redraw the student into another group. The students decide cannot which group they will integrate.

H.1. In-Class Group Presentation (15% of the final grade)

As described in section F, the In-Class Group Presentation is the moment in which a pre-defined group of three students, based on the readings of the week, the Instructor’s lectures, documentary, and guest presentation, will share their points of view with other colleagues. Each group will present once during the semester. The presentation will last approximately 25 minutes, 15 to present the main ideas, and the other 10 to answer the other’s group comments. It will be assessed the quality of the presentations and questions raised by the group. Nevertheless, each member will not necessarily be equally graded; it may depend on individual performance during the group presentation. The first In-Class Group Presentation will begin on February 4, and the last will be on April 15.

H.2. In-Class Commentator Group (10% of the final grade)

As described in section F, on Thursdays after the In-Class Group Presentation, another Group of three students will comment on the colleagues’ presentation for about 10 minutes. Each group will serve as a commentator once during the semester. It will be assessed the quality of the comments and questions raised by the group. Over again, each member will not necessarily be equally graded; it may depend on individual performance during the group comments. The first In-Class Group Commentator will begin on February 4, and the last will be on April 15.

H.3. Individual Weekly Summary (20% of the final grade)

The individual assignment consists of homework in which each student will describe and develop the five most essential concepts debated each. The Individual Weekly Summaries will have three to five key-words and between four to six paragraphs. The size will be no more than 1.5 pages. It will be typed and uploaded in PDF using Times New Roman 12, double space with one-inch margins, and adhere to Chicago citation format. From the second week of classes on, the assignment needs to be uploaded on Canvas every Friday by 11:59 p.m. Late assignments will result in a one-point deduction per day of delay in the grade of the assignment.

Tip for the Weekly Assignment: In the student’s assessment, what words best describe the readings’ central idea and watched documentaries and presentations? How are the concepts or central ideas of these words? Which are emerging questions that the class identifies for future studies and researches?

The first turn-in for the Individual Weekly Summary is on January 29, and the last will be on April 16.
H.4. Final Group Presentation (15% of the final grade)

Final Group Presentation consists of research prepared by each group of three students during the semester based on the studies’ subjects or emerging class questions. Each group will have 20 minutes to present the group’s research principal findings to their colleagues and 10 minutes to answer their classmates’ comments. The presentations will be graded based on the quality, clarity, precision of the presentation, ability to summarize, and depth analysis. Nevertheless, each member will not necessarily be equally graded; it may depend on individual performance during the group presentation.

The presenter group needs to send the material for their presentation to the commentators no less than 24 hours before the presentation (if not, the presenter group may have their grade discounted). The students can ask the Instructor and the T.A. for support to plan the In-Class Presentation. The topic of each group presentation must be turn-in on Canvas by April 2.

Can the class participate in the debate on the days that a student is not presenting or commenting?

Yes, they can!!! Students’ participation in the Zoom class is highly encouraged. In that situation, the student has two possibilities. The first is using the Zoom chat to ask questions or make comments. The class can do it all class long, and the Instructor will read it for the presenters and commentators to give their responses. The second form of participation is jumping in for no longer than one minute. In this case, the student needs to solicit the T.A. to get unmuted and share these comments. The Instructor will give the floor to the student as soon as possible.

In-Class Presentations are mandatory and will occur in Week 14, 15, and 16. In case a student does not make the class presentation, there will not be a makeup assignment.

H.5. Final Comments for Group Presentation (10% of the final grade)

Final Comments for Group Presentation consists of questions, reflections, and suggestions prepared by each group for their classmate’s presentation. The Commentator group will receive from the presenter group the material for their presentation no less than 24 hours before the presentation. Each group will have 10 minutes to present the group’s essential comments to their colleagues. The comments will be graded based on the quality, clarity, contribution to the classmates’ research, and respect for their colleagues. The students can ask the Instructor and the T.A. for support to plan the Final Group Commentors.

In-Class Presentations are mandatory and will occur in Week 14, 15, and 16. All students are required to attend them as a presenter or as a commentator, or as a listener. In case a student does not attend the class commentator, there will not be a makeup assignment.

Oral Skilling: For many students may not be easy to make a public oral presentation. The reasons are multiples, but the U.T. has facilities that can help the class overcome it. The Sanger Learning Center (SLC) and the School of Undergraduate Studies (UGS) have partnered with the U.T. Libraries to provide free public speaking support for all students. Its website is https://ugs.utexas.edu/slc/support/speaking-center. The class can also count on T.A. support in case you want to schedule an appointment with them.
H.6. Individual Final Essay (30% of the final grade)

The Individual Final Essay is the final assignment to be prepared by each student. It can be based on the same topic of the In-Class Group Presentation (item H4). However, each student needs to write the Individual Final Essay on their own. So, to avoid any confusion, or, even worse, any chance of two or more essays being identical and be considered cheating or plagiarism, do not exchange or share parts of your writing with your colleagues even if they are in the same group.

