

HIST 2381: The African-American Experience

(Fall 2026)

Section 001
Tuesday / Thursday
9:30 – 10:45 AM
Classroom: Madla #205

Instructor: Dr. Eric Rose
Email: erose05@tamusa.edu
Office: CAB Room 318 B
Hrs 12 :30-1 :30 PM (T-Th) + by appt.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course presents a survey of the African American experience from the colonial period to the post-civil rights era

This course presents a broad history of African American lives and experiences, tracking the path of West African peoples across the Atlantic through slavery and four centuries of tragedy and triumph in the Americas. Starting in pre-colonial Africa and ending in present-day San Antonio, the course takes several detours along the way to explore particular settings, cultures, and individuals: we will watch and discuss the history of American Slavery on film, trace the history of black lives through biographical narratives (from Phillis Wheatley to Kanye West), and venture out into local historical sites to develop a public history initiative that honors the lives and contributions of African Americans in the San Antonio area.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

This course will provide students with a number of opportunities to practice his/her analytical skills. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Build and support a thesis argument through the use of historical evidence.
2. Analyze and interpret primary and secondary sources.
3. Analyze the effects of historical, social, political, economic, cultural, and global forces on this period of United States history.

REQUIRED READING:

Jesmyn Ward, *The Fire This Time: A New Generation Speaks about Race* (Scribner, 2016), ISBN# 978-1501126352, available through TAMUSA library [here](#) – noted below as ‘FTT’

TEXTBOOK

- Robin D.G. Kelley and Earl Lewis, *To Make Our World Anew* (Oxford Press, 2000), e-book available through TAMUSA library [here](#) – noted below as ‘ANEW’

SOURCE READINGS / MEDIA: Brief readings, video and audio from sources posted to our class Blackboard site. Most of these required source materials are listed below as ‘**BBOARD**,’ with some additions to be announced later (‘TBA’).

HOW TO USE SOURCES / AVOID PLAGIARISM

In accordance with the [Student Code of Conduct](#) (described below), students must adequately document source material used to complete any written assignments. Guidelines and suggestions for proper citation and quotation of source materials is clearly outlined in the 'Course Policy on Citation' statement (on Blackboard in 'Information' folder). Please review this statement before submitting any written work.

ACADEMIC CONDUCT AND INTEGRITY

Students are expected to exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity in their pursuit of higher education. Students engaging in an act that violates the standards of academic integrity will find themselves facing academic and/or disciplinary sanctions. Academic misconduct is any act, or attempt, which gives an unfair advantage to the student. Additionally, any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion may be considered as academic misconduct. For more information on academic misconduct policies and procedures please review the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

University policy prescribes serious consequences for acts of academic misconduct including, but not limited to, a grade of 'F' on the particular paper or assignment or a failing grade in the course. Also, a referral may be issued to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities where the sanctions can vary up to possible expulsion from the University. Considering the potential consequences of academic misconduct, it is obviously in students' best interests to avoid even the appearance of such behavior. If you are ever unclear whether a specific act might constitute academic misconduct, please contact your instructor for an assessment of the situation.

Statement on Artificial Intelligence: All student work must be generated by the students themselves. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing or any other portion of an assignment for them. This includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments, as well as using generative AI tools like ChatGPT to produce content for your assignments without approval and/or acknowledgement. We will determine course policy for acceptable use of AI together via in-class discussions during the first few weeks of the course (see dates below).

ASSIGNMENTS

Reading and (Pop) Lecture Quizzes – Once per Unit, students will be required to submit an **online** quiz based upon the **required** readings. Each quiz will consist of 2-5 questions in multiple choice or short-answer format. There are no time limits or editing restrictions for these quizzes, but final answers must be submitted by the deadline given for each. Each Unit will also include (at least) one **in-class** quiz, based upon **lecture** material from the previous class. Dates for the first two lecture quizzes are listed on the "Assignment Calendar" below; other lecture quizzes will be administered on a "pop" (unscheduled) basis.

Running Journal / Textual Archive – On Sept. 1, each student will receive a blank moleskin notebook to record their personal responses to reading and viewing assignments throughout the semester. On Sept. 3, we will workshop a "film review" writing sample to model the type of entries your Journal should include. Students are encouraged to fill the Journal with any style of writing about any source, but grading for this assignment will involve only selected sources – **required** Journal entries noted (in red) on the calendar below as "**FILM**" or "**JOURNAL**" entry. Discussion prompts for assigned entries will be provided during class on the date listed.

Participation / Attendance / Discussion Board - each student is expected to participate actively in class activities and discussions. Since records of class attendance are required and monitored by Department of History, Philosophy and Geography, attendance will be taken at the start of every class and folded into each students' Participation grade. Most course modules also require students to participate in online class discussions via the Discussion Board forums on our Blackboard site. These forums provide time and space for students to post their reflections on the readings and discussions for that day's class. Participation in *required* Discussion Board forums accounts for half of the student's overall Participation Grade. Due dates for required Discussion Board assignments are posted in red as "**DISCUSSION BOARD**" in the schedule of assignments below.

