

City University of New York (CUNY)

CUNY Academic Works

Open Educational Resources

City College of New York

2020

African Heritage and African-American Experience

Tanzeem S. Ajmiri
CUNY City College

[How does access to this work benefit you? Let us know!](#)

More information about this work at: https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cc_oers/392

Discover additional works at: <https://academicworks.cuny.edu>

This work is made publicly available by the City University of New York (CUNY).
Contact: AcademicWorks@cuny.edu

Professor Tanzeem S. Ajmiri
Office Hour: By appt.
Email: tajmiri@ccny.cuny.edu

BLST 10100 Section D African Heritage and African-American Experience

Course Description:

This class is Introduction to Black roots from ancient Africa to contemporary America as an orientation to the nature of Black Studies emphasizing its relationships to world history, Europe, Asia, the Americas, slavery, Reconstruction, colonization, racism, and their politico-economic and cultural impact upon African descendants worldwide. In this course we will learn to do close readings of texts to draw evidence from them and use that evidence to produce well developed, historically situated arguments using evidence to support conclusions. Students will evaluate evidence and arguments critically and analytically to build their critical thinking skills. Finally, students will gather, interpret, and assess information from a variety of sources and points of view.

Classroom Etiquette

This class will touch on sensitive issues which we may not agree on as a whole class. However, it is crucial that we learn to respect one another's perspectives and analysis. This includes not talking while others are talking, and not using mobile communication devices in class. If you come in late, please step in quietly.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class. Each student will be given 2 excused absences during the semester. After 2 absences points will be deducted from your grade. If you miss a class, you are responsible for the material you missed. I will not provide this material. Please ensure you have the contact information of a classmate instead.

Text

This is a **Zero Textbook Cost** course. There are links to reading assignments that live online, and I have uploaded additional materials in portable document format (.pdf).

City College Blackboard

Other reading and writing materials, PowerPoint slideshows, educational links and videos will be posted online on Bb during the semester. ***Note: You must use your CCNY email address in Bb (log in to the CCNY Portal, click Blackboard, then Update Email in the Tools menu). If you add a non-CCNY domain email address in this window, you will not receive important course announcements.***

There is no textbook for this class. Instead we will be using a variety of texts from different sources, which will also be provided to you on Blackboard under the *Content* section. It is essential for this course that you are able to access the site and your email. If you do not have a

computer or internet access, you may use the computer labs and the computers in the library. **Students are required to read assigned readings *before* class and *bring physical copies* of the readings to class for discussion. You must bring a hard copy of the readings with you to class as there are no computers or phones allowed in class.**

Journals (10%): I ask that you record your thoughts and reactions about the readings and about class discussions themselves in your journals. Your journals will assist in how you process the information you will learn in this class, so I encourage you to write questions, record your surprise or any other reaction, and reflect on what you're learning: Did you learn something new? Did the readings or viewings cause you to have more questions? Can you connect what you are learning currently to previous knowledge or other things we have discussed in class? These journals are ungraded but you do get points towards your final grade for doing them. They are due on Blackboard under the Discussion section every Friday.

Final Project (20%): Your final project can take any of the following forms. As you see in the grade breakdown, you will be working on your final project throughout the semester, with each assignment building toward its ultimate manifestation. I remind you that your project should be related to this course itself and it should be something that is fascinating to you, that calls your attention, that you will enjoy spending time working on, ideally. **The Final Project is due Wednesday May 18th emailed to tajmiri@ccny.cuny.edu**

You will have the option to create the following, all of which require research:

- A short film of 10-15 minutes
- An art work that you create accompanied by a written explanation of the inspiration of the piece in relation to the class (2 pages)
- A podcast / audio documentary of 10-15 minutes
- A musical piece that you create accompanied by a written explanation of the inspiration of the piece in relation to the class (2 pages)
- A chapter in a novel (8-10 pages)
- A non-fiction essay (8-10 pages)
- A chapbook of 8–10 poems in whatever poetic form you choose
- An anthology (poems, short stories) comprised of the work of other writers accompanied by a one-page written description providing a broad general idea of the rationale behind the selections (8-10 selections)
- Scenes of a theatrical piece you create up to one act (8-10 pages)
- A research paper of 8-10 pages
- A syllabus of your own course which includes at least 10 weeks worth of readings and assignments (primary, secondary, college level)
- A digital archive of images accompanied by a written description of your account (2 pages). This could be on Tumblr, Instagram, or another platform with the approval of the professor.

