

# AFR 317E: Afro-Brazilian Diaspora

[AFR 317E (#30595); Crosslisted with LAS 310 (#39680) and CL 305 (#34080)]

**Prof. Niyi Afolabi**

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MWF 1-2PM @ PARLIN 204

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## **Description\*:**

This course focuses on post-abolition Afro-Brazilian life, history, culture, politics, and literature. It engages a wide range of literary texts, socio-cultural movements, visual arts, and cultural performances, while raising a number of questions that would lead to provocative midterm and final research papers, while simultaneously honing students' writing skills with a number of response papers that may be expanded into a research paper. Most concepts and issues will be illustrated with multimedia clips or movies to ensure that students gain a richer experience of the Afro-Brazilian diaspora world.

Some of the questions the course will grapple with include the following: (i) What explains the continued exclusion of Afro-Brazilians from political power?; (ii) What is the legacy or impact of slavery within this context?; (iii) How is the concept of Africa (re)imagined, distorted, and manipulated in this regard?; (iv) What are the discourses used to justify social inequalities and racial discrimination in Brazil?; (v) How is the "radical" view on discrimination silenced while the "co-opted" perspective is promoted?; (vi) What are the effects of governmental patronage on cultural producers as they negotiate what Carl Degler calls the "mulatto escape hatch" that fits into Gilberto Freyre's "racial democracy" model; and (vii) What are the limitations of ideology in an era of "globalization" and pragmatism? These among other issues will form the basis of the course which will additionally analyze the social condition that goes beyond the more apparent "culture game"; and must also be seen as a political game towards visibility, participation, gendered equality, and empowerment.

**Objectives:**

1. Students will be able to meet requirements for writing and global flags.
2. Students will be exposed to the dynamics of coping mechanism with social inequalities in Brazil as they mostly affect the Afro-Brazilian population.
3. Students will not only be exposed to elements of style, they will also improve their writing skills by having opportunities to re-write most of their assignments.
4. Transnational resonances will be invoked for comparative analysis within contexts and texts in order to see the African Diaspora beyond a continental prism.

**Required Texts:**

1. Johnson, Crook et al. ed. *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization*
2. Alves, Miriam and C. R. Durham. *Finally Us/Enfim Nós*
3. Almeida, Bira. *Capoeira: A Brazilian Art Form: History, Philosophy, and Practice*
4. Guimarães, Geni. *The Color of Tenderness*
5. Gomes, Dias. *Journey to Bahia\** (**Course Pack**). \*Available for purchase at Union Copy Center (on the first floor of Texas Union Building, 512-475-6675).

**Course Requirements and Grading:**

5 Response Papers (2 pages)	= 10%
5 Re-Written Papers (2 pages each)	= 10%
Midterm Paper (3-5 pages)	= 20%
(Research Proposal and Annotated Bibliography)	
Customized Library Visit	= 10%
Final Research Paper (5-7 pages)	= 20%
Oral Presentation	= 10%
Capoeira Report	= 05%
Attendance	= 15%
<b>Total</b>	<b>= 100%</b>

**Numeric Grading:**

A	= 94-100
A-	= 90-93
B	= 86-89
B-	= 81-85
C	= 70-80
D	= 60-69
F	= 00-59

**IMPORTANT DUE DATES**

- September 10: Position Paper #1
- September 14: Re-Written Position Paper #1
- **September 24: Customized Library Visit (PCL)**
- October 15: Position Paper #2
- October 19: Re-Written Position Paper #2

- **October 22: Midterm Paper**
- November 5: Position Paper #3
- November 5: Capoeira Report
- November 9: Re-Written Position Paper #3
- November 12: Position Paper #4
- November 19: Re-Written Position Paper #4
- November 26: Position Paper #5
- December 3: Re-Written Position Paper #5
- December 3-7: Group Presentations
- **December 10: Final Research Paper**

\*This syllabus is subject to minor alterations in the course of the semester.

