

AFR 140-- INTRODUCTION TO AFRICANA STUDIES

Lecture I

Fall, 2020

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▶ Dr. Carl F. Paris

- ▶ My academic expertise: Dance Theory and History, Black Performance, African American History and Culture, and Cultural Studies, including critical theory issues around race, gender, class, and power.
- ▶ My teaching style is grounded in a lecture/dialogic-learning format.
 - A method of teaching in which I use lecturing, discussion, and interactive strategies, designed to draw on what students bring to the issues for a multiplicity of view points.
 - The course is not meant to be difficult. However, there is a fair amount of reading and in-class work. The key to getting a good grade is doing the work to the best of your ability.

THE SYLLABUS

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- ▶ Its content

- ▶ How to approach it

SOME BASIC CONCEPTS



- ▶ What does “Africana” mean?
 - ▶ Having to do with all things African —particularly sub-Saharan Africa— and the African diaspora.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY AFRICANA STUDIES AS A DISCIPLINE?

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- ▶ **African Studies, Africana Studies, Black Studies, African-American Studies or Africology are all inter-related terms.**
- ▶ In US education, Africana Studies is the multidisciplinary field of study of the histories, politics, epistemologies, and cultures of peoples of African origin in Africa and the African diaspora (Azevedo 2005, 6).*

* APA Style in Works Cited page.

Azevedo, M. (2005). *Africana studies: A survey of Africa and the African diaspora* (third edition). Durham NC: Carolina Academic Press.

Key words here are “discipline” and/or “field of study.”

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Although relatively new and still developing as a discipline, Africana Studies has come to be a systematic way to organize and articulate academic thought and practice through intertwining intellectual, social, and metaphysical discourses specific to the Africana experience.

CONTINUED ...



- ▶ As your first reading will explain more fully, there have been various forms of African Studies since the 19th century. However, in the U.S., Black Studies grew most directly out of campus demands made by black students and their supporters, during the mass protest movements and social upheaval of the late 1960s and early 1970s; and, thus, became one of the first of the later twentieth century disciplines to challenge Eurocentric disciplines in the humanities social sciences, culture and the arts.



Terms You Should Know:

- **the cultural** (concerning social behavior and norms),
- **the epistemological** (concerning ways of knowing),
- **the ontological** (concerning ways of being),
- **the existential** (concerning ways of understanding or explaining existence),
- **the axiological** (ways of valuing),
- **the social** (concerning organization of peoples),
- ~~and **the political** (concerning public affairs and government).~~



MORE KEY VOCABULARY

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▶ Black Expressive Cultures

Behavior, beliefs and practices in religion, art, literature, leisure, and play that are specific to Africa and the African Diaspora.

▶ Humanistic

Tending toward philosophical and ethical perspectives that emphasize the value and agency of human beings, individually and collectively, and generally employs critical thinking about and interpretation of human interaction, often challenging established doctrine or faith. Black cultural production tends to be humanistic.

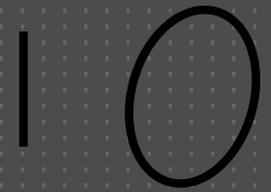
▶ Syncretistic or syncretic

In the context of culture, it is the characteristic of the melding of languages and cultural elements of two or more cultures.

▶ Worldview (*weltanschauung*)

An overall view or conception of life and the world held by an individual or a societal group.

OUR EMPHASIS, SUMMARIZED:



- ▶ In this course we focus on concepts and pivotal historical developments of black thought and practice, including issues of race, religion, culture, education, and politics, which serve as a basis for understanding Africana thought and action.

CONTINUED ...

- ▶ My aim is to expose you to as many concepts, literature and practices in Africana thought as possible, which will enable you to form and articulate your own ideas and arrive at your own conclusions.

A key question, you will answer in the Discussion Board: Why is Africana Studies important in American education? 12

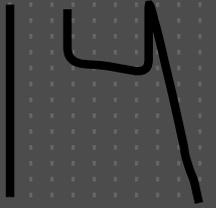
- ▶ Write down a one-to-two sentence answer.
 - ▶ The idea here is to compare your answer with your impressions after the first few readings.

My take: Why is Africana Studies important?

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- ▶ The Africana or African diaspora experience gives us a deeper and much more complete understanding of world history and events, as well as helping African peoples better understand and articulate their collective self and humanity through the education and liberation of their physical and psychological existences and for others to better understand the African/African diaspora experience.

Why Take This Course?



- Write down a reason why other than you just had to?

From My Perspective

- Of course, if you are minoring in Africana Studies, you need this course, both as a requirement and as a base for understanding more advanced areas of Africana inquiry.

But whether minoring or not, this course should help you strengthen your ability to think through complicated concepts and issues in Africana Studies as well make you more fluent in broader cultural and theoretical discourses.

Also, whether you identify as a person of African descent or not, this course should enrich your sense of identity as an American and citizen in a diverse world.

Video

This video is already embedded in learning materials. Video, Africana Studies, Brown University Africana Studies <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48DI8I09nIk>

Secondary video, Africana Studies some interesting points by an Afro-centrist

The Status of Africana Studies part 1

▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?>

▶ [At 5:17 Min.](#)

AN UNDERLYING CONSTRUCT TO THINK ABOUT AS YOU TAKE THIS COURSE AND WRITE YOUR PAPERS : SOCIAL JUSTICE

- ▶ Social justice exists when all people share a common humanity and, therefore, have a right to equitable treatment, support for their human rights, and a fair allocation of community resources.
- ▶ The fair and proper administration of laws conforming to the natural law that all, irrespective of ethnic origin, gender, possessions, race, religion, etc., are to be treated equally and without prejudice (M. Robinson, *Department of Government and Justice Studies, Appalachian State University*, retrieved, August 15, 2014)

HOW TO APPROACH YOUR READING



- ▶ The reading is intended to help us understand the key contours of the field. However, it often contains a lot of information.
- ▶ In order to manage that information, I will try to be as specific as possible about what to concentrate on. But you want to find your own narrative within each reading, by identifying what you see as the main points, and concepts in a way that will help you apply them to the broader aims of the course....

Continued...

This means that, in some cases, we will need to skim the material.

- ▶ For example, you will not need to learn a lot of detailed dates and names, but we will tease out landmark dates, concepts, and individuals, which help you get a solid sense of the “why” and “how” of the Africana experience.

MORE QUESTIONS FOR YOU OPTIONAL TO PUT IN YOUR DISCUSSION BOARD

- ▶ What do you bring to this course, as it relates to previous courses or life experience?
- ▶ What kind of knowledge about the African American experience do you bring to this course?

The End

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