

History 3620
African-American History, 1500-1877
Southern Utah University

Fall 2009	3 Credit Hours	Dr. Earl Mulderink
Office Hours: TR, 10-11:30; 1:30-2:30	MC 110	mulderink@suu.edu
Centrum 225	TR @ 11:30 AM	435/865-8323

Course Description

This course examines the historical experiences of African-Americans and their contributions to United States history from the seventeenth century to the era of Reconstruction. Significant topics include the development and consequences of slavery, the creation and evolution of African-American culture, and African-Americans' persistent efforts to combat racism. One goal of this course is to present a clear chronology of events and explain their historical significance. Equally important, this course emphasizes the many ways in which the study of history demands imagination and critical thinking. History is, above all, the *interpretation* of past human interactions and their consequences, and you will be encouraged to develop your analytical and communication skills through this introduction to the study of the African-American past.

There are no pre-requisites for this class and there are no scheduled examinations. History 3620 will offer a variety of active learning exercises and opportunities, including movies, primary sources, lectures, and discussions. Successful completion of this course will provide a strong foundation in United States history and will help meet degree requirements. Some students may use this course to complete a "diversity" requirement expected for graduate and professional school applications. In the end, it is hoped that all students acquire greater appreciation, understanding, and respect for the rich and complex history of African-Americans within the broader context of American history.

Required Reading Assignments

Your course reading assignments require you to purchase, read, and reflect upon several books available at the SUU Bookstore. All readings are required, and each week's assignment should be read prior to the first class session each week. Other materials may be distributed, too.

- Darlene Hine et al, *The African-American Odyssey*, Vol. I, Fourth edition pref. (2008)
- Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Written by Himself*, Second ed., edited by Robert J. Allison (2007)
- Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Second ed., edited by David W. Blight (2003)

Examinations, Assignments, and Grading

Your grade will be computed as follows:

- Paper on Olaudah Equiano's *Interesting Narrative* (4-5 pages) 20%

- Paper on Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative* (4-5 pages) 20%
- Individual Project (your choice of format plus oral presentation) 20%
- Critical Movie Review (2-3 pages; highest grade counts) 10%
- Critical Web Site Evaluation (2-3 pages; highest grade counts) 10%
- Reading Journal 10%
- Participation, Attendance, Other 10%

The grading scale is based on the following: 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, 0-59.

This course features a number of assignments that provide variety and develop different skills. All written papers submitted for this course should be typed, double-spaced, and follow the standard rules of grammar, punctuation, and English usage. Always aim to write in your own words, but if you wish to quote from course materials, simply place all quoted material in quotation marks and add a page reference in parentheses at the end of that sentence. Try to avoid block quotes of excessive length. Late papers will receive a penalty of at least one full letter grade (10 points).

All written paper assignments should be submitted to turnitin.com, as explained in a separate handout. For the two paper assignments on Equiano and Douglass, respectively, you are allowed to “revise and resubmit” your paper within one week of its return to you. If your revised paper merits a higher grade, that grade will count toward 20% of your final grade. For the movie review and web site evaluation assignments, you can submit more than one review with the highest grade counting toward 10% of your final grade. Each submission must be entirely new. The reading journal will be graded on a pass/fail basis, as explained in more detail below.

Students are expected to submit original and independent work. *Plagiarism -- using the work or words of another individual without proper attribution -- is a serious academic offence and will be treated accordingly with a failing grade.* Plagiarism may include using printed materials and electronic sources without acknowledging their use. Please cite all information taken from the Internet, using at least the URL address for Web sites (e.g., “http://www.suu.edu.”).

Written Paper Assignment on Olaudah Equiano’s Interesting Narrative (4-5 pages) – 20%

Please write and submit a paper of 4- to 5-pages in length (typed, double-spaced) that answers the following questions:

How does Olaudah Equiano define himself? Is he African? Is he European? How would you define him?

