

**INTRODUCTION TO AFRICANA STUDIES**  
**AFR 200, Fall 2009**  
**Monday and Thursday, 2:35-3:50PM**  
**Williams College**

Dr. Devyn Spence Benson  
Office: x4734, SAB 229  
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:30-3:30PM  
[Devyn.S.Benson@williams.edu](mailto:Devyn.S.Benson@williams.edu)

Dr. Neil Roberts  
Office: x4772, NAB 213  
Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1:00-3:00PM  
[Neil.Roberts@williams.edu](mailto:Neil.Roberts@williams.edu)

**Course description:**

This survey course introduces students to the content and contours of Africana Studies as a field of study--its genealogy, development, and future challenges. The course focuses on historic and contemporary experiences of African-descended peoples in the Americas, particularly the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America. We will also give some attention to how members of the Diaspora remember and encounter Africa, and to how Africans respond to the history of enslavement, colonialism, apartheid, racism and globalization. In addition to literature and research, film, music, photography, and artwork will be used to develop a critical understanding of the African Diaspora. These non-written texts will make abstract readings come to life while stimulating the development of critical thinking skills. Students are encouraged to draw connections between these visual/audio representations and the ideas and issues that we uncover from course readings.

**Course requirements:**

The following requirements serve as the basis for course evaluation:

- (1) Class attendance, participation, and weekly 1-page reading response papers (**25%**)
- (2) Two 5- to 7-page essays (**50%**)
- (3) Final research project (**25%**)

**Required materials and readings:**

- Course Packet
- Audio-visual items are available on reserve for a 4-hour limit in Sawyer Library

**Course policies:**

**Attendance:**

Attendance will be taken each class period and you will be required to attend the entire class session to receive full credit. If you arrive late to class, you will receive only half credit for the class period. In case of sickness or other legitimate reason for absence it is your

responsibility to inform us in advance, or as soon as possible after the class. Every absence after two instructor excused absences will result in the reduction of your overall grade by half a letter grade. To earn full participation points, you must come to class prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that class period and with the necessary materials (course pack, primary source readings, required books, paper, and writing utensil). Participation will be assessed based on the quality of your contribution to class discussion. Your participation grade will be marked down for failure to come to class, be on time, and/or with the required readings in hand.

### **Reading Responses:**

Students will be required to submit a weekly reading response to at least one reading per week to the course Blackboard site. This response is intended to help prepare you for class discussion and will count toward your participation grade. **All responses are due by 2:00 PM on Thursday of each week.** Only responses posted by this time will count for the week's reading and participation. Reading responses cannot be made up. The response should be between at least 100-250 words and should comment on a posted question and analyze or evaluate the readings. We will monitor the discussion, but not participate. Feel free to use the online space to continue discussions from class or ask questions of your peers.

### **How to Post Reading Responses to Blackboard:**

- 1) Go to <http://blackboard.williams.edu> and log in with your username (last two digits of your class year and initials) and password. If this is your first time logging into Blackboard, your password will be your birth month and day (mmdd).
- 2) Click on this course and then Discussion Boards, and select the class date for which you will be posting a response.
- 3) Click on Add New Thread and enter your response.

### **Week 1: Course Overview**

Session 1: September 10

### **Week 2: From Black Studies to Africana Studies: Development of the Field**

Session 2: September 14

Manning Marble, "Black Studies, Multiculturalism and the Future of American Education," in Floyd Hayes III, ed., *A Turbulent Voyage: Readings in African American Studies* (henceforth *TV*)

Carter G. Woodson, "The Study of the Negro," in *TV*

Session 3: September 17

Fabio Rojas, *From Black Studies to Black Power: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline*, Introduction, Chs. 4-5

Noliwe Rooks, *White Money/Black Power: The Surprising History of African American Studies and the Crisis of Race in Higher Education*, Ch. 1

**Week 3: Representations of Black and Blackness: What Is, What Ain't**

Session 4: September 21

In class film and discussion of *Black Is, Black Ain't*

Session 5: September 24

- **Carlos Moore Public Lecture: "Race and Revolution in Castro's Cuba: A Personal Account," Paresky Center, Lower Level, 7:00PM (MANDATORY ATTENDANCE)**
- **Professor Moore guest lecture**

Carlos Moore, "Cuba: The Untold Story"

René Depestre, "Letter from Cuba"

Selections from Carlos Moore, *Pichón: Race and Revolution in Castro's Cuba, A Memoir*

**Week 4: From Slavery to Freedom**

- **Professor Long guest lecture**

Session 6: September 28

C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, Prologue & Chs. 1, 4

Session 7: October 1

C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*

**Week 5: Pan-Africanism**

Session 8: October 5

W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Ch. 1

Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Ch. 4

Session 9: October 8

Walterio Lord Garnes, “Marcus Garvey and the UNIA in the Memory of West Indian Residents in Cuba.”

