

# **SURVEYING AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE**

**University of Florida**

**AFA3930**

**African American Studies**

**FALL 2022**

**Tue, Periods 8-9 (3:00 PM - 4:55 PM)**

**Thu, Period 9 (4:05 PM - 4:55 PM)**

**Room: TUR 1101**

Instructor: [Drew D. Brown, Ph.D.](#)

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Office: 1012 Turlington Hall

Office hours: Tuesday 2-3pm

## **Course Description:**

This course examines the key aspects of African American culture. It focuses on historical processes, race or racialization, gender and sexuality, aesthetics, and other related topics. The course begins with a look at how intellectuals have theorized race, blackness. It will also look at the historical roots of African-American culture in Africa. It will view African American culture through

- Social science literature
- Social structural
- The Black church and other socio-cultural institution
- Through gender, sexuality, and other identity politics

This course will help develop your understanding of the history of African Americans. Its specific aim is to teach you how to interpret historical and contemporary materials about African Americans in the United States, as well as throughout the diaspora. The course will enhance your critical thinking skills, information literacy skills, and your ability to place historical and contemporary issues in proper context.

Furthermore, this is an African American Studies course. Therefore, it will explore how race and ethnicity operate. We will define central ideas such as whiteness, race, ethnicity, class and so on. In this course, we will use various methodological frameworks to view history and review various theoretical approaches of analysis. Additionally, we will examine the historical growth of white supremacy and privilege in sustaining systems of racial and economic inequality.

## **Course Goals**

In this course, student will be exposed to African American history while enhancing the following:

- Critical thinking skills
- Information literacy
- Ability to examine historical events through an Africana studies framework
- Understanding the context of historical and contemporary issues
- Engagement, both locally and globally, in the issues of our day

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Define the concept of race and discuss its development and application.
- Understand how scholars, researchers, and culture workers have theorized “Blackness”
- Identify the various African-American cultural markers and their origins.
- Identify key interrelated experiences, both historical and contemporary, that are relevant to African American people.
- Demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate popular and scholarly texts (both written and visual) on the various perspectives and diverse cultural backgrounds of African Americans.

On the first quiz, you will be asked, “what is the ‘keyword’ according to the syllabus.” The answer is “**think**”.

#### Required Texts

1. Caponi, Gena Dagele, ed. *Signifyin (g), sanctifyin' & slam dunking: a reader in African american expressive culture*. Univ of Massachusetts Press, 1999.
2. Boyd, Todd. *Am I black enough for you?: Popular culture from the' hood and beyond*. Indiana University Press, 1997.
3. Wallace, Michele & Dent, Gina, *Black Popular Culture (Discussions in Contemporary Culture)*. The New Press, 1992.

#### Films

Black is; Black Ain't  
 500 Years Later  
 Ethnic Notions  
 African Americans in Sports  
 Moonlight  
 Claudine  
 Lemonade  
 She's Gotta Have It  
 Hip Hop Beyond Beats and Rhymes

**Supplemental readings for the semester will be provided via Canvas** along with any other pertinent course information (syllabus, guidelines for assignments, etc.) Students are responsible for printing out all assigned readings unless otherwise noted or instructed. *All students enrolled in this class have been automatically enrolled in Canvas. Please make sure to check Canvas and*

*your UF email accounts regularly for any announcements, information or changes that may be made to the class schedule.*

**Communication:**

There may be additional readings/commentaries/news stories sent via email or posted on Canvas. Each student must have a UF e-mail account in order to receive e-mail announcements sent via Canvas. You are responsible for logging on to Canvas and reading the announcements and obtaining assigned material.

Email: Please use your University of Florida email account for all correspondence in this course. It is appropriate to start all email correspondence with a salutation (Professor \_\_\_\_\_: Dear Dr.\_\_\_\_\_, Hi Professor \_\_\_\_\_, etc.) and end with your name (Sincerely, \_\_\_\_\_). My goal is to answer all emails in a timely manner. However, students can anticipate a delay after business hours.

