



The University of Western Ontario

HISTORY 9390B

Black Histories in North America

Winter 2021

On Zoom, time TBA

Instructor: Associate Professor Laurel Clark Shire

Office Hours: TBA

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(but working from home)

Email: lshire@uwo.ca

In this course we will explore African American and African Canadian history from the eighteenth century to today. We will trace the diverse experiences of African-heritage people in North America through slavery and the struggle to end it, segregation, and the mass incarceration that is the backdrop for “hip-hop culture” and the supposedly “post-racial” settler states of the present. Throughout we will track the long history of black protest and the long movement that historians’ call the Black Freedom Struggle. We will spend 2-3 weeks on each period, examining it from as many perspectives as time allows, including how African Americans of different genders, socio-economic classes, regions, and ages experienced it. We will also be concerned with understanding how race was socially constructed in each of these periods: how did ideas about black identity and blackness (and, therefore, whiteness) survive, change and reformulate in each period? We will also continually confront the idea of “progress” in this course, and will be forced to grapple with the question of whether life got better or worse for people of African descent (and for *which* people of African heritage) in each period. We will also seek to understand what the major political and cultural debates were in each period. Thus, rather than searching for the correct answers, we will try to ask the right questions.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Master the themes and chronology of the major periods in the history of the African diaspora in North America.
- Describe the diversity of Black life and experience, and the changing meaning of race in the colonies and, later, the U.S. and Canada.
- Become proficient at reading strategically for the argument, content, and ideas that interest you the most so that you will retain this information beyond class meetings.
- Practice analyzing and writing about historical monographs.

Methods of Evaluation:

WEEKLY PARTICIPATION IN SEMINAR (30%)

Did you attend? Had you done the reading effectively? Were you prepared to ask questions and interact with the readings and your peers in a respectful and critical manner? Did you ask questions or make comments that drew common threads or useful comparisons across different readings (from this or any week of the course)? Did you participate meaningfully each week, or only when we read something you were interested in? Did you share your thoughts, positive or negative, or did you save “what you really

think” for discussions outside of class? If you must miss a seminar meeting due to illness or a family emergency, please inform me in writing and provide any available documentation.

DISCUSSION LEADERSHIP IN SEMINAR (5%)

Once during the seminar you (and possibly 1-2 others) will begin our discussion of the week’s readings with a short presentation (5-10 minutes) to the whole seminar that outlines: 1) main arguments 2) methodologies 3) sources 4) reviews of author(s)’s work and its implications for the field and 5) discussion questions. Hit each of these effectively, and you’ll earn all 5 points.

FIVE BOOK REVIEWS (25%)

We will read several monographs in this course. You must write a 500-800 word review of five of them. Send each to lshire@uwo.ca before class on the date we discuss the book. A good book review pinpoints and pithily summarizes the thesis, methods, and sources of the study; identifies the most important implications of the research findings and places them in conversation with others who agree and disagree in the field; points out any substantive omissions or problems; indicates what new questions the study has raised for future research. If you are unsure what a good book review looks like, browse the review section of your favorite academic history journal. These cannot be accepted after the seminar meets on that book (whether or not you attend), so please plan accordingly.

ESSAY (40%)

Choose a reasonably delimited question about the history of people from the African diaspora in North America (at any time in history) and conduct original research into primary and secondary sources to answer it in 18-20 pages (double spaced, exclusive of notes and bibliography). You might choose a particular cultural artifact/event or primary source to analyze, or carve out a small piece of a larger research project to explore in this essay. You should use as many of our shared course materials as are relevant to your research question, in addition to those you find in your research. Your final draft is due on April 28 by 12 noon. Late essays will be penalized 5% per day, and extensions will be granted only in advance and if requested. It must include a title, footnotes or endnotes, and a bibliography in Chicago/Turabian (exceptions will be made for students from disciplines that use other citation styles, discuss with me please). If possible and appropriate, you are encouraged to use this to begin research for a conference paper, journal article, MA cognate, or dissertation chapter. If your seminar paper does continue into one of those venues, I will be happy to provide feedback even after the course is complete.

