UNITED STATES AND AFRICA

HIS 317L (39035)/AFR 317C (30365)/WGS 301(301)
T & TH 12:30-2:00 PM UTC 3.112

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Course Description and Objectives

This class will examine the history of the political, economic, and cultural relations between the United States and Africa from the early origins of the slave trade to the present. It explores the role of the US in historical global contexts. The class is intended to elucidate historical developments both in the US and on the African continent and should satisfy students with a strong interest in US history as well as those interested in the place of the US in the African Diaspora. The semester is divided into four parts, each covering a major theme. The course aims; (1) to develop a base of African and US history and increase the level of awareness of the African Diaspora in the US; (2) to obtain a well-rounded approach to the political, economic, and cultural connections between the United States and Africa; (3) to reevaluate perceptions of Africa, to recognize the vibrant nature of African culture, and to apply new knowledge to the different cultural agents active in US popular culture, such as music, dance, literature, business, and science; (4) to help students understand present-day politics in Africa at a deeper level and to obtain a better understanding of racial conditions in the US; and (5) to learn how to assess historical materials—their relevance to a given interpretative problem, their reliability and their importance—and to determine the biases present within particular scholarship. These include historical documents, literature, and films.
Three mandatory books.


They can be purchased at the University Co-op.

Grading and Assignments—All assignments are due on canvas at noon of every due date.

**Final Grade Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Project: The Art of Public Engagement and Conversation (USA-Africa Dialogue)</td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-term Examination</td>
<td>Oct. 22</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Review</td>
<td>Nov. 7</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>Dec. 5</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Course Schedule: Lectures and Reading

Part A: Connections and Relevance

Main reading:

**August 29: Introduction**

Africa – the continent and its people Information about the course

*Teaching Approach:*
Lectures
Class discussions
Reading

**September 3: Africa in World History**


**September 5: Africa and the United States: Relevance of Connections, 1**

*African Americans e3 Africa: Chapters 1 and 2*

**September 10: Africa and the United States: Relevance of Connections, 2**

*African Americans e3 Africa, Chapter 3*
Part B: PERCEPTIONS

September 12: Africa in American Images and Perceptions, 1
*Mistaking Africa*, Introduction, chapters 1-3

September 17: Africa in American Images and Perceptions, 2
*Mistaking Africa*, Chapters 4

September 19: Class discussion: Perceptions and Stereotypes
Remaining chapters of *Mistaking Africa*, Chapter 5

PART C: Geopolitics and Historical Phases

Main Text for the section: *African-American and Africans*

September 24: The Peering and Politics of Interrelations

*African Americans & Africa*: Chapter 4

September 26: Africa and the United States: Historical Overview 1

*African Americans & Africa*: Chapter 5

October 1: Africa and the United States: Historical Overview 2

Chapter 6: “The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery in the Americas, 1580-1780.”
Chapter 7: “Trade in the Atlantic World, 1580-1780.”

PART D: Slavery, Africanism and Pan-Africanism


October 3: Africa, the United States, and the Atlantic World

Chapter 6: “The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery in the Americas, 1580-1780.”
Chapter 7: “Trade in the Atlantic World, 1580-1780.”

October 8: Slavery in the Americas

- The Atlantic World
-- Chapter 8, “Racial and Cultural Mixture in the Atlantic World, 1450-1850”

October 10: The Impact of Slavery


October 15: The Basis of Africanisms:

- Holloway, *Africanisms*, Chapter 4, “Gullah Attitudes”

**October 17: Afro-Atlantic Religion: Film Screening: Voodoo**


**October 22: Afro Atlantic Religion**

[Link](https://utexas.kanopystreaming.com/video/legacy-spirits)

**October 24: Africanisms, 1**

***FIRST MID-TERM: EXAM DUE***


**October 29: Africanism, 2**

October 31: Back to Africa Movement (no reading for this day?)

