

History 3102
The Modern African-American Experience

Class time and location: MWF 2:30 p.m.—LeConte Hall, room 135
Instructor: Robby Luckett
Email: robbyms@uga.edu
Office hours: MWF 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.—LeConte Hall, room 133

This syllabus is a general plan for the course: deviations announced to the class may be necessary.

Course Description

This course examines the African-American experience from a multidisciplinary perspective from 1865 to the present. We will examine the ways in which African Americans made the transition from slavery to freedom and how the American social, economic, and political landscape was dramatically altered over the 20th Century. We will study the evolution of black political thought and culture and offer an extensive analysis of the civil rights movement. Violence is an essential part of “The Modern African-American Experience,” so be prepared to be confronted with graphic images.

Monday and Wednesday classes will be reserved primarily for lecture. Because much of modern African-American history has been recorded on film, we will view a substantial number of videos on those days as well. All videos will be considered to be the equivalent of lectures, and you should treat them as such. You should take notes on them, be prepared to discuss them, and study them as you would your lecture notes for the exams.

Fridays will be our discussion day and will focus on the readings for the week. On these days be prepared for pop quizzes and in-class writing assignments, which will count towards your participation grade. These exercises will be simple, but they will test whether you did the assigned reading for the week. As noted, participation will be a part of your final grade, so also be prepared to contribute in class.

History is much more than dates and figures and names. What has happened in the past is important but even more so is how people conceptualize what has happened in the past. Critical and analytical thinking and especially writing are essential in this process. With that in mind, this class centers on reading and writing assignments. The ability to analyze a document beyond what is presented and to express that critique on paper is an invaluable skill beyond a history class.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend each class. I WILL TAKE ATTENDANCE EVERY DAY. If you have an excused absence, please notify me well before the scheduled class time.

Five unexcused absences (i.e. without documentary evidence of a medical or family emergency or similar event) will result in a half-letter grade being deducted from your overall grade. If your overall grade was going to be an A-, then it would be a B+ instead. Every unexