

CSI 116: CULTURES OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

Hampshire College || Spring 2012 || Mon/Wed 1030-1150am || FPH 105
Professor Tinson || *Office hours:* Tues 4-6pm, Wed 3-6pm, Thurs 4-6pm
Office: FPH G-2 || *schedule all appts via email:* ctinson@hampshire.edu

Description: This course will deepen students' knowledge of the African diaspora through the study of what some scholars have called "Africanisms," a broad term that seeks to capture the wide array of technical skills, artistic practices, religious and spiritual beliefs, philosophies, linguistic patterns, and epistemologies that derive from the African continent and take root around the world. Though many of these practices continue in the present day, they are as likely to be found throughout the African diaspora in places such as the Panamanian city Colón, the Brazilian state of Bahia, and New York City as they are in Africa. In this course we will interrogate such concepts as "survivals," "retentions," and "the black Atlantic," and study critical debates between such major figures as E. Franklin Frazier, Melville Herskovits, W.E.B. Du Bois, Ruth Simms Hamilton, Sheila S. Walker, Joseph E. Harris and others over the meaning of African culture in the New World. Will include field trip and film screenings. Learning Goals: REA, WRI, PRS, MCP



"Modern Music" by Yinka Adeyemi

Distribution

Culture, Humanities, and Languages • Power, Community and Social Justice

Cumulative Skills

Independent Work • Multiple Cultural Perspectives • Writing and Research

Goals

Multiple Cultural Perspectives • Presentation • Reading • Writing

Required Texts: Available for Purchase at Food For Thought Books in Amherst.

Robert Farris Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit* (New York: Vintage, 1983).

Sheila Walker, ed., *African Roots/American Cultures* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001).

*** PROF. TINSON'S PHILOSOPHY OF CRITICAL EDUCATION:** As we are seeking a courageous vocabulary of race and social justice, active, informed dialogue is encouraged and appreciated (attacks are not); we encourage getting real about race, staying engaged with the readings, avoiding self-pity. We expect some discomfort, and anticipate that some issues will be left unresolved. And remember: critical thinking is valued over self-righteousness.

ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS—Attendance is critically important and therefore mandatory. *Three unexcused absences will result in no evaluation.* Persistent tardiness is unacceptable under any circumstances. Your attendance and tardiness will be included as a part of the overall course participation portion of each student's course evaluation.

EMAILING THE PROFESSOR—Please type the course number (CSI 116) in the subject line of all correspondence directed to me. If you need an answer to a burning question or need to inform me of a pressing issue (e.g. a medical absence), do not wait until the last minute to notify me. I need at least 24 hours lead time to answer you. Plan accordingly. **However, I do not accept emailed assignments.**

COURSE EVALUATION POLICY—In accordance with the student assessment practices of Hampshire College, each student will be evaluated based upon their course attendance and participation, and the fulfillment of all assignments in a satisfactory and timely manner. (Non-Hampshire students see “Five College Students” next.)

COURSE PORTFOLIOS

At the end of the course all students will hand in a Large Envelope containing all course assignments. This should include any completed, graded, or revised work. Do not sneak missed assignments into your portfolio without the Professor's permission. Once your evaluation has been uploaded to the HUB you can stop by my office to retrieve your portfolio. All students are required to submit all of their written work at the end of the semester. If you do not hand your portfolio in by the deadline, you will receive an Incomplete that will carry over into the following semester. If your work is still missing by the close of the following semester, your incomplete will turn into a No Eval. No exceptions. Work turned in late cannot be guaranteed an evaluation.

FIVE COLLEGE STUDENTS—Those who are not Hampshire students will receive a letter grade a conventional A-Fail grading scale instead of a written evaluation. Each assignment will be graded accordingly, including the final project.

NO LAPTOPS, ETC. UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED, YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO USE YOUR LAPTOP, CELL PHONES, NOOK, IPOD, ETC. DURING COURSE MEETINGS.

READINGS OVER BREAK—because there are a number of key texts that are central to this course, readings will be assigned over Spring Break.

REVIEW ESSAYS AND RESEARCH PAPER – Students are required to write critical review essays, and one research paper throughout the semester. These essays are a chance for you to explore an idea and to demonstrate your understanding of the particular themes and concepts we have read, observed and discussed in the course. **These essays should be no shorter than 5-7 full double-spaced pages in length.** In these essays you are expected to draw upon one or more of the aspects of the reading, film/video, musical, or literary contents that pertain to historical, social and or political developments concerning the evolution of African American Studies. **Final Research Papers must be 10-12 pages in length on a subject closely related to our course.** *Additionally, it is **essential** that students use proper citation methods (Chicago or MLA) in these essays. See guidelines for assistance.*

ALL OUT-OF-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TYPED. Handwritten out-of-class assignments will not be accepted.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND REWRITE POLICY – Yes, students are allowed to rewrite their written/evaluated assignments. All rewrites must be received no later than one week (or two class meetings) after the assignment was evaluated by the instructor and returned to the student. However, assignments turned in late cannot be revised for reconsideration.