November 5: Pan-Africanism

Essay by Falola and Agbo

November 7: Class Conversation on Africanism and Pan-Africanism


*Book Review Due.*

November 12: Documentary: Back to Africa Movements

Slavery’s Buried Past

November 14: Documentary

30 Days in Atlanta (2014; Robert Peters)

Part E: Contemporary Culture and Politics

November 19: Contemporary Immigrants, 1

Chapter 1. Introduction: African Immigrants in the New Global Migration

Chapter 2. Causes of African Migrations to the United States and the Dynamics of the Post-Arrival Adjustment Process. (posted on canvas)

November 21: Contemporary Immigrants 2

November 26: Conversation on Race, Anti-Racism, and the Post-racial era

November 27-30: No Class: Thanksgiving

December 3: Reflections and Reviews

December 5: FINAL EXAM

In class

APPENDIX

Attendance Policy:
The class attendance will be counted from the 4th of September. It will be counted based on the total of 26 classes. So for each absence, students will lose approximately 0.38 points from the final grade. Absences will be excused if a student provides documentation of emergency health situation, death in family, job interviews, etc. However, without documentation no excuses will be granted.

Evaluation and Points: (No extra credit will be awarded, and the course is not graded on curve) The weight is distributed to ensure success for all students, balancing the various needs to participate, interact, engage, think critically, and write well. Not all students seek an A or B grade, but those who do should expect to do the maximum required. Always read before the class so that you can understand the lectures and ask questions.

Media Project:
1. Join the USA-Africa Dialogue for the entire semester. You can unsubscribe in December or remain a member.
2. Follow the postings.
3. Students will read 5 articles by a particular contributor, or relating to a specific theme, and create a minimum 4 sentence response based on each post. This will comprise of a brief summary, as well as their thoughts on the post. This will be worth 1 point per summary, or 5 points in total. You can also post your comments as a member of the Dialogue and print it out.
4. Post at least one item of your interest on the Dialogue. This item must not be on Nigeria. 5 points
5. The students will ultimately write a 400-500 word literature review style essay discussing the culmination of the 5 posts that they have read and of one post by them. This essay will be worth 10 points total.

Book Reviews: (Reviews should be no less than 5 pp. and no more than 5 pp., typed and double spaced. Book reviews should be analytical, and not just a retelling of the narrative. The best way to do this is by synthesizing the narrative in your own mind and then critically examining such things as the historical content, style and the overall impression the book made on you. You will probably want to assess how the book fits in with particular topics or themes we are developing in the course. Feel free to express your own opinion, but do so clearly. Organize and develop the main points you wish to make and re-emphasize them in a conclusion. Proofread your review before submitting it. Turn your review in on time (that means at the beginning of class on the assigned day), because late submission will be penalized. If you are reviewing a book for the first time, speak with your TA about structure and style.

Book Review Guidelines:

1. What is the book about?
2. Give your opinion on the book.
   a. What are your overall impressions?
   b. Likes and dislikes?
   c. Make sure to provide impartial details that support your assessments of the book.
3. Understand that you are writing to an academic audience. Facts and specifics are mandatory, as is objective prose. Saying something “sucks” or “stinks” is unacceptable unless you can back up your opinions with facts.
4. Give an outline of the book without excessive details. Too much detail will result in summarization, which you want to avoid.
5. Analyze the narrative structure of the book. Are there continuity gaps?

Examinations: The course is divided into five parts, each covering a major thematic issue. The mid-term examination consists of two essay questions. Students are expected to answer both questions, writing at least three pages on each. Essay questions will be drawn from a pool
submitted by the TA. Students who integrate materials from class text, public issues, lecture notes, films, and discussions on key issues will be rewarded. The final examination consists of two essays. Students will be expected to answer both questions, writing at least three pages on each.

Volunteers for Class Discussion: During the course of the semester, students may be asked to volunteer to lead discussion groups. All students are encouraged to participate so as to develop public speaking skills and learn how to work effectively in a group.

Make-up policy: Make-ups will be granted only in the case of medical illness or university-related conflict. Such conflicts will require signed documentation from the Dean’s Office explaining the reason for absence.

Overall semester averages will earn the following letter grades:

- 93-100: A
- 90-92: A-
- 87-89: B+
- 83-86: B
- 80-82: B-
- 77-79: C+
- 73-76: C
- 70-72: C-
- 67-69: D+
- 63-66: D
- 60-62: D-
- 0-59: F

Information on Movies/Documentaries

Africa Buried Past/Slavery’s Buried Past
In 1991, New York City construction workers were digging a foundation for a skyscraper when they unearthed an 18th century slave graveyard containing the remains of 427 bodies. It was a major news story – and a political fight – as African-Americans in New York sought to preserve a sacred place. After months of negotiation, the skeletons were sent to Washington, D.C.'s Howard University for study.
http://www.worldcat.org/title/slaverys-buried-past/oclc/70853795