Major Projects, incl. Group Projects – the course is divided into four Units, and each Unit concludes with a 'Major Project' assignment. The project for each Unit is different:

1. Unit 1 ends with an individual writing assignment – a comparative film review;
2. The Midterm (Unit 2) Project is a Group assignment – your group will prepare a book (or some educational media) of African American History for an audience of (ca. 6th Grade) schoolchildren;
3. Your Major assignment for Unit 3 will be to represent some of the black voices we cover during the Unit via the format you find most fitting: a poem, screenplay, comic, video, song, etc...
4. The Final (Unit 4) Project will be a Group Presentation – a Grant Proposal to fund a new public history initiative that will illuminate a neglected aspect of black life in San Antonio.

See the "Assignment Calendar" below for dates and the separate "Graphic Calendar" document (on Bboard under 'Information') for a breakdown of the expectations for each assignment.

G R A D I N G : (based upon standard 100-point scale)¹

Individual Projects (Units 1 and 3)

- 2 x 10% ea. = 20%

Group Projects (Midterm + Final)

- 2 x 15% ea. = 30%

Quizzes (Reading + Lecture) = 20%

Journal / Critical Archive = 10%

Participation (incl. Discussion Board) = 20%

¹ A = 90-100%; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; D = 60-69; F = 59 or below

ASSIGNMENT CALENDAR

UNIT 1		
Africa in America?		
Date	REQUIRED READING/FILM	ASSIGNMENT/ACTIVITY
TUES, 8/25	<i>The Fire This Time (FTT)</i> : Ward, Introduction (pp. 3-11)	ACTIVITY: History as Syzygy DISCUSSION: Tragedy, Triumph, and Triggers
THUR, 8/27	FTT: Ward, "Cracking the Code" (Grp 1), - Young, "Blacker Than Thou" (Grp 2), and - Cadogan, "Black and Blue" (Grp 3). BBOARD: - McGhee and Jackson on "Bacon's Rebellion" (Grp. 4), <i>Guardian</i> Interview with Eddie Glaude (Grp. 5)	(GROUP) DISCUSSION BOARD: One-Drop in the Melting Pot (Race in America) ²
TUES, 9/1	BBOARD: Assante, "Africa," and selections from "Slave Narratives" folder TBA	QUIZ: Assante and "Bewitching Tale"
THUR. 9/3	<i>To Make Our World Anew (ANEW)</i> : Chapters 1-2 (esp. pp. 84-94)	(LECTURE) QUIZ: on material from Tuesday's lecture FILM: "Sankofa"
TUES, 9/8	BBOARD: Callahan, "The Poison Book"	DISCUSSION BOARD: Spiritual Inversion FILM: <i>Birth of a Nation</i> (2015)
THUR, 9/10	ANEW: pp. 191-99 (Chapter 4) BBOARD: Edda Fields-Black, <i>Combee</i> (excerpt)	FILM: <i>Harriet</i> DISCUSSION: Julia Roberts as Harriet Tubman?
TUES, 9/15	BBOARD: "Solomon Northup" readings (folder)	FILM: <i>12 Years a Slave</i> DISCUSSION: (Why) Does it matter who wrote '12 Years a Slave'?
THUR, 9/17	BBOARD: - Coates, "Why Do So Few Blacks Study the Civil War" I. Muhammad feature on Colson Whitehead - Other readings from "Black Voices: Film" folder (required for Unit 1 Project)	FILM: Scenes from <i>Birth of a Nation</i> (1915), <i>Gone with the Wind</i> , and <i>Glory</i>

UNIT 1 PROJECT = due Monday, **Sept. 21** (ca. midnight)

² The class has been sorted into five Discussion Groups. There will be five Discussion Board forums for this assignment: each forum addresses one of the five required readings, and each Discussion Group is responsible for one forum. Add an original thread to the Discussion Board forum assigned to your group by the start of Thursday's class.

UNIT 2		
Slavery and Freedom: Biographical Notes on Love and Revolution		
Date	REQUIRED READING/FILM	ASSIGNMENT/ACTIVITY
TUES, 9/22	ANEW: Ch. 3 "Revolutionary Citizens" FTT: Jeffers, "Phillis Wheatley's Husband" BBOARD: Readings from "Phillis Wheatley" Folder	QUIZ: ANEW Ch. 3
THUR, 9/24	BBOARD: Readings from "Nat Turner" folder	LECTURE QUIZ: (content from 9/22) DISCUSSION: Accommodation-Resistance Spectrum
TUES, 9/29	BBOARD: "When the Lion Wrote History" (video) - Douglass, "What to the Slave is the 4th of July?" - US Constitution (Excerpts)	JOURNAL: Douglass and the Constitution
THUR, 10/1	BBOARD: S. Truth, "Ain't I A Woman" H. Jacobs, excerpt from <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> - Edda Fields-Black, <i>Combee</i> (excerpt) ANEW: Chapter 4 (review)	FILM: <i>Harriet</i> (GROUP) DISCUSSION BOARD: Minty and Harriet and Harriet and Linda
TUES, 10/6	FTT: - DJ Older, "...Notes on Love and Revolution," and - Danticat, "Message to My Daughters"	MIDTERM PROJECT: Mission Statement and Planning
THUR, 10/8	BBOARD: "Phillis Wheatley" and "Nat Turner" readings (folders)	WORKDAY: Plan/Prepare Group Project
MIDTERM PROJECT = due Monday, Oct. 12 (ca. midnight)		
TUES, 10/13	BBOARD: View (other) Group Projects	MIDTERM PROJECT: Feedback/Discussion

