University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign
Department of African American Studies
Theory in African American Studies
AFRO 490, Fall 2011
Tuesdays 9-11:50 in the Conference Room, 1201 W. Nevada

Instructor
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Office hours
Tuesdays 8-9 am and by appointment.

Course description and goals
An introduction to various theories and methodologies rising out of the study of the Black world based on African American intellectual traditions. Goals include:
1. To survey major theoretical positions in Black intellectual history
2. To introduce methods for creating theory in Black studies
3. To document theoretical work on Malcolm X
4. To develop a public discourse on theory in Black Studies

Required readings


Other readings are available online.
Grades

Class participation ........................................................................................................... 30%
Class bibliography project on Malcolm X ................................................................. 30%
Individual research project on a theorist ................................................................. 40%

Public lectures

Five lectures during the course will be a public lecture series, “Rethinking Theory in Black Studies” and will be video recorded. This won’t include you being videotaped, just the lecture. Please invite others you think might be interested.

   September 13: Ideology
   September 27: Methodology
   October 11: History
   October 25: Tradition
   November 8: Debate

Class process

1. Read the required text and be prepared to present in class as instructed. For some readings the entire page range is indicated; for others just the first page, be sure and read the entire item indicated.

2. After opening remarks by the instructor, class will be conducted using the Socratic Method (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Socratic_method)

3. Each class will be in two parts separated by a ten minute break, a and b.

Weekly schedule

I / Tuesday, August 23. Introduction

A. Who are we, what are the texts, the syllabi, instructor’s philosophy and pedagogy


2 / Tuesday, August 30. Introduction to Malcolm X and to Research


B. Discussion of class project and individual research project

3 / Tuesday, September 6. Ideology: Class discussion

A. Read: Paradigms book (Abdul Alkalimat, Houston Baker, Amiri Baraka, Robert Harris, Manning Marable, Cornel West)

B. Black culture and art. Read:
   Fanon, On national culture, A236 [Asante page 236]
   DuBois, Criteria of Negro art, G777 [Gates page 777]
   Hoyt Fuller, Toward a Black aesthetic, G1852
   Countee Cullen, Yet do I marvel, G1341
   Margaret Walker, For my people, G1619
   Baraka, Black art, G1943
   Larry Neal, Black Art Movement, G2038
   Karenga, Black Art, G2086
   Angela Davis, Black women and music, A765
   Baraka, Revolutionary culture, A689
   Gayle, The Black aesthetic, G1911
   Paul Robeson, The Negro artist looks ahead, M326 [Marable page 236]
   *Ralph Bunche, Conceptions and Ideologies of the Negro Problem
   http://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1109&context=cibs

4 / Tuesday, September 13. Ideology: Public lecture

A. Read: Abdul Alkalimat, The relevance of local politics,
   http://www.eblackchicago.org/HAROLD/PDF/relevance.pdf#page=8

B. Read: Abdul Alkalimat. The ideology of Black social science,
   http://books.google.com/books?id=cn7hXfc1roC&pg=PA173&dq=ideology+of+black+social+science&hl=en&ei=uUpRTvCfGcaAsqL91dHkBg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1&sqi=2&ved=0CC0Q6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=the%20ideology%20of%20black%20social%20science&f=false

5 / Tuesday, September 20. Method: Class discussion

A. Read: Schomburg, Negro digs up his past, G962
   Hughes, Negro artist and racial mountain, G1311
Wright, Blueprint for Negro writing, G1403
Ellison, Richard Wright's blues, G1538
Gates, Esu and the Signifying Monkey, A160
Asante, The principal issues in Afrocentric inquiry, A256
Nkrumah, Consciencism, A354
Karenga, Mguzo Saba, A543
Woodson, Miseducation of the Negro, A656
*Alkalimat, eBlack Studies,  


6/ Tuesday, September 27. Method: Public lecture


7/ Tuesday, October 4. History: Class discussion

A. Read:  Olaudah Equiano, The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, M9  
William Wells Brown, Narrative, G315  
W. E. B. Du Bois, Souls of Black Folk, G692  
Walter Rodney, African before the Europeans, A706  
Nat Turner, Narrative, A620  
Frederick Douglas, 4th of July, A637  
Ida B. Wells, Lynching, A651  
Mary McCleod Bethune, Last Will, A671  
Black Workers in the Great Depression, M273  
Black Women Workers During the Great Depression, M300  
A Philip Randolph, March on Washington, M308  
Rose Parks and the Montgomery Bus Boycott, M352