- A playlist of music accompanied by a written description providing a broad general idea of the rationale behind the selections (2 pages)
- A new wikipedia entry that you create on a topic related to the African diaspora that must be thoroughly researched using a minimum of 10 academic sources, which must then be cited.

Prospectus (10%): In this 1-2 page document, you will include

- a short summary of your final project
- an outline of the content of your final project
- a timeline of how you will complete this project
- a description of the attributes you believe the completed project will have in order to receive a grade of A

Please feel free to explore those aspects of United States history that we may not have touched on during class itself. **The Prospectus is due Monday February 14th emailed to tajmiri@ccny.cuny.edu**

First draft (15%): In addition to the draft itself, I ask that you please fill out the below as a sort of progress report to accompany it. I will be looking for progress from your prospectus to this point. And yes, progress is a loose term, but that is what I am seeking. I do not have any expectation of a first draft resembling a final project. **The First Draft is due Wednesday March 2nd emailed to tajmiri@ccny.cuny.edu**

- Project title
- Project description
- Original goal for this first draft
- Where you are now:
- How you feel about where you are now: (i.e. satisfied? Content?)

Second draft (15%): Again, I am looking for progress, this time from the first draft to the second: **The Second Draft is due Wednesday April 6th emailed to tajmiri@ccny.cuny.edu** In addition to handing in the second draft I ask that you answer the following:

- Project title
- Description of project now
- Where you are now, from first draft to second
- Where you would like to go for the final project

Presentation (15%): The presentation will be an opportunity for students to share their final project with their classmates; in three minutes, I ask that you briefly describe the evolution of this project: why you were interested in the topic, how it developed over the course of the semester, and what you learned. Please prepare 1-2 pages from which you can read.

Participation (15%): This class depends completely on the participation of every participant, be it verbally with the large group; in break-out discussions (in the chat if we go remote.) It is a class that hinges on not only taking notes but also on learning from every person in the room. Each person should get accustomed to paying attention to the conversations that are happening in class: students will find that the ideas for your final projects may come from these dialogues. Every person, and the perspective that they contribute to this class is important and necessary.

Grade Breakdown:

Journals	10%
Prospectus of final project	10%
First draft of final project	15%
Second draft of final project	15%
Presentation of final project	15%
Final project	20%
Active Participation	15%
	<hr/>
	100%

Late Work

I generally do not accept any late work. However, I understand that in life, things happen that can impede your ability to turn in an assignment on time. If you are unable to finish an assignment on time due to unforeseen circumstances, you must email me asking for an extension at least 24 hours before the deadline. I will only provide 1 extension per student for the semester.

A “Living” Syllabus

This syllabus is a living syllabus and is subject to change. If (as) this occurs I will make the class aware of the modifications and post a revised syllabus on Blackboard. The syllabus can be found under the *Information* section of Blackboard.

CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity

CUNY regards acts of academic dishonesty (e.g., plagiarism, cheating on examinations, obtaining unfair advantage, and falsification of records and official documents) as serious offenses against the values of intellectual honesty. The College is committed to enforcing the CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity and will pursue cases of academic dishonesty according to the CUNY Academic Integrity Procedures.

**All students are expected to turn in original work. Any work that is plagiarized will result in a 0.

Benny’s Food Pantry - <https://www.cuny.cuny.edu/bennysfoodpantry>

If you or someone you know needs food, you are welcome to visit Benny’s Food Pantry, which is open to all Harlem community members and students, staff, and faculty of CCNY. Because we continue to be in remote mode, you must make an appointment to gain entry to the North Academic Center (the NAC), where the food pantry is located.

Class Schedule

Week 1

Class 1 Monday January 31 Introduction
No Reading
In Class: Introduction and Syllabus

Class 2 Wednesday February 2 African Civilizations: East African Empires
No Reading
In Class: Ancient East African Empires

Week 2

Class 3 Monday February 7 African Civilizations: West African Empires
Readings:

- *African American History* by Christopher Collins Ch. 1 pages 8-14

Class 4 Wednesday February 9 African Civilizations: Central African Empires
Readings:

- *African American History* by Christopher Collins Ch. 1 pages 15- 16

Week 3

Class 5 Monday February 14 The African System of Slavery
Readings:

- *Transformations in Slavery* by Paul E. Lovejoy Ch.1 pages 1-15 Stop at the section titled
The Islamic Factor

Due Monday February 14th Prospectus emailed to tajmiri@ccny.cuny.edu

Class 6 Monday February 16 The Indian Ocean Slave Trade

Readings:

