

HIST 5374: History of African Americans

Introduction:

This graduate-level course provides an in-depth exploration of African American history from enslavement to the contemporary era. Students will examine the social, political, economic, and cultural developments shaping the African American experience. Key topics include Reconstruction, the Great Migration, the Harlem Renaissance, and the Civil Rights Movement.

Through a combination of primary and secondary sources, students will engage with the voices and perspectives of African Americans who have influenced and been influenced by historical events. Finally, this course will also grapple with the intersectionality of race, class, gender, and sexuality and how these factors have impacted the lives of African Americans.

Instructor: Dr. M. Rhys Dotson

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Office: CAS 117

Office Hours: MWF 11:15 – 12:15 *or* by appointment

Note on emails: If you reach out to me during the week, I will do my best to respond to you within 24 hours. If you contact me during the weekend *or* during a scheduled university break, I will do my best to respond to you within 48 hours.

Required Texts:

- Edmund S. Morgan - *American Slavery, American Freedom*
- David S. Blight - *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*
- Louis Moore - *I Fight for a Living: Boxing and the Battle for Black Manhood, 1880-1915*
- Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore - *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*
- Chad L. Williams - *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era*
- James N. Gregory - *The Southern Diaspora: How the Great Migrations of Black and White Southerners Transformed America*
- Harvard Sitkoff - *A New Deal for Blacks: The Emergence of Civil Rights as a National Issue: The Depression Decade*
- Marable Manning - *Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention*
- Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin, Jr. - *Black Against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*
- Greta de Jong - *You Can't Eat Freedom: Southerners and Social Justice after the Civil Rights Movement*
- Ibram X. Kendi - *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America*

Accessing Required Readings:

- **Library Resources:** Many of the required books are available in the university library. You are encouraged to borrow copies from the library to minimize costs.
- **E-Books:** Several of the required texts are available as e-books. You can access these through the university's digital library or through other reputable online sources.
- **Purchasing Books:** While purchasing books is an option, it is not mandatory. If you prefer to own your copies, you may buy them from the campus bookstore or through other retailers.

Course Objectives:

Following the completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Analyze the major events and themes in African American history from 1618 to the present
- Analyze the trends and shifts in the historiography of African American history
- Critically evaluate primary and secondary sources related to African American history
- Understand the contributions of African Americans to American society and culture

Expectations and Etiquette:

In this graduate history course, we strive to create an environment that is respectful, inclusive, and conducive to learning. As members of this academic community, it is essential that we adhere to the following guidelines to ensure a positive and productive experience for all:

- **Respectful Communication:** Engage with your peers and the instructor respectfully. Listen actively and be open to new ideas and perspectives. Disagreements should be expressed thoughtfully and constructively.
- **Punctuality:** Arrive on time for all classes, discussions, and meetings. If you must be late or absent, inform the instructor in advance whenever possible.
- **Preparation:** Come to class prepared, having completed all assigned readings and ready to participate in discussions. Your contributions are valuable and enhance the learning experience for everyone.
- **Academic Integrity:** Uphold the highest standards of academic honesty. Plagiarism, cheating, the use of AI, and other forms of academic misconduct are strictly prohibited and will be addressed according to university policies.
- **Participation:** Actively participate in class discussions and activities. Your insights and questions are important and contribute to a richer understanding of the material.
- **Feedback:** Provide and receive feedback graciously. Constructive criticism is a vital part of the learning process, and it should be given and taken with the intent to help improve and grow.

Methods of Evaluation:

Book Reviews (30%) – Students must write eleven book reviews, constituting **30%** of the final grade. These reviews are an essential component of the course, designed to develop your critical thinking and analytical skills.

Participation (25%) – Active class participation is a vital component of all graduate history courses. As such, participation will account for **25%** of your overall grade. Engaging in discussions, asking questions, and sharing insights enrich your learning experience and contribute to the class' collective knowledge. Therefore, this is truly a **participation** grade and not merely credit for attendance.

Final Paper (45%) – Students have the option to complete either a research paper on a topic of their choosing or a historiography paper.

Guidelines for Book Reviews:

- **Content:** Each review should provide a concise summary of the book's main arguments, analyze its strengths and weaknesses, and discuss its significance within the broader historical context.
- **Length:** Reviews should **not** exceed 1000 words.
- **Format:** As historians, you should **always** format your work according to the Turabian/Chicago Manual of Style guidelines.
- **Submission:** All reviews must be submitted via Canvas before our class meeting/discussion. No late submissions will be accepted.

Options for the Final Paper:

- **Research Paper:** Choose a specific topic within the scope of the course and conduct original research. Your paper should present a clear thesis supported by primary and secondary sources. This would be an ideal assignment for those interested in writing a thesis related to our course content.
 - You must submit a proposal with a working bibliography to the instructor no later than 5:00 pm on Friday, September 27.
 - All secondary sources must be written by historians and published by reputable academic presses.
 - You must have a minimum of five primary sources and ten secondary sources.
 - The final draft of your paper should be a minimum of 4000 words (excluding the cover page and bibliography).
 - The final draft will be submitted via Canvas during final exams week.
 - Dr. Dotson reserves the right to veto submitted ideas/topics.
- **Historiography Paper:** Analyze and compare the works of various historians on a specific topic related to our course. Discuss the evolution of historical thought, methodologies, and interpretations, highlighting key debates and contributions to the field.
 - You must evaluate at least twelve books for your final paper.
 - You must submit a proposal with a working bibliography to the instructor no later than 5:00 pm on Friday, September 27.
 - The final draft of your paper should be a minimum of 4000 words (excluding the cover page and bibliography).
 - The final draft will be submitted via Canvas during final exams week.
 - Dr. Dotson reserves the right to veto submitted ideas/topics.

Grade Scale:

A: ≥ 89.5
B: 79.5 – 89.4
C: 69.5 – 79.4
D: 59.5 – 69.4
F: $59.4 \leq$

Key Dates*:

August 26:	First Day of Class
November 4:	Last Day to Withdraw from a Class
November 25-29:	Thanksgiving Break
December 9-13:	Final Exams Week

*See Canvas for a weekly description of class topics & reading assignments.

Note: At the end of the semester, final grades will not be rounded up.