B. Read:  Intro, Introduction  
Read the introductions to the sections in the three anthologies,  
Asante A 1-7, 9-14, 57-63, 109-114, 283-287, 441-446, 595-600  
Gates G xxxvii, 3-8, 151-162, 541-554, 953-962, 1355-1368, 1831-1850, 2127-2139  
8 / Tuesday, October 11. History: Public lecture
A. Read: Intro, chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
B. Read: Intro, chapters 7, 8, 9, 12, 14

9 / Tuesday, October 18. Tradition: Class discussion
A. Liberation Theology, Pan-Africanism, and Feminism.
Read on Liberation Theology:
   Richard Allen, The Founding of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, M20
   The Spirituals: Go down Moses and Didn't My Lord Deliver Daniel, M111
   Henry McNeal Turner, Black Christian Nationalist, M128
   The Yoruba Creation Narrative, A45
   James Weldon Johnson, The Creation, A53
   Jomo Kenyatta, Religion and Ancestor Veneration, A88
   God, Johnson, Franklin, Thurman, Townsel, King, Malcolm X, Forbes, and Williams,
   Sermons, G94
   Gates, Scholars and Prayers, 94-129
   Intro, Chapter 10
Read on Pan-Africanism:
   Pan-African Congress Resolution (1919), A517
   Pan-African Congress Resolution (1945), A518
   Kwame Nkrumah, The Need for a Union Government for Africa, A559
   C.L.R. James The Rise and Fall of Nkrumah, A573
   Emperor Haile Selassie, Address to the League of Nations, A664
   Charter of the Organization of African Unity, A698
   Martin R. Delaney, The Condition, Elevation, Emigration and Destiny of the Colored
   People of the United States, G255
   Marcus Garvey, Africa for the Africans and The Future as I See It, G995
   Intro, Chapter 15
Read on Feminism:
   Alice Moore Dunbar-Nelson, The Negro Woman and the Ballot, M264
   Claudia Jones, An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman! M316
   Fannie Lou Hamer: The Special Plight and the Role of Black Women, M395
   Angela Y. Davis, I Am a Revolutionary Black Woman, M459
   Audre Lorde, I Am You Sister, M515
   bell hooks, Shaping Feminist Theory, M522
   Anna Julia Cooper, Womanhood: A Vital Element in the Regeneration and Progress
   of a Race, A643
   Third World Women's Alliance. Black Women's Manifesto: Documents from the
Intro, Chapter 11

B. Socialism, Nationalism.

Read on Socialism:

Black Bolsheviks: Cyril V. Briggs and Claude McKay, M228
League of Revolutionary Black Workers, Our thing is DRUM, M463
http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/
Intro, Chapter 16

Read on Nationalism:

Elijah Muhammed and the Nation of Islam, M401
Black Power, M418
The National Black Political Convention, M469
Intro, Chapter 15

10 / Tuesday, October 25. Tradition: Public lecture

A. Read: Ernest Allen, African American Identity: Reflection on the Pre-Civil War Era
http://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1047&context=cbs

B. Scan: St Clair Drake http://www.stclairdrake.net/

11 / Tuesday, November 1. Debate: Class discussion

A. Emancipation Debate

Read: David Walker, G227-238, A627-636, M24-33
Sojourner Truth, G245-249, M66-67
Henry Highland Garnet, G345-352, M56-62
Frederick Douglass, G385-483, A637-640, M84-88, M122-128
Nat Turner, A620-626, M34-39
Maria Stewart, M40-46
Pease and Pease, Negro Convention Movement,
Bell, A survey of the Negro Convention Movement, Chapters 1, 5, 6, 7.
http://books.google.com/books?id=0_gGtph7VQwC&printsec=frontcover&dq=negro +convention+movement&hl=en&ei=1S5RTxyvMLHE0AGin_m_AQ&sa=X&oi=bo ok_result&ct=result&resnum=1&ved=0CCoQ6AEwAA#v=onepage&q=f=false

B. Self-Determination Debate.

Read: Dubois, M195-208, M209-212, A492-499, G686-785
Garvey M241-250, M251-252, G995-1003, A402-406, A503-504
Washington, M174-180, A483-491, G570-602
Ida B. Wells, M191-194, G675-686
T. Thomas Fortune, M135-137
Trotter, M181-182, A500-502
Cyril Briggs, M228-240
Angelo Herndon, M281-287
Southern Negro Youth Congress, M306-307
Thurgood Marshall, M331-340

