

Fall 2018 | University of North Carolina, Greensboro

Dr. Torren L. Gatson | Email: tlgatson@uncg.edu | MHRA room 1215 | Office: MHRA 2112
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m., and Wednesday by appointment



HIS 213-02: Topic in American History
“The Quest for African American Citizenship throughout American History”
Course Syllabus

Covering the period from arrival to the Black Freedom Struggle, this course hones in on key moments in American history that have shaped and crystallized African Americans quest for citizenship. This course will also expose students to history from a variety of different perspectives, methodologies and approaches. Students will analyze and evaluate scholarly work and position them within the historiography through a series of exams, response papers, and group projects.

American history is too vast a topic to cover every aspect of it from the creation of the colonies to the present. For this reason, we will focus upon several major themes relevant to African American history throughout the semester. Each theme easily weaves into the conversation of citizenship. They are as follows:

- Traditional history and its counter arguments
- Historic conflicts: ethnicity, gender, race, class, and religion
- Slavery
- Emancipation
- Causes and consequences of the Civil War
- Emancipation
- Reconstruction

- Black Freedom Struggle

Course Requirements: The requirements for this course include assigned readings for class, and a mixture of exam and group projects.

Assigned Readings: The readings for the class will consist of a mixture of articles and chapters from various books that speak to the varying themes within the course.

Attendance and Late Policy: Attendance in class is mandatory. The door will close ten minutes after class starts. It is student's responsibility to secure any work or information missed unless the absence was excused prior to class or in the event of a proven emergency. Students are allowed one absence, excused or unexcused, without an impact on their grade. Attendance is worth 30% of your final grade. Attendance is also directly connected to participation. Once you arrive, you should be prepared to engage in class discussion.

Electronic Devices: The use of laptops, tablets, cellular phones, or any other type of electronic device is prohibited during class.

Plagiarism Policy: The University defines plagiarism as intentionally or knowingly "representing the words of another, as one's own in any academic exercise."¹ (See the University's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) for further information.) All sources (books, articles, documents, etc.) used in any paper or assignment must be properly cited or will be considered plagiarism. Any instance of plagiarism will receive a zero and will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for appropriate action, including suspension or expulsion from the University.

Special Needs

If you require accommodations for special learning needs, please do not hesitate to contact the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services, located within the Elliot University Center (334-5440; <http://ods.uncg.edu>)! I will be very receptive to any steps to help make your learning experience more healthy and successful.

Student Learning Outcomes:

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

1. interpret primary sources (including material culture, visual images, oral history, landscapes and others) for cultural and historical meanings;
2. analyze written secondary sources thoughtfully, with attention to argument and point of view;
3. analyze public interpretations of the past—including exhibitions, historic sites, and monuments—with attention to argument, point of view, and historical context;
4. create original interpretations of the past that engage public audiences;
5. write clearly and persuasively; and
6. speak with passion, clarity, and respect over various historical themes.

¹ <http://sa.uncg.edu/dean/academic-integrity/violation/plagiarism/>

Teaching Methods:

This course is combines classroom lecture with regular opportunities for discussion and collective exploration. While primarily set in a lecture style, in addition to learning a body of historical content, we will be exploring how to “read” a variety of cultural texts to glean historical insights. In every class period, time will be reserved for group consideration of historical documents, photographic images, music, or video. Frequently, students will form smaller groups in the classroom to consider a question, an article excerpt, or a primary source.

Assignments and Evaluation:

- **Reader responses: 20%** (due every Tuesday when class is scheduled to meet)

Each week, I will ask you to write a response to the most recent readings and or documents, to assess reading comprehension and to ensure that each student is prepared to participate fully in our in-class discussions. (learning outcomes #1, 2, and 5). Your responses must be at least **TWO typed pages**. These readings will be a combination of a primary source documents and/or readings from the required textbook for the class (text book is primarily for contextual purposes). I will present the new reading material each Thursday.

