

## History 242 – African American History

Dr. Charles W. McKinney

Fall 2006, 208 Kennedy Hall  
MWF 11.00 – 11.50  
Office Hours: Mondays and Tuesdays  
2.30 – 4.00 and by appointment

e: mckinneyc@rhodes.edu  
o: 901/843-3525  
c: 901/270-9003  
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 (Jim Crow)*
- Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom (Joy)*
- Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul (Soul)*
- Steve Lawson and Charles Payne, *Debating the Civil Rights Movement (Debating)*
- Roger Wilkins, *Jefferson's Pillow (Pillow)*

#### Reaction Papers - 30% of final grade:

Students will submit **five** 3-4-page reaction papers due on designated days. These papers are designed for you to engage in a deep, critical reading of the material covered in class and in the lectures. In these papers, you will discuss the major themes and concepts that we are dealing with at that point in the class, assess them accordingly and draw coherent conclusions about them. I will give you specific assignments throughout the semester. One of these papers will be a primary source exercise, which I'll discuss during class. One final note on the papers: when I say they should be 3-4 pages long I mean it. *Papers that do not have at least three full pages of text will not be graded.* Although this should go without saying, I'll put it in here anyway: a title page does **not** count as page one of your paper.

#### In-class discussion/participation – 20% of final grade

I expect you to attend every class, arrive on time and 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. 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. Also, coming to the office during office hours to discuss material covered in the class also counts towards your class participation grade.

#### Discussion days and Discussion page:

On many Fridays throughout the semester, we will have in-class discussion (these days will be in **bold** on your syllabus). On those days you will submit a discussion page at the end of class. This page will consist of *at least **five** well thought out questions and **five** fully formed discussion topics that you would like to discuss with the class.* You will come to class with this page, and use it engage your classmates in an informed, thoughtful discussion of the dominant themes and

ideas that have presented themselves during the week. I will call on students randomly to begin discussion on these days. Please note that a fifth of your grade is based on your participation in class. While in-class discussion days represent a significant opportunity for you to shine, it is in your best interest to come to class throughout the semester ready to contribute to the intellectual give and take of the class.

Examinations – 25% each of final grade:

There will be two in class examinations, a mid term and a final. Both of these will consist of short answer questions and essay questions. The mid term exam will be held on **October 13**. The final exam will be held on **December 8<sup>th</sup> at 1.00PM**. These dates are fixed.

*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. Each unexcused absence after the third one will cost you 5% of your **final** grade. If you miss three weeks worth of classes, you can be dropped from the class or flunked.* 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. Excuses after the allotted three should be accompanied by a note from the Dean’s office. Needless to say, infrequent class attendance will negatively impact your class participation grade.

Paper/test 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:

Papers are due at the beginning of class. Papers that are one day late will be penalized one letter grade. “My computer crashed the night before the paper was due” is not an excuse for a late paper; rather, it is a testament to poor time management on your part. *Papers over one day late will receive an F. However, please note that you must turn in all of the assigned work in order to pass the class.*

Missed Tests:

Make-up exams are available for students who miss class for an excusable reason (see above). Students should contact me and arrange a mutually convenient time within a week of the student’s return.

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
- The readings for the week should be done by the *beginning of each week*
- ***I reserve the right to amend this syllabus as necessary***

**Class Schedule:**

August 23: Introduction

Go over syllabus; discussion

August 25: Building Freedom and Unfreedom

August 28, 30, September 1: Slavery and the Founding of the Republic

M: Building freedom and unfreedom (cont'd)

W: Slavery and the founding of the Republic

F: **Discussion day**

(*Pillow*, Intro – chapter 2)

September 4

Labor Day – no class

September 6, 8: The Question of Black Humanity

W: “Are they human?”

F: Changing the rules: science, economics and the racial flim flam game

(Read *Trials of Phyllis Wheatley* article; *A Hideous Monster* article – both in public folder)

September 11, 13, 15: Slavery and the Founding of the Republic, Part II

M: Humanity and Revolution

W: “We deserve our freedom”

F: **Discussion Day**

(*Pillow*, chapters 3-4; *African American Voices* article in public folder)

**Reaction Paper #1 due September 15**

September 18, 20, 22: Life and Culture in Antebellum America

M: Black life in the North

W: Institution building

F: Black Religion in the North and South

(William Gravelly, “The Dialectic of Double-Consciousness in Black American Freedom

Celebrations”, *Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 67, no. 4 (Winter 1982) available on JSTOR; *Black Culture and Black Consciousness* – public folder)

September 25, 27, 29: Marking Bodies, Making Racial Difference

M: The Chattel Principle

W: The World the Slaves made

F: **Discussion Day**

(*Soul*, Intro – chapter 3)

October 2, 4, 6: People or Property?

M: Slavery and White Society

W: Life in the shadow of the market

**F: Discussion Day**  
(*Soul*, 4 – Epilogue)

**Reaction Paper #2 due October 6**

October 9, 11: Abolition, War and Beyond

M: Freedom and Respect

W: Who freed the slaves?

(Ira Berlin article – public folder; “Plans dat comed from God” – public folder)

October 13

Midterm exam

October 13 – 17:

Fall break!!

October 18, 20: The Freedom Generation

W: Building freedom from the ground up

F: Life in the post-war era

(*Joy*, Intro – chapter 5; “Ex slaves and the rise of universal education” – public folder)

October 23: “I’ll find a way or make one”

M: Intra-class dynamics and the beginnings of Jim Crow

(*Joy*, chapters 6 – 10)

October 25, 27

No class

October 30, November 1, 3: Jump Jim Crow: The Rise of Racial Apartheid in the U.S.

M: The Rise of Jim Crow

W: Memory and Family

F: The Nationalist response to Jim Crow

(*Jim Crow*, chapters 1 – 3; Marcus Garvey bio – public folder)

**Primary Source Paper due October 30**

November 6, 8, 10: Life Behind the Veil

M: School and Work

W: Resistance to Jim Crow

F: World War Two and the beginnings of the Civil Rights Movement

(*Jim Crow*, 4 – 6; “Wars for Democracy” – public folder)

November 13: Civil Rights – A view from the top

M: The Master Narrative

(*Debating*, 3 – 44, and three documents from pp. 45 – 97)

**Reaction Paper #3 due November 13**

November 15, 17

No class

November 20

M: **Discussion Day**

November 21 – 26

Thanksgiving Day Break

November 27, 29, December 1: Civil Rights – A view from the trenches

M: Groundwork

W: The Rise and Rise of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee

F: “Malcolm v. Martin” and other false dichotomies

(*Debating*, 99 – 136, and all documents)

**Reaction Paper #4 due December 1**

December 4, 6: Contemporary Black America – Where do we go from here?

M: Assessing the modern landscape

W: **Discussion Day**

(John McWhorter article, Charles Payne article – both in public folder)

December 8

Final exam, 1.00PM