## GENERALITIES

### WRITING FLAG COMPONENT:

#### IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE COLLEGE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES

*“This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and to read and discuss your peers’ work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work.”*

### CUSTOMIZED LIBRARY VISIT

In order to help you navigate “information literacy resources” available on UT campus and through internet access, a formal customized library visit has been set up at the Perry-Castaneda Library (PCL) in **Learning Lab 4** (Main Floor) on **Monday, September 24**, during class time at 1PM. Your attendance at this one-time workshop is not only required, it also counts for **10%** of the final grade.

#### **Before Library Visit:**

1. Please, watch this video: **<http://guides.lib.utexas.edu/choosetopic>**.
2. Please, view also a sample assignment for preparing an Annotated Bibliography: **<https://www.lib.utexas.edu/signaturecourses/resources/create-annotated-bibliography>**

### ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

Given the writing intensive nature of the class, skipping classes will put you at a disadvantage as lectures on elements of style or customized comments cannot be repeated once shared with the class. Also, you cannot participate if you are absent. This segment counts for **15%**.

## **POSITION PAPERS**

These are meant to provide your critical reactions or responses to your readings. When properly done, it involves a brief exposition of the main arguments of the reading, your critical analysis, and a “position” taken in a form of reflection or how the reading affected you in a personal way. What strikes you in a reading may not strike someone else. It is about **your** own position not someone else’s. The length of each paper is **2 double-spaced pages**. This exercise counts for **15%**.

## **RE-WRITTEN PAPERS**

As part of the expectation of this class—that you improve your writing systematically over the course of the semester, this is an opportunity to hone your writing skills by using the suggestions you have been provided with to improve and strengthen your paper. In order to show that you have followed the instructions, **you are expected to attach the first version to the revised paper each time**. The excuse that you “forgot,” “lost your paper,” “did not know,” “missed the class it was announced,” “had the flu” or “will scan or email it to me” is **NOT** acceptable. Length is same as the position papers: **2 double-spaced pages each**. This exercise counts for **10%**.

## **MIDTERM EXAM/PAPER**

This is to get you ready for your “final research paper” by getting started on your research paper very early through a combined assignment on a RESEARCH PROPOSAL and an ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY. The exam expects that you: (i) present your research proposal in a cogent manner by advancing a **thesis statement** of your paper and the main arguments that support it in one cogent page; and (ii) prepare an annotation of your working bibliography where you synthesize and analyze your readings of a number of articles and/or books (at least 5 entries of annotation of articles and or books, according to the topic) by listing an entry for each reading in few paragraphs for a total of 3 pages. Overall, the assignment is at least 3 pages (one-page “research proposal” as a cover page, and a two-page analytical “annotation” for a total of **3 pages**). This segment counts for **15%**.

## **CAPOEIRA REPORT**

This is a one-page reflection on the in-class practical capoeira knowledge and experience with a Master Capoeirista (Prof. Dare) for a week. The assignment counts for 5% of the final grade.

## **GROUP/ORAL PRESENTATION**

This is an opportunity for team work while not losing your individuality. When properly coordinated, different aspects of a subject matter or topic may be presented by a group and or presented as a PANEL on the due date. Regardless of how the group is formed (similar topics) or disparate topics within the same group, each presenter will have **7-8 minutes** to present to the rest of the class at the end of the semester. You **need to know the group you are** in and not complain at the end of the semester that you don’t have a group to present in. You may use any multimedia approach you wish as long as you prepare well in advance and not have a situation where your laptop malfunctions and you blame it on technology. This segment accounts for **10%** of your grade.

## **FINAL RESEARCH PAPER**

This is a topic you have researched and will develop throughout the semester. A list of possible topics will be distributed before MIDTERM. Any of your response papers could be further developed into a research paper if properly coordinated. Likewise your midterm assignment is meant as a “midway” moment for you to work on a potential final research topic in terms of a **Research Proposal** and an attached **Annotated Bibliography**. The assignment counts for **15%**.

## **THE STANDARD OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AT UT-Austin**

A fundamental principle for any educational institution, academic integrity is highly valued and seriously regarded at The University of Texas at Austin, as emphasized in the standards of conduct. More specifically, you and other students are expected to "maintain absolute integrity and a high standard of individual honor in scholastic work" undertaken at the University (19-128, Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities). This is a very basic expectation that is further reinforced by the University's Honor Code.

