

HTS 3024-A  
AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY TO 1865 (and beyond)

COURSE SYLLABUS  
Spring Semester 2010  
Tues. & Thurs.; 8:05a.m. - 9:25 a.m.  
DM Smith, Rm. 304

Instructor: Dr. Olivia A. Scriven  
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COURSE STATEMENT

This course is a critical examination of the history of African descendant peoples in North America from initial European contact, through the Civil War, and in the decade shortly thereafter. It is a history of competing narratives, informed as much by the perspective of the individual scholar, as well as by the influence of time and place. Through readings and class discussions, we will survey themes, conventional theories and counter-prevailing arguments about the African American experience. Included in our discussions will be a brief exploration of West African societies in the time before and during initial European contact; the role/impact of industrialization and emerging markets on shifting relations; factors influencing the growth of the Atlantic Slave Trade and the reality of the Middle Passage; the rhetoric of the Great Awakening, European Enlightenment, colonial struggles for independence, and heightened contradictions about slavery; varied and ongoing forms of Black resistance and efforts to achieve self-determination; the Civil War, Emancipation and Reconstruction. Utilizing first-hand narratives, study of these topics will be viewed as much from the perspectives of the enslaved Africans as from those on the other side. From this critical and collaborative examination, the course goals are to:

GOALS

1. Stimulate an interest in African-American history within the context of U.S. history more broadly.
2. Develop an understanding of how the lives of 17th, 18th and 19th-century [African] Americans influence the lives of [African] Americans today.
3. Expose students to some of the diverse social thoughts and policies that shaped the African-American experience.
4. Expose students to the historian's tools of primary and secondary materials.
5. Encourage the interrogation of data through the assignment of often conflicting narratives.
6. Improve students oral, written, and critical thinking skills by engaging in informed discussions of course reading materials.

### COURSE FORMAT

This course utilizes a participatory format, with its structure designed to engage and encourage students to actively participate in the teaching/learning process. Toward that end, each week students will be select a class meeting in which they will supplement lectures with their own summary comments and questions/discussion topics based on the assigned readings. (Students are encouraged to bring in outside research, articles, visuals, etc. as necessary to add to the discussion and stimulate dialogue). Comments and questions will be based on students' own interpretations of the arguments/theories contained in the readings, and such reactions may either support the prevailing arguments contained in the readings or posit or a counter-argument, offering research/citing passages in the literature to support the basis of your claims. Student oral presentations must be accompanied by a written 2-page analysis, a copy of which is to be presented to the instructor at the beginning of class. Position papers will be reviewed and graded.

### READINGS

We will utilize four (4) texts to facilitate the lecture and discussions, including autobiographies that help to provide a dynamic source of first-person narratives. The readings include:

1. Hine, Darlene Clark. The African American Odyssey, vol. 1 (4<sup>th</sup> edition)
2. Douglass, Frederick. Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass
3. Jacobs, Harriet. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
4. Mintz, Steven. African American Voices: The Life Cycle of Slavery (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)

### HONOR CODE

Students at Georgia Tech adopted the honor system. Therefore, cheating in any form (including PLAGIARISM) is prohibited and will not be tolerated in this class. When this is detected, a **“ZERO” GRADE is given for the assignment.**

### CLASS ROOM COURTESY

While we can all appreciate the early hour of the class and that “stuff” happens, the class will begin and end on time. We will excuse the occasional late entry, but habitual tardiness will result in failure to enter the room. If it is your day to present and you arrive after 8:05AM, you, unfortunately, will not be able to present and will NOT RECEIVE credit for the assignment.

If you must bring your morning coffee, tea or protein shake, please do so in a covered container and make certain the container leaves with you or finds its way to a receptacle when done. Unfortunately, you must eat your breakfast before entering the room or after class is done.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This class has a moderate reading load but requires engagement of those texts through critical analysis, respectful discourse and reasoned debate. While you may not agree with your classmates' perspectives, everyone will be provided with the respect and courtesy necessary to

voice their opinions and have their voices heard. Specific requirements for satisfactory completion include the following:

1. Class attendance. You will be allowed **NO MORE THAN TWO EXCUSED OR UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**. If you have unavoidable circumstances which will affect your attendance, let's talk about it.
2. Facilitated Discussion and Position Paper. Each student will be required to lead a classroom discussion. These facilitated discussions must be accompanied by a written position paper, described in detail above. Remember, if you show up late the day you are assigned to facilitate, you won't be allowed to present and you won't receive credit that day.
3. Mid-term Exam. The good news is that there will be no mid-term exam. The greater news is your mid-term will include the submission of a five-page essay on some aspect of the African American experience **OF YOUR CHOOSING** as covered through course readings up to that date. The essay will require outside research from the Ga Tech library resources, such as academic journals, newspapers, reference works, and other scholarly materials. If you've never written a research paper, complete with citations and bibliographic resources, let's talk.
4. Final Exam. The good news is that there will be no final exam. The greater news is your final will include the submission of a second, five-page essay on an aspect of the Civil War. Your source will be newspapers published during the era. Choose at least one; however, you may choose several different ones if you wish. Read a newspaper on the day and month of your birthday for the years 1861 through 1865. This means you will have at least five articles (one from each year) from which you write your **FIVE PAGE ESSAY** on the Civil War and/or African Americans during that time. **DO NOT COPY WHAT YOU SEE WORD FOR WORD**. Instead, discuss the articles, relating them to your knowledge of the Civil War era. Attach to your essay photocopies of the newspaper articles. Write on each the name of the newspaper—it must be underlined—and its date. Also include on the front page of your essay the name of the newspaper (underlined), and the dates of these papers.