Writing Skilling: Possibly, our course will be the first time the students will need to write academic work. We expected that the class might face difficulties in taking the first steps in this terrain. Each student will need to develop the writing capacity to accomplish the Weekly Assignments and do the Final Work. The University Writing Center (UWC) provides one-on-one writing consultations to undergraduate students. Additionally, The Scholl of Undergraduate Studies (UGS) offers workshops and regular "write-ins." If the students are interested in attending these events, the class can visit http://uwcenter.utexas.edu/ and schedule an online appointment with them. In case some student (or a group of you) need some help to contact and make an appointment with UWC, you can count on the T.A. support.

The Individual Final Essay will be submitted as a PDF file, using Times New Roman 12, double space with one-inch margins, and adhere to Chicago citation format. The essay will have between 1.5 to 3 pages. The Final Work needs to be uploaded on Canvas by May 14, 11h59 p.m.

The Individual Final essay is mandatory. Each student is required to upload her/his assignment by the due date. Late assignments will result in a one-point deduction per day of delay in the final work grade. It will not be accepted Final Works more than seven days late.

I. Course schedule (All texts, papers, and documentary links are available on Canvas)

Note Regarding Syllabus Changes - The following schedule is tentative and may vary depending on class discussions and feedback. The Instructor reserves the right to make changes to the schedule of readings and lectures during the semester and announce these changes in class and Canvas.

Week 1 (January 19) – Course's Introduction of the Syllabus, the Instructor, the T.A., and the Students.

Reading: Syllabus of the course "Afro-Entrepreneurship and Solidarity Economy: a global perspective."

Week 1 (January 21) – History and Realities of African American Entrepreneurship (1st Part)

Reading:


Watching:

**Week 2** (January 26 and 28) – History and Realities of African American Entrepreneurship (2nd Part)

**Reading**


**Watching:**


**Week 3** (February 2 and 4) – African American Entrepreneurship in Austin, Texas and the South/Southwest of the USA

**Reading**


**Watching**


*(Warning. The following video contains graphic content that may be disturbing to some viewers. Discretion is advised)*

**Week 4** (February 9 and 11) – Controversies and debates about African American Entrepreneurship in the USA
Reading


Watching (subjected to changing)


Week 5 (February 16 and 18) – Obstacles, Discrimination, and Public Policy

Reading


Watching:


Week 6 - (February 23 and 25) – African American Woman Entrepreneurship, Revisiting Madam C. J. Walker

Reading


Watching:


Week 7 (March 2 and 4) – Social Capital: Meanings and Implications

Reading


Watching:

American Climate Rebels Episode 11: Cooperation Jackson: Building a Social and Solidarity Economy. https://youtu.be//_Nt9Z2P7mPY

Week 8 (March 9 and 11) – Cooperativism: Principles and Afro-Cooperatives History in the USA
**Reading**


**Watching (subjected to changing)**

Arc of Justice The Rise, Fall and Rebirth of a Beloved Community [https://utexas.kanopy.com/node/254055/preview](https://utexas.kanopy.com/node/254055/preview)

**Week 9 – Spring Break (no classes)**

**Week 10 (March 23 and 25) – Access to Financial Capital, Black-owned banks**

**Reading**


**Watching**

Killer Mike on his next act: co-founding a Black-owned bank. 7:24 min [https://youtu.be/DON1R2Agrgo](https://youtu.be/DON1R2Agrgo)

Killer Mike and the creation of Greenwood, a Black-owned digital bank. 11:24 min. [https://youtu.be/A_vm4ulHvCg](https://youtu.be/A_vm4ulHvCg)

**Week 11 (March 30 and April 1) – Struggling Against Segregation and Gentrification: Community Development Based**
Reading


Watching (subjected to changing)

My Brooklyn: Demystifying Gentrification
https://utexas.kanopy.com/node/143989/preview

Week 12 (April 6 and 8) – COVID-19: Impacts Against African American Entrepreneurship

Reading


Watching


Week 13 (April 13 and 15) – Afro-Entrepreneurship in Brazil.

Reading

Fact of Impact: Leila Velez, co-founder of Beleza Natural an Endeavor Brazil Company, 4 p.


Watching

Black in Latin America E02, Brazil: A Racial Paradise https://youtu.be/Gh7c46U5hhY