SEVERE WEATHER & CLASS CANCELLATION (just in case)—On severe weather days please call the Hampshire College Hotline: 559-5508 (off-campus) or ext. 5508 (on-campus) to check the status of school closing. If the school is open plan to attend class. If school is closed due to weather, I usually issue (via email) a small assignment to make up for lost class time; so don't be surprised. ☺ If for some reason the professor is unable to come to class the School of Critical Social Inquiry (CSI) administrative assistants will place a written notice of class cancellation on the classroom door.

N.B. Disclaimer: For purposes of efficacy, any part of this syllabus may be changed at the discretion of the professor.

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Reading and Assignment Schedule

(Please come to class prepared to discuss reading on the date listed below.)

Week 1

Wed., Jan. 25th

Course overview and introduction to key terms, history, places | research and writing expectations | HC Africana LibGuide introduction

Short Essay: A basic definition of culture is “the behaviors and beliefs characteristic of a particular social, ethnic, or age group.” In a

thoughtful, two-three paged essay, describe your culture. What's your aesthetic? What rituals do you perform (if any)? What beliefs pertain specifically to your culture? How did you acquire these beliefs and what importance do they have? **Due Monday 1/30.**

***Film Screening:** "The War We Are Living: A PBS Documentary on Women, War, and Peace" with Afro-Colombian Community Activist Francia Marquez, UMass, January 25, 2012, 12:30PM
Du Bois Library, Rm. 2601

Week 2

History and Theory of Diaspora Formation

Mon. Jan 30th

Kelley & Patterson, "Unfinished Migrations" *African Studies Review* 43, No. 1, Special Issue on the Diaspora (April 2000): 11-45.

R. F. Thompson, "Overture: The Concept 'Altar,' in *Face of the Gods* (Prestel, Munich: The Museum for African Art, 1993), 19-32.

Recommended: Scholars Commentary and Response to "Unfinished Migrations" *African Studies Review* 43, No. 1, Special Issue on the Diaspora (April 2000): 47-68.

Short Reflection Essay Due

Wed., Feb 1st

Lovejoy, "Yoruba and the Slave Trade;" and Law, "Yoruba Liberated Slaves" in *The Yoruba Diaspora in the Atlantic World*, edited by Toyin Falola and Matt Childs (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004).

Week 3

Pioneering U.S.-based Scholars of Diaspora

Mon. Feb. 6th

Shiela S. Walker, "Introduction: Are You hip to the Jive?" in *African Roots/American Cultures: Africa in the Creation of the Americas*, edited by Walker (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 1-44.

Wed. Feb. 8th

W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Conservation of Races" (1899)

E. Franklin Frazier, "The Negro Community, A Cultural Phenomenon" (1929); and "The Negro Family in Bahia, Brazil" (1942)

Herskovits, M. "The Contribution of Afroamerican Studies to Africanist Research," pp. 12-23; "What Has Africa Given to America?" pp. 168-174 in *The New World Negro* edited by Frances S. Herskovits (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1966).

Recommended:

St. Clair Drake, "Reflections on Anthropology and the Black Experience"; *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, Vol. 9, No. 2, New Perspectives on Black Education (Summer, 1978), pp. 85-109.

Lee D. Baker, *Anthropology and the Racial Politics of Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010).

Blog on Pioneering African-American female anthropologist, Caroline Bond Day <http://carolinebondday.tumblr.com/>

Essay Due Monday 2/13: What does it mean to think diasporically? What are the advantages or limitations? In a 5-7 paged essay please thoughtfully engage several of the articles read thus far, keeping in mind how African Diaspora studies has evolved and some of the contributions of diaspora scholars.

Week 4

Africa in/and/of the Americas

Mon. Feb. 13th

R.F. Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Ch. 1 and 2

Essay Due Today

Film Screening: "Precious Knowledge," Smith College, Stoddard Auditorium, at 430pm. Director Eren McGinnis in attendance.

Wed. Feb. 15th

R.F. Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Ch. 3

Week 5

Religion and the Politics of Memory

Feb. 20th

R.F. Thompson, *Flash of the Spirit*, Ch. 4 & 5

Feb. 22nd

Helen A. Regis, "Blackness and the Politics of Memory in the New Orleans Second Line," *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Nov., 2001): 752-777.

