

History 2081: Representing the Race

The Ohio State University

Summer 2013

TTh 1:50–4:30

Instructor: Dan Royles

207C Dulles Hall

OH: Tuesdays 11–1 (at Heirloom Cafe, in the Wexner Center), or by appt.

About the Course

Course Description

According to the OSU catalog, this course offers a survey of African American history from 1877 to the present. Unfortunately, since this is the summer session, we only have seven weeks of instruction comprising thirteen class sessions. Trying to cram a regular semester's worth of material into that time would be counter-productive, so we will focus on a particular theme—race and representation—during our time together. Using a variety of primary texts (in addition to a textbook for reference and context) as a prism, we will investigate the different voices and perspectives that make up “the black community.”

Course Goals

Instead of simply imparting to you a set of facts about the history of African

Americans over the past century and a half, in this course I will help you develop skills of critical thinking, analysis, communication, and collaboration. Along these lines, although I will lecture for part of almost each session, a significant portion of our time in class will be devoted to discussion, interactive activities, and work in small groups. To my mind, the value of history education lies not in the rote memorization of facts and dates (although an awareness of historical context and chronology is always important in talking about the past), but in the ability to evaluate evidence, balance competing perspectives, and imagine alternative outcomes.

In this course, I will also introduce you to concepts and methods from digital humanities, a growing field that explores digital ways to pursue and represent research in humanistic disciplines, including history. Since much of the information we absorb on a daily basis comes to us over the Internet, through personal computers, tablets, and smartphones, it's important to be a savvy consumer of data. Thankfully, the traditional practice of history gives us a solid toolkit for manipulating and interpreting many different kinds of data, whether they be the demographic information recorded in the U.S. census, the stanzas of a poem, or the archeological refuse collected from a tenant farm.

In addition to learning how to critically consume data, you will all become producers of data—in the form of digital content—as well. In lieu of a final exam or research paper, you will work in groups to research a topic in African American history since Emancipation, and produce an online project based on what you learned. We'll talk about the guidelines for this assignment in much more detail later on, but if you're worried about not being tech-savvy enough to do well at the assignment, I would encourage you to stick it out. You'll be working in a group, so your fate won't rest on your computer skills alone, but more importantly, stepping outside your comfort zone (even just a little bit) is important for learning new things.

Readings

The readings listed under each class meeting below are to be completed BEFORE that class session. For example, the readings listed under “June 20” are to be completed before class on that day. Please bring a copy of each day’s readings to class with you so that you may refer to them if necessary during our discussions.

NOTE: I reserve the right to make changes to the reading schedule for the course as I see fit, and I will announce any changes to course readings both in class and via e-mail or on Carmen, with at least a week’s notice.

This course has four primary texts:

- Clayborne Carson, Emma J. Lapansky-Werner, and Gary B. Nash, *The Struggle for Freedom: a History of African Americans* vol. 2 (since 1865), 2nd edition, 2011. [Note: I believe the bookstore ordered the combined version of this textbook, which includes the first volume as well. We will only be using volume two, so if you wish to exchange the larger edition for the one that has volume two *only*, feel free to do so.]
- W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*. [Any edition of this should be fine.]
- David Levering Lewis, ed., *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*.
- Claude Brown, *Manchild in the Promised Land*.

Additional readings listed on the syllabus will be available through the library’s web services or posted to Carmen.

Grading

Grade Distribution

Quizzes: 20% Participation: 40% Group Project: 40%

Quizzes

There will be three pop quizzes for which you will answer an open-ended question

about the reading for the day. These will take between twenty and thirty minutes. You will not be able to look at the reading or your notes unless otherwise directed. In calculating your final grade, I will drop the lowest of these quiz grades; the remaining two will each be worth 10% of your final grade, for a combined weight of 20%. Make-up quizzes will not be given.

Participation

This course is designed to be more interactive than a traditional lecture format, but this will only work if you come to class ready and willing to engage with the course material. Every class session will involve some kind of discussion or activity based on the material, so it's important that you come to class not only having completed and reflected on assigned readings. Accordingly, participation counts for almost half of your final grade. A quarter of your participation grade (or 10% of your final grade, if you look at it another way) will be based on your participation over Twitter. In order to satisfy this requirement, you must tweet *at least* five times each week about course material. In order to count for course credit, your tweets must:

- use the hashtag #Hist2081
- be related to course material (a thought about the reading, link to an article, question about something covered in class)
- be substantive
- be respectful

So, what to tweet? You can respond to a reading, pose a question, answer someone else's question, or link to something relevant from around the web. We may also live tweet our film viewings—I'll let you know in advance so that you can bring your smartphone/tablet/laptop. However, those tweets won't count toward your five for the week.

This is intended to be a low-stakes, easy, even fun way to engage with the course

material, and with each other, but you *must* tweet at least five times a week in order to receive credit. This portion of your grade will be awarded on an ALL OR NOTHING basis.

Group Project

The final group project will make up the final 40% of your overall grade. We'll talk more about this during our second class meeting.

