

AA371/ HI298
African American History
Boston University, Fall 2017
MWF 10:10-11:00am

Instructor: Dr. Ashley D. Farmer

Email: adfarmer@bu.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00-3:00pm - (*sign up via Slotted on Blackboard*)

Instructor Office: History Department, 226 Bay State Road, #210

Teaching Fellow: Jessica Samuel

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Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-13:00pm

TF Office: History Department, 226 Bay State Road #B08

Course Description:

The course is a survey of African-American history from the slave trade to the recent past. It is an introductory examination of the black experience and is designed to bring to life the voices and history of African Americans. The course is organized chronologically, with an emphasis on the ideas, actors, and organizations that contributed to the African American experience. By the end of the semester, students should have a basic understanding of how African Americans have contributed to the making of America, the problems that they face, and how African Americans have defined themselves, their history and culture, and their struggle for equality.

Required Texts: Reserve copies available at Mugar

- A. Deborah Gray White, Mia Bay, and Waldo E. Martin, Jr. *Freedom on My Mind: A History of African Americans with Documents – Combined Volume*
- B. Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *Never Caught: The Washington's Relentless Pursuit of their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge*
- C. Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (also available online through BU libraries)
- D. All other readings will be made available via Blackboard Learn (BL)

Grading:

Attendance & Participation:	20%	HistoryMakers Mixtape:	15%
Document Essay #1:	10%	Midterm Exam:	20%
Document Essay #2:	15%	Final Exam	20%

Class Attendance:

Regular attendance in class is necessary. Furthermore, you are expected to come to class having read the material and prepared to engage with the assigned texts. Multiple absences will count against you. Please notify the TF in advance (if possible) if you know that you will need to be absent from class. *After one unexcused absence, I will begin deducting points from your final participation grade for every missed class.*

Class Participation:

Your participation grade will be calculated based on your attendance to our 3 weekly meetings and your *engagement in our discussion/ practicum sessions*. During most Friday sessions, we will discuss the weekly readings and focus on one aspect of historical research and/or writing. Often times, we will perform written tasks or activities that the TF will collect as part of your participation grade.

Document Analysis Papers:

You will write two 5-7-page papers based on a primary source that we have read and discussed in class. Examples include speeches, position papers, biographies, and news articles. If you are thinking ahead, you might choose documents that we have discussed in class. We will discuss the parameters for these papers in class.

Document Analysis #1 Due: October 2nd

Document Analysis #2 Due: November 13th

Midterm Exam:

The midterm exam will be administered in class and will consist of short and long answer questions about the material covered in the first half of the semester.

Midterm Exam: In-Class October 16th

History Makers Assignment:

Historymakers.com is an online database with recorded of important figures in black history. You can access it through the BU libraries website or the link in the announcement section of the class Blackboard page. You will make a "Mixtape" featuring five different figures on the site to describe a theme or event. Potential themes/ topics include black feminism or Jim Crow. After curating your mixtape you will write a 3-5 page response paper explaining the rationale for your choices.

History Makers Mixtape and Response Paper Due: December 11th

Final Exam:

The final exam will be held during exam period as dictated by the registrar. It will consist of multiple choice, short answer questions, and a choice of long-format essays.

Late Assignments:

Please contact the TF well in advance of an assignment's due date if you think that you will have difficulty meeting a particular deadline. *All papers submitted late without my/ TF's permission will automatically be marked down one half grade per day.*

Plagiarism Policy:

Each student is expected to complete all stages of work. Taking the words of others, or presenting the ideas of others as your own is a violation of the University's Academic Conduct Code. It is your responsibility to understand all of the provisions of the CAS Academic Conduct Code. *The minimum penalty for such offenses is to fail the assignment; the more common penalty is to fail the course.*

Accessibility:

If you are a student requiring accommodations, please let both me and the TF know privately as soon as possible. Both I and the Office of Disability Services is available to assist you and may be contacted at 353-3658.

Email and Electronics Policy:

Email communication with the instructor and the TF should be considered formal, similar to other business-style correspondence. You should remember to include a proper salutation and sign your name at the end of the email. I will usually be able to answer emails within 24 hours except for weekends and holidays. *I typically will not respond to email between 8pm and 8am.*

You are permitted to use electronic devices and laptops to take notes during the lecture portion of our class. *I reserve the right to ask you to discontinue the use of devices during class discussion or ban them if students are caught engaging in non-academic activity.*

Week 1: What is African American History?

