Carleton University
Winter 2018
Department of English/Department of History

ENGL 3702B/HIST 3907A: American Culture/Transnational History

Prerequisites (ENGL 3702): third-year standing or permission of the department
Prerequisites (HIST 3907): a 2000-level history course or third-year standing and 1.0 credit in History
Precludes additional credit for ENGL 3703 (no longer offered)

Tuesday 11:25-2:25
Please confirm location on Carleton Central

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Black Freedoms: African American Culture from Abolition to Black Lives Matter

This course explores the demand for black freedom that courses through U.S. culture from the movement to abolish slavery in the mid-nineteenth century to the present day, and places this long struggle for justice and equality in a global and transnational context. Throughout, we will pay particular attention to the politics and poetics of black intellectuals, artists, and activists who have shaped the modern world by resisting forms of racial hierarchy and violence. Topics that will be explored in the course include: the marketing and reading of slave narratives; anti-lynching crusades and the visual archive of mob violence; contested memories of the transatlantic slave trade and imperialism; the relationship between anti-colonialism, surrealism and existentialism; Black Consciousness Movements and Afrofuturism; the place of sex, love, and desire in discourses of liberation; and current struggles against mass incarceration and police brutality.

Please note that this course outline is provisional and that readings and viewing for the course may change in the months ahead.

Assignments and Evaluation: Your grade will be based on a social media assignment (20%); take-home exam (30%); timeline project (30%); class participation (attendance, discussion, brief writing assignments; 20%).

Week 1 **Introduction**

Week 2 **Independence and Equality**

Thomas Jefferson, "The Declaration of Independence" (1776) and excerpts from "Notes on the State of Virginia" (1787)
Phillis Wheatley, "On Being Brought from Africa to America" (1773)
David Walker, "Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World" (1829)

Week 3 **Narrating Emancipation**
Frederick Douglass, "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass" (1845)
Abraham Lincoln, "Emancipation Proclamation" (1863), "To Albert Hodges" (1864), "Second Inaugural Address" (1865)
Anonymous, "John Brown's Body" (1961)
Julia Ward Howe, "Battle Hymn of the Republic" (1862)

Week 4 **'Crusades for Justice': Race Women and Intellectual Thought**
Selected readings from Ida B Wells, *Southern Horrors and Other Writings; The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 1996).
Selected readings from Ida B Wells, 'Ida B. Wells Abroad'
Columns from the *Daily Inter Ocean Newspaper* (written between April 9, 1894, and July 7, 1894). Available in Michelle Duster, *Ida from Abroad* (Chicago: Northwestern University, 2010).
Eric Lott, 'A Strange and Bitter Spectacle,' *First of the Month.*

Week 5 **Omni-American Art**
Selected readings from W.E.B. Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk* (1903).
Selected readings from J.A. Rogers, *From Superman to Man* (1917).
George Schuyler, 'Negro Art-Hokum' (1926).
Langston Hughes, 'The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain' (1929).
Looking for Langston (dir. Isaac Julien, 1989).

Week 6 **Love and Family: Early Civil Rights**
Brown vs. Board of Education (1954)
James Baldwin, "Notes of a Native Son" (1955)
*Langston Hughes, "Mother to Son" (1922), "Weary Blues," (1932), "Song for a Dark Girl" (1927), "Silhouette" (1949)
*Gwendolyn Brooks, "A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi, Meanwhile, a Mississippi Mother Burns Bacon" (1960), "The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till" (1960)
*John Edgar Wideman, "The Killing of Black Boys" (1997)

Week 7 **Marching On**
Martin Luther King, Selected Speeches
Ava DuVernay, "Selma" (2014)

Week 8 **"This is a struggle for Human Rights not civil rights"**
Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).
Frantz Fanon, "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness" (ch. 3 from *The Wretched of the Earth*).
Selected readings from Malcolm X and Alex Haley, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Ballantine Books, 2015.

Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin, *Detroit: I Do Mind Dying: A Study in Urban Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1998), 9-68.
Black Panthers, *Ten-Point Program*
Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like* (especially 5, 'Black Souls in White Skins'; 6, 'We Blacks'; 9, 'The Definition of Black Consciousness'; 11, 'White Racism and Black Consciousness'; 14, 'Black Consciousness and the Quest for a true Humanity'; 15, 'What is Black Consciousness?')

Week 9 **Freedom Embodied**
Toni Morrison, **Sula** (1973)

Week 10 **The Resistance: Hip Hop and Black popular culture**
Armond White, 'Introduction,' *The Resistance* (New York: Overlook Press, 1995).
Armond White, 'White on Black,' *Film Comment*, November/December 1984.
Armond White, 'Apartheid Chic,' *Film Comment*, November/December 1987.
Armond White, 'Hollywood Burning,' *The City Sun*, March 8 1989.
bell hooks, 'Cool Cynicism' (1996)
Armond White, 'See Quentin Kill' (2003)
Armond White, 'The Wall Came Tumbling Down,' *New York Press*, May 18, 2004.
Armond White, 'The Pursuit of Crappyness,' *New York Press*, July 9, 2008.
'Has Black music declined?' *Thinking Allowed*, BBC Radio 4 (2010)
Armond White, 'Rihanna's True Confession: A Pop Star's Music Video Rebellion,' *City Arts*, February 9, 2012
Carrie Mae Weems, 'The Power of Your Vote' and 'The Obama Project'
Armond White, 'Paying Attention to Black Lives,' *National Review*, July 24, 2015.

Week 11 **Black Lives Matter**
Spike Lee, "When the Levees Broke, Act I" (2006)
Black Lives Matter, *Campaign Zero*
Raoul Martinez, *Creating Freedom: Power, Control and the Fight for our Future* (Canongate, 2016). Chapters 7 ('Media') and 8 ('Creativity').
George Yancy and Paul Gilroy, 'What 'Black Lives' Means in Britain,' *New York Times*, October 1, 2015.
'Who are the Slaves Now?' *Under the Skin with Russell Brand and Paul Gilroy* (2017)

Week 12 **Freedom Then, and Freedom Now**
James Baldwin, TBA
Raoul Peck, "I Am Not Your Negro" (2016)