

History 232, The African-American Freedom Struggle (3 credits)

Fall 2008

Cedar Crest College

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## COURSE INTRODUCTION

This course serves two purposes: It offers a historical examination of the black freedom struggle in America, while providing a setting in which students can improve their writing and critical thinking skills as part of the college-wide writing requirement.

### COURSE CONTENT (Objectives, Format, Evaluation, and Outcome)

This course examines the history of the African-American struggle for freedom, equality, identity, and economic success. Particular attention is paid to the Jim Crow and post-World War II eras. The work of such leaders as Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, Martin Luther King, and Malcolm X will be studied in detail. In addition, the course explores the activities of such organizations as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, the Black Panthers, and the Nation of Islam. The Harlem Renaissance and the development of blues and jazz will also be explored.

By assigned readings, classroom lectures, and films the course will give the student a great deal of information about the black freedom struggle. But the purpose of the course goes well beyond the accumulation of data. Classroom discussion and the writing assignments will encourage the student to ask intelligent questions about the black freedom struggle, to think critically about evidence, and to apply the principles of logic to historical facts and theories.

Students often ask: What good is knowledge about the history of the black freedom struggle or, for that matter, any historical subject? There are many answers to such a question. But one need only think of men and women who know nothing of the past. For them governments rise or fall, wars are fought, nations are disposed – seemingly without explanation. Trapped in the small world of their own experience, such people are similar to the superstitious folk of past ages. They fall prey to forces beyond comprehension. At best they are given to apathy, at worst to paranoia. Students who successfully complete this course will be well on their way to escaping such a condition.

### WRITING AND CRITICAL THINKING

Because this is a writing intensive course, you should understand that writing will be an important component of your work. I will frequently begin class with a discussion of writing. These discussions will come from the work of such authorities on rhetoric as Rudolf Flesch, H.W. Fowler, Jacques Barzun, William B. Hesseltine, E.B. White, and William Struck, Jr.

In this course you will write one short research paper (four or five pages in length) and one longer research paper (about twelve pages in length). Both papers must deal with some aspect of the

African-American freedom struggle. The first paper will be worth one third ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ) of your final writing grade, and the second paper will be worth two thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) of your final writing grade. The second paper must be based in part on the use of primary sources. I will discuss both these papers in more detail in class. For every unexcused day a draft or paper is turned in late, the paper will lose a letter grade.

You will submit to me drafts of both papers. I will critique these drafts and return them to you. You will then rework your papers based on my evaluation. When you turn in your finished work, please also turn in a copy of your earlier draft and my critique. Besides the body of your work, your finished paper should include a title page, and, at the end, a list of works cited. On your second paper you should divide primary sources from secondary sources. On both papers, citations should appear either as footnotes or as end notes.

Before you begin serious work on either of the papers, please get my approval of your topic. For both papers, you will be graded on the quality of the research, the quality of the writing, and the quality of the argument.

For security purposes, keep a second copy of both papers.

As part of the writing requirement, you must read the handout entitled "Citations, or How to Avoid Plagiarism." Your paper will not be graded unless your title page includes the following statement signed by you: "I have carefully read and understand 'Citations, or How to Avoid Plagiarism.'"

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### Readings:

Booker T. Washington, Up From Slavery  
Mamie Till-Mobley, Death of Innocence  
James McBride, The Color of Water

### Tests:

There will be a mid-term and a final exam. The mid-term will be given on October 15. The date of the final exam will be announced later.

### Grading:

Mid-term	October 15	(20%)
Final Exam	TBA	(30%)
Writing		(40%)
Classroom Participation		(10%)

## Due Dates for Papers and Drafts:

Draft of First Paper: September 24  
First Paper: October 6  
Draft of Second Paper: November 12  
Second Paper: November 24

The drafts that are due on September 24 and on November 12 will be collected in class. The papers that are due on October 6 and November 24 should be put in my mail box, which is located in Hartzel Hall, Room 119. All drafts are due at 1:00 P.M.

## CLASSROOM ATTENDANCE

Students are required to show up for the exam, tests, and book discussions. In addition, students should realize that they cannot do well in their classroom participation grade if they do not attend class and regularly take part in discussion. If you miss required work, such as a test or exam, you will only be allowed to have a makeup with a legitimate excuse. For example, illness must be confirmed with a note from the Dean of Students' office.