All information and details should be drawn from the full text, and you are neither expected nor encouraged to use sources other than those required in History 3620. The Bedford Series version of this book is the only one you will need. If you wish to integrate quoted material from the *Interesting Narrative* into your paper, avoid lengthy block quotations. No footnotes or endnotes are needed, but quotations should include quotation marks and page references in parentheses. **This paper is due to turnitin.com before the start of class on Thursday, September 10, at 11:30 AM.**

Written Paper Assignment on Frederick Douglass's Narrative (4-5 pages) – 20%

Please write and submit a paper of 4- to 5- pages in length (typed, double-spaced) that answers the following questions:

Was Frederick Douglass a “typical” slave? Why or why not?

All information and details should be drawn from the full text, and you are neither expected nor encouraged to use sources other than those required in History 3620. The Bedford Series version of this book is the only one you will need. If you wish to integrate quoted material from Douglass's *Narrative* into your paper, avoid lengthy block quotations. No footnotes or endnotes are needed, but quotations should include quotation marks and page references in parentheses. **This paper is due to turnitin.com before the start of class on Thursday, October 15, at 11:30 AM.**

Critical Movie Review (10%)

We will watch several historical documentary movies in History 3620, all of them centered on the experiences of African-Americans. For this written assignment, you are to watch, review, and write about one movie that is due no later than one week after that movie was shown in class. Each review is to be submitted to turnitin.com in an appropriate format. And, here's a kicker: **You must submit at least one movie review by the end of Week 12, Friday, November 13, by 5 PM.** Earlier submissions are welcome.

This assignment is challenging, and please note that you have the option of reviewing more than one movie with the lowest grade(s) dropped. Your single (best) review is worth 10% of your final grade. If you have written about or reviewed one or more of these movies for a previous class, please see me to discuss your options. Or, if you want to watch other movies outside of class, including feature films, just ask. If you opt to submit one or more additional movie reviews, please do so before the end of classes in Week 15.

Your reviews — typed, double-spaced, and no more than three (3) pages in length — should **explain and analyze** the following issues in each movie:

- Title of movie and other production information?
- Theme(s) of documentary?
- Major source(s) and evidence used in movie?
- Any unusual idea(s), material(s), and argument(s)?
- Broader themes of American history raised — or not — in movie?
- “Thumbs up” or “thumbs down”?

You are encouraged to follow the format and outline above in preparing your review that should be written and submitted as a coherent essay with specific details drawn from the movie. Watch these carefully-chosen historical documentaries with keen eyes and ears, and then detail your observations in a critical review that addresses all the points listed above. Note that the word “critical” does not necessarily mean “negative.” Plan to write a review that analyzes the movie as a source of historical information.

Web Site Evaluation (10%)

There is a proliferation of excellent history-related web sites available on the internet. This assignment asks that you critically evaluate one relevant web site in a written review of no more than three (3) pages, typed and double-spaced. The web site should fall within the scope of this course, that is, African-American history between 1500 and 1877. As suggested in additional handouts, your evaluation of a chosen web site will share similarities with a critical book or movie review. For example, your review should examine aspects of the web site from at least the following four (4) categories: 1) authority and accuracy; 2) purpose and content; 3) currency; 4) design, organization, and ease of use. Of course, you are encouraged to range beyond these guidelines to assess other aspects of the web site, such as its aesthetic appeal, its incorporation of unique technologies, or its standing within the field of digital history.

Because this assignment is challenging, you are free to submit more than one web site evaluation with the highest grade counting toward 10% of your final grade in History 3620. The written web site evaluation should be submitted to turnitin.com. **You are to submit a required web site evaluation no later than the end of Week 6, Friday, October 2, by 5 PM.** If you opt to submit one or more additional web site reviews, please do so before the end of classes in Week 15. Earlier submissions are welcome.

