

Boston University
Department of History
HI/489/AA489
The African Diaspora in the Americas: Constructing Identity¹
Thursday 3:30-6:15
AAS 101
Second Semester 2017

Prof. Linda Heywood
African American Studies
138 Mountfort St.
Room 202
Email: Heywood@bu.edu

Office Hours:
M 4-5; W 9:00-10:00
and by appointment
Second Semester 2015
Telephone: 358 3389

Course Description: The course is a historical, conceptual and thematic exploration of the forces that have shaped the transformation of African-Diasporic identities and communities in the Americas and parts of Western Europe from Emancipation to today. Students will read scholarly articles and books that cover a range of concepts and debates that interrogate the notion of African-Diasporic identity. Students will also view documentaries and movies that deal with issues relevant to understanding how African Diasporic identity formed from the end of slavery to today. Finally, students will listen to a selection of recent musical performances by African-Diasporic artists such as rap performers to gain insights into what they reveal about the present state of African-Diasporic identity. By engaging in class discussions and debates and writing critical evaluations of the readings, documentaries, movies, and lyrics, students will gain a deeper appreciation of how and why African-Diasporic identities emerged and diverged during the period. The comparative approach that the course adopts also exposes students to common issues that descendants of enslaved Africans in various parts of the Americas and Western Europe have confronted in their attempts to construct American and European identities. Students will leave the course with a deeper appreciation of the commonalities and divergences between various African-Diasporic populations in the Americas and Western Europe today.

Required Books and Other Readings:

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W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York, Norton, 1999).
 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin: White Masks* (Grove Press, revised ed. 2008).
 Claude McKay, *Banjo*
 Gary Younge, *No Place Like Home: A Black Briton's Journey Through the American South* (University Press, 2002). **OR** E.R. Braithwaite, *To Sir With Love* (Reprint, 2014)
 Maria de Los Reves Castillo Bueno et al, *Reyita: The Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the Twentieth Century* (Duke, 2000).
 Essie Mae Washington Williams, *Dear Senator: A Memoir* (Harper, 2006).
 Mary Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*
 Beatriz Gois Dante, *Nagô Grandma and White Papa: Candomblé and the Creation of Afro-Brazilian Identity* (North Carolina Press, 2009).
 Additional Readings are available on **Blackboard Learn (BL)**

Required books can be purchased at the bookstore. One copy of each of the required book is also be available at Mugar Reserve. To obtain a list of the materials on reserve go to <http://library.bu.edu> and click on Reserve Services, selecting either my name or the course number. The additional required readings are available at Blackboard Learn (<http://www.bu.edu/tech/teaching/lms/blackboard/>). **BL**

Attendance: Prompt and regular attendance is required. No late assignments will be accepted without supportive evidence of illness or personal hardship, otherwise a grade of “zero” will be given for each graded assignment missed.

Course Requirements

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| Grading: Essays on 4 of the Weekly Readings | 40% |
| Oral Presentation | 10% |
| Class Participation/Attendance | 10% |
| Research Paper | 40% |

Essays: Four essays (3-4 pages-not including footnotes-Font size Times New Roman 12). The essays should be based on the readings from four different weeks. The essays will be graded for critical evaluation of the main themes covered as well as for organization and coherence. Essays must be submitted during the following class meetings: Week 3, Week 6, Week 9 and Week 12. Each essay counts for 10% of the course grade for a total of 40%.

Oral Presentation and Class Participation: Each student will be required to make one formal presentations of 25 minutes each. The presentation should be on one week’s readings. For the presentation students should not select any of the weeks that they have selected for their critical essays. Students must select the date for their oral presentation during the first class session. All students are expected to attend each class and to be active participants in all class discussions. Students writing critical essays on readings for a particular week will take the lead in class discussions for the week that they have selected for the critical reading. **Oral presentation and Class participation/attendance will account for 10% of final grade.**

Final Paper: The paper can be on any of the themes arising from the weekly readings and discussions. Each student must consult with the instructor before deciding on a topic and undertaking research for the paper. Students should hand in a one page description of their topic (proposal) on Thursday March 2 during class. These will be returned with comments at the beginning of the next class. Supporting material for final paper should be selected from the core weekly readings as well as from outside readings. Final papers from students who have not handed in a proposal will not be accepted. **The research paper accounts for 40% of the final grade.** The final paper should be between 3,500 words -4,000 words. Font Size-Times New Roman 12. Final Papers are due **May 4.**

Academic Integrity Policy: Each student is expected to author his/her own work. Students should familiarize themselves with CAS Academic Conduct Code. Students who submit plagiarized papers or other assignments that they have not authored will be subject to the penalties imposed by the CAS Academic Conduct Code. For more on CAS Academic Conduct Code link to: www.bu.edu/cas/academics/programs/conductcode.html.