At a minimum, you should complete any assignments, exams, and other scholastic endeavors with the utmost honesty, which requires you to:

- acknowledge the contributions of other sources to your scholastic efforts;
- complete your assignments independently unless expressly authorized to seek or obtain assistance in preparing them;
- follow instructions for assignments and exams, and observe the standards of your academic discipline;
- and avoid engaging in any form of academic dishonesty on behalf of yourself or another student.
- students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259.

## **ON PLAGIARISM**

The academic tradition demands that you cite your sources if you have used the ideas or words belonging to others. Failure to do so constitutes **plagiarism** (academic theft) and can cost you your status as well as academic integrity that has serious consequences.

## **ON CAMPUS CARRY**

I do not allow any concealed weapon in my office. I would also ask you to declare if you are carrying one before you step into my office. Otherwise feel free to exercise your rights but be aware also that the best safety you can have is to have a heart full of love for humanity. The fear of the other is indeed due to the absence of love.

## Chronological Syllabus

### August

- 29 Introduction to the course; logistics and materials  
Elements of Writing Style

### **Autobiography & Politics of Race and Gender**

- 31 **READ:** Guimarães, Geni. *The Color of Tenderness* pp. 1-32

### September

- 3 **Labor Day Holiday: No Class!!!**  
5 **READ:** Guimarães, Geni. *The Color of Tenderness* pp. 33-68  
7 **READ:** Guimarães, Geni. *The Color of Tenderness* pp. 69-83  
**READ:** “Introduction” pp. ix-xxxviii

### ***Black Brazil: An Overview***

- 10 **READ:** *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization* pp. 1-13

### **DUE: Position Paper #1**

### **Suggested Reflection/Question for Paper 1**

To what extent is *The Color of Tenderness* a subtle, innocent, and “apolitical” autobiographical piece that is written from the viewpoint of a female child? Should the reader excuse or question the narrative voice for not openly challenging social inequalities and racial discrimination? Is it enough to expose the complexities of the racial situation without really taking a position? As a reader, what do you take away from this award-winning piece of Afro-Brazilian literature and its gendered dynamics?

### **The Black Movement**

- 12 **READ:** *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization* pp. 17-21; 31-42  
14 **READ:** *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization* pp. 43-51  
**DUE: Re-Written Position Paper #1**

### **Race, Class, Culture**

- 17 **READ:** *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization* pp. 61-84  
19 **READ:** *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization* pp. 85-101

### **Brazil/Africa**

- 21 **READ:** *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization* pp. 143-174  
24 **Customized Library Visit** at Perry-Castaneda Library (PCL) in  
**Learning Lab 4** (Main Floor)  
26 **READ:** *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization* pp. 175-197

### **Religion and Cultural Resistance**

- 28 **READ:** *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization* pp. 201-212

### **Music, Carnival & Identity**

### October

- 1 **READ:** *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization* pp. 249-259

- 3 **READ:** *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization* pp. 261-295  
5 **Screening and Discussion:** “Black Orpheus”

### **Blacks in Visual Media**

- 8 **READ:** *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization* pp. 313-338  
10 **READ:** *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization* pp. 339-361  
12 **READ:** *Black Brazil: Culture, Identity, and Social Mobilization* pp. 363-375

### **CASE STUDY I: Capoeira**

- 15 **READ:** *Capoeira: A Brazilian Art Form: History, Philosophy, and Practice* pp. 1-22

### **DUE: Position Paper #2**

#### **Suggested Reflection/Question for Paper 2**

The blurb of the edited volume, *Black Brazil*, states: “This collection of essays brings together diverse perspectives on multiple dimensions of Afro-Brazilian culture, with a common focus on the construction of identities and the ways grassroots cultural expressions are linked to social organization and mobilization.” Focusing on one or more aspects that struck you in particular, reflect on the complexity of Brazilian national identity and how Afro-Brazilians feel that they still have to struggle for their sense of belonging and citizenship in a “racial democracy.”

