MODERN CULTURE AND BLACK PEOPLE

Taught By
Afro-American Studies Program
Fisk University
Nashville, Tennessee

Course Designed by
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MODERN CULTURE AND BLACK PEOPLE

1. PURPOSES OF THE COURSE

A. To challenge every student to be a serious Black intellectual, (knowledgeable about himself and his people, and committed to make the world a better place to live in).

B. To study the development of modern society and culture, and the role Black people have played in it.

C. To investigate and discuss the historical origins and development of the contemporary Black community in the USA.

D. To systematically examine the development, basis, and make-up of several important social institutions in the Black community.

E. To explore the relevancy of various ideologies concerning the social position of Black people (past, present and future).

2. REQUIREMENTS

A. Class attendance.

D. Take good class notes.

C. Reading required materials.

D. Full participation in class discussions.

E. Writing a short paper (2-3 typed double-spaced pages) every week, and turning it in on time.

3. GRADES

A. 40% weekly papers (due the first session of each week) and class participation.

B. 20% mid-term exam (middle of October).

C. 40% final exam (middle of December).
OUTLINE OF COURSE CONTENT

WEEK

1. What's it all about? (INTRODUCTION)

Black people in the USA have to develop a scientific approach to understanding and changing this society and themselves. Our focus on problems must start with Colonialism and Slavery (because all subsequent social developments are related to Colonialism and Slavery) and then turned to Liberation (because all current social action must be based on bringing Liberation about).

2. What was Africa like before the European came? (COLONIZATION)

Africa as "the dark continent full of savages" is an image only recently corrected in most history books. But while that negative image has been replaced by a strong positive image and identification with Africa, we have not developed a full understanding of the peoples and cultures of Africa before European penetration. Until we do so we can have little appreciation of the full impact of that which we often intuitively condemn—"how the white man exploited Africa" in terms of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism. What was Africa like before the coming of Europeans? What was the state of its economy, its politics, its art, its music, its dance, and its religion?

3. What was slavery all about? (SLAVERY)

Black labor from Africa provided white landlords in the Americas with agricultural and mineral produce which provided the raw materials for industrial revolutions in England and the United States during the 19th century. Black societies in the New World, being deprived of ownership of land and capital, were thus unable to develop economically, socially, or politically.

4. What is modern? (CAPITALISM)

All societies develop in historical stages based upon the ways in which people are organized to develop and distribute the goods and services needed to survive. In general, the modern period is based on a revolution of science and technology and corresponding revolutions in the social organization of society. In sum, modernity is a social phenomena after the fall of feudal society and is the result of urbanization, industrialization, and bureaucratization.

5. Are all Black people the same? (SOCIAL CLASS)

Social classes are formed when people are organized on the basis of inequality, i.e., some people own and control the resources of the society while others are forced to work for them in order to make a living. Black people in the USA have been forced to play different social roles and have developed different relationships with the ruling class. In sum, this has resulted in a middle class and a working class, with marginal groups such as welfare recipients, the unemployed, and the lumpen-proletariat. However, none of these differences are as great as that between the ruling class and all class elements of Black people.
6. Can Black people get a "piece of the American Pie"? (POLITICAL ECONOMY)

Monopoly capitalism, nationally and internationally, places control of the means of production outside the reach of Black people in the United States, in the Caribbean, and to a large extent in Africa. This essential fact has made reformist, integrationist, and separatist proposals from Black capitalism to Black nationhood less than effective in improving the relative welfare of the vast majority of oppressed Blacks.

7. What kinds of political power do Black people have in the USA? (GOVERNMENT & THE POWER OF THE STATE)

Black people are participating in politics in greater numbers than ever. As appointed officials, as elected politicians, and through voting, some degree of power is yielded. In addition, Black community groups play an important political role. What gains have been secured through Black political activity? Have there been any long-lasting gains? Or have the rules of the game been changed when meaningful Black political power becomes a possibility?

8. Why is religion so strong in the Black community? (CHURCH AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION)

The church has been the most stable institution in the Black community. It has functioned as the basis of social life, developed civic leadership and provided an ideological orientation for the masses of Black people. The historical stages of its development reflect the basic experiences of the total Black community.

9. Has education paid off for Black people? (THE SCHOOL AS AN AGENCY OF SOCIAL CHANGE)

Tremendous strides have been made since the 1954 Brown Decision of the Supreme Court in improving educational opportunity for Black youth on all levels of education. These strides, however, have not come without great sacrifice and struggle. Still, many contradictions remain to be resolved. Recent studies indicate that income and employment gaps between Blacks and whites are increasing despite Black educational advancements. Others argue that the control of Black higher education rests outside the Black community. If Black people are not benefiting from their education, then who is? How do we assess the past and present struggles of Black people in the educational arena?