Wednesday, September 6th: Introduction

In Class:

- Class expectations
- Overview of assignments and discussion/ practicum sessions

Friday, September 8th: Practicum and Practicum: “Doing African American History”

In Class:

- How is African American History similar or different from American History?
- As historians of African American history, where do we find sources?
- What are the unique challenges of “doing” African American History?

Week 2: From Africa to the Americas

Monday September 11th:

Reading:

- “From Africa to the Americas,” *Freedom on My Mind*
- Belinda, “The Petition of Belinda,” *Freedom on My Mind*

Wednesday, September 13th:

Reading:

- “African Slavery in North America,” *Freedom on My Mind*
- Olaudah Equiano, “The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano,” *Freedom on My Mind*

Friday, September 15th: Discussion and Practicum: “Secondary Source Analysis”

Reading:

- *Never Caught*, Chapters 1, 2, and 3

In Class:

- Discussion of *Never Caught*
- How to read, analyze, and write about secondary sources (aka paper preparation)

Week 3: African Americans in the Age of Revolution

Monday, September 18th:

Reading:

- “African Americans in the Age of Revolution,” *Freedom on My Mind*
- Phyllis Wheatley, “A Poem to the Earl of Dartmouth,” *Freedom on My Mind*
- *Never Caught*, Chapter 4

Wednesday, September 20th:

Reading:

- Cassandra Pybus, “From Epic Journeys of Freedom Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and Their Global Quest for Liberty” **(BL)**
- *Never Caught*, Chapter 5

Friday, September 22nd: Discussion and Practicum: Primary Source Analysis

In Class:

- Discussion, *Never Caught*
- How to read, analyze, and write about primary sources (aka paper preparation)

Week 4: Slavery and Freedom in the New Republic & Slave South

Monday, September 25th:

Reading:

- “Slavery and Freedom in the New Republic,” *Freedom on My Mind*
- *Never Caught*, Chapter 6

Wednesday, September 27th:

Reading:

- “Black Life in the Slave South,” *Freedom on My Mind*
- Solomon Northrop, “Solomon Northrop Describes New Orleans Slave Auction” **(BL)**

Friday, September 29th: Discussion and Practicum: “Documenting Black Life During Slavery”

Reading:

- *Never Caught*, Chapters 7, 8, and 9

In Class:

- Discussion, *Never Caught*
- Thinking through finding black joy and pain in slavery sources

Week 5: The Civil War

Monday, October 2nd: **DOCUMENT ANALYSIS ESSAY #1 DUE **

Reading:

- “The Northern Black Freedom Struggle and the Coming of the Civil War,” *Freedom on My Mind*
- Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave Is the Fourth of July?” *Freedom on My Mind*
- *Never Caught*, Chapter 10

Wednesday, October 4th:

Reading:

- “Freedom Rising: The Civil War,” *Freedom on My Mind*
- *Never Caught*, Chapters 11 and 12

Friday, October 6th: Discussion and Practicum: Visualizing Freedom

Reading:

- *Never Caught*, Chapter 13 and Epilogue

In Class:

- Discussion, *Never Caught*
- How to analyze images as historical artifacts

Week 6: Reconstruction

Monday, October 9th: NO CLASS

Tuesday, October 10th: SUBSTITUTE FOR MONDAY CLASSES

Reading:

- “Reconstruction: The Making & Unmaking of a Revolution,” *Freedom on My Mind*

Wednesday October 11th:

Reading:

- Williard Gatewood, ““The Remarkable Misses Rollin”: Black Women in Reconstruction South Carolina,” (BL)
- “A Debate: Negro Male Suffrage vs. Woman Suffrage,” *Freedom on My Mind*

Friday, October 13th: Discussion and Practicum – “Putting the Nation Back Together”

In Class:

- Discussion of readings/ Debate about reconstructing the nation

Week 7: Black Life and Jim Crow

Monday, October 16th: IN-CLASS MIDTERM

Wednesday, October 18th:

Reading:

- “Black Life and Culture in the Nadir,” *Freedom on My Mind*
- A Georgia Negro Peon, “The New Slavery in the South,” *Freedom on My Mind*

Friday, October 20th: Discussion and Practicum: “Documenting Violence”

Reading:

- *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*, Chapters 1 and 2

In Class:

- Discussion of *Ella Baker*
- How to read and write about racial violence

Week 8: The New Negro

Monday, October 23rd:

Reading:

- “The New Negro Comes of Age,” *Freedom on My Mind*
- *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*, Chapter 3

Wednesday, October 25th:

Reading:

