

**SYLLABUS  
HTS 3024-A**

**INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY**

Fall Semester 2006  
Dr. Eleanor Alexander  
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Class Meets: Tuesday & Thursday 9:35 to 10:55 pm  
Room: 207  
Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday @8:30-9:30 a. m.  
11:00-12:00 p.m , and by appointment  
Office: D. M. Smith Building, Room 207

**COURSE STATEMENT**

This course surveys the uniqueness of African-American life through recurring themes in the African-American experiences of yesteryear and today. Included are the impact of Africa, slavery and the Civil War on African Americans; free African American communities before the Civil War; self-determination and resistance to racism; and the social and economic realities of racism.

The study of African-American history is actually the study of several histories that were shaped by many factors. It is a history of competing narratives. For example, those opposing slavery found little or no good in the institution, while many slave owners supported it with Biblical, social, and "scientific" theories. African American history is a matter of interpretation that is dependent on the participant's views and socialization. Moreover, it is a story of what scholars have, or have not written about African Americans, for this too aided in shaping the image of African descendants in this nation in the eyes of the world. Image is a contributing factor to the African-American experience.

This course then is a critical examination of African-American history from several points of view.

**COURSE GOALS**

1. To stimulate an interest in African-American history.
2. To develop an understanding of how the lives of 17th, 18th and 19th-century [African] Americans influence the lives of [African] Americans today
4. To expose students to some of the diverse social thoughts and policies that shaped the African-American experience
5. To expose students to the historian's tools of primary and secondary materials through assigned readings
6. To impress upon students the importance of interrogating data through the assignment of often conflicting narratives
7. To improve oral and cognitive skills of students by engaging them in informed discussions of course reading materials

### **COURSE FORMAT**

This course consists mainly of lectures with ten minutes at the end of each period for questions and discussion. However, students are encouraged to interrupt the lectures at any point with questions or discussion topics.

### **HONOR CODE**

Students at Georgia Tech adopted the honor system. Therefore, cheating in any form is prohibited and will not be tolerated in this class. **When this is detected, a “ZERO” GRADE is given for the assignment.**

### **CLASS ROOM COURTESY**

This class begins **ON TIME. At 9:35 I shall close the door and/or begin my lecture. You may not enter after that time. If you attempt to do so I shall ask you to leave.**

Also, eating and drinking are not allowed during class time, neither are casual conversations during lectures or classroom discussions.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

This is not a difficult class, for you already possess the skills necessary to excel. You know how to read, think, and speak. This course hones these skills through an exploration of African American history.

**I. ATTENDANCE AND LATENESS.** There are penalties for coming to class late and/or being absent without a valid excuse more than three times. You may enter class late and/or be absent only three times without penalty. **PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS APPLIES TO A COMBINATION OF LATE ENTRIES AND ABSENCES, OR ONE OR THE OTHER. ON THE FOURTH ABSENCE AND/OR LATE ENTRY, YOUR SEMESTER GRADE IS DROPPED BY TEN POINTS.**

**II. THERE ARE FOUR IN-CLASS BOOK QUIZZES** on the following texts and related class lectures. Don't worry. These are small books.

Douglass, Frederick. Narrative of the Life of Frederick

Equiano, Olaudah. The Life of Olaudah Equinox

Jacobs, Harriet. Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl

Mintz, Steven. African American Voices

Wilson, Harriet. Our Nig: Sketches from the Life of a Free Black

**III. YOU WILL ALSO WRITE A CIVIL WAR HISTORY.** Your source will be newspapers published during the era. Choose at least one; however, you may choose several different ones if you wish. Read a newspaper on the day and month of your birthday for the years 1861 through 1865. This means you will have at least five articles (one from each year) from which you write your **FIVE PAGE ESSAY** on the Civil War and/or African Americans during that time. **DO NOT COPY WHAT YOU SEE WORD FOR WORD.** Instead, discuss the articles, relating them to your knowledge of the Civil War era.

Attach to your essay photocopies of the newspaper articles. Write on each the name of the newspaper—it must be underlined—and its date. Also include on the front page of your essay the name of the newspaper (underlined), and the dates of these

papers. **I WILL NOT ACCEPT LATE PAPERS! ALSO, I DO NOT GIVE MAKE-UP WORK, NOR DO I GIVE ASSIGNMENTS FOR EXTRA CREDIT!**

The Civil War assignment and all quizzes are weighted equally in determining your semester grade.