African and African-American religions
Discusses the cultural diversity of Africa through its many religions. Shows how shared elements of various customs serve as unifying threads across tribes, centuries, and continents.
http://library.anderson.edu/uhltbin/cgisirsi/x/0/0/5?searchdata1=1572252014
http://catalog.lib.utexas.edu/search~S29/?X(VIDCASS+7789)&searchscope=29&SORT=D/X (VIDCASS+7789)&searchscope=29&SORT=D&SUBKEY=(VIDCASS+7789)/1%2C13%2C15%2C15%2C/frameset&FF=X(VIDCASS+7789)&searchscope=29&SORT=D&13%2C15%2C

Marcus Garvey: Black-nationalist leader
In this documentary, black historians discuss the life of Marcus Garvey from his birth in Jamaica to his young years of trying to organize Black workers in Jamaica, Latin America and London, to his role as a Black-nationalist leader in the United States and the failure of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, of which he was the founder.
Legacy of the Spirits
For centuries, the religion of Vodou (commonly called "voodoo" by outsiders) has been thought of as sticking pins in dolls or witchcraft. It has been kept underground and practiced in secret, giving way to much misunderstanding and sensationalism. This documentary - the first of its kind - shows how Vodou is a valid and serious belief system. The film interweaves exciting Vodou ceremonies, important scholarly information, compelling music, and images of colorful ritual objects, to show the beauty behind what has been one of the world's most misunderstood religions.

Legacy of the Spirits traces the religion from Africa to Haiti to New York City. It explains the theology of the religion, the meaning of the rituals, the pantheon of spirits, possession, the sacred drawings (called ve-ve), the Catholic influence, the history of persecution and more. This is all explained by priests and priestesses who practice Vodou and who give the film the quality of being both informative, yet personal.

Filmed entirely in the Caribbean communities in New York City, participants speak of what the religion means to them and their families, how the spirits have helped them, and why they continue to practice these ancient traditions today. Since the religion has always been kept underground (the reasons why are explained in the film), this is the first time the practitioners have spoken about it openly on camera.

Internet Resources

Course Policies
1. In matters relating to grade, you must first meet with your TA before scheduling an appointment to meet with your Instructor. Also, your TA will not provide lecture notes under any circumstances.

2. Essay prompts will be posted on canvas under course documents.
3. All assignments must be submitted on canvas at noon of due dates. **Email submissions will not be accepted.** 5 points per day are deducted thereafter. Failure to read the assigned materials will incur **negative grading** and treated as an evidence of **cheating**. Answers to questions will be used to reveal the failure to read. ***A part of writing history includes clearly communicating your ideas. As such, written assignments must conform to standard rules of written English including the organization of essays and grammar***

**ADDITIONAL UNIVERSITY POLICY**

1. **University of Texas Honor Code:** The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. Any student found guilty of scholastic dishonesty may receive an “F” in the course and be remanded to the appropriate University of Texas authorities for disciplinary action. For more information, view Student Judicial Services at [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs).

2. **Use of Class Materials:** No material presented in lecture may be directly or indirectly published, posted to the Internet, or rewritten for publication or distribution in any medium. Neither these materials nor any portion thereof may be stored in a computer except for personal and non-commercial use. All information derived from the internet must be adequately cited.

3. **Student Privacy:** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) require that student privacy be preserved. Thus the posting of grades, even by the last four digits of the social security number, is forbidden. All communication will remain between the instructor and the student, and the instructor will not be able to share details of the student’s performance with parents, spouses, or any others.

4. **Documented Disability Statement:** The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone).

5. **Religious Holy Days:** By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

6. **Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL):** If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone
your concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal

7. **Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students:** E-mail is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your e-mail for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently— I recommend daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin’s policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at http://www.utexas.edu/its/help/utmail/1564

8. **Use of Canvas in Class:** In this class I use Canvas—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at https://canvas.utexas.edu/—to distribute course materials, and examination study guides. I will not post grades on Canvas. You can find support in using Canvas at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so plan accordingly.

9. **Emergency Evacuation Policy**
   a. Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation: Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
   b. If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless you’re given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

10. **Q drop Policy:** Texas law limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six. Per Section 51.907 of the Texas Education Code, students enrolled on or after the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number.