UNIT 3 ³		
Hard Road to Freedom		
Date	REQUIRED READING	ASSIGNMENT/ACTIVITY
THUR, 10/15	FTT: Wilkerson, “Where Do We Go From Here” and Anderson, “White Rage” BBOARD: selections from “Afro-Pessimism” and “Afro-Futurism” folders TBA	DISCUSSION: Recycling Struggle – Metaphors for Continuity amid Change
TUES, 10/20	BBOARD: Wells, “Southern Horrors” ANEW: Chapter 5	JOURNAL: ANEW and Wells
THUR, 10/22	BBOARD: two readings from Decker, <i>Made in America</i> “Marcus Garvey” and “Madam CJ Walker” FTT: Ghansa, “The Weight”	DISCUSSION BOARD: Black Nationalism and the American Dream
TUES, 10/27	BBOARD: readings from “Racial (In) Equality” folder - M.L. King, Malcolm X, James Baldwin (week-long assignment) - Cobb, “The Civil Rights Movement”	FILMs: scenes from <i>Malcolm X</i> and <i>I Am Not Your Negro</i>
THUR, 10/29	BBOARD: - King, Malcolm, Baldwin readings (cot’d) “Shattered Dreams, Infinite Hope” (bk review)	QUIZ: King and Malcolm X readings; Cobb and Perry DISCUSSION: Approaches to Racial Inequality
TUES, 11/3	BBOARD: - Gilman, “What Katrina Teaches Us...” - Readings/video from ‘Obama’ folder TBA	JOURNAL: Gilman DISCUSSION: Was Kanye Right?
THURS, 11/5	BBOARD: Coates, “Eight Years in Power;” Deborah Baker, <i>Charlottesville</i> (excerpt); and Kevin Sack, <i>Mother Emanuel</i> (excerpt)	CAPSTONE ACTIVITY: “Epiphenomena”
UNIT 4		
Black San Antonio		
Date	REQUIRED READING	ASSIGNMENT/ACTIVITY
TUES, 11/10	BBOARD: “Public History” readings TBA	FILM: “Black Navarros”
THUR, 11/12		FIELD TRIP to Casa Navarro**
TUES, 11/17	BBOARD: - Burrough, et al., <i>Forget the Alamo</i> (excerpt) - Baumgartner, <i>South to Freedom</i> (excerpts)	DISCUSSION BOARD: Local Histories
THUR, 11/19	BBOARD: reading/viewing from “Alamo Joe” folder TBA	JOURNAL: The White Man’s Alamo
11/24 – 11/26	NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK	
12/1 - 12/3	BBOARD: Resources from Texas Historical Commission	GROUP PROJECT: Workdays

FINAL (GROUP) PROJECT = In-Class Presentations **on Final Exam Date** (Tuesday, Dec. 8 @ 10 AM)

³ NOTE: Dates listed here for Units 3 and 4 are tenuous, subject to change if needed to accommodate scheduling demands for field trip

* Class will meet @ 9:30 AM at Casa Navarro – 228 S. Laredo St. SATX 78207 (date subject to change*)

HIST-2381: History of the African American Experience

This course presents a broad history of African American lives and experiences, tracking the path of West African peoples across the Atlantic through slavery and four centuries of tragedy and triumph in the Americas. Starting in pre-colonial Africa and ending in present-day San Antonio, the course takes several detours along the way to explore particular settings, cultures, and individuals: we will watch and discuss the history of American Slavery on film, trace the history of black lives through biographical narratives (from Phillis Wheatley to Oprah Winfrey), and venture out into local historical sites to develop a public history initiative that honors the lives and contributions of African Americans in the San Antonio area.

... + Field Trip! To visit local historical site

punctuated by more **focused** explorations... we will A B and C – one sentence on each + D (or start w/ search for survival of African traditions / culture in America

Bios – list examples: from Phillis Wheatley to Barack Obama/Oprah Winfrey

of local / biographies / watch/discuss film (and biography) as source of historical narrative...AND/OR

Tracking the cultural origins/traditions of West Africa across the Middle Passage / Atlantic through slavery / four centuries of tragedy and triumph on American soil / in the Americas

historical and cultural survey of the African-American experience, from origins in pre-colonial Africa to the present