Martha Vega, "The Yoruba Orisha Tradition Comes to New York

City,” *African American Review*, Vol. 29, No. 2, Special Issues on The Music (Summer, 1995): 201-206.

Week 6

Mon. Feb. 27th

Terry Rey, “Kongolese Catholic Influences on Haitian Popular Catholicism” in *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 265-285.

John O. Stewart, “Cultural Passages in the African Diaspora: The West Indian Carnival” in Sheila Walker, ed., *African Roots/American Cultures*, pp. 206-221.

Film Screening: “Precious Knowledge” at UMass, Campus Center Auditorium, 530pm. Director Eren McGinnis in attendance.

Wed. Feb. 29th

Walker, “Everyday Africa in New Jersey: Wonderings and Wanderings in the African Diaspora,” in Sheila Walker, ed., *African Roots/American Cultures*, pp. 45-80.

Patricia Guthrie, “‘Catching Sense’ and the Meaning of Belonging in a South Carolina Sea Island” in Sheila Walker, ed., *African Roots/American Cultures*, pp. 275-283.

Critical Essay Due 3/5: This section has been (partially) about religious rituals and diaspora formation, about tradition and cultural regeneration. In a five to seven paged thoughtful and informed essay, please engage the following: How have African descendants and practitioners of African-derived spiritual practices made sense of the world(s) around them? How have these practices accommodated to or altered the spaces they inhabit?

Week 7

Spirit and Rhythm in Motion

Mon. Mar. 5th

Olly Wilson, “It Don’t Mean a Thing if it Ain’t Got that Swing: The Relationship between African and African American Music” in Sheila Walker, ed., *African Roots/American Cultures*, pp. 153-168.

Gerardo Mosquera, “Africa in the Art of Latin America,” *Art Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Winter, 1992): 30-38.

Essay Due Today

Film Screening: (In class) “From Mambo to Hip-Hop” (53 minutes)

Wed. Mar. 7th

González, Anita. (2004) "Roots of Jarocho Dance" in *Jarocho's Soul: Cultural Identity and Afro-Mexican Dance*. Lanham: University Press of America.

González, Martha. (2009) "Zapateado Afro-Chicana Fandango Style: Self- Reflective Moments in Zapateado" in *Dancing Across Borders: Danzas y Bailes Mexicanos*. (Eds. Olga Nájera-Ramírez, Norma E. Cantú, and Brenda M. Romero) Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Zapateado – Mexican/Indigenous cousin of tap dancing
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pEoGIVgiM-Y&feature=related>

Guest: Dr. Micaela Diaz-Sanchez, Mount Holyoke College

Week 8

Diasporic Politics of Race

Mon. Mar. 12th

Romera Jorge Rodriguez, "The Afro Populations of America's Southern Cone: Organization, Development, and Culture in Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay" in Sheila Walker, ed., *African Roots/American Cultures*, pp. 314-321.

Lisa Brock, "Back to the Future: African-Americans and Cuba in the Time(s) of Race," *Contributions in Black Studies* 12, No. 1 (1994): 9-32.

Wed. Mar. 14th

Joseph E. Harris, "The African Diaspora in World History and Politics" in Sheila Walker, *African Roots/American Cultures*, pp. 104-117.

Small, "Introduction: Empire Strikes Back" in *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009), xxiii-xxxviii.

Week 9 – Spring Break: March 17-25th – Final Project Proposals due upon return.

Week 10

Mon. Mar. 26th

Allison Blakely, "The Emergence of Afro-Europe: A Preliminary Sketch" in *Black Europe*, pp. 3-28.

Tricia Danielle Keaton, "Black (American) Paris and the French Outer Cities: The Race Question and Questioning Solidarity in *Black Europe*," pp. 95-118. >>>**Final Project/Paper Proposals Due**

Wed. Mar. 28th

Ginetta E.B. Candelario, "It is Said that Haiti is Getting Blacker and Blacker: Narratives of Dominican Identity," in Candelario, *Black Behind the Ears* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 35-82.

Guest: Dr. Ginetta E.B. Candelario, Smith College

Film Screening: AL MÁS ALLÁ -- Wednesday March 28th 7:30pm UMass Amherst 137 Isenberg School of Management; Dir. Lourdes Portillo, USA/Mexico, 2008, 43 min, in Spanish w/English subtitles). An experimental documentary using narrative elements to explore the realities of shifting global wealth and drug trafficking along the Mayan coastline of Mexico. A vain filmmaker leads a fictional documentary crew through a beach town to interview real local merchants and tour guides, interrogating truth claims. In collaboration with the Five College Symposium on Women, Social Justice and Documentary. *The director will be present to discuss her work.*

Week 11

Mon. April 2nd

T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting and Tiffany Patterson, "Conundrum of Geography" pp. 84-91 and Tina Campt, "Pictures of 'US'? Blackness, Diaspora, and the Afro-German Subject pp. 63-83 in *Black Europe*.

