

**COURSE TITLE: Race in Contemporary Society**

**COURSE NUMBER: AFAM 1050**

**SECTION TIMES/DAYS: TBA**

**INSTRUCTOR: FACULTY**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPLE TOPICS:**

With particular emphasis upon the contemporary era (i.e., the 1970's forward), this course primarily follows the struggles and triumphs of African Americans through the various developments and contributions of selected intellectuals, artists and religious leaders. Additionally, the course will acquaint students with the history and struggles of selected other ethnic groups in the U.S. via interdisciplinary and intersectional modalities. We will examine some of the cultural, historical, religious, political and artistic influences which have contributed to the survival and empowerment of selected ethnic groups in American society.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

The successful student will be able to do the following at the end of the course:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the historical trajectory of the African-American freedom struggle
- Demonstrate an appreciation of African-American artistic and religious diversities
- Articulate in clear manner the influences of specific intellectual and religious leaders upon American ethnic minority groups
- Understand the complexities and nuances of discourse on matters of race, identity, culture and society

**PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND: N/A**

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Stacyann Chinn, *The Other Side of Paradise*

**COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS:**

Students can expect to be evaluated via quizzes, 2-3 essay assignments and a final exam.

**COURSE TITLE: Introduction to African American Studies**

**COURSE NUMBER: AFAM 1211**

**SECTION TIMES/DAYS: TBA**

**INSTRUCTOR: FACULTY**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPLE TOPICS:**

This purpose of this course is to provide students with an overview of African American Studies and to familiarize students with significant movements in the intellectual history of the African Diasporic experience. The course will cover important issues such as (but not limited to) enslavement, freedom, justice, citizenship, equality, class, and gender/sexuality politics. Students in this course will become well versed in the myriad of approaches present throughout African American Studies, aware of the seminal debates in disciplinary discourse, and proficient in the inquiry of the African Diasporic experience.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

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

- Describe the African American experience in the United States and the Diaspora during the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century.
- Identify the players and events that allowed for the emergence and maintenance of African American Studies as a discipline in the academy.
- Define and assess theoretical frameworks used within the discipline of African American Studies
- Interrogate the construction and operation of race in an United States context
- Situate contemporary issues facing African Americans within a historic intellectual lineage and framework.
- analyze and evaluate primary and secondary materials
- demonstrate oral & written competency in the analysis of theories and practices

**PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND: None.**

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Books, articles, and films are all through Brightspace & Hannon library

**COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS:**

Short Assignments

Essay

Group Project

**COURSE TITLE:** Black Cultural Arts

**COURSE NUMBERS:** AFAM 2221 – CRN# 40013, & CRN# 40014

**SECTION TIMES/DAYS:** Section 2, 9:55-11:35 MW, in St. Robert's Hall 233  
Section 3, 11:50-1:30 MW, in St. Robert's Hall 233

**INSTRUCTOR:** Bob Myers

**COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS:**

This course investigates not only how art-forms like literature, painting, blues, comedy, and hip-hop emerged, but also how they erupted out of political and existential crises. The philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche argues that “it is the artist’s responsibility to disturb the universe,” because great artwork provokes a time of intense difficulty, trouble, or danger; it even requires a new language in order for us to evaluate it. Most great art reduces us to silence, at first. After James Baldwin, Alice Coltrane, and Toni Morrison, or Jean-Michel Basquiat, and Kendrick Lamar, we have to think and talk differently about the world.

Just as great art demands a new language to express it, even to conceive of it (think of the interventions Pablo Picasso & Jackson Pollock made in Modern Art 🎨), it also causes a crisis because it demands a new context of significance. This course examines how a disavowed person, an “outsider” comes to recognize her own alienation — the confusion, anxiety, pressures, and absurdity which outsiders suffer — and then turns that pain into great art. I would like to build a way to understanding how great art swells-up in an individual, takes-over, and then alters personal, political, cultural, and historical conditions.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

After completing this course, students will be more aware of how art criticism and critical theory help to illuminate the role art plays in our lives, specifically in our politics and culture. Students will be able to perceive how artists take pain and social challenges, and then transmute that domination and trauma into creative projects that build dignity, solidarity, and community.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992)
- Rahel Jaeggi, *Alienation*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016)
- Nathan Asala, *CHAR: A Story Within the Art of Black Culture*, (Self-Published, 2024)

**COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS:**

Attendance is mandatory, and this course is reading intensive, so students should be prepared to discuss the reading earnestly during class sessions.

