

# HIST 2381: The African-American Experience

(Spring 2025)

Section 001  
Tuesday / Thursday  
11:00 – 12:15 PM  
Classroom Hall #205

Instructor: Dr. Eric Rose  
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Office: CAB Room 325  
Hours: 2-3 PM (T-W) and by appt.

This course presents a historical and cultural survey of the African-American experience, from origins in pre-colonial Africa to the present. Just as most of the word “hiSTORY” consists of “story,” most of our time in class will revolve around *stories* – narrative accounts of past events – told or retold through a range of storytellers. We will focus on three types of historical narrative: 1) *primary source* accounts (authored by historical witnesses), 2) *biographies* of historical figures, and 3) popular visual media (video/*film*/television). All coursework requires students to engage and analyze these sources critically. The primary objective of the course is to provide students with the tools and opportunity to develop their own interpretations of black life in America.

## 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 (paperback) – noted below as ‘**FTT**’

## TEXTBOOKS:

- 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**’
- *African-American History and Culture*, online course and textbook, developed by Florida State College at Jacksonville – available via open access [here](#) – noted below as ‘**FSCJ**’

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 are clearly outlined in the ‘Course Policy on Citation’ statement (on Blackboard under ‘Information’ tab). Please review this statement before submitting any written work.

## ASSIGNMENTS :

**Reading Quizzes** – At least 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. See “Assignment Calendar” below for dates and details

**Reaction Papers** – Units 1 and 3 require students to submit a reaction paper. This is an individual assignment, designed to elicit deeper personal engagement with selected readings. Students should submit on Blackboard via the ‘turnitin’ app. For more on expectations for Reaction Papers, see “Guide to Success” file (under ‘Information’ tab).

**Participation / Attendance / Discussion Board** - each student is expected to participate in every class session and discussion. 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 (ca. 5%). You may also participate in class discussions ‘virtually’ via the Discussion Board forums on our Blackboard site. Each post to the Discussion Board will receive grade-weight equivalent to one in-class contribution (if time-stamped by day of class).

**Major Projects, incl. Group Project** – the course is divided into four Units, and each Unit concludes with a ‘Major Project’ assignment. The project for each Unit is different: the Unit 1 Project is a biographical paper; the Midterm Project (Unit 2) is a comparative film review; the Major Project for Unit 4 is a group presentation; and the ‘Final Project’ will be an children’s book of biographical vignettes. See the “Assignment Calendar” below for dates and the separate “Graphic Calendar” for a breakdown of the expectations for each assignment.

## GRADING : (based upon standard 100-point scale)<sup>1</sup>

|                                  |   |         |
|----------------------------------|---|---------|
| Major Projects (Units 1 and 2)   | = | 2 x 10% |
| Group Project (Unit 4)           | = | 15%     |
| Final Project                    | = | 20%     |
| Reading Quizzes                  | = | 15%     |
| Reaction Papers                  | = | 10%     |
| Participation (incl. Attendance) | = | 20%     |

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\* First Quiz will take place in-class, all others will be administered online (Blackboard).

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

## ASSIGNMENT CALENDAR

| UNIT 1        | Africa in America?                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|               | REQUIRED READING/FILM                                                                                                                          | ASSIGNMENT/ACTIVITY                                                                                                                            |
| 1/23 (Thurs.) | <i>The Fire This Time (FTT)</i> : Ward, Introduction (pp. 3-11)                                                                                | ACTIVITY: Uncomfortable Conversations                                                                                                          |
| 1/28 (Tues.)  | FTT: Ward, "Cracking the Code;" Young, "Blacker Than Thou;" and Cardogan, "Black and Blue"                                                     | GROUP DISCUSSION: One-Drop in the Melting Pot (Race in America)                                                                                |
| 1/30 (Thurs.) | <i>African-American History and Culture (FSCJ)</i> : <a href="#">Sections 2, 4-5, 7-8</a> and <a href="#">Primary Source</a> (Olaudah Equiano) | QUIZ: FSCJ and Equiano <sup>2</sup>                                                                                                            |
| 2/4 (Tues.)   | FTT: Jeffers, "Phillis Wheatley's Husband"<br>BBOARD: Readings from "Phillis Wheatley" Folder and "Slave Narratives" folder TBA                | DISCUSSION: "On Being Brought From Africa to America" (Wheatley)<br>EXTRA CREDIT: attend " <a href="#">Whole Gritty Movie Showing</a> " @ 2:30 |
| 2/6 (Thurs.)  | BBOARD: Callahan, "The Poison Book"                                                                                                            | REACTION PAPER: Poison Book<br>FILM: <i>Birth of a Nation</i> (2015)                                                                           |
| 2/11 (Tues.)  | <i>To Make Our World Anew (ANEW)</i> : Wood, Chapter 2 (esp. pp. 84-94)<br>BBOARD: selections from "Nat Turner" folder                         | ONLINE* (BONUS) QUIZ: <i>To Make Our World Anew</i> (Ch. 2)<br>FILM: "Sankofa"                                                                 |
| 2/13 (Thurs.) | BBOARD: "Phillis Wheatley" and "Nat Turner" readings (folders)                                                                                 | WORKDAY: Workshop, Discuss Unit 1 Project (Race and Resistance)                                                                                |