- Marcus Garvey, “An Appeal to the Consciousness of the Black Race to See Itself” **(BL)**
- Cyril Briggs, “What the African Blood Brotherhood Stands For” **(BL)**
- Mary McLeod Bethune, “Breaking the Bars to Brotherhood” **(BL)**

Friday, October 27th: Discussion and Practicum: “Harlem Street Corner Debate”

Reading:

- Claudia Jones, “An End to the Neglect to the Problems of Negro Women” **(BL)**
- Amy Jacques Garvey, “Women as Leaders” **(BL)**

In Class:

- Debate on black politics in the 1920s

Week 9: War at Home and Abroad

Monday, October 30th:

Reading:

- “Fighting for a Double Victory in the WWII Era,” *Freedom on My Mind*
- Letters to the Editor **(BL)**
- Black Women in the War **(BL)**

Wednesday, November 1st:

Reading:

- Keisha N. Blain, “We Want to Set the World on Fire,” Black Nationalist Women and Diasporic Politics in the *New Negro World* 1940-1944” **(BL)**
- Erik S. McDuffie, “A ‘New Freedom Movement of Negro Women:’ Sojourning for Truth, Justice, and Human Rights During the Early Cold War” **(BL)**

Friday, November 3rd: Discussion and Practicum: “Mapping Wartime Mobilization”

Reading:

- *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*, Chapter 4

In Class:

- Discussion of Readings
- How can maps and geography illuminate the black experience

Week 10: Civil Rights Movement(s)

Monday, November 6th:

Reading:

- “The Early Civil Rights Movement,” *Freedom on My Mind*
- Mamie Till Bradley, “Telegram to President Dwight D. Eisenhower” **(BL)**

Wednesday, November 8th:

Reading:

- Diane McWhorter, “The Enduring Courage of the Freedom Riders” **(BL)**
- “Rosa Parks, Jo Ann Robinson, and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, 1955-1956” **(BL)**

Friday, November 10th: Discussion and Practicum- “Power of First Person Narratives”

Reading:

- *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*, Chapters 5 and 6

In Class:

- Discussion of readings/ how can first-hand accounts be useful historical sources

Week 11: Black Power and Empowerment

Monday, November 13th: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS ESSAY 2 DUE

Readings:

- “Multiple Meanings of Freedom,” *Freedom on My Mind*
- Black Panther Party, “Ten Point Platform,” *Freedom on my Mind*

Wednesday, November 15th:

Readings:

- Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet” **(BL)**
- “The Poor People’s Campaign: Non-Violent Insurrection for Economic Justice” **(BL)**
- *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*, Chapters 8 and 9

Friday, November 17th: Discussion and Practicum: “Manifestos of Freedom”

Readings:

- *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*, Chapters 10 and 11

In Class:

- Discussion of Readings
- Thinking about how we should understand and analyze protest documents

Week 12: Black Feminism

Monday, November 20th:

Readings:

- Angela Davis, “I am a Revolutionary Black Woman” **(BL)**
- Combahee River Collective Statement, *Freedom on My Mind*
- *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*, Chapter 12

Wednesday November 22nd – Friday, November 24th: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 13: The Challenge of Conservatism

Monday, November 27th:

Reading:

- “Racial Progress in the Era of Backlash,” in *Freedom on My Mind*

Wednesday, November 29th:

Reading:

- Jessie Jackson, “Keep Hope Alive” (BL)
- Joshua Guild, “To Make that Someday Come: Shirley Chisholm’s Radical Politics of Possibility” (BL)

Friday, December 1st: Discussion and Practicum: “Legal Arguments as History”

Reading:

- “The Affirmative Action Debate” (BL)
- “A Negative Vote on Affirmative Action” (BL)

In Class:

- Discussion of Readings
- What role do legal debates and documents have in African American history

Week 14: African Americans and the New Century

Monday, December 4th:

Readings:

- “African Americans and the New Century,” *Freedom on My Mind*
- “Hurricane Katrina Crisis” (BL)

Wednesday, December 6th:

Readings:

- Barack Obama, “A More Perfect Union” (BL)
- “First Lady Michelle Obama” (BL)

Friday, December 8th: Discussion and Practicum: “Doing the History of the Present”

Readings:

- Alicia Garza, “A Herstory of Black Lives Matter,” *Freedom on My Mind*
- Darnell Moore, “Black Freedom Fighters in Ferguson: Some of us are Queer” (online)

In Class:

- Discussion of Readings
- Thinking about how we document the history of the present

Week 15: Looking Forward

Monday, December 11th: Mixtape Assessment Due

In Class:

- Share Mixtapes

****** Final Exam: Monday December 18th******