**COURSE TITLE:** Black Cultural Arts

**COURSE NUMBER:** AFAM 2221

**SECTION DAYS/TIMES:** TBA

**INSTRUCTOR:** FACULTY

**CORE:** FOUNDATIONS – Studies in American Diversity

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

A study of Black American art forms, such as music, dance, theatre, film, television, painting, sculpture and literature as they have developed in the African Diaspora from slavery to the modern age.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

In the broadest sense this course aims to lay a foundation upon which to build a deeper understanding of black cultural arts as well as the evolution and diversity of perspectives in characterizing this dynamic collage of cultural production. In terms of student outcomes this course seeks to provide students with a comprehensive, concise, critical and substantive grasp of the major and relevant sociological theories, concepts, social thinkers, cultural critics and socio-economic/political/historical/cultural dynamics that have and continue to inform and construct black cultural arts.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. Explain and analyze black cultural arts by applying the core concepts and theories covered in class.
2. Analyze and explain the multiple perspectives that underlie debates on important historical and contemporary issues concerning black cultural arts.
3. Know appropriate linkages between African American social relations and black racial formation that have impacted modes of black cultural production.
4. Identify several fundamental issues concerning the role of commerce and race that impact black cultural arts in American society.

**COURSE TEXTS:**

The use of the textbooks are key to establishing the framework by which to engage the range of material. This course, however is lecture intensive and involves committed note taking. In other words the texts are necessary to pass the course, but not sufficient to excel in the course.

**COURSE TITLE:** African American Studies Research Methods

**COURSE NUMBER:** AFAM 2243

**SECTION TIMES/DAYS:** TBA

**INSTRUCTOR:** FACULTY

**COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPLE TOPICS:**

The objective of this course is to introduce students to interdisciplinary research methods in the discipline of African American Studies. African American Studies was founded, in part, to critique the canons and assumptions in traditional disciplines. In the course, students will consider the political, social and cultural underpinnings of research and how scholars in African American Studies have sought to adapt & create various methods and theories to address the needs and interests of marginalized communities. Students will examine theoretical and conceptual issues, techniques for identifying existing research, and methods of collecting data, and evaluating materials.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Upon completion of this course, students will have:

- familiarity with research methodology in African American Studies including ethnography, oral history, archival investigation, and textual analysis.
- Experience designing a research project using one or more of these methods.
- Practiced assessing and selecting appropriate methods for specific questions

**PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND:** None.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Serie McDougal, *Research Methods in Africana Studies*, Peter Lang Inc, New York, NY 2014;

**COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS:**

Class Assignments

Midterm & Final Exam

Term Project

**COURSE TITLE: Black Community Engagement**

**COURSE NUMBER: AFAM 3643.01**

**SECTION TIMES/DAYS: TBA**

**INSTRUCTOR: Faculty**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPLE TOPICS:**

In this course (a major requirement and engaged learning flag), students will actualize the mission of Black Studies within the larger Black community of Los Angeles. They will use their intellectual talents, time, and energy to address the needs of neighbors and organizations. As they share, the students will acquire knowledge and skills that will make them useful to the community. In addition to reading assignments that will provide context for engagement, students will be responsible for oral and written assessments regarding their progress and accomplishments.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Identify key issues of concern and celebration for the Black community
- Recognize impactful and effective organizations and organizers in the community
- Geographically navigate neighborhoods in Los Angeles' Black community
- Use their interdisciplinary training to assess and evaluate community problems
- Work in community, as “men and women for and with others,” to solve problems

**PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND:**

None

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

TBD

**COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS:**

This course will require students to engage Black community leaders and organizations. Students will spend at least 3 hours each week in service to the community. In addition to the reading assignments and designated class meetings, students will be expected to submit bi-weekly reports and a final report of activities.

