

Spring 2019 | University of North Carolina, Greensboro  
Dr. Torren L. Gatson | Email: [tlgatson@uncg.edu](mailto:tlgatson@uncg.edu) |  
School of Education Bldg. room 202 | Office: MHRA 2112  
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 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.

Special Note\* Students, **DO NOT** draft emails in CANVAS. Please send all emails directly from your UNCG designated account directly to my email listed above. My Failure to respond to any email sent to CANVAS will not result in the correction or deliberation of any academic related process.

**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."<sup>1</sup> (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;

---

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

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.

### **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 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 2<sup>nd</sup>) 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:

White, Deborah Gray, Mia Bay and Waldo E. Martin Jr. *Freedom on My Mind, Vol. 2, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, 2016.

**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**

January 15<sup>th</sup> Brief course overview and review of syllabus

January 17<sup>th</sup> **Frist Reader Response Due**,

“reader response” discussion on proper research and writing style

**Week 2**

January 22<sup>nd</sup> Slavery and the Constitutional Convention: Historical perspectives. (1787)

January 24<sup>th</sup> David Walkers Appeal and the African American perspective of slavery and America. (1829)

**Week 3**

January 29<sup>th</sup> Living Free in Fear: examining the Fugitive Slave Act and its impact, meaning and ramifications on free people of color. (1850)

January 31<sup>st</sup> Frederick Douglass, “What of the Negro and the 4<sup>th</sup> of July.” (1852)

**Week 4**

February 5<sup>th</sup> Charles Lenox Remond, “An Anti-Slavery Discourse.” (1857)

February 7<sup>th</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution and responses by Jamal Greene and Jennifer Mason McAward. (1865)

**Week 5**

February 12<sup>th</sup> Unpacking the 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the united Stated Constitution

February 14<sup>th</sup> The Civil Rights Act of 1866.

### **Week 6**

February 19<sup>th</sup> Booker T. Washington, “Atlanta Exposition,” examining reconstruction and the false promise of a new America. (1895)

February 21<sup>st</sup> I, Too, Am America. Framing African American identity during the early twentieth century.

### **Week 7**

February 26<sup>th</sup> Martin Luther King “Letter from a Birmingham Jail.” (1963)

February 28<sup>th</sup> John Lewis “Original drafted Speech on behalf of SNCC.” (March on Washington, 1963)

### **Week 8**

March 5<sup>th</sup> **No class, Spring Break, RELAX**

March 7<sup>th</sup> **No class, Spring Break, Prepare for your midterm**

### **Week 9**

March 12<sup>th</sup> **MID TERM EXAM**

March 14<sup>th</sup> Freedom School students, Palmers crossing (Declaration of Independence) Hattiesburg, Mississippi. (1964)

### **Week 10**

March 19<sup>th</sup> Fannie Lou Hammer “Say it Plain” speech at Democratic National Convention (DNC) (1964)

March 21<sup>st</sup> **When the truth hits close to home, UNCG and its struggle for equality. Erin Lawrimore, University archivist**

### **Week 11**

March 26<sup>th</sup> 1966- Stokely Carmichael “Call for Black Power” (1966)

March 28<sup>th</sup> **No class**

### **Week 12**

April 2<sup>nd</sup> Will the fight? Should They Fight? African Americans in Time of War

April 4<sup>th</sup> They tell me I am a citizen, but I Can’t Vote! (Voting Rights Act of 1965)

**Week 13**

April 9<sup>th</sup> Stranger at Home...James Baldwin and what it means to be an American

April 11<sup>th</sup> A House is not a Home: home ownership and African American Identity

**Week 14**

April 16<sup>th</sup> James Baldwin Documentary, "I am not your Negro"

April 18<sup>th</sup> James Baldwin Documentary, "I am not your Negro" continuation

**Week 15**

April 23<sup>rd</sup> "Music, Identity, and new Technology" (Herman S. Gray)

April 25<sup>th</sup> **No class** (time designed for preparation of articulate and well-developed final papers)

**Week 16**

April 30<sup>th</sup> **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\*\*