

## COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Title:	Black American History
Number:	HIS 50
Credits/Hours:	3 credits/3 hours

### INTRODUCTION

History 50 begins with the era of West African slavery and ends at the present day. The course covers many aspects of African-American History from a variety of perspectives. It tries to go beyond dates and facts and to consider major themes and events crucial to African-American history, culture, and thought.

How have African-Americans been affected by the history and legacy of black slavery? Which factors led to black urbanization after the conclusion of slavery? What are some of the major themes in black thought and leadership, such as the struggle for civil rights and equality, the movement for integration, and black nationalism, and how did they develop? To what extent has today's African-American culture been shaped by the black experience throughout American history? To address these and other historical questions, the class integrates elements of history, cultural studies, economics, music, art and literature to present a multifaceted history of America and its history.

### OBJECTIVES

A primary objective of the course is for the student to achieve a deeper insight into the African-American experience, past, present, and future. Through intensive study of the events and individuals that comprise black history in the United States of America, undergraduates will develop a sense of perspective and a broader frame of reference for their own individual and collective histories. The knowledge students acquire in our learning environment will provide them with the necessary intellectual and cultural background to define for themselves what it means and has meant to be African-American.

Additionally, as a central offering in the Liberal Arts, the course acquaints students with many of the core concepts, theories, and methodologies essential to academic and cultural literacy. Through emphasis on reading and interpreting texts, comparative conceptual analysis, the explication of graphic charts and illustrations, and communicating clearly and effectively through writing, the course develops and enhances student skills in the areas of critical thinking, reading comprehension, and both oral and written communication.

## ASSESSMENT

History 50 employs a variety of pedagogical techniques including lecture, discussion, and computer-based (online and web-enhanced) instructional technologies. Oral presentations, low-stakes writing assignments, and small discussion groups are also encouraged.

Assessment of student learning will be based on class assignments, which include readings from primary and secondary texts, group discussions in class and/or online, class presentations, and written work, which may take the form of essays, journals, reports, research papers, or other assigned writing. The specific forms and combinations of assignments are left to the discretion of individual instructors.

In addition to informal or low-stakes assignments, student achievement of basic skills and knowledge will be measured through examinations and term papers. Examinations require essay writing, and will test reading comprehension and fluency as well as mastery of critical thinking skills. Specific weighting of various assignments and requirements is determined by individual instructors. However, students in all sections are expected to master a common body of information as measured by their responses to selected questions.

## COURSE OUTLINE

The following topics will be covered by the course. Given the breadth and fluidity of this subject, it is expected that instructors may vary the content, organization, and overall approach of their sections.

### I. West African Heritage and Early Slavery

Introduction to the course and pre-slavery African societies.

### II. Atlantic Slave Trade

The rise of African slavery and its effect on West African societies; the Middle Passage; West Indian slavery and the development of slavery in the British North American colonies.

### III. Slavery in Early America

American slavery in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries; the era of the American Revolution and independence; slavery and the New Republic; Crispus Attucks, Phyllis Wheatley, and other notable black figures; black participation in the War of 1812.

### IV. The Free North, 1800-1860

Free black communities in the antebellum North; black labor and seafaring; abolitionism; black religious and cultural institution-building.

V. Cotton and Plantation Slavery, 1800-1860

Plantation labor and the gang system; slave oral culture and society; resistance, escape, and slave rebellions.

VI. The Civil War and Reconstruction

Introduction to the era during and following the Civil War; black military participation; agitation for “manhood rights” and civic equality; the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, and 15<sup>th</sup> amendments; the rise of the sharecropping system; Ku Klux Klan and lynchings.

VII. Race Relations and Black Leadership, 1876-1920

Black leadership, including Booker T. Washington, William Monroe Trotter, W.E.B. DuBois, Ida Wells-Barnett, and others; Northern black urbanization; white philanthropy and attitudes towards African-Americans; formation of black organizations and institutions including Tuskegee and the early years of the NAACP; popular culture imagery of blacks; popular culture expressions created by African-American artists such as ragtime and early Jazz.

VIII. The Jazz Age through WWII

Black military participation in WWI and WWII; Jazz and the Harlem Renaissance; the black experience during the Great Depression; Marcus Garvey and the back-to-Africa movement.

IX. The Civil Rights Era

The history of the African-American Civil Rights movement, including Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, jr.; Brown vs. the Board of Education and Southern desegregation; marches, sit-ins, Freedom Rides, and other forms of protest; Civil Rights legislation.

X. The 1960s

Urban black communities in turmoil; Malcolm X and the Black Muslim movement; African-Americans and the Vietnam War; Black Power, the Black Panthers, and Sixties black radicalism; assassinations of King, Malcolm X, Medgar Evers.

XI. The Modern Era

African-American life and culture today; the struggle for economic, political, and civic gains; urban unrest and the Rodney King riots; rap music and popular culture.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Goals:

The purpose of this course is:

1. To introduce students to the basic concepts, questions, and problems addressed by historians of black America;

2. To trace specific historical developments in African-American society and culture, including slavery, Reconstruction, black community building, black leadership and thought, modern society, among others;
3. To foster skills needed to read, interpret, and analyze primary sources such as documents and other texts;
4. To foster skills needed in historical methodology;
5. To foster skills needed to write a historical essay;
6. To enable students to apply their learned knowledge to their understanding of ongoing current events in American society and culture.

Learning Outcomes:

As a result of taking this course, students will learn or be able to:

1. Read and comprehend primary source texts;
2. Identify and understand key vocabulary terms used within the discipline;
3. Identify and analyze historical problems from a variety of viewpoints;
4. Explain and defend historical arguments;
5. Write clearly, critically, and effectively;
6. Develop and use research skills;
7. Use a variety of learning strategies including traditional lectures, oral presentation, collaborative learning, and/or computer-assisted learning (in certain hybrid-online sections).

Measurement:

Strategies to be used in demonstrating that students' learning has been achieved will include:

1. Quizzes
2. Classroom discussion
3. In-class ("low-stakes") writing assignments
4. Group discussions and/or presentations
5. Take-home writing assignments
6. Examinations (essay and objective/factual)
7. Essay papers (short and/or term papers)
8. On-line and web-enhanced exercises and assignments

Evaluation:

Based on the above measurements, the following quantitative and qualitative evidence will provide evidence that students have achieved their learning outcomes:

1. 75% passing grades on quizzes

2. Discussions and writing assignments reflect students' understanding of texts and class material, as well as their facility in explaining and defending their position
3. Writing assignments reflect students' ability to think and write clearly, effectively, and critically
4. Examination results demonstrate knowledge of basic concepts and ability to analyze historical problems.