**COURSE TITLE: American Cinema and Black Representation**

**COURSE NUMBER: AFAM 3623**

**TIMES and SECTIONS: TBA**

**INSTRUCTOR: Dr. A. Nama**

**Description:** In this post-Civil Rights era, African Americans are a part of American culture in ways that reflect not only a high degree of visibility but also extraordinary popularity. Moreover, American cinema has delivered, whether real or fictional, various representations of black people, racial progress and notions of racial pathology. This course examines how Hollywood cinema, has defined the issue of race in American society by offering controversial, entertaining and engaging representations of African Americans. Accordingly, an in-depth exploration of the history and criticism of the Black image in film, the film industry along with issues of audience reception are covered concerning how to critically “read” film for the ideological subtext as well as social and political symbolism. The class is also concerned with connecting the cultural ferment created by the Civil Rights, Black Power Movements of the 1960s and the mainstreaming of Hip-Hop as substantial moments in bringing about many of the changes in the status, role and representation of African Americans in American film.

**Required Textbooks:**

Guerrero, Ed. Framing Blackness: The African American Image in Film, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, PA: 1993.

Hall, Stuart. Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices. Sage. 1997.

**Student Learning Outcomes:**

- ☐ Identify and explain how political-social-historical-cultural factors have influenced and shaped perspectives of the images associated with the African American and fundamental literature, arguments, substantive arguments and critics associated with the intersection of black racial formation in film.
- ☐ Explain debates concerning historical and contemporary representations of African Americans by deconstructing debates/issues associated with negative stereotyping and mass media effects.
- ☐ Through evaluative essays, exams and oral presentations explain the difference between black cultural criticism and other more traditional approaches to examining film, for its encoded ideological message and cultural appeal to race, class, gender and sexual orientation mythologies that often masquerade as common sense or social fact.

**Instructional Methods:**

Lecture/Discussion for the first hour of class followed by a screening of a film, documentary or television show. The following meeting will involve a critical lecture and discussion of the material viewed along with the reading assigned.





**COURSE TITLE:** Social Justice Internship/Research Experience

**COURSE NUMBER:** 3800

**SECTION TIMES/DAYS:** TBA

**INSTRUCTOR:** Faculty

**CORE AREA:** N/A

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

An opportunity to connect the academic side of African American Studies with the black community. Students will work with a community organization or conduct research in the area of African American Studies or Social Justice organizations. Students will complete 60 hours of work with a local organization to work with and in the community they serve. Or, students will be paired with a scholar in African American Studies and/or related field and work on a guided research project. The course will provide mentorship in professional development and graduate and professional school preparation.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. Understand the needs of local communities of color
2. Improve writing and critical thinking skills
3. Create a community outreach plan for continuing this work beyond LMU
4. Develop a policy paper specifically related to the chosen organization
5. Collaborate and connect with local community outreach programs
6. Apply theoretical frameworks to the work being done

**PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND:**

N/A

**REQUIRED LAB FEE:**

TBD

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

N/A

**COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS:**

Complete 60 hours of work at an approved organization

Policy Paper

Community Outreach Plan

**COURSE TITLE:** Rebellion & Mental Health

**COURSE NUMBERS:** AFAM 3998 – CRN# 40021  
HEAS 3998 – CRN# 42553  
SOCL 3998 – CRN# 42709

**SECTION TIMES/DAYS:** 3:40-5:20 MW, in St. Robert's Hall 233

**INSTRUCTOR:** Bob Myers

**COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS:**

Why is it that when people rebel against unjust systems, we get penalized and labeled as “unreasonable” or “crazy” instead of taken seriously? This course explores what it means to “rebel,” to make war against repressive regimes. It focuses on how the urge to say “No!” surges up in the individual, and then becomes contagious in the public mind. I will use philosophy and history to look critically at what happens when our sense of safety gets ruptured: we move from the comfort of solidarity to alienation... and if we can recognize what’s happening, we experience absurdity, confusion, and obstinacy which, taken together, seems like a kind of madness.

