

**Harvard University
Professor Cornel West **

Department of Afro-American Studies Fall 2001

M W 11 (and section)
Lowell Lecture Hall

Afro-American Studies 10:

INTRODUCTION TO AFRO-AMERICAN STUDIES

The aim of this course is to provide an interdisciplinary examination of the complex array of Afro-American cultural practices from slavery to postmodern times. This shall be done by close readings of those classic texts that provide the most profound grasp of the dynamics of Afro-American thought and practice.

The requirements for the course are regular attendance in lectures, active and consistent participation in discussion section, two papers, and a final exam.

Week 1: Cultural Theory and Afro-American Practices

Weeks 2-3: Laying Groundwork

Readings: W.E.B. Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk* (entire)

Recommended: Richard Wright, *Twelve Million Black Voices*

** Week 2: Sectioning (see below)**

** Week 3: Sections begin**

Week 4 Constructing Black Religion

Readings: Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion* , pp. 3-91, 290-321

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| Orlando Patterson, <i>Slavery and Social Death</i> , pp. 1-76 |
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Week 5: Up From Slavery

Readings: Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll* , pp. 161-284

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| Toni Morrison, <i>Beloved</i> (entire) |
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Week 6: The Challenge of Reconstruction

Readings: Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction* (entire)

Recommended: W.E.B. Du Bois, *Black Reconstruction in America* , pp. 3-83, 711-775

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| Eric Foner, <i>Reconstruction</i> , pp. 1-123, 228-280 |
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Week 7: Black America in the Gilded Age

Readings: C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* , pp. 3-96

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| August Meier, <i>Negro Thought in America 1880-1915</i> , pp. 3-82 |
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**** Week 7: First paper due in section****

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Week 8: The Black Womanist Upsurge

Readings: bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*, pp. 1-13, 159-196

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| Paula Giddings, <i>When and Where I Enter</i> , pp. 17-31, 75-117 |
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Week 9: The Quest for Black Leadership

Readings: Emma Louis Thornborough, "T. Thomas Fortune: Militant Editor in the Age of Accommodation"

Thomas C. Holt, "The Lonely Warrior: Ida B. Wells-Barnett and the Struggle for Black Leadership"

Eugene Levy, "James Weldon Johnson and the Development of the NAACP"

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| Lawrence Levine, "Marcus Garvey and the Politics of Revitalization" |
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The above essays are in John Hope Franklin and August Meier, eds., *Black Leaders of the Twentieth Century* , pp. 19-37, 39-61, 85-103, 105-138

Week 10: Black Cultural Creativity: Music

Readings: Leroi Jones, *Blues People* , pp. 1-16, 81-165

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| Ralph Ellison, <i>Shadow and Act</i> , pp. 77-94, 241-258 |
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| Albert Murray, <i>Stomping the Blues</i> (entire) |
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Recommended: Peter Guralnick, *Sweet Soul Music* , pp. 1-20, 220-245, 332-352, 395-405

Note: No class Nov. 21. No sections Thanksgiving week.

Week 11: Black Cultural Creativity: Literature

Readings: James Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son* , pp. 3–45

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| Richard Wright, <i>Native Son</i> (entire) |
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| Lorraine Hansberry, <i>Raisin in the Sun</i> (entire) |
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Recommended: Nathan Huggins, *Harlem Renaissance*

Week 12: The New Black Middle Class

Readings: E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie* (entire)

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| William Julius Wilson, <i>The Declining Significance of Race</i> , pp. 1-23, 122-154 |
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Week 13: The Postmodern Afro-American Predicament

Readings: Cornel West, *Race Matters* (entire)

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| Audre Lorde, <i>Sister Outsider</i> , pp. 114-123 |
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Course Requirements : section {25%}, one short paper (5–8 pages) {15%}, one long paper (10–12 pages) {30%}, and a final exam {30%}.

Section : Section attendance and participation are mandatory. Sections meet once per week for one hour. The first section meetings will take place during the third week of classes. Section meetings will be devoted to discussing the assigned reading and lecture material for each week. Students are expected to do the assigned reading for each week in advance and come to section prepared to discuss it. All students must be enrolled in a section. **Any student with more than three unexcused absences from section will be excluded from the course.**

Sectioning : Electronic sectioning will take place from noon on Wednesday, September 19 to noon on Friday, September 21. Students must section during this time. Please do not section unless you plan to take Afro-American Studies 10. If you have any questions about sectioning, please e-mail afam10@fas.harvard.edu (<mailto:afam10@fas.harvard.edu>).

Note: Every student must be able, if necessary, to take a section on Fridays at 11am, the regular class time.

Short Paper : The first paper is due in section during Week 7. Paper topics will be distributed in class. **No late papers will be accepted.**

Long paper : The final paper is due on Tuesday, December 11, location TBA. Paper topics will be distributed in class. **No late papers will be accepted.**

Final Exam: format TBA.

All work should be handed to section leaders. Students may not submit papers to the department office or to a designated place or box.

Note: In order to pass Afro-American Studies 10, students must fulfill all of the course requirements.

Office Hours:

Prof. Cornel West: M 2–4, Department of Afro-American Studies, Barker Center. By appointment only. Please e-mail Barbara Karasinski at karasins@fas.harvard.edu (<mailto:karasins@fas.harvard.edu>) or call 496–2454.

Head TF, Martha Nadell: M 3–4, Barker Center 039. By appointment only. Please e-mail mnadell@fas.harvard.edu (<mailto:mnadell@fas.harvard.edu>) or call 495–3292.

Web Site: The web site for Afro-American Studies 10 is <http://www.courses.fas.harvard/~afam10> (<http://www.course.fas.harvard/~afam10>). The syllabus and additional course information will be posted on this site.

****Pass/Fail:** **Students may take the course pass/fail, subject to the regulations of the University. Pass/fail students must complete all of the course requirements.

Core Credit: Afro-American Studies 10 may be taken to meet the Historical Study A requirement.

Required Texts (available at the Coop and on reserve at Hilles and Lamont Libraries)

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

Albert Raboteau, *Slave Religion*

Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Eric Foner, *A Short History of Reconstruction*

LeRoi Jones, *Blues People*

Albert Murray, *Stomping the Blues*

Richard Wright, *Native Son*

Lorraine Hansberry, *Raisin in the Sun*

E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie*

William Julius Wilson, *The Declining Significance of Race*

Cornel West, *Race Matters*

Required Texts (available at the Coop, in the course pack, and on reserve at Hilles and Lamont Libraries)

Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*

C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*

August Meier, *Negro Thought in America 1880–1915*

bell hooks, *Ain 't I a Woman*

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