COURSE MATERIALS (in DBW library, available at the bookstore and/or online)

Note: PhD students planning to do a comprehensive exam field should skim all these books. Other students should choose one book each week to read (and potentially write a review of, as you choose, see above).

Books we plan to read the week of:

January 12

Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *Never Caught: The Washington's Relentless Pursuit of their Runaway Slave Ona Judge*.

Erica Armstrong Dunbar. *A Fragile Freedom: African American Women and Emancipation in the Antebellum City*

January 19 – with special guest Prof. R. Wardhaugh?

Elizabeth Stordeur Pryor. *Colored Travellers*

Harvey Amani Whitfield, *North to Bondage: Loyalist Slavery in the Maritimes*

January 26

Andrew K. Diemer *The Politics of Black Citizenship: Free African Americans in the Mid-Atlantic Borderlands, 1817-1863*

W.E.B. Dubois. *The Philadelphia Negro: A Social Study*

Feb 2

David E. Goldberg. *The Retreats of Reconstruction: Race, Leisure, and the Politics of Segregation at the New Jersey Shore, 1865-1920*.

Kathryn Watterson. *I Hear My People Singing: Voices of African American Princeton*.

February 9

Robin D.G. Kelley, *Hammer and Hoe: Alabama Communists During the Great Depression*

Timothy Tyson, *Radio Free Dixie* (Robert F. Williams)

Feb 16 – reading week

February 23

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*

Edward Onaci, *Free the Land: The Republic of New Afrika and the Pursuit of a Black Nation-State*

March 9

Clayborne Carson, *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening in the 1960s*

Ibram X. Kendi, *The Black Campus Movement*

March 16

Peniel Joseph, *Stokely: A Life*

Ashley D. Farmer, *Remaking Black Power: How Black Women Transformed an Era*

Miriam J. Abelson, *Men in Place, Trans Masculinity, Race, and Sexuality in America*

March 23 – with special guest Prof. Nina Reid-Maroney?

Reid-Maroney, Nina, Wanda Thomas Bernard, and Boulou Ébanga de B'éri. *Promised Land'': Essays in African Canadian History*

Barrington Walker, *Race on Trial: Black Defendants in Ontario's Criminal Courts 1858-1958*

March 30

Patrick D. Jones, *The Selma of the North: Civil Rights Insurgency in Milwaukee*

Paula C. Austin, *Coming of Age in Jim Crow DC: Navigating the Politics of Everyday Life*

Brian Purnell, Jeanne Theoharis, and Komozi Woodward, *The Strange Careers of the Jim Crow North: Segregation and Struggle Outside the South*

April 6

Robert T. Chase, *We are not Slaves: State Violence, Coerced Labour, and Prisoners' Rights in Postwar America*

Heather Ann Thompson, *Blood in the Water: The Attica Prison Uprising*

Classes end April 8

Additional Statements

You may also wish to contact Accessible Education (formerly known as Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)) at 661-2111 x 82147 for any specific question regarding an accommodation. See: <http://success.uwo.ca/academics/sas/index.html>

Request for Accommodations/Medical Issues

Students are entitled to their privacy and consequently they do not need to disclose personal information to their course professors. In the event that students feel the need to discuss personal information, they should see the graduate chair. Unlike undergraduate students, graduate students cannot be referred to Social Science Academic Counselling to have their medical or non-medical circumstances evaluated and to receive a recommendation for accommodation. Those facilities are for undergraduates only, and there is no process beyond the department to secure recommendations for accommodation. Our process is that faculty should deal with routine requests for extensions. However, a student's request for accommodation (on medical, non-medical, compassionate grounds) should go to the graduate chair, Prof. Laurel Shire (lshire@uwo.ca) who will consult and communicate with faculty. Additionally, faculty and students should communicate with the grad chair about any case in which work is not submitted before grades are due. In the event that the graduate chair is also the course professor, then a request for accommodation can be taken to the department chair.