This course explores why confusion is ingredient to rebellion; how having the temerity to diagnose what’s wrong with prevailing systems amounts to rejecting the dominant world view and refusing to cooperate with “common sense.” The rebel forces crises in knowing and being. Like great artwork, the rebel's crisis demands a new language in order for us to conceive it. This course examines how saying “No!” to an old order demands a radically new dis-order which has consequences for what we call “mental health.”

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

When students have completed this course, they will be equipped to unpack what “mental health” means, and how it relates to prevailing cultural and political beliefs. Students will have developed a greater appreciation for how individuals relate to society, even when they feel like outsiders. This course will heighten our awareness of what it means to challenge concepts of normalcy while building pathways to dignity.

**PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND:**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

— Jonathan Metzl, *The Protest Psychosis: How Schizophrenia Became a Black Disease*, (New York: Beacon Press, 2011)  
— Rahel Jaeggi, *Alienation*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016)

**COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS:**

Attendance is mandatory, and this course is reading intensive, so students should be prepared to discuss the reading earnestly during class sessions.

**COURSE TITLE: Black Women Playwrights**

**COURSE NUMBER: 3998.01**

**SECTION TIMES/DAYS: MW 1:45-3:25pm**

**INSTRUCTOR: Jalylah Burrell**

**CLASSROOM: University Hall | Room 3222**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course examines plays by Black women in the United States from the 1960s to the present. Plays and critical essays by Alice Childress, Lynn Nottage, Suzan-Lori Parks, Radha Blank, and Zora Howard among others will be engaged alongside key texts in Black theater history and criticism. Topics of emphasis include formal innovation, constructions of identity, international solidarities, uses of comedy, and adaptations to film and television.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

To develop an understanding of key figures, themes, and texts with respect to Black Women and theatrical history in the United States.

To understand how race, gender, and other forms of identity inform the production of and reception of work by Black women playwrights.

To investigate select formal and theoretical innovations present in the work of Black women playwrights and to put them in conversation with histories and traditions from which they have been excluded.

To develop and refine critical thinking and writing skills through in-class participation and writing assignments.

**PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND:**

N/A

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** All course materials are accessible through William H. Hannon Library's holding and are accessible via Brightspace (zero-cost course materials).

**COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS:** This course is reading intensive. Students should come to each class meeting prepared to discuss the texts with precision and insight.

**AFAM 4223 Race in Popular Culture (4 semester hours)**

This course examines how black people have been portrayed in various forms of popular culture and how those portrayals have impacted the race in our society.

**COURSE TITLE:** African American Social Thought

**COURSE NUMBER:** AFAM 4644

**SECTION TIMES/DAYS:** TBA

**INSTRUCTOR:** Faculty

**COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPLE TOPICS:**

This course will discuss African American and African Diaspora social theory from the 20th and 21st centuries. We will engage with theories related to race, gender and sexuality, identity, anti-capitalism, prison abolition, and possibility which have influenced Black social movements. We will read traditional scholarship, while also centering intellectual production from Africana cultural spaces such as homes, spiritual centers, social gathering spaces, and social media. Students will gain a critical understanding of the intellectual labor of Africana people, and how it impacts the social, cultural, and political activities of the Africana community.

**STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

Students will:

- explore key themes, questions, and ideas presented within African, African American, and African Diasporan Intellectual history through reading selected texts.
- learn to think, read, write, and speak critically about the concepts of race, gender, sexuality, class, and nation and explore how these concepts interrelate.
- Understand the breadth and diversity of social and political discourse from a Black Studies perspective
- Synthesize primary and secondary sources about Black intellectuals

**PREREQUISITES/RECOMMENDED BACKGROUND:** None

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** None

**COURSE WORK/EXPECTATIONS:**

Research Papers

Exams