If you are unable to attend a class, it is your responsibility to get the missed notes. It is also your responsibility to be aware of any announcements – for example, assignments, schedule changes, etc. – that may have been given during class.

## DISABILITIES

Students with documented disabilities who need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with me during the first two weeks of class. If you wish to request accommodations, you should also get in touch with the Advising Center.

## OFFICE VISITS

Office visits are always welcomed. If you would like to discuss the class or if you just want to chat, please feel free to drop by. My office hours are on Wednesday and Thursday, 11:00-11:30 a.m. I am also available, by appointment, on Tuesday evenings from 9:00-9:15 p.m. If these times are not convenient, call me or see me after class for an appointment

THIS COURSE WILL BE TAUGHT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CEDAR CREST COLLEGE HONOR SYSTEM AND THE CLASSROOM PROTOCOL CODE FOUND IN THE CUSTOMS BOOK. CHEATING AND OR PLAGIARISM WILL RESULT IN FAILURE OF THE COURSE. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS, PLEASE SEE ME.

## COURSE OUTLINE

### THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN LIBERATION STRUGGLE, 1865 TO THE PRESENT

- I. Africa, An Overview
- II. Slavery: An Introduction to Slavery  
The Middle Passage and Slavery in the Americas  
The American South's Peculiar Institution  
The Slave Community  
Slave Resistance, Nat Turner, etc.  
Free Blacks in America; Frederick Douglas  
North of Slavery: The Roots of Jim Crow
- III. The Civil War, Reconstruction, and Populism  
Sharecropping and Tenant Farming
- IV. Life in the Jim Crow South  
White Racism: The Ku Klux Klan, Lynching (Ida B. Wells), Minstrelsy, etc.  
Plessey v. Ferguson (1869)
- V. Black Resistance  
Booker T. Washington and the New Negro  
W.E.B. DuBois and the NAACP  
The Cult of Respectability  
"Infrapolitics"  
Reading: Washington, Up From Slavery
- VI. World War I and the Great Migration
- VII. The Rise of the Black Urban Community  
Harlem: The Harlem Renaissance; Marcus Garvey  
Popular Racism: Birth of a Nation, and "Amos 'n' Andy"  
Jack Johnson
- VIII. The Great Depression  
The Scottsboro Rape Case  
Blacks and the New Deal Coalition  
The Southern Negro Youth Congress  
Congress of Industrial Organizations and Black Rights  
Highlander Folk School  
Paul Robeson
- IX. World War II  
The Transformation of Southern Agriculture  
The Great Migration at High Tide

- X. Legal Resistance to Jim Crow
  - Charles Houston and Early Civil Rights Cases
  - Harry Truman
  
- XI. Brown v. Board of Education (1954)
  - Thurgood Marshall
  - The Integration of Central High School, Little Rock, Arkansas
  
- XII. The Montgomery, Alabama, Bus Boycott
  - Rosa Parks, Martin Luther King, and the Rise of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (Civil Disobedience and Nonviolence)
  - The Murder of Emmett Till
  - Reading: Till-Mobley, [The Death of Innocence](#)
  
- XIII. Sit-in at Woolworth's 5 & 10, Greensboro, North Carolina
  - The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee
  - The Congress of Racial Equality
  
- XIV. The Fight for the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act
  - Massive Resistance; Murder in Philadelphia, Mississippi; the Freedom Rides; Birmingham, Alabama; the Integration of Ol' Miss and the University of Alabama; Freedom Summer, Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, etc.
  - Lyndon Johnson
  
- XV. Local Resistance in the Mississippi Delta
  - Fannie Lou Hammer, Amzie Moore, Mae Bertha Carter, and SNCC
  
- XVI. Long Hot Summers, 1964-1968
  - Harlem, Watts, Newark, Detroit
  - The Assassination of Martin Luther King
  
- XVII. Black Power
  - The Transformation of SNCC: Stokely Carmichael and H. Rap Brown
  - The Black Panthers: Huey Newton and Eldridge Cleaver
  - The Black Muslims: Malcolm X
  - Angela Davis
  
- XVIII. Blacks in Contemporary America
  - Reading: McBride, [The Color of Water](#)
  
- XIV. The Supreme Court and Changing Views on Race