10. How and why do we spend our money? (THE CONSUMPTION OF POPULAR CULTURE)

Black culture serves to give identity to the Black community. This identity can be understood in terms of who produces the cultural forms, and who consumes them. Black people tend to be the cultural innovators and consumers, but others control and produce the cultural forms. Examples are clothes, radio stations, movies and music.
11. What was the struggle during the 1960's all about? (CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS)

The struggle in the 1960's was a struggle for democracy, civil rights. The different organizations and movements were based on different social classes and groups in the Black community. A great deal of what happened can also be explained by examining the changing interests of the ruling class. The highest point of struggle (based on the notion of the masses of people) can best be discussed in light of Martin Luther King.

12. What are the basic ideas of an integrationist? (THEORY OF ASSIMILATION)

Schools of thought among Black intellectual leaders have had a central dichotomy, integration or separation. It is proper to view these alternatives not as ends in themselves but as alternative tactics to deal with racism in America. The integrationist position has as its underlying assumption that assimilation is the ultimate solution of all racial conflict.

13. What are the basic ideas of a nationalist? (THEORY OF NATIONALISM)

There is disagreement about whether Black people constitute a nation or a national minority. Numerous organizational activities and protests have taken nationalist forms. How can we characterize the various strains of nationalist thought throughout our history? What factors account for the rise and dominance of any particular form? What are the main tendencies of nationalist thought today?

14. What are the basic ideas of a revolutionary? (THEORY OF INTERNATIONALISM)

Pan-Africanism and concern with Third World problems generally are increasingly becoming the concern of Black intellectuals in search of solutions to the oppression suffered by Black people in the United States. National liberation movements in Africa, Asia, and Latin America have prompted a renewed interest among Black scholars in the idea of internationalizing the fight against oppression.
5. REQUIRED READINGS

WEEK

1. INTRODUCTION

2. COLONIZATION
How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, Walter Rodney
Chapter 1 - "Some Questions on Development"
Chapter 2 - "How Africa Developed Before the Coming of the European"

3. SLAVERY
Capitalism and Slavery, Eric Williams
Chapter 1 - "Triangular Trade"

4. CAPITALISM
Communist Manifesto, Karl Marx & Frederick Engels, (Peking, Foreign Languages Press).

5. SOCIAL CLASS
Chapter 1 - "The Roots of the Black Bourgeoisie"
Chapter 2 - "The Economic Basis of Middle Class Status"
B. The Demand for Black Labor (pamphlet from Radical America), Harold Baran

6. POLITICAL ECONOMY
A. The Myths of Black Capitalism, Earl Ofari
D. Monopoly Capital, Paul Baran and Paul Sweezy,
Chapter titled "Monopoly Capital and Race Relations"

7. GOVERNMENT & THE POWER OF THE STATE


8. THE CHURCH AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

The Negro Church in America, E. Franklin Frazier.

9. THE SCHOOL AS AN AGENCY OF SOCIAL CHANGE


10. THE CONSUMPTION OF POPULAR CULTURE

A. Black Bourgeois, E. Franklin Frazier, Chapters 5, 7, 9.

B. "The Black Middle Class," (Special Issue of Ebony).

11. CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS


D. "On the Role of Martin Luther King," August Meier, (Bobbs-Merrill Reprint).

12. THEORY OF ASSIMILATION


B. "Review of An American Dilemma," Ralph Ellison, in (Shadow and Act, Ralph Ellison).

13. THEORY OF NATIONALISM


14. THEORY OF INTERNATIONALISM

A. Speeches by Martin Luther King on Vietnam and W.E.B. DuBois.

7. SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

1. INTRODUCTION

A. Horace Cayton, The Lonely Road.
B. Harold Cruse, The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual.
C. W.E.B. DuBois, Autobiography (last one of three he wrote).
E. Ralph Ellison, Invisible Man.
F. Frantz Fanon, Wretched of the Earth.
I. Armstead Robinson, Black Studies in the University.
J. John Williams, The Man Who Cried I Am.

2. COLONIZATION

B. Phillip Curtin (ed.), Africa Remembered: Narratives by West Africans from the Era of the Slave Trade.
E. Yosef ben-Jochanan, Black Men of the Nile: Contributions to European Civilization and Thought.
G. John S. Ibidi, African Religions and Philosophies.
I. Joseph A. Tillinghast, The Negro in Africa and America. (Perhaps the best example of racist scholarship in this area.)
3. SLAVERY

A. Herbert Aptheker, Slave Revolts.
C. John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom.
H. K. Stammp, Reconstruction.
I. Richard Wade, Slavery in the Cities.

4. CAPITALISM

A. Marc Bloch, Feudal Society.
D. Émile Durkheim, The Division of Labor in Society.
C. V. I. Lenin, The State and Revolution.
D. Lewis Mumford, Technics and Civilization.
E. David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd.
F. Joseph Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy.
G. Alex de Tocqueville, The Old Regime and the French Revolution.
H. Ferdinand Tonnies, Community and Society.
I. Richard Wright, Black Boy.