**UNIT 1 PROJECT** = due Monday, **Feb. 17** (ca. midnight)

| UNIT 2        | Slavery and American Memory                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                               |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|               | REQUIRED READING/FILM                                                                                                                                                                                           | ASSIGNMENT/ACTIVITY                                                                           |
| 2/18 (Tues.)  | BBOARD: Coates, "Why Do So Few Blacks Study the Civil War"                                                                                                                                                      | FILM: Scenes from <i>Birth of a Nation</i> (1915), <i>Gone With the Wind</i> and <i>Glory</i> |
| 2/20 (Thurs.) | FCSJ: Sections <a href="#">16-18</a><br>BBOARD: Slave Petitions                                                                                                                                                 | QUIZ: FSCJ                                                                                    |
| 2/25 (Thurs.) | BBOARD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "When the Lion Wrote History" (video)</li> <li>• Douglass, "What to the Slave is the 4<sup>th</sup> of July?"</li> <li>• US Constitution (Excerpts)</li> </ul> | SOURCE INTERPRETATION:<br>Douglass and the Constitution                                       |
| 3/4           | BBOARD: S. Truth, "Ain't I A Woman"<br>ANEW: Chapter 4                                                                                                                                                          | FILM: <i>Harriet</i><br>DISCUSSION: Julia Roberts as Harriet Tubman?                          |
| 3/6           | BBOARD: "Juneteenth: Faith & Freedom" ( <a href="#">Movie</a> )                                                                                                                                                 | MIDTERM PROJECT: Workshop                                                                     |
| 3/10 – 3/15   | NO CLASS – SPRING BREAK                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                               |

**MIDTERM PROJECT** = due 3/16 (ca. midnight)

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<sup>2</sup> "ASSIGNMENT" headings that appear in red refer to graded assignments and list the source materials required to complete each assignment. For example, the first assignment – "QUIZ: 'FSCJ and Equiano'" (Jan. 30) – will be a quiz on the required reading for that day; Complete the required reading [the sections from the *African-American History and Culture* coursebook (FSCJ) and the excerpt from Olaudah Equiano] BEFORE coming to class and prepare yourself to take a quiz on that reading at the start of class on the day listed.

| UNIT 3               |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                               |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hard Road to Freedom |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                               |
|                      | REQUIRED READING                                                                                                                                                                 | ASSIGNMENT/ACTIVITY                                                                                           |
| 3/18 (Tues.)         | FTT: Wilkerson, "Where Do We Go From Here" and Anderson, "White Rage"<br>FSCJ: Sections <a href="#">43</a> , <a href="#">44</a> and <a href="#">48</a>                           | DISCUSSION: Recycling Struggle – Metaphors for Continuity amid Change                                         |
| 3/20 (Thurs.)        | BBOARD: Wells, "Southern Horrors"                                                                                                                                                | QUIZ: FSCJ and Wells                                                                                          |
| 3/25 (Tues.)         | BBOARD: readings from "Racial (In) Equality" folder <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>WEB DuBois and BT Washington</li> </ul>                                               | GROUP DISCUSSION: "Schools of Improvement" (WEB vs. BTW)                                                      |
| The 3/27 (Thurs.)    | BBOARD: two readings from Decker, <i>Made in America</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Marcus Garvey" and "Madam CJ Walker"</li> </ul> FTT: Ghansa, "The Weight"       | REACTION PAPER: Black Nationalism and the American Dream                                                      |
| 4/1 (Tues.)          | BBOARD: readings from "Racial (In) Equality" folder <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>M.L. King, Malcolm X, James Baldwin (week-long assignment)</li> </ul> ANEW: Chapter 9 | FILMs: scenes from <i>Malcolm X</i> and <i>I Am Not Your Negro</i>                                            |
| 4/3 (Thurs.)         | BBOARD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>King, Malcolm, Baldwin readings (cot'd)</li> <li>Decker, "Downsizing: Oprah Winfrey"</li> </ul>                                   | QUIZ: King and Malcolm X readings; excerpts from Ch. 9 of ANEW<br>DISCUSSION: Approaches to Racial Inequality |
| 4/8 (Tues.)          | BBOARD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gilman, "What Katrina Teaches Us..."</li> <li>Readings/video from 'Obama' folder TBA</li> </ul>                                   | DISCUSSION: Was Kanye Right? Did George Bush Care about Black People?                                         |
| 4/10 (Thurs.)        | BBOARD: Coates, "Eight Years in Power" and Alexander, "Injustice of this Moment"                                                                                                 | CAPSTONE ACTIVITY: "Epiphenomena"                                                                             |
| UNIT 4               |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                               |
| Black San Antonio    |                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                               |
|                      | REQUIRED READING                                                                                                                                                                 | ASSIGNMENT/ACTIVITY                                                                                           |
| 4/15 (Thurs.)        | BBOARD: "Public History" readings TBA                                                                                                                                            | FILM: "Black Navarros"                                                                                        |
| 4/17 (Thurs.)        |                                                                                                                                                                                  | FIELD TRIP to Casa Navarro**                                                                                  |
| 4/22 (Tues.)         | BBOARD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Burrough, et al., <i>Forget the Alamo</i> (excerpt)</li> <li>Baumgartner, <i>South to Freedom</i> (excerpts)</li> </ul>           | DISCUSSION: The White Man's Alamo                                                                             |
| 4/24 (Thurs.)        | BBOARD: <a href="#">Resources</a> from Texas Historical Commission                                                                                                               | GROUP PROJECT: Workday                                                                                        |
| 4/29 (Tues.)         | UNIT 4 / GROUP PROJECT: In-Class Presentations                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                               |
| 5/1 (Tues.)          | FTT: DJ Older, "This Far..." and Danticat, "Message to My Daughters"                                                                                                             | FINAL PROJECT: Mission Statement and Planning                                                                 |

**FINAL PROJECT** = Due **Tuesday, May 13 @ noon**

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\* Pending approval and viability; proposed Field Trip would take place during class time on April 17, schedule subject to change or be rescheduled as a 'Virtual' Field Trip.