History 242 – African American History

Dr. Charles W. McKinney

Fall 2005, 205 Palmer Hall  e: mckinneyc@rhodes.edu
TR 2.00 – 3.15  o: 901/843-3525
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays  h: 901/725-3474
10.00 – 11.30 and by appointment  o: 318 Clough Hall

Course Description
The experiences of African American people in the United States can be described as a continuous quest for empowerment; this quest has been affected by myriad factors (e.g., gender roles, class divisions, secular and non-secular ideologies, regionalism, etc.) in addition to racism. This course, through the use of primary and secondary material, historical documentaries, and critical analyses, will chart the historically complex journeys of African Americans, from the impact of slavery on colonial America to the Black Freedom Struggle of the 1960’s and beyond.

Course Requirements:

Books:
- William Chafe, Remembering Jim Crow
- Tera Hunter, To ‘Joy My Freedom
- Walter Johnson, Soul by Soul
- Steve Lawson and Charles Payne, Debating the Civil Rights Movement
- Roger Wilkins, Jefferson’s Pillow

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 will select a set of related readings and provide a critical reading/reaction to the intellectual and thematic terrain covered by the text(s) you select. The main point of the papers is to provide, you guessed it, a critical reaction to the readings covered in a particular unit. In these papers, you will discuss and evaluate the major themes that arise in the readings and discussions, and assess them accordingly. While a (very) short synopsis of the readings can make its way into the papers, reaction papers will ultimately be graded based on the conclusions you draw about the readings/discussions themselves, and the ways in which they help/do not help you understand particular topics or themes.

In-class participation/research paper presentation - 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. **A substantial portion of this grade will be drawn from the presentation you make on your research paper at the end of the semester.**

**Final paper – 20% of final grade**

Students will submit a 15 to 25-page research paper that uses *either* primary source documents, oral interviews or both 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 absences 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:

August 25: Introduction
Go over syllabus; discussion

Building Freedom and Unfreedom

August 30: Slavery and the Founding of the Republic
Pillow, Intro-chap. 2

September 1: Slavery and the Founding of the Republic, Part II
Pillow, 2-4

September 6: African American Life in the Antebellum North
People as Property: Slavery and its Cultures

September 8: Marking Bodies, Making Racial Difference
*Soul*, Intro-2; David Walker’s *Appeal* (Preamble, Articles 1, 4) @
http://www.iath.virginia.edu/utc/abolitin/walkerhp.html

September 13: Turning People into Products
*Soul*, 3-4; Maria Stewart Article (folder);

September 15: Life in the Shadow of the Market
*Soul*, 5-epilogue; “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?” @

Reaction Paper #1 Due
A More Perfect Union? Building Freedom from the Ground Up

September 20: Civil The Civil War
Ira Berlin Article (folder); W.E.B. DuBois, “*The Coming of the Lord*” @

September 22: Gender, Nationalism and the End of Slavery
*Joy* intro-chap. 1

September 27: Communities of Struggle
*Joy*, 2-4; Read about the Exodusters and Pap Singleton @
http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/african/afam009.html (browse pictures and images here)
http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/program/episodes/seven/theexodust.htm

September 29: Education for Liberation
Anderson article (folder)

October 4: Anchoring the Community: The Black Church
*Time Longer than Rope*, chapter 3 (folder)

October 6: Intraclass Dynamics: The Beginnings of Jim Crow
*Joy*, 5-6

Reaction Paper #2 Due

October 11: Lynching and the response to it
Movie: *Ida B. Well: A Passion for Justice*; go to www.withoutsanctuary.org
and view the contents of the site.

October 13: Expressive Culture
*Joy*, 7-8; blues lyrics
October 14-18: Fall Break!

October 20: Migration
Joy, 10; letters from migrants @ http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5332/
Times is getting harder: Blues of the Great Migration:
http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/5333/

October 25: A Question of Leadership
DuBois, “The Talented Tenth” (folder); Washington’s Atlanta Exposition Speech @ http://www.alexanderstreet4.com/cgi-bin/asp/bltc/getdoc.pl?/projects/artfla/databases/asp/bltc/fulltext/IMAGE/.812
Garvey bio (folder)

**Paper proposal and bibliography due**

October 27: Segregation and the rise of Jim Crow
Jim Crow, 1

November 1: Memory and Family
Jim Crow, 2-3

November 3: School and Work “Behind the Veil”
Jim Crow, 4, 205-8, 245-67

November 8: Fighting the Machine: Resistance to Jim Crow
Jim Crow, 6, Randolph, March on Washington Movement (folder)

November 10: World War II
Tyson article (folder); Bates article (folder)

**Reaction Paper #3 Due**

The Civil Rights Movement

November 15: A View from the top
Debating, 3-44, 3 documents from 45-97

November 17: A View from the trenches
Debating, 99-136, All documents from 139-149

November 22-27: Thanksgiving Break

November 29: A Legacy of Struggle and Achievement/Presentations
Payne article (folder)
December 1: Presentations

December 6: Presentations

Research Paper Due