5. SOCIAL CLASS

A. James Bodds, Racism and the Class Struggle.
D. Kenneth Clark, Dark Ghetto.
5. SOCIAL CLASS


F. Henry Hudson, Black Worker in the Deep South.


J. Spero and Harris, The Black Worker.

6. POLITICAL ECONOMY

A. Ron Bailey, Black Business Enterprise.

B. Daran & Swezy, Monopoly Capital.

C. Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth.

D. Haddad and Pugh, Black Economic Development.


F. D. Hermelstein, Economics, Mainstream Readings and Radical Critiques.

G. Kwame Nkrumah, Africa Must Unite.

H. Kwame Nkrumah, Dark Days in Ghana.

I. Kwame Nkrumah, Neo-Colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism.

J. Vatter & Palm, The Economics of Black America.

7. GOVERNMENT & THE POWER OF THE STATE

A. Harry A. Bailey, Negro Politics in America.


C. William Domhoff, Who Rules America?
7. GOVERNMENT & THE POWER OF THE STATE

D. Lenniel Henderson, Black Political Life in the U.S.


F. V. I. Lenin, The State and Revolution.

G. Donald Matthews and James Prothro, Negroes and the New Southern Politics.


J. Henes, Walton, Black Politics.

8. THE CHURCH AS A SOCIAL INSTITUTION

A. William Banks, The Black Church in the U.S.


C. James H. Cone, Black Theology and Black Power.


E. St. Clair Drake, The Redemption of Africa and Black Religion.


G. Benjamin E. Mays and Joseph W. Nicholson, The Negro's Church.


J. Carter G. Woodson, The History of the Negro Church.

9. THE SCHOOL AS AN AGENCY OF SOCIAL CHANGE

A. Africa Research Group, Who Rules Harvard?


C. Henry A. Dullock, A History of Negro Education in the South.

D. John Egerton, Black Public Colleges: Integration or Disintegration, (Race Relations Institute, 1971).
9. THE SCHOOL AS AN AGENCY OF SOCIAL CHANGE


F. Federal Interagency Committee on Education, *Federal Agencies and Black Colleges* (June 1970), a government report detailing federal support of Black colleges (about $120 million) as compared to "White" colleges (about $3.9 billion).


10. THE CONSUMPTION OF POPULAR CULTURE


B. E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie*.

C. Gibson, *The $20 Billion Negro*.

D. Vatter & Palm, *The Economics of Black America*.

E. *Black Enterprise* (periodical), all issues.


11. CIVIL RIGHTS STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRATIC REFORMS
B. Lerone Bennett, The Negro Mind.
D. James Forman, Sunny Younge, Jr.: The First Black College Student to Die in the Black Liberation Struggle, (in Tuskegee, Ala.).
E. Langston Hughes, Fight for Freedom: The Story of the NAACP.
F. Martin Luther King, Stride Toward Freedom.
G. Martin Luther King, Why We Can't Wait.
H. Martin Luther King, Where Do We Go From Here?
I. Bobby Seale, Seize the Time.
J. Howard Zinn, SNCC: The New Abolitionists.

12. THEORY OF ASSIMILATION
A. Robert Allen, Black Awakening in Capitalist America.
D. Hansjörg Elshorst, "Two Years After Integration: Race Relations at a Deep South University," Phylon 28, (Spring, 1967), pp. 41-51, Undergraduate Negro students at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge.
E. Hugh Davis Graham, Crisis in Print: Desegregation and the Press in Tennessee.
G. Beauregard James, The Road to Birmingham.
H. Jacob K. Javits, Discrimination - USA.
I. Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma.
13. THEORY OF NATIONALISM


B. John H. Bracey, et al., *Black Nationalism in America.*


E. Harry Haywood, *Negro Liberation.*


14. THEORY OF INTERNATIONALISM

A. Wilfred Burchett, *Vietnam Will Win.*

B. Amilcar Cabral, *Revolution in Guinea.*

C. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth.*


E. Alex Haley, *Autobiography of Malcolm X.*


H. George Padmore, *Pan Africanism or Communism.*


# PURPOSE

The research papers you will do this semester will enable you to analyze the articles on the Black experience to be covered in course lectures, assigned readings and outside readings, and to present a synthesis of this material in a clearly written paper. Five research papers (10-15 pages each) will be required this semester, all based on intensive treatment of five topics chosen because (1) they represent the "modal" (i.e., most important) experiences of Black people during a particular historical stage of development; and (2) some of the best social analyses about Black people and by Black people--THE BLACK CLASSICS--have been written on the experiences in the historical periods covered.

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<tr>
<th>Wks.</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Text</th>
<th>Paper Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The Negro in America: An Overview</td>
<td>Annotated Bibliography</td>
<td>Jan 23</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Rural Life</td>
<td>Shadow of the Plantation by Charles Johnson</td>
<td>March 1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Black Workers</td>
<td>The Black Worker by Sterling Spero and Abram Harris</td>
<td>March 25</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Urban Life</td>
<td>Black Metropolis (Volume I) by St. Clair Drake &amp; Horace Cayton</td>
<td>April 15</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Black Modes</td>
<td>Up From Slavery by Booker T. Washington</td>
<td>May 3</td>
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