Black Politics in the Americas: From Ferguson to the Favelas

This course will explore the range and history of black political mobilization in the Americas. It will begin by comparing the different racial orders developed in the U.S. and Latin America, and analyze the way in which black populations throughout the Americas have mobilized to escape slavery, to gain rights from the state, and to protect black life and resist various forms of dehumanization. In particular, the course will focus on how blacks have responded to moments of racial terror and white supremacy, including: lynching in the U.S. in the early twentieth century, the civil rights movement of the 1960s, current protests against police violence that have crystallized in the Black Lives Matter movement, and mobilization against “black genocide” and police violence, and to resist criminalization and territorial dislocation in Brazil and other parts of Latin America. The course will pay special attention to gender and sexuality, highlighting the historical participation of women and LGBTQ people in black political movements, even as they faced stigma as a result of misogyny and homophobia. It will also emphasize the historical and contemporary transnational links between black political movements in different spaces, and reflect on the constitutive elements of a vision for black liberation and racial justice.

Course Requirements: Students are expected to attend class, complete the readings prior to class, and actively participate in class discussion. The emphasis of this course is on critical thinking and analytical writing. Students are expected to read thoroughly and carefully, as the quality of discussion depends on the extent of your preparation and participation.

Completion of all assignments is required. Students who fail to complete ANY of the following assignments will fail the course. Students will write 1 short reflection essay (2 pages), 2 short analytical essays (4 pages each) based on class readings, and 1 short (4 page) research paper. The research paper will be based on outside materials and use at least one primary document. It should be an in-depth analysis of one example of black protest (historical or contemporary); essay topics will require prior approval of the instructor. Students will also make one in-class group presentation. Working in groups of five, they will prepare a 15-minute presentation on pre-determined topics. Papers should be sent via email, by 5:00pm, on the due dates listed in the course schedule. Late papers will NOT be accepted.

Grading Policy: Final grades (using a plus/minus scale) will be assessed based on class participation (14%), in-class group presentations (10%), and the four written essays (10% for essay #1, and 22% each for essays 2-4, for a total of 76%). There will be no grading curve. Class participation grades will be based on the in-class presentation, participation in class discussions, and attendance. There will be no grading curve.

Policy on Academic Dishonesty: Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Plagiarism occurs if you represent as your own work any material that was obtained from another source, regardless of how or where you acquired it. For examples of plagiarism, see http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_plagiarism.php

Writing Assistance: I strongly encourage you to use the Undergraduate Writing Center (UWC), PCL 2.330, 471-6222, http://www.uwc.utexas.edu/. The UWC offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis.

Students with disabilities: You will need to provide official documentation at the beginning of the semester to receive appropriate accommodations. Any student who requires special accommodations must

Religious holy days: You must notify me of an expected absence at least fourteen days in advance, so that arrangements can be made for completion of any missed assignments.

Required Texts:
1) Claudia Rankine, Citizen: An American Lyric (Graywolf Press, 2014) at UT Co-op bookstore.
2) Course Reader (Paradigm Books, at 2401A Rio Grande, corner of Rio Grande & 24th St, inside Melissa's Boutique). Includes all readings marked with an asterisk (*).

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Weeks 1-2. Defining Key Terms: White Supremacy and Black Politics
Aug. 24: Introduction

Weeks 3-5: Historical Forms of Black Mobilization
Sept. 5: LABOR DAY HOLIDAY – NO CLASS
   b) In-class screening of Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice
   b) In-class screening of Policing the Police (2016).
Essay #1 Due Sept. 23 by 5pm

Week 6: Black Radicalism in Transnational Perspective

Weeks 7-10: Black Lives Matter and the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S.


   b) In-class screening of Brother Outsider: The Life of Bayard Rustin (2015).
   b) In-class screening of The Black Panthers: Vanguard of the Revolution (2016).
Oct. 17: Claudia Rankine, Citizen: An American Lyric (Graywolf Press, 2014), chapters I-IV.
Oct. 19: Claudia Rankine, Citizen, ch. V-VII.
Oct. 24: Visit to PCL Library for instructional session on how to do research

Essay #2 Due Oct. 28 by 5pm

Weeks 11-13: Black Protest in Latin America: Past and Present
   b) In-class screening of PBS documentary, Black in Latin America (2011), episode 3.
Nov. 2: Keisha-Khan Perry, Black Women against the Land Grab (Univ. of MN Press, 2013), p. 27-55.*
   - Guest lecture by Prof. Christen Smith (Dept. of African Diaspora Studies)
   b) In-class screening of PBS documentary, The War We Are Living (2011).
Nov. 16: Paul Joseph López Oro, “Ni de aquí, ni de allá”: Garífuna Subjectivities and the Politics of Diasporic Belonging,” In Afro-Latin@s in Movement (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 61-83.*
   Essay #3 Due Nov. 18 by 5pm

Week 13: Global Black Protest
   b) In-class screening of documentary Luister [Listen] (2015) on student protests in South Africa.
Nov. 23: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – NO CLASS

Weeks 15-16: Racial Justice and Black Freedom
   Essay #4 Due Dec. 9 by 5pm