Weekly Class Meetings

Part One: In Search of Definitions and Concepts of African Diaspora Identities in the Atlantic World

Week 1 1/19: Defining Diaspora-The Historiography

Readings:

Colin Palmer, Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora”
Perspectives, 1998. **BL**

Kristin Mann, “Shifting Paradigms” **BL**

Kim Butler, “Defining Diaspora: Redefining a Discourse.” **BL**

Safran, “The Jewish Diaspora in Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives (BL)
Lecture, Discussion

Week 2 1/26: Towards a Theory of Identity and the African Diaspora: Methods, Approaches, Debates

Readings:

Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora.” **BL**

Brubaker, “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora” **BL**

Christine Chivallon, “Beyond Gilroy’s Black Atlantic.” **BL**

Muqtegar Khan, “Constructing Identity in Global Politics” (BL)

Lecture, Presentation, Discussion

Part Two: Historicizing African-Diasporic Identities: 1830s-1910’s

Week 3 2/2 North America and the English-Speaking Caribbean

Readings:

DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Begin to Chapter V11)

Mary Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures*

Bailey, "Race Patriotism" (BL)
Lecture, Presentation, Discussion

Week 4 2/9 Brazil and Cuba/Latin America

Reading:

Kim Butler, "Africa in the Re-invention of Nineteenth Century" (BL)
Góis Dantes, *Candomblé...Afro-Brazilian Identity* (Begin to end of Chpt 2).
Helg, "Race and Black Mobilization". BL
Zacair, "Haiti on His Mind" (BL)
Giovenetti, "Identity...Race, Religion and Empire...Cuba."BL
Lecture, Presentation, Discussion

Week 5 2/16 French and English-Speaking Caribbean, 1890s-1910s

Reading: Claude McKay, *Banjo*

Michael Largey, "Haitian Cultural Identity." BL
Torres-Saillant, "The Tribulations of Blackness." BL
Lecture, Presentation, Discussion

Part Three: Identity, Race, Politics and Culture

Week 6 2/23 Competing Ideologies and Conflicting Loyalties: Race and New Identities in the Making I

Readings: Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin/White Mask* (Begin to Chapter 4)
DuBois, *Souls of Black Folk* (continue to end)
Lecture, Presentation, Discussion

Week 7 3/2 Competing Ideologies and Conflicting Loyalties: Race and New Identities in the Making II

Readings:
Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin/White Mask*; (continue to end)
Murdock, "Creolizing the Metropole." BL
Cohen, "Cultural Diaspora: The Caribbean Case." BL
Video, West Indians in Britain and the War Effort-
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ViGwxJloI70&feature=player_embedded#!

Lecture, Presentation, Discussion

Week 8 3/16: Competing Ideologies and Conflicting Loyalties: Race and New Identities in the Making III

Reading:

Góis Dantas, *Candomle...Afro-Brazilian Identity* (Chapt. 3 to end)
Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. (Chapt. 5 to End) BL
Hutchinson, "Nella Larsen and the Veil of Race" BL
Lecture, Presentation, Discussion

Part Four: The Individual and the Making of African-Diasporic Identity

Week 9 3/23: Biography I

Reading:

Washington-Williams, *Dear Senator* (Begin to middle)
Dudziak, "Josephine Baker, Racial Protest." **BL**
María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno, *Reyito* (Begin to chapter 2).
Lecture, Presentation, Discussion

Week 10 3/30 Biography, II

Reading:

María de los Reyes Castillo Bueno, *Reyito* (Continue to End)
Snaith, "Una Marson: Little Brown Girl." **BL**
Benedita da Silva, *An Afro-Brazilian Woman's Story* (excerpts) **BL**
Lecture, Presentation, Discussion

Week 11 4/6 African Diasporic Identity: Biography III

Reading:

Washington-Williams, *Dear Senator* (Continue to End)
Younge, *No Place Like Home: A Black Briton's Journey*
Rahier, "Métis/Mulâtre, Mulato, Mulatto, Negro...Black...
Identities." **BL**
Lecture, Presentation, Discussion

Part Five: Creating (Re-creating) African Diasporic Identities: Cinema and other Media

Week 12 4/13:

Reading: Guerrero, "The Black Man on Our Screens." **BL**
Telles, "Racial Ambiguity...Brazilian Population." **BL**
Carrington, "Improbable Grounds: Black Intellectuals." **BL**
Viewing of one of the following videos: *Bamboozled*; *Franz Fanon*;
Black Orpheus; *The Harder They Come*
Lecture, Presentation, Discussion of Readings and Videos

Week 13 4/20: Afro-Diasporic Identities: Music and Art

Reading:

George Lipsitz, "Diasporic Noise, History, Hip Hop...Politics of Sound."
Fuentes, "Afro-Cuban Movement." **BL**
Philip Galinsky, "Co-option, Cultural Resistance and Afro-Brazilian
Identity." **BL**
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLB5bUNAesc> (Ladies First)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93fxMbKIHdw>;
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mnIHpFxyNR4>
Discussion of Readings, Video clips and Films;

Week 14 4/27 Afro-Diaspora Identities: Recapturing Past Identity

Reading: "Black Victoriana" **BL**

Wirtz, "Cuban Performances of Blackness." **BL**

Waters, "Ethnic and Racial Identities." **BL**

Gordon and Anderson, "The African Diaspora..." **BL**