12 / Tuesday, November 8. Debate: Public lecture

A. Black Liberation Debate.
Read: SNCC, M371-374, 383-385, 399-401, 418-429
     Ella Baker, M375-376
     King, M377-383
     DuBois, M385-395
     Malcolm X, M404-418
     Panthers, M445

B. Black Liberation Debate.
Scan: The debate over Manning Marable’s the recent book on Malcolm X, at
      http://brothermalcolm.net
Read: William Sales, Malcolm X: A Life of Reinvention by Manning Marable.
      http://brothermalcolm.net/marable/pdf/Sales.pdf
      Abdul Alkalimat, Rethinking Malcolm means first learning how to think: What was
      Marable thinking? And how? http://echicago.illinois.edu/alkalimat-reviews-marable-
      june-2011.pdf

13 / Tuesday, November 15

A. Read: Alkalimat, Studies on Malcolm X.

B. Discussion of group research on Malcolm X bibliography

Tuesday, November 22 is Thanksgiving, no class

14 / Tuesday, November 29

Finishing the class bibliography project

15 / Tuesday, December 6

Presentation of individual research volumes and an early pizza lunch
Assignment instructions for Class Bibliography on Malcolm X

This assignment is for the class to collectively produce a bibliography, in other words, to assemble a volume that we will call A Comprehensive Bibliography (1986-2011) of Works about Malcolm X. This entails compiling a list of 25 years of commentary and research. This will update the two bibliographies already published on Malcolm X:


This work requires learning and using the free plug-in Zotero, which works with Firefox. It enables you to collect citations and generate not only a text bibliography but an .ris file which is shareable and interoperable and can be combined with other .ris files. So you should work in Firefox that has zotero installed. You can download it from zotero.org and it is also in use in the U of I libraries. You can learn it by asking a librarian, a classmate, a friend, and/or watching the videos at zotero.org. Individual tasks will include collecting citations from:

- Google Scholar (http://scholar.google.com/)
- Dissertation Abstracts (linked from U of I library home page, or direct at http://www.library.illinois.edu/rex/erefs/dissertations.html)
- The bibliography of the dissertations we collect (scanning the downloaded pdfs
- The bibliographies of books we collect
- Newspaper databases (via the U of I library website, http://www.library.illinois.edu)

We’ll review progress every two weeks in class and adjust tasks according to what we are finding. So every due date, you bring to class and hand in (or move to the instructor’s laptop):

1. A printed bibliography of your work
2. That bibliography on a flash drive
3. The .ris file containing the same contents, on a flash drive.

Due dates are:

Tuesday, September 6
Tuesday, September 20
Tuesday, October 4
Tuesday, October 18
Tuesday, November 1
Tuesday, November 15
Tuesday, November 29
Assignment instructions for Individual Research Project

You will select a contemporary Black Studies theorist or school of thought, from the list below or your own choosing, collect their work, write a 5 page introduction, create a table of contents, and assemble it all into a one-volume monograph (pdf and hard copy). Due Tuesday, December 6.

1. Identify the theorist/school of thought. Possibilities include:
   William Sales
   Sam Anderson
   Lou Turner
   Robert Allen
   Barbara Ransby
   Sundia Cha Jua
   Ron Bailey
   Geneva Smitherman
   Communiuniversity
   Yaki (James Sayles)

2. Locate the person and communicate with them to get their permission and assistance. For instance, ask for a curriculum vitae (this will list their work).

3. Do research in the library and online and produce a bibliography using Zotero.

4. Collect the work and assemble pdfs.

5. Send the author the bibliography and ask for their corrections and additions.

6. Write an introduction to the collection and a table of contents for what you will include in the volume. For instance, you cannot include an entire book.

7. Send the author your introduction and TOC and ask for their corrections and additions.

8. Assemble the volume (pdfs and word documents) into one pdf using Adobe Acrobat Pro, create a cover, print and bind it (The binding is called “perfect binding” and is available at the U of I Print Shop, 54 E. Gregory, Urbana, and at Kinko’s).

9. Bring to class on due date one perfect bound book and the book as pdf on a flash drive, to move to instructor’s laptop.