- **Midterm exam (October 2nd) 30%**

This in-class exam will include an in-class essay. (learning outcomes #1, 3, and 5)

- **Group discussion and breakout sessions (Daily tracking) 10%**

Students are expected to engage in classroom discussion and any group interactive learning exercises.

- **Final paper (Due last day of class) 40%**

Students will write a 10 page paper examining the ideal of “Citizenship” as it relates to African Americans in America. Students will use the various course readings and primary documents to clearly articulate and answer the following questions:

- 1) If African Americans ever truly received full exercise of the rights of citizenship.
- 2) Compare and contrast a historical document of either human or civil rights for African Americans with current event of American political, social, or religious connection. (as they relate to persons of color)
- 3) Create an argument around use of the word “citizenship” and if it best represents The African American experience in America.

Grading scale:

A=93-100, A-=90-92, B+=87-89, B=83-86, B-=80-82, C+=77-79, C=73-76, C-=70-72, D+=67-69, D=63-66, D-=60-62, F=59 and below

Required Text:

Available at the UNCG bookstore:

Hine Clarke, Darlene, William C. Hine and Stanley C. Harrold. *African Americans a Concise History, 5th Edition*, 2013.

E-reserves: In addition to the required text, discussions for each class session will also draw on required primary source readings and articles. All of these materials are on electronic reserve on Canvas.

Semester Outline/Calendar:

Week 1

August 14th Brief course overview and review of syllabus

August 16th **No class**,
first “reader response” will be due the following Tuesday (August 21st)

Week 2

August 21st Slavery and the Constitutional Convention: Historical perspectives. (1787)

August 23rd David Walkers Appeal and the African American perspective of slavery and America. (1829)

Week 3

August 28th Living Free in Fear: examining the Fugitive Slave Act and its impact, meaning and ramifications on free people of color. (1850)

August 30th Frederick Douglass, “What of the Negro and the 4th of July.” (1852)

Week 4

September 4th Charles Lenox Remond, “An Anti-Slavery Discourse.” (1857)

September 6th 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution and responses by Jamal Greene and Jennifer Mason McAward. (1865)

Week 5

September 11th Unpacking the 14th Amendment to the united Stated Constitution

September 13th The Civil Rights Act of 1866.

Week 6

September 18th Booker T. Washington, “Atlanta Exposition,” examining reconstruction and the false promise of a new America. (1895)

September 20th I, Too, Am America. Framing African American identity during the early twentieth century.

Week 7

September 25th Martin Luther King “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” (1963)

September 27th John Lewis “Original drafted Speech on behalf of SNCC.” (March on Washington, 1963)

Week 8

October 2nd **MID TERM EXAM**

October 4th **No class**

Week 9

October 9th **No class, Fall Break**

October 11th Freedom School students, Palmers crossing (Declaration of Independence) Hattiesburg, Mississippi. (1964)

Week 10

October 16th Fannie Lou Hammer “Say it Plain” speech at Democratic National Convention (DNC) (1964)

October 18th 1966- Stokely Carmichael “Call for Black Power” (1966)

Week 11

October 23rd **When the truth hits close to home, UNCG and its struggle for equality. Erin Lawrimore, University archivist**

October 25th **No class**

Week 12

October 30th Will the fight? Should They Fight? African Americans in Time of War

November 1st They tell me I am a citizen, but I Can’t Vote! (Voting Rights Act of 1965)

Week 13

November 6th Stranger at Home...James Baldwin and what it means to be an American

November 8th A House is not a Home: home ownership and African American Identity

Week 14

November 13th Watch the documentary “Black Power Mixtape”

November 15th "Music, Identity, and new Technology” (Herman S. Gray)

Week 15

November 20th **No class** (time designed for preparation of articulate and well-developed final papers)

November 22nd **No class, Thanksgiving**

Week 16

November 27th **LAST DAY OF CLASS, Final papers due**

Papers are due at the beginning of class

Any information found within this syllabus (i.e. assignments, due dates or instructions) is subject to change at the discretion of the professor