



HIST 105-05, The African American Intellectual Traditions, Fall 2005

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History 105.05 – The African American Intellectual Tradition

Dr. Charles W. McKinney

Fall 2005, 313 Clough Hall
TR 8.00 - 9.15
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays
10.00 – 11.30 and by appointment

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Course Description

Intellectual history is largely defined by the role that elite thinkers play in the shaping of ideas. This course will adhere to the definition of intellectual history as “the history not of thought, but of [people] thinking.” To that end, students will grapple with an intellectual tradition that encompasses the work and thought of both “elite” and “non-elite” actors in the African American experience. From slaves to senators, the African American Intellectual tradition is broad, wide and deep. To that end, students will examine intellectual responses to slavery, emancipation, nation-building, and the long civil rights movement. In our examination of expressive culture, writings and speeches, we will come to a greater understanding of the centrality and multi-layered meanings of freedom. Finally, students will explore the critical role that African American intellectuals—in all their guises—have played in the shaping of the American historical and intellectual landscape.

Course Requirements:

Books:

- Mia Bay, *The White Image in the Black Mind (White)*
- Eddie Glaude, *Exodus! (Exodus)*
- Wilson Moses, *Creative Conflict in Afro-American Thought (Thought)*
- Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker (Baker)*

Reaction Papers - 30% of final grade:

Students will submit **three** 5-to 7-page reaction papers due on designated days. To do these papers, you can select *either* a set of related readings or a *single biographical piece* (you can not do three papers using all the same format). For either choice, you will provide a critical reading/reaction to the intellectual terrain covered by the text(s) you select. Specifically, I’m asking you to discuss and evaluate the major intellectual components of the chosen selections. What are the subjects of the readings responding to? How have they framed their responses? Are they effective? While a very short synopsis of the readings can make its way into the papers, reaction papers will ultimately be graded on the *conclusions* you draw about the readings themselves, and the ways in which they help/do not help you understand the dominant themes of the class.

In-class discussion/participation - 30% of final grade

As for class participation, I expect you to attend every class meeting, to arrive on time and to come ready, having done the assigned reading and/or written assignment. Since there will be a very high premium on class discussion, it is imperative that everyone comes to class ready to contribute with comments, questions and insights. Remember though, class participation is not a contest. The people who talk the most do not necessarily “win.” What really counts is your ability and willingness to bring something valuable to the discussion that your colleagues and I can build upon in our efforts to bring some clarity to the issues that we are discussing. If you have an insight on the readings, or if you have a page full of questions, let your voice be heard! Of course, this level of participation will require full reading of assigned work. Also, to ensure the best possible experience for all of us, let’s refrain from using inappropriate language, or any other activity that may make our classroom less than open and engaging.

Final paper – 20% of final grade

Students will submit a 10 to 15-page research paper that uses primary source documents to explore key issues raised (or not raised) throughout the course. I will be happy to assist you in your efforts to identify primary source documents for this paper. *A 1- to 2-page research proposal and 10 item bibliography (websites don’t count) are due on October 27 at the beginning of class. The final paper is due on December 6 at the beginning of class.*

Final Exam – 20% of final grade

The final exam will be a take home essay exam. I’ll give you three essay questions; you will answer two of them.

Please do not hesitate to come by my office to discuss any of these requirements.

Honor Code:

All work turned in for this course is to be completed in accordance with the Rhodes College Honor Code. To demonstrate your commitment to the Code, each student must write “pledged” and sign his/her name on every assignment. If you have questions about plagiarism you should talk to me directly.

Policies:

Note on written work:

All written work must be composed on a computer, be double-spaced and in 10 or 12 point font. Have your name, the assignment name (and number if necessary), date, course name and email address on each document you turn in. Students who feel that they need assistance with written assignments should feel free to contact me so that we can discuss whatever challenges you may be facing.

Attendance:

Students will be allowed three unexcused absences. *All other absences after the third one must be excused.* Valid excuses for missing class include but are not limited to religious observances, college-sanctioned academic or athletic travel, personal illness or

injury, family illness or injury or bereavement. Infrequent class attendance will negatively impact your class participation grade.

Paper grades:

As a general rule, grades are not negotiable. However, I will gladly discuss the grade on any assignment 24 hours after the work is turned in.

Late Papers:

All papers are due at the beginning of class. Papers turned in after that time will be considered one day late. Unexcused late assignments will be penalized by one letter grade for each day late.

Learning Differences:

I am strongly committed to accommodating students with disabilities, and ask your cooperation in making sure that I'm aware of any such accommodation you might need. For more information, please contact Student Disability Services to alert them of any needs you may have.