- 17 **READ:** *Capoeira: A Brazilian Art Form: History, Philosophy, and Practice* pp. 23-64  
19 **READ:** *Capoeira: A Brazilian Art Form: History, Philosophy, and Practice* pp. 65-107  
**DUE: Re-Written Position Paper #2**

- 22 **READ:** *Capoeira: A Brazilian Art Form: History, Philosophy, and Practice* pp. 111-123  
**DUE: Midterm Paper**

- 24 **READ:** *Capoeira: A Brazilian Art Form: History, Philosophy, and Practice* pp. 125-142  
26 **READ:** *Capoeira: A Brazilian Art Form: History, Philosophy, and Practice* pp. 143-167

- 29 **Capoeira Practicum I**

- 31 **Capoeira Practicum II**

**November**

- 2 **Capoeira Practicum III**

### **CASE STUDY II: Afro-Brazilian Women Writers**

- 5 **READ:** Alves, Miriam and C. R. Durham. *Finally Us/Enfim Nós* pp. 31-68; 70-103  
**DUE: Position Paper #3**

#### **Suggested Reflection/Question for Paper 3**

For Richard S. Heckler, “Capoeira weaves fighting, music, dance, prayer, and ritual into an urgent strategy by which people live, struggle, celebrate, and survive together.” Based on your reading of Bira Almeida’s *Capoeira: A Brazilian Art Form*, what aspect of this fascinating expressive art truly embodies the struggle to survive?

**DUE: Capoeira Report**

- 7 **READ:** Alves, Miriam and C. R. Durham. *Finally Us/Enfim Nós* pp. 112-153
- 9 **READ:** Alves, Miriam and C. R. Durham. *Finally Us/Enfim Nós* pp. 164-188; 204-230  
**READ:** Afolabi, Niyi. "Beyond the Curtains: Unveiling Afro-Brazilian Women Writers"  
*Research in African Literatures* 32.4 (2001): 117-135 (**Course Pack**)  
**DUE: Re-Written Position Paper #3**

### **CASE STUDY III: Religious Syncretism**

- 12 **READ:** Gomes, Dias. *Journey to Bahia* pp. 1-34 (**Course Pack**)  
**DUE: Position Paper #4**

#### **Suggested Reflection/Question for Paper 4**

The poems in *Finally...Us* celebrate the visibility of Afro-Brazilian women's writing while at the same time challenging the stereotypes that have kept them "behind the curtain." Selecting a few poems to illustrate your perspective, discuss the women's sense of being marginalized by the mainstream Brazilian society. How do you explain the contradiction in the compelling female power contained in what Conceição Evaristo calls the "continuous motion of the world" ('I-Woman' [p. 71])?

- 14 **READ:** Gomes, Dias. *Journey to Bahia* pp. 35-62 (**Course Pack**)  
16 **READ:** Gomes, Dias. *Journey to Bahia* pp. 63-79 (**Course Pack**)  
19 **READ:** Bailey, Dale S. "Pagador de Promessas: A Brazilian Morality" (**xerox**)  
**DUE: Re-Written Position Paper #4**

- 21 **Thanksgiving Holidays!!!**  
22 **Thanksgiving Holidays!!!**

- 26 Afro-Brazilian Religion and Film I  
**Screening and Discussion:** "O Pagador de Promessas"

#### **DUE: Position Paper #5**

#### **Suggested Reflection/Question for Paper 5**

Who is to blame for Joe's tragic end in Dias Gomes' *Journey to Bahia*: The religious intolerance of the Catholic Church in relation to Candomblé, the manipulation and opportunism of the media, his own inability to adapt to the exigencies of urban mythology in relation to "capitalist freedom," or all of the above? Justify your position with adequate references from the play.

- 28 Afro-Brazilian Religion and Film II  
**Screening and Discussion:** "Ile Aiye: House of the World"
- 30 Afro-Brazilian Religion and Film III  
**Screening and Discussion** "Bahia: Africa in the Americas"  
**DUE: Re-Written Position Paper #5**



**December**

3 Oral Presentations: Group I

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5 Oral Presentations: Group II

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7 Oral Presentations: Group III

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10 **DUE IN CLASS: Final Research Paper**