Policies and Expectations

Attendance

I will be taking attendance in this class. Please come to class on time. If you are more than fifteen minutes late, you will be marked absent. You are allowed one unexcused absence; every absence thereafter will lower your participation grade by one full letter. More than THREE unexcused absences—including days that you are more than fifteen minutes late—will result in automatic failure of this course. Excused absences are limited to medical emergencies and funerals, and require a note from a doctor or mortuary director, not a family member.

Cell Phones

Please silence your cell phone and keep it put away during class. This means no text messaging. If your phone rings during class or I catch you texting, you must bring enough cookies for everyone to the following class session.

Communication

I will hold regular office hours every week. If you have a concern about the class or want to talk in more depth about the material, please come see me there. You may also reach me by e-mail at royles.1@osu.edu. During the week (Monday through Friday) please wait 24 hours after e-mailing me to follow up, and 48 hours on the weekend.

Computer Use

Some of you may wish to bring a laptop or tablet to class in order to take notes. If you do so, please show respect to me, your classmates, and your own learning by not checking e-mail and social networks or browsing the internet during class. If I catch you doing so, you must bring enough cookies for everyone to the following class session. Repeated violations may result in a more serious penalty.

Disabilities Disclosure Statement

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Statement on Academic Conduct

Academic dishonesty in this course will absolutely not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, which is a serious offense of academic standards and will not be tolerated under any circumstances. Any student or group of students who tries to pass off the work of another person, whether drawn from course materials or outside sources (including the internet), without appropriate citation will automatically receive a failing grade in the course. I, the instructor, reserve the right to refer any cases of suspected plagiarism or cheating to the Office of Academic Affairs; I also reserve the right to assign a grade of "F" for the assignment. Please refer to the video "Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism" for more information.

Course Schedule

June 11

Introduction to the Course

Introduction to course, review syllabus, ice breakers, mini-lecture on the practice of history.

June 13

Civil War and Reconstruction

READING

- Chapter 12 in *The Struggle for Freedom*, 289–319
- W.E.B. Du Bois, “The Forethought,” “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” and “Of the Dawn of Freedom,” in *The Souls of Black Folk*

June 18

Black Progressivism and “the Nadir”

READING

- “Booker T. Washington Delivers the 1895 Atlanta Compromise Speech,” *History Matters*
- “Making the Atlanta Compromise: Booker T. Washington Is Invited to Speak” (excerpt from Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery*), *History Matters*
- W.E.B. DuBois, “Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others,” “Of the Meaning of Progress,” and “Of the Wings of Atalanta” in *Souls of Black Folk*

June 20

WWI and the New Negro

READING

- Chapter 14 in *The Struggle for Freedom*
- William Pickens, “The Kind of Democracy the Negro Expects”
- *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, 3–28; 46–51

June 25

Harlem Renaissance

READING

- *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader*, 52–57, 61–67, 100–105, 194–205

June 27

Sex and “Slumming it” in Harlem

FILM

- Isaac Julien, *Looking for Langston*

READING

- excerpt from *Gay New York* (Carmen)
- Essex Hemphill, “Undressing Icons” in *Brother to Brother* (Carmen)

July 2

Discussion of *Manchild in the Promised Land*

READING

- Claude Brown, *Manchild in the Promised Land* [Note: This book is rather long, so make sure that you start it early. Don’t leave it until the last minute!]

July 9

Civil Rights in the Courts

READING

- Chapter 17 in *The Struggle for Freedom*
- Mary L. Dudziak, “Josephine Baker, Racial Protest, and the Cold War,” *Journal of American History* 81, no. 2 (Sep. 1994), 543–70.

July 11

Representing Civil Rights

READING

- Chapter 18 in *The Struggle for Freedom*
- Martin Luther King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”
- Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet”

July 16

Representing Radicalism

FILM

- *Black Power Mixtape*

READING

- Chapter 19 in *The Struggle for Freedom*
- Audre Lorde, selected reading (Carmen)

July 18

A Different World

FILM

- *Paris is Burning*

READING

- Chapter 20 in *The Struggle for Freedom*
- Marlon Riggs, “Black Macho Revisited: Reflections of a Snap! Queen,” *Black American Literature Forum* 25.2 (Summer 1991), 389–394

July 23

LA Burning and the Ethnography of the Street

READING

- Chapter 21 in *The Struggle for Freedom*
- Mike Davis, “Los Angeles: Civil Liberties between the Hammer and the Rock,” *New Left Review* (Jul 1988)

July 25

The Joshua Generation: Barack Obama and “Post-Racial” America

READING

- Toni Morrison, “Clinton as the First Black President,” *New Yorker*, October 1998
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, “How the Obama Administration Talks to Black America
- Andrew Sullivan, “Obama at Morehouse”
- James Fallows, “The Impossibility of Being Barack Obama”
- Ta-Nehisi Coates, “Color-Blind Policy and Color-Conscious Morality”

July 30 (2:00–3:45)

Presentation of group projects