The History of Blacks in Modern Europe

(AA/HI 380/880) Instructor: Allison Blakely,
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BLACKS in MODERN EUROPE  
(Syllabus for AA/HI 380/360 Spring 2012)

Course Objectives

The main objective of this course is to enhance awareness of the full scope of what has come to be called the Black African Diaspora. The prevailing perception of peoples of Black African descent delimits their historical experience to Africa and the Americas, and centers on the slave trade, slavery, and the Civil Rights movement in the United States. An examination of the well-documented European dimensions of this African Diaspora can help dispel this misperception. One hypothesis I wish to pose for the sake of discussion in the course is that Africa and Africans have had an influence on European thought and culture far disproportionate to the size of the relatively small black population. A second, related theme for the course is the question of why it is that, despite the fact that both published and unpublished sources on the history of Blacks in Europe contain both positive and negative images of Blacks, the negative ones are the most widely known. We will seek insights on these issues and others through re-examining European history with this in mind, and including source material from the visual arts, religious thought, folklore, literature, commercial developments, and pertinent racist theories. Students will sample the growing published scholarly literature, as well as increasingly more available primary materials on Blacks in Europe, giving special attention to France, the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, and Russia. The course covers the period from the sixteenth century to the present, but with greatest emphasis on the period from the eighteenth century forward. In addition to its central focus on developments within Europe, the course will take into account the importance of the global nature of the European empires during the centuries in question, which has largely accounted for the unprecedented upsurge of Black population in the major European societies in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Format and Requirements

This course will combine lectures, class discussions, and completion of all the requirements listed below in the breakdown on grading. The main readings will include assignments from a general European history textbook that will provide broader historical context for the study of Blacks in Europe, in addition to scholarly monographs, journal articles, literary works, and documents on the course website and related Internet links (such as www.blackpast.org). The writing requirements for the course will include a brief "get-acquainted" opinion essay; two quizzes, mid-term and final examinations, and a
research paper, of at least 15 pages for undergraduates and 25 for graduate students. Research paper topics are to be selected by the third week of the semester, and submitted along with an initial working bibliography. During the course of the semester time will be allowed for students to give progress reports on their research, and to receive feedback from their classmates and the instructor. During the last two class meetings each student will also be required to give a concise, formal, oral report (approximately 10 minutes) on their findings (the papers need not yet be completed for submission at that time).

Grades will be computed as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Opinion essay</td>
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<td>2 Quizzes</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Mid-term Examination</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral report</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>25%</td>
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Late work will be treated as follows: With a medical excuse or my prior consent it will be accepted without grade reduction. In all other cases I will deduct one full grade point from the earned grade, unless there are special circumstances that I feel justify a waiver of this rule. Normally I expect students to work independently on their written assignments, although they are encouraged to exchange ideas and information on sources.

Students should be advised that this course operates under the provision of the CAS Academic Code. I will expect each student to become familiar with the provisions of that code. I reserve the right to bring violations of the code to the attention of the pertinent academic authorities.


Required Texts

The following texts are required for this course, and will be available in the University Bookstore:

Lynn Hunt, The Making of the West: Peoples and Cultures, Since 1560 (Bedford, 2005)
Darlene Clark Hine, et. al., eds., Black Europe and the African Diaspora (Illinois, 2009)
David Northrup, Africa’s Discovery of Europe, 1450-1850 (Oxford, 2002)
Maxim Matusevich, ed., Africa in Russia Russia in Africa: Three Centuries of Encounters (Africa World Press, 2007)
Peter Fryer, Staying Power: the History of Black People in Britain (2010)
H. J. Massaquoi, *Destined to Witness: Growing up Black in Nazi Germany* (Morrow, 1999)
In addition to these works, excerpts from sources of interest will be made available online
on the course website that can be accessed through [http://courseinfo.bu.edu](http://courseinfo.bu.edu)

**Course Outline**

**17 January**  
**Orientation**  
- Outline of course objectives and requirements  
- Overview of the history of research on Blacks in Europe  
- Begin Overview of the History of Blacks in Europe