- *Transformations in Slavery* by Paul E. Lovejoy Ch.1 pages 15-18 Stop at the section titled the Trans- Atlantic Slave Trade

Week 4

Class 7 Monday February 21 No Class

Class 8 Monday February 23 The Trans Atlantic Slave Trade

Readings:

- *Transformations in Slavery* by Paul E. Lovejoy Ch.1 pages 18-23
- *African American History* by Christopher Collins Ch. 2 pages 19-30

Week 5

Class 9 Monday February 28 First Africans in the Americas

Readings:

- First Blacks in the Americas: The African Presence in the Dominican Republic (CUNY Dominican Studies Institute)

<http://firstblacks.org/en/summaries/arrival-06-introduction/>

<http://firstblacks.org/en/summaries/arrival-01-free-and-enslaved/>

<http://firstblacks.org/en/summaries/arrival-02-ladinos-and-bozales/>

<http://firstblacks.org/en/summaries/arrival-03-legal-and-illegal-slave-trade/>

<http://firstblacks.org/en/summaries/arrival-04-sugar-accelerated-imports-of-blacks/>

<http://firstblacks.org/en/summaries/arrival-05-official-importing-of-slaves-diminishing/>

<http://firstblacks.org/en/summaries/arrival-06-black-majority-at-end-of-16-century/>

- *The Making of Haiti: The Haitian Revolution From Below* by Carolyn E. Fick Chapter 1

Class 10 Wednesday March 2 Early Slavery in the U.S

Reading:

- *African American History* by Christopher Collins Ch. 3 pages 32- 50

Due Wednesday March 2nd First Draft emailed to tajmiri@ccny.cuny.edu

Week 6

Class 11 **Monday March 7** **Slavery and the Construction of Race in the US**
Reading:

- *Slavery Race and Ideology in the United States* by Barbara Fields

Class 12 **Wednesday March 9** **Bacon's Rebellion and Slave Codes**
Reading:

- *Bacon's Rebellion* by Jennifer Stock

Week 7

Class 13 **Monday March 14** **Resistance and Revolt**
Reading:

- *The Haitian Revolution* by David Patrick Geggus
- *American Negro Slave Revolts* by Herbert Apthekar

Class 14 **Wednesday March 16** **Culture as Resistance**
Reading:

- *African American History* by Christopher Collins Ch. 5 pages 70- 86

Week 8

Class 15 **Monday March 21** **The Spread of Slavery**
Reading:

- *African American History* by Christopher Collins Ch. 7 pages 103- 125

Class 16 **Wednesday March 23** **The Abolitionist Movement and Emancipation**
Reading:

- *African American History* by Christopher Collins Ch. 6 pages 87- 102
- *African American History* by Christopher Collins Ch. 9 pages 149-167

Week 9

Class 17 Monday March 28 Reconstruction, Jim Crow, Prisons and Policing

Reading:

- *African American History* by Christopher Collins Ch. 11 pages 199- 205

Class 18 Wednesday March 30 The Great Migration

Reading:

- *African American History* by Christopher Collins Ch. 12 pages 206- 231

Week 10

Class 19 Monday April 4 European Colonialism Globally

No Reading

**Class 20 Wednesday April 6 The 1960's : Civil Rights, Black Power and Global
Decolonization**

Reading:

- *African American History* by Christopher Collins Ch. 14 pages 240-270

Due Wednesday April 6th Second Draft emailed to tajmiri@ccny.cuny.edu

Week 11

Class 21 Monday April 11 The 1960's: Black Workers and The Labor

Movement

No Reading

Class 22 Wednesday April 13 The 1960's: COINTELPRO and the Murder of

Movements

No reading

Week 12

Class 23 **Monday April 18** **Spring Break**

Class 24 **Wednesday April 20** **Spring Break**

Week 13

Class 25 **Monday April 25** **The Racial Wealth Gap**
Reading:

Class 26 **Wednesday April 27** **Medical Racism**
Readings:

- *The Tuskegee Syphilis Study* by Fred Gray Introduction, Ch. 2, 3 and 4

Week 14

Class 27 **Monday May 2** **Police Murders and BLM**
Readings:

Class 28 **Wednesday May 4** **Presentations**

Week 15

Class 29 **Monday May 9** **Presentations**

Class 30 **Wednesday May 11** **Presentations**

Week 16

Class 31 **Monday May 16** **Presentations**

Class 32 **Wednesday May 18** **Final Projects Due**