Additional Information:

- Please turn off all cell phones, pagers, games, and any other object that can beep, buzz, ring or vibrate. These devices are extremely disruptive when they go off in the middle of class.
- ***I reserve the right to amend this syllabus as necessary***

Class Schedule:

Race and the Riddle of the Republic

August 25:

Introductions; go over syllabus; discussion

August 30: Race and the Republic, Part One

Hideous Monster, chap. 1; *African American Voices*, (public folder)

September 1: Race and the Republic, Part Two

White, 13-22; *The Trials of Phillis Wheatley* (public folder)

Web resources: The Life of Olaudah Equiano, A Slave,

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/equiano2/menu.html>; *The Poems of Phillis Wheatley,*

<http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/wheatley/wheatley.html>

September 6: The Sacred World of the Slaves

White, 113-143; skim *Black Culture* article (public folder)

September 8: An Appeal to the Nation

Exodus chaps. 1-2; David Walker's *Appeal* (Articles 1, 4) @

<http://www.iath.virginia.edu/utc/abolitn/walkerhp.html>

White, 22-36

September 13: Chosenness and the question of violent resistance

Exodus, 3-4; *White*, 157-160; Nat Turner article (public folder)

September 15: The Politics of Literacy

Hand out on "Pit Schools"; Dorothy Porter, "The Organized Educational Activities of Negro Literary Societies, 1828-1846", *Journal of Negro Education*, vol. 5, no. 4 (October 1936) (JSTOR)

- **Reaction Paper #1 due**

September 20: The Convention Movement and the Politics of Respectability

Exodus, 6-7; *White*, 38-54

September 22: Colonization and Nationalism

Thought, chap. 5; Alexander Crummell article (public folder); *White*, 55-74

September 27: Abolition and the Idea of Freedom

Maria Stewart article (public folder); Frederick Douglass on the 4th of July @

<http://www.alexanderstreet4.com/cgi-bin/asp/bltc/getdoc.pl?/projects/artfla/databases/asp/bltc/fulltext/IMAGE/.117>

September 29: Frederick Douglass

Thought, 2, 4; Douglass biography (public folder)

October 4: Emancipation: Building Democracy, Confronting Race

White, 75-111, 143-149; "Plans dat comed from God" (public folder)

October 6: Education and beyond

"Ex-slaves and the rise of universal education" (public folder); Aptheker, "Negro People in the U.S." (Skim at least 2 documents; article in public folder)

- **Reaction Paper #2 due**

October 11: Up from Douglass: The Rise of Booker T. Washington

Booker T. Washington biography (public folder); *Thought*, 8, 9

October 13: A Question of Leadership

DuBois, "The Talented Tenth" in *The Future of the Race* (folder)

Booker T. Washington's Atlanta Exposition Speech @

<http://www.alexanderstreet4.com/cgi-bin/asp/bltc/getdoc.pl?/projects/artfla/databases/asp/bltc/fulltext/IMAGE/.812>

Additional resources: A. Philip Randolph and W.E.B. DuBois bios (public folder)

October 14 – 18: Fall Break

October 20: Marcus Garvey and his critics

Garvey bio (folder); Movie: “Look for me in the whirlwind”

October 25: W.E.B. DuBois

Thought, chap. 11; DuBois bio (folder)

- **Paper Proposal and Bibliography Due**

October 27: The New Negro

Alain Locke, “The New Negro” (folder); *Baker*, chaps. 1-2

November 1: Progressive Perspective

Baker, 3-4

- **Reaction Paper #3 Due**

November 3: Social Science and Race

Gunnar Myrdal article (handout); “What the Negro Wants” (folder)

November 8: World War II

Beth T. Bates article (folder); “Speech and Power” article (folder)

November 10: Building a Movement: Another Question of Leadership

Baker, 5-6; “Southern Manifesto” @

<http://www.cviog.uga.edu/Projects/gainfo/manifesto.htm>

November 15: The Beginning of the Revolution?

Baker, 7-8; SNCC and SCLC Statements of Purpose (handouts)

November 17: Violence and Nonviolence: A Mythical Dichotomy?

Pure Fire (folder); Malcolm X bio (folder); “Unviolence” by Charles Payne

@<http://ashp.listserv.cuny.edu/scripts/ashp/wa-ashp.exe?A2=ind0310&L=civilrights&T=0&F=&S=&P=10203>

Highly Recommended *Additional Resource*: King, “Letter from a Birmingham Jail” @

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/King/frequentdocs/birmingham.pdf>

November 22-27 Thanksgiving Break

November 29: Indigenous Leadership

Baker, 9-10

December 1: Black Power

Black Power (folder); Bayard Rustin, “Black Power and Coalition Politics” @ <http://www.alexanderstreet4.com/cgi-bin/asp/bltc/getdoc.pl?/projects/artfla/databases/asp/bltc/fulltext/IMAGE/.3642>

December 6: Roundtable Discussion – Final Paper Due

Come prepared to discuss your papers and your thoughts on the African American Intellectual Tradition. What did you learn this semester? What significant trends/patterns did you discover?

The take-home exam will be given out on **December 7. It will be due at my office on Wednesday, December 14 at 5.30PM. Late exams will not be accepted.**