**19 January**  
**African Perspectives on Europe**

**Reading:** David Northrup, *Africa’s Discovery of Europe*: xi-106.

**24 January**  
**The Black Presence in Early Modern Europe**

**Reading:** Lynn Hunt, *The Making of the West*, 16th and 17th centuries: 563-642.

**26 January**  
**The Black Presence in Early Modern Europe (cont’d)**

**Reading:** Northrup, *Africa’s Discovery of Europe*: 107-87

[Research Paper topics due]

**31 January**  
**The Image of Blacks in Early Modern Europe**

**Reading:** Blakely, *Blacks in the Dutch World*: Ch. 1-3.

[on Blackboard website: Black Saints and the Black Madonna]

**2 February**  
**The Dark Side of the European Enlightenment**

7 February  The Image of Blacks in Early Modern Europe (cont’d)

Reading: Blacks in the Dutch World, Ch. 4-7.

9 February  Emergence of the Concept of Race in Europe

Reading: Sue Peabody and Tyler Stovall, eds., The Color of Liberty, “Introduction” and “Race: the Evolution of an Idea,” ix-72
[15-min Quiz]

14 February  Early History of Blacks in Britain

Reading: Freyer, History of Blacks in Britain, Introduction and Ch. 1-5.

16 February  The Age of Revolutions

Freyer, Staying Power, Ch. 6-8.

21 February  Origins of the Image of Blacks in France

Reading: The Color of Liberty, 131-86; and 260-97.
Hunt, Making of the West, Politics and Culture of the Nation-State, c.1850-1870: 847-88.

23 February  Blacks in Imperial Russia


28 February  Blacks in Early Modern Germany

Reading: [on website: Leroy Hopkins, ]

1 March  World Wars I and II, and the Collapse of European Imperialism

Fryer, Ch. 9, “Challenges to Empire.”
6 March  Diasporic Crosscurrents between Europe, Africa and the Americas

Reading: [on Blackboard website, A. Blakely, “The Quest for Cultural Identity in the African Diaspora in the Americas and Europe in the Early Twentieth Century”]

Freyer, Ch. 10.

8 March  Early 20th-century Emigration from European Colonies to Europe

Reading: Freyer, Ch. 11, “The Settlers.”

Hunt, "War, Revolution, and Reconstruction, 1914-1929:" 977-1018

[Mid-term Examination – due by March 15]

20 March  Blacks in Soviet and Post-Soviet Russia

Reading: Africa in Russia, 61-110; and 153-97.


22 March  Blacks in the Holocaust

Reading: Massaquoi, Destined to Witness: Growing up Black in Nazi Germany


27 March  The Emergence of Afro-Europe


29 March  Europe and the Black Diaspora: France, Germany and Italy

Reading: Hine, et.al., Black Europe, Section 2: “Race and Blackness in Perspective: France, Germany, and Italy,” 95-197.


[on Blackboard website: Abdoulaye Gueye, “The Colony Strikes Back:

3 April  Europe and the Black Diaspora: United Kingdom and the Netherlands

Reading: Freyer, Ch. 12, “The New Generation.”


5 April  Europe and the Black Diaspora: Spain, Portugal, and Italy

Reading: [on Blackboard website, Antumi Toasije, “The Africanity of Spain: Identity and Problematization,” Journal of Black Studies 2009; 39; 348; and articles on Portugal and Italy]

12 April  Europe and the Black Diaspora: Scandinavia

Reading: [on Blackboard website: selected articles]

17 April  The Identity Question

Reading: [on Blackboard website: A. Blakely, “French Black Identity in European Perspective”]

19 April  Blacks in European Sports, and the New Faces of Racism in Europe

Reading: [on Blackboard website, A. Blakely, “Lighthearted Racism: Humorous Black Stereotypes in Modern Europe;” and selected media articles and links]

23 April  Impact of the Election of Barack Obama on Afro-Europe

Reading: [on Blackboard website: related documents]
Selected Works For Further Reading and Reference