I respect and accept that you are busy. So am I. Given our other commitments, I can not accept late papers. I also can not give make-up work or assignments for extra credit. So, with the understanding the grading scale is as follows:

**COURSE GRADING**

|                                                     |            |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Attendance and Participation. . . . .               | 20 Percent |
| Facilitated Discussion and Position Paper . . . . . | 30 Percent |
| Mid-Term Essay. . . . .                             | 25 Percent |
| Final Essay. . . . .                                | 25 Percent |

READING AND LECTURE SCHEDULE

- Week 1      Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup>
- Introduction to Course and Review of Requirements
  - Hine, Chapter 1: "Africa" (early empires)
  - No Student Facilitated Discussions This Week
- Week 2      Jan. 19<sup>th</sup> & Jan. 21<sup>st</sup>
- Hine, Chapter 1: "Africa" (continuation of discussion on West Africa)
  - Hine, Chapter 2: "Middle Passage"
  - Mintz, Chapter 2 "God's A-Gwineter Trouble de Water"
- Student Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Week 3      Jan. 26<sup>th</sup> & Jan. 28<sup>th</sup>
- Hine, Chapter 3: "Black People in Colonial North America"
- Mintz, Chapter 3: "Dere's No Hidin' Place Down Here": Arrival
- Student Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Week 4      Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>
- Hine, Chapter 4: "Rising Expectations: African Americans and Struggle for Independence"
  - Mintz, Chapter 4: "A Change is Gonna Come": Slavery in the Era of the American Revolution
- Student Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Week 5      Feb. 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>
- Hine, Chapter 5: "African Americans in the New Nation, 1783-1820"
  - Mintz, Chapter 5: "We Raise de Wheat, Dey Gib Us de Corn": Conditions of Life.
- Student Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Week 6 Feb. 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>
- Hine, Chapter 6: "Life in the Cotton Kingdom, 1793-1861"
  - Mintz, Chapter 6: "Like a Motherless Child": Childhood.

Student Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Week 7 Feb. 23<sup>rd</sup> and Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>
- Hine, Chapter 7: "Free Black People in Antebellum America, 1820-1861"
  - Mintz, Chapter 7: " "Nobody Knows de Trouble I See": Family

Student Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Week 8 March 2<sup>nd</sup> and March 4<sup>th</sup>
- Hine, Chapter 8: "Opposition to Slavery, 1800-1833"
  - Mintz, Chapter 9: "Oppressed So Hard They Could Not Stand": Punishment.

Student Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Week 9: March 9<sup>th</sup> and March 11<sup>th</sup>
- Hine, Chapter 9: "Let Your Motto Be Resitance, 1833-1850"
  - Mintz, Chapter 10: " "My Lord Says He's Gwineter Rain Down Fire": Resistance.

Student Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Week 10 March 16<sup>th</sup> and March 18<sup>th</sup>
- Hine, Chapter 10: "And Black People Were at the Heart of It": The U.S. Disunites over Slavery, 1846-1861
  - Mintz, Chapter 10: " "Follow the Drinkin' Gourd": Flight

Student Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Week 11 March 23<sup>rd</sup> and March 25<sup>th</sup> \*\*SPRING BREAK\*\*

- Week 12      March 30<sup>th</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup>
- Jacobs, *Incidents in Life of a Slave Girl*
    - Introduction; Ch. 29 – 33 & Ch. 41
- Student Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Week 13      April 6<sup>th</sup> and April 8<sup>th</sup>
- Douglass, *Narrative in the Life of Frederick Douglass*
    - Entire book
- Student Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Week 14      April 13<sup>th</sup> & April 15<sup>th</sup>
- Hine, Chapter 11: "Liberation: African Americans and the Civil War"
  - Mintz, Chapter 12: "The Walls Came Tumblin' Down": Emancipation.
- Student Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Week 15      April 20<sup>th</sup> & April 22<sup>nd</sup>
- Hine, Chapter 12: "The Meaning of Freedom: The Promise of Reconstruction, 1865-1868"
- Student Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Week 16      April 27<sup>th</sup> & April 29<sup>th</sup>
- Hine, Chapter 13: "The Meaning of Freedom: Failure of Reconstruction"
- Student Facilitator(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
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- Week 17      Finals Week. --- Essay on Civil War due on Tues., May 4<sup>th</sup> by 12 noon