Copyright

Lectures and course materials, including power point presentations, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own educational use. You may not record lectures, reproduce (or allow others to reproduce), post or distribute lecture notes, wiki material, and other course materials publicly and/or for commercial purposes without my written consent.

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense.

For more information on plagiarism and other scholastic offenses at the graduate level see: https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

The following rules pertain to the acknowledgements necessary in academic papers.

A. In using another writer's words, you must both place the words in quotation marks and acknowledge that the words are those of another writer.

You are plagiarizing if you use a sequence of words, a sentence or a paragraph taken from other writers without acknowledging them to be theirs. Acknowledgement is indicated either by (1) mentioning the author and work from which the words are borrowed in the text of your paper; or by (2) placing a footnote number at the end of the quotation in your text, and including a correspondingly numbered footnote at the bottom of the page (or in a separate reference section at the end of your essay). This footnote should indicate author, title of the work, place and date of Publication and page number. Method (2) given above is usually preferable for academic essays because it provides the reader with more information about your sources and leaves your text uncluttered with parenthetical and tangential references. In either case words taken from another author must be enclosed in quotation marks or set off from your text by single spacing and indentation in such a way that they cannot be mistaken for your own words. Note that you cannot avoid indicating quotation simply by changing a word or phrase in a sentence or paragraph which is not your own.

B. In adopting other writer's ideas, you must acknowledge that they are theirs.

You are plagiarizing if you adopt, summarize, or paraphrase other writers' trains of argument, ideas or sequences of ideas without acknowledging their authorship according to the method of acknowledgement given in 'A' above. Since the words are your own, they need not be enclosed in quotation marks. Be certain, however, that the words you use are entirely your own; where you must use words or phrases from your source; these should be enclosed in quotation marks, as in 'A' above.

Clearly, it is possible for you to formulate arguments or ideas independently of another writer who has expounded the same ideas, and whom you have not read. Where you got your ideas is the important consideration here. Do not be afraid to present an argument or idea without acknowledgement to another writer, if you have arrived at it entirely independently. Acknowledge it if you have derived it from a source outside your own thinking on the subject.

In short, use of acknowledgements and, when necessary, quotation marks are necessary to distinguish clearly between what is yours and what is not. Since the rules have been explained to you, if you fail to make this distinction, your instructor very likely will be forced to regard your omission as intentional literary theft. Plagiarism is a serious offence which may result in a student's receiving an 'F' in a course or, in extreme cases, in their suspension from the University.

If a History graduate course professor suspects course work of possible plagiarism, or if a graduate supervisor suspects a cognate or thesis of possible plagiarism, the faculty member will meet with the student. If the issue is not resolved, the student then meets with the graduate chair to discuss this situation, and so that the student can present or respond to evidence. Afterwards the graduate chair will make a decision about whether misconduct has occurred and any penalties; this will be communicated in writing to the student within 3 weeks. The student may appeal this decision to the Vice-Provost (Graduate) within 3 weeks of the issuance of the chair's decision. If the student does not appeal, the Vice-Provost will review the case. The Vice-Provost may confirm affirm, vary, or overturn the graduate chair's decision or penalty.

Information on the appeals procedures for graduate students can be found here:
http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/appealsgrad.pdf

Support Services

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western, http://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/ for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority.

- Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students, as part of their registration, receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page <http://www.music.uwo.ca/> and our own McIntosh Gallery <http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>
- Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>
- Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or

other relevant administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html

UWO has many services and programs that support the personal, physical, social, and academic needs of students, in a confidential environment. The Student Development Centre (SDC) has trained staff and an array of services to help students achieve their personal, academic and professional goals. See: <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca>.

If you have any further questions or concerns please contact, Heidi Van Galen, Administrative Officer, Department of History, 519-661-2111 x84963 or e-mail yangalen@uwo.ca.