**IV. Your CLASS ROOM PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSIONS is Also A COURSE REQUIREMENT.**

### **CLASS TEXT**

Hine, Darlene Clark. The African-American Odyssey. Second Edition, Vol. I

### **ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE**

1. September 7: Book Quiz I -The Life of Olaudah Equiano, and African American Voices, p. 48-83, & related class notes
2. October 12: Book Quiz II-- Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, Written By Himself and African American Voices, p. 93-13, & related class notes
3. October 19: Book Quiz III—Incidents on the Life of a Slave Girl and African American Voices, 119-124; 159-161; 164-167; 169-171, & related class notes
4. November 2: Quiz IV: Our Nig & related class notes
5. Final examination day: Essay on the Civil War

### **READING AND LECTURE SCHEDULE**

Week 1            **Beginning August 22**

Hines, Chapter 1: "Africa"

#### **Lectures:**

Introduction to Course  
Atlantic Origins of Slavery  
African Life  
Slavery in African Life



Discrimination, Subordination, Segregation  
 The Federal Government and Free People  
 of Color  
 The Foundations of Caste  
 Gabriel Prosser

Week 7

**Beginning October 3**

Hines, Chapter 6: "Life in the Cotton Kingdom"

**Lectures:**

The Slave Family  
 Insanity Among Slaves  
 Slave Culture  
 Plantation Realities  
 Slave Stereotypes  
 Physicians and Slaves

Week 7

**\*\*DOCUMENTARY FILM: Frederick Douglas: Continued**

When the Lion Wrote History

Week 8

**Beginning October 10**

**OCTOBER 12: Book Quiz II --Narrative of  
 the Life of Frederick Douglass and African American  
 Voices, p. 98-138, & related lecture notes**

Hine, Chapter 7: "Free Black People in Antebellum  
 America"

**Lectures:**

Slave Women  
 Free People of Color: Coping With Urban Life  
 Free People of Color: Urban Education  
 Free People of Color: Community  
 Organizations  
 Kidnapping Free People of Color  
 Phillis Wheatley

Week 9:

**Beginning October 17**

**OCTOBER 17—HOLIDAY**

**BOOK QUIZ III- Incidents in the Life of a  
 Slave Girl [October 19] & related class  
 notes**

Week 10

**Beginning October 24**

**\*\*VIDEO—SOLOMON NORTHRUP: Twelve  
 Years a Slave**

Hine, Chapter 8: "Opposition to Slavery, 1800-  
 1833"

**Lectures**

Slave Rebellions

Denmark Vesey Rebellion  
 Nat Turner's Rebellion  
 Runaway Slaves

Week 11

**Beginning October 31**  
**NOVEMBER 2--BOOK QUIZ IV—OUR NIG**  
**& related notes on free people of**

**color**

Hine, Chapter 9: "Let Resistance Be Your Motto"

**Lectures:**

Colonization  
 African American Abolitionists  
Amistad Incident  
Creole Uprising  
 The Fugitive Slave in Canada

Week 11  
 Continued

Week 12

**Beginning NOVEMBER 7**

Hine, Chapter 10: "And Black People Were At the  
 Heart of It: The U.S. Disunites Over  
 Slavery"

**\*\* Documentary Video: John Brown's Holy War**

**Lectures:**

Secession  
 The Southern Church and Confederate  
 Morale  
 Should the Northern States Let the South Go?  
 Was the Civil War About Slavery?

Week 13

**Beginning November 14**

Hine, Chapter 11: "Liberation: African Americans  
 and the Civil War"

Lectures:

Battle Cries and Freedom Songs  
 Frederick Douglass and the Civil War  
 Were There African American Confederate  
 Soldiers?

Week 14

**Beginning November 21**

Hine, Chapter 11: "Liberation: African Americans  
 and the Civil War"

**Lectures:**

African American Men and the Civil War  
 Families of Free Men of Color During the  
 Civil War  
 Was the Emancipation Proclamation a

Worthless Act?  
How Blacks and Whites Reacted to the  
Emancipation Proclamation

Week 15

**Beginning November 28**

Hine, Chapter 12: "The Meaning of Freedom: The  
Promise of Reconstruction"

Week 15  
Continued

**Lectures:**

Slaves Confront Emancipation  
African American Women and Emancipation  
The Freedmen's Bureau  
African Americans in Public Office  
During Reconstruction  
The School Marms

Week 16

**Beginning December 5**

Hine, Chapter 13: "The Meaning of Freedom:  
The Failure of Reconstruction"

**Lectures:**

Political Reconstruction  
African Americans in Public Office  
During Reconstruction  
Black Codes  
The Convict-Lease System  
The Ku Klux Klan

Week 17

**Finals Week. Essay on the Civil War due on day of final.**