**Class Schedule:**  
**(Tentative and subject to change)**

- Week 1: Syllabus
- Week 2: The meaning of “Blackness”  
Identity politics
- Week 3: The meaning of “Culture”  
The Cultural Matrix
- Week 4: Slavery & Oppression  
Religion  
Double consciousness
- Week 5: Identity
- Week 6: Harlem Renaissance  
Black Arts Movement
- Week 7: Economic foundations  
Nihilism  
The Ghetto
- Week 8: Cool Masculinity  
Strong Black women
- Week 9: Language  
Signifyin’  
Style and Non-verbal communication

- Week 10: Music
- Week 11: Sports
- Week 12: Religion  
Fashion  
Media (Movies and TV)
- Week 13: Group presentations

### **Ground Rules:**

1. Everyone is required to do their own work individually unless stated otherwise.
2. Papers are to be submitted electronically. NO late work will be accepted.
3. Plagiarism is a serious offense. If you use the work of other authors without giving them credit, you will receive a '0' for the assignment.
4. Some of the material in this course uses slang, profanity, and what some might consider derogatory racial and sexual terminology. If you find such language offensive, please let me know.

### **Assignments:**

No late assignments will be accepted without a legitimate excuse (unexpected, life-threatening illness or family emergency which will require a conversation and **sufficient evidence** that will be determined by the professor). The semester grade for assignments will be the percentage of total assignment points earned (out of the total points possible).

### **Readings:**

All readings will be listed on Canvas. Depending on current events, there may be additional readings/commentaries/news stories sent via email or posted on Canvas. Each student must have a UF e-mail account in order to receive e-mail announcements sent via Canvas. You are responsible for logging on to Canvas and reading the announcements and obtaining assigned material.

### **Quizzes (20%):**

There will be several quizzes given to ensure that the students are doing the assigned readings and watching the assigned lectures. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the course. Because the lowest quiz will be dropped, there will be no make-up for missed quizzes. If I believe that the assigned readings are not being/have not been done, I will give pop quizzes. The point value will be determined once the decision is made to give a quiz.

### **Test 1 and Test 2: (20% each)**

The Test 1 and Test 2 examinations will be in class exams that will cover selected information and consist of fill-in-the-blank, short answer and multiple-choice questions. Students should be prepared to answer questions on a variety of topics covered over the course of the semester.

**Papers: (15%)**

A 1000-word typed paper will be assigned and will be assembled from various topics discussed in class as well as assigned course readings. (Paper guidelines will be distributed prior to each paper's due date).

**Course Grade Consists of the Following Components, Weighted as Follows:**

Attendance & Class Participation	10%
Quizzes (10)	20%
Paper	15%
Group Assignment	15%
Test 1	20%
Test 2	20%
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Total	100%

A 92 and above	C+ 78-79.99	D- 60-61.99
A- 90-91.99	C 72-77.99	F 59.99 and below
B+ 88-89.99	C- 70-71.99	
B 82-87.99	D+ 68-69.99	
B- 80-81.99	D 62-67.99	

**Course Policies:**

This is an asynchronous class. Students should expect to put a minimum of 6 hours of work per week doing the following: (Reading texts, summarizing texts, outlining major points, understanding perspectives, researching concepts or historical moments that they are unfamiliar with, outlining texts, articles, and notes.)

No predetermined “grade curve” will be applied to quizzes, exams, essays, oral presentations, or the final grade. Your grade will depend upon your own individual effort and performance. I cannot make you study, I cannot do the work for you, but I will be able to tell easily if you did or did not do your work.

**Statement of Principles:**

1. Faculty are entitled to freedom in the classroom in discussing their subjects, but they should be careful not to introduce into their teaching controversial (or other) matter which has no relation to their subject. The faculty member is responsible, however, for maintaining academic standards in the presentation of course materials.
2. As members of the academic community, students should be encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for the truth.
3. Faculty members in the classroom and in conference should encourage free discussion, inquiry and expression. Student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.
4. Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the information or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but students are responsible for learning the content of the course of study in which they are enrolled. The validity of

academic ideas, theories, arguments, and views should be measured against the relevant academic standards.

5. Students should have protection through orderly grievance procedures against prejudiced or capricious evaluations that are not intellectually relevant to the subject matter under consideration. At the same time, students are responsible for complying with the standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

**Controversial Subject Matter:**

In this class, we will be discussing subject matter that some students may consider controversial. Some students may find some of the films, readings and/or comments in class very challenging. Our purpose in this class is to explore this subject matter deeply and consider multiple perspectives and arguments. Students are expected to listen to the instructor and to one another respectfully, but of course are free to disagree, respectfully, with views expressed in class or in readings. Your grades will by no means be penalized or rewarded if you agree or disagree with anyone's opinion even mine. However, it will depend on your ability to substantiate and support your claims.

**Disability Statement:**

This course is open to all students who meet the academic requirements for participation. Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible.

**Students Requiring Accommodations:** Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

**University Honesty Policy:**

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

**Counseling and Wellness Center:**

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

**Writing Studio:**

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at

<http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 302 Tigert Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.