Marcus Garvey, “Africa for the Africans” and “Declaration of Rights of the Negro Peoples of the World,” in *Selected Writings and Speeches of Marcus Garvey*  
 Selections from *Reyíta: The Life of a Black Cuban Woman in the Twentieth Century*

- **\*PAPER 1 DUE FRIDAY OCTOBER 9 BY 5:00PM**

**Week 6: Black Internationalism**

October 12: **Reading Day, No Class**

Session 10: October 15

- **Professor Singham guest lecture**  
 Additional reading (TBA)

Michael Hanchard, “Black Transnationalism, Africana Studies, and the 21<sup>st</sup> Century”

**Week 7: Black Feminism**

Session 11: October 19

Anna Julia Cooper, “Womanhood: A Vital Element in the Regeneration and Progress of a Race,” in *I Am Because We Are: Readings in Black Philosophy* (henceforth *IBWA*)  
 Paulette Nardal, “The Awakening of Race Consciousness” (available via Blackboard)

Session 12: October 22

**Professor Schleiwiler guest lecture**  
 Additional reading (TBA)

Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement”  
 Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, Ch. 3  
 Angela Y. Davis, “Radical Perspectives on the Empowerment of Afro-American Women: Lessons for the 1980s,” in *IBWA*

**Week 8: Racism, Anti-Colonialism, and Resistance**

Session 13: October 26

Selections from Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*

Session 14: October 29

Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like*, Ch. 11

Amilcar Cabral, "Identity and Dignity in the Context of the National Liberation Struggle,"  
in *IBWA*

**Week 9: Between Civil Rights and Black Power: Comparative Perspectives**

Session 15: November 2

- **Professor Brown guest lecture**  
Reading (TBA)

Joy James, "Ella Baker, 'Black Women's Work', and Activist Intellectuals" (available via Blackboard)

Martin Luther King, Jr, "Letter from a Birmingham Jail"

Malcolm X, "The Ballot or the Bullet"

Session 16: November 5

Besenia Rodriguez, "'De la Escalvitad Yanqui a la Libertad Cubana:' U.S. Black Radicals, the Cuban Revolution, and the Formation of a Tricontinental Ideology"

Walter Rodney, "Black Power, its Relevance to the West Indies"

**Week 10: The Making of a Canon? From Black Power to African American Studies**

Session 17: November 9

Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Manning Marable, "A Debate on Activism in Black Studies," in Jane and Lewis Gordon, eds., *A Companion to African-American Studies* (henceforth CAAS)

Martin Kilson, "From the Birth to a Mature Afro-American Studies at Harvard, 1969-2002," in CAAS

Session 18: November 12

Molefi Kete Asante, "The Afrocentric Idea in Education"

Francis Crest Westling, *The Isis Papers: The Keys to the Colors*, Ch. 20

**Week 11: Hair, Color, and Community: Contemporary Debates on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Black Identity**

Session 19: November 16

Melissa Harris-Lacewell, *Barbershops, Bibles, and BET: Everyday Talk and Black Political Thought*, Ch. 5

Kathy Russell, Midge Wilson, and Ronald Hall, *The Color Complex: The Politics of Skin*

*Color Among African Americans*, Chs. 1, 9

Session 20: November 19

Ginetta Candelario *Black Behind the Ears: Blackness in Dominican Identity from Museums to Beauty Shops*, Ch. 5 & Conclusion

Anani Dzidzienyo and Suzanne Oboler, Eds., *Neither Enemies nor Friends*, Chs. 9-10

- **\*PAPER 2 DUE FRIDAY NOVEMBER 20 BY 5:00PM**

**Week 12: Film and Politics**

Session 21: November 23

In-class film (TBA)

November 26: **Thanksgiving, No class**

**Week 13: Hip Hop and Sexuality**

Session 22: November 30

William Jelani Cobb, "Blame It On Rio: Why More Black Men Are Booking Secret Sex Vacations"

Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender, and the New Racism*, Ch. 7

Session 23: December 3

John L. Jackson, Jr., *Racial Paranoia: The Unintended Consequences of Political Correctness*, Ch. 5

T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, *Pimps Up, Ho's Down: Hip Hop's Hold on Young Black Women*, Prologue & Ch. 1

**Week 14: Africana Studies and Beyond**

Session 24: December 7

Adolph Reed, Jr. "'What are the Drums Saying Booker': The Curious Role of the Black Public Intellectual"

Hazel V. Carby, "The New Auction Block: Blackness and the Marketplace," in CAAS

Session 25: December 10

- In Class Presentations (**FINAL PROJECTS DUE**)