Guest: Dr. Anna Schrade

Wed. April 4th

Advising Day – No Classes

Week 12

Mon. April 9th

Howard Dodson "The Transatlantic Slave Trade," pp. 118-122 and Joao Jose Reis, "Quilombos and Rebellions in Brazil," pp. 301-313 in *African Roots/American Cultures*.

Wed. April 11th

Michael Blakely, "The Study of New York's African Burial Ground: Biocultural and Engaged" in *African Roots/American Cultures*, pp. 222-231.

Recommended:

Blakely, "African Burial Ground Project: Paradigm for Cooperation?"

Friday, April 13th

Field Trip to the African Burial Ground NYC

Week 13

Afro-Asian Solidarities

Mon. April 16th

Vijay Prashad “Bandung is Dead” in *AfroAsian Encounters*, edited by Heike Raphael-Hernandez and Shannon Steen (New York: NYU Press, 2006), xi-xxiii.

Kim Hewitt, “Martial Arts is Nothing if Not Cool” in *Afro-Asia* edited by Fred Ho and Bill Mullen (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 265-284.

Recommended:

Robin Kelley and Betsy Esch, “Black Like Mao” in *Afro-Asia*.

Wed. April 18th

Oliver Wang, “These are the Breaks: Hip-Hop and Afro-Asian (dis)Connections” in *AfroAsian Encounters*.

Marc D. Perry, Hip-Hop’s Diasporic Landscapes of Blackness in *From Toussaint to Tupac: The Black International since the Age of Revolution*, edited by West, Martin and Wilkins (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 232-258.

Visuals: Iona Rozeal Brown

Week 14

Mon. April 23rd

Research Day with Caro Pinto (subject to change)

Wed. April 25th

Flex day (subject to change)

Week 15

Student Presentations

Mon. April 30th

Wed. May 2nd

Friday, May 5th

All course portfolios and final work for this course DUE. No exceptions.

Possible Writing Topics for any of the essays/projects

Select a pioneering scholar of African Diapora Studies and write about their contributions

Website review—review a website or blog that contains extensive information on an aspect of Afro-Diasporic culture (can include popular culture, history, religion, music, etc. but must be focused on the African Diaspora). Should use the course reading as entry point to discuss web content.

Select a historic or contemporary artist (broadly defined) and discuss the elements of diaspora in their work, art, etc.

Definitions of Culminating Semester Assignments

“Essay” Might include a full-length essay, an extensive annotated bibliography, or an interview with a “notable” artist, educator, organizer, or activist.

“Project” Might include a creative project of your choosing such as a visual art piece, a collection of poems, a high school lesson plan, a community arts project, a critique of a local libraries Africana holdings, etc. All projects must also include a descriptive write-up detailing the ideas and strategies contained therein.

@@@ Extra Material @@@

Weblinks

Chuchumbé, Quemallama

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ec_EUGorAqs

Orchestre Poly-Rythmo de Cotonou

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S10OZqd8DS0>

<http://www.gladyspalmera.com/en/news/detail/3507/the-almighty-polyrhythmic-orchestra-of-cotonou.html>

Bomba on a Chicago Train

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEfsz4Qp21I>

African Diaspora Archeology Network
<http://www.diaspora.uiuc.edu/newsletter.html>

Trans-Atlantic Slavery Voyages
<http://www.slavevoyages.org/tast/index.faces>

US Census “Minority Links”
<http://www.census.gov/pubinfo/www/NEWafamML1.html>

PBS resources
<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/slavery/resources/online.html>

Films

“The War We Are Living” with Francia Marquez; January 25, 2012, 12:30PM, Du Bois Library, Rm. 2601

“Precious Knowledge” February 13th at Smith; February 27th at UMass

“Bahia: Africa in the Americas” (clips)

“Quilombo Country” (clips)

“From Mambo to Hip Hop: A South Bronx Tale” (full)

“Then I’ll be Free to Travel Home: The Legacy of the New York African Burial Ground” (clips)

“This Far by Faith: African-American Spiritual Journeys” (clips)

Recommended:

“African Leaders: Amilcar Cabral and Frantz Fanon”

“Through the Door of No Return” (1982)

“Sankofa”

N.B. For purposes of efficacy, any part of this syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the professor.