Individual Project and Oral Presentation (20%)

Each student is required to create an Individual Project that relates to some aspect of African-American history up to 1877. You have great latitude in selecting a topic and focus, but please seek suggestions (and approval) from the instructor, preferably by the end of Week 5. You will find that the textbook and companion resources provide lots of ideas and materials for potential projects. Probably the best way to approach this project is to ask: ***What topic (or issue or person or event) in African-American history do I want to know more about?***

You will be pursuing independent research through print and electronic resources to explore your chosen topic, to be completed in a format appropriate to your skills and interests. While these projects should demonstrate a sound reliance upon the course text(s) and web site, you are free to bring in outside materials through the internet or other external sources, including scholarly books and articles. All sources and materials should be acknowledged in your Individual Project.

Ideally, your Individual Project will be submitted in one of four formats:

- PowerPoint slideshow with rich content and audiovisual materials
- Web page(s) with rich content, audiovisual materials, and appropriate links
- “Mini-documentary” movie in a digitized format with rich content and audiovisual materials
- 6-8 page written paper (typed, double-spaced) with rich content, suitable resources, and appropriate citations (and submitted to turnitin.com)

If you have ideas for other formats, please ask. The primary aim here is for you to investigate some aspect of African-American history and choose the best way to showcase your skills and knowledge. Feel free to be imaginative in examining these topics and formats, and please find a focus that truly interests and inspires you!

During the second half of the semester, all students will present their findings to the class through scheduled oral presentations of “work-in-progress.” A typical presentation should be about 15 minutes in length, leaving time for questions or comments from the audience. A sign-up sheet will be circulated so everyone knows in advance the dates of their presentation. Each presenter should aim for high-quality content in a presentation marked by effectiveness, clarity, and enthusiasm. Confidential and brief evaluations by audience members will be shared with each presenter to enhance the project prior to its final submission.

Please note that the final version of your Individual Project is due on Tuesday, December 8, between 1 and 2:50 PM, the time that our class is scheduled for a Final Exam. Please submit a print copy of the project, along with an electronic version on a CD, DVD, flash drive, or as an email attachment. These media will be returned to you upon request.

Reading Journal (10%)

All students are expected to write at least one short evaluation for each chapter of *The African-American Odyssey* (Chapters 1-13 inclusive). This work will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis and should be submitted as a Word document to turnitin.com no later than Tuesday, December 8, at 3 PM. You have much latitude in writing your entries, but mainly you should demonstrate that you read and understood the course material. You may want to highlight a topic, person, or issue that you found intriguing in the chapter, or perhaps you want to discuss what you learned about African-American history that was new or surprising to you. This journal exercise is designed to be a low-key way of helping you to stay up with the reading and to learn most effectively.

This assignment is prompted by my concern that the lack of examinations removes an obvious incentive for reading an excellent textbook. In my opinion, *The African-American Odyssey* is by far the best textbook in this field, and I want you learn from and with it. In general, try to write at least a full page (300 words or so) for each chapter, so by the end of the semester, you will have generated thirteen (13) or more pages of commentary if you read every chapter. To “pass” this assignment, your journal should show convincingly that you read all thirteen (13) chapters. Because this is a Pass/Fail evaluation, the only grades will be 100 (pass) or 0 (fail). Obviously, a failing grade of 0 will be detrimental to your final grade in this class. **Your Reading Journal should be submitted to turnitin.com by Tuesday, December 8, by 3 PM.**

Course Participation, Attendance, Other (10%)

Because of the number of students and format of this course, your active participation is expected and encouraged. Students are expected to arrive at classes in a timely manner, and attendance is expected for all class sessions. If you plan to be absent, particularly in the case of serious illness, please try to inform your instructor in advance. Your instructor reserves the right to take attendance and to require additional work as needed, and you may be asked read additional materials distributed in class. Work submitted late will be subjected to penalties of at least one letter grade (10 points).

When In Doubt, Ask!

If you have questions about your progress in History 3620 or remain unclear about course assignments or materials, please do not hesitate to ask. You have several ways to contact me at any time. First and most obviously, feel free to ask pertinent questions before, during, or after class periods. Or, you can visit during my office hours in Centrum 225 or call me directly at 435/865-8323. If my office hours are not convenient, we can meet at other times that are mutually agreeable. Finally, I encourage you to communicate through email whenever possible; my email address is: mulderink@suu.edu.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will be prosecuted to the fullest extent. You are expected to have read and understood the current issue of the student handbook (published by Student Services) regarding student responsibilities and rights, and the intellectual property policy, for information about procedures and about what constitutes acceptable on-campus behavior.

STUDENT DISABILITY NOTICE

Students with medical, psychological, learning or other disabilities desiring academic adjustments, accommodations or auxiliary aids will need to contact the Southern Utah University Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), in Room 206F of the Sharwan Smith Center or phone (435) 865-8022. SSD determines eligibility for and authorizes the provision of services.

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

Information contained in this syllabus, other than the grading, late assignments, makeup work, and attendance policies, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.

- Week 1 Read Hine et al, *The African-American Odyssey* (Hine), Preface and Chapter 1; explore publisher's web site (if available).
 8/25 (T) Introduction to History 3620: Syllabus and Introductions
 8/27 (R) African Societies in Perspective
- Week 2 Read Hine, Chapter 2; start reading Equiano's *Interesting Narrative*
 9/1 (T) The Slave Trade
 9/3 (R) Movie and Discussion: "Family Across the Sea"
- Week 3 Read Equiano, *Interesting Narrative* (in full)
 9/8 (T) Becoming "African-American"
 9/10 (R) Discussion: Olaudah Equiano's Experiences
 Equiano Papers due to turnitin.com by start of class period
- Week 4 Read Hine, Chapter 3
 9/15 (T) No Class: Convocation (Distinguished Faculty Lecture)
 9/17 (R) Movie and Discussion: "Ethnic Notions"
- Week 5 Read Hine, Chapter 4; finalize plans for Individual Projects
 9/22 (T) A Revolution for African-Americans?
 9/24 (R) Movie and Discussion: "Africans in America"
- Week 6 Read Hine, Chapter 5
 9/29 (T) "Free" Blacks in Early America
 10/1 (R) Black Churches
 Critical Web Site Evaluation due by Friday, 5 PM
- Week 7 Read Hine Chapter 6; start reading Frederick Douglass's *Narrative*
 10/6 (T) The "Peculiar Institution"
 10/8 (R) Movie and Discussion: "Doing as They Can"
- Week 8 Read Frederick Douglass, *Narrative* (in full)
 10/13 (T) No Class: Convocation (Service and Service-Learning in Mexico)
 10/15 (R) Discussion: Frederick Douglass's Experiences
 Douglass Papers due to turnitin.com by start of class period

Hey, the semester is half-over!

- Week 9 Read Hine, Chapter 7
10/20 (T) “Free” Blacks in Antebellum America
10/22 (R) Black Communities
- Week 10 Read Hine, Chapters 8 and Chapter 9; continue work on Final Projects
10/27 (T) Black Abolitionism
10/29 (R) Movie and Discussion: “Roots of Resistance”
- Week 11 Read Hine Chapter 10
11/3 (T) Slavery Expands
11/5 (R) Blacks in the Civil War
- Week 12 Read Hine Chapter 11
11/10 (T) Movie and Discussion: “54th Massachusetts Colored Infantry”
11/12 (R) **Individual Project Presentations (5)**
Critical Movie Review due by Friday, 5 PM
- Week 13 Read Hine, Chapter 12
11/17 (T) Reconstruction in Perspective
11/19 (R) **Individual Project Presentations (5)**
- Week 14 Read Hine, Chapter 13;
11/24 (T) Movie and Discussion: “Dr. Toer’s Magic Lantern Show”
11/25 (R) **No Class: Thanksgiving Recess**
- Week 15 Finalize Individual Projects
12/1 (T) **Individual Project Presentations (5)**
12/3 (R) **Individual Project Presentations (5)**
Deadline for submitting additional Movie and/or Web Site Reviews by Friday 5 PM

Final Projects Due: December 8, Tuesday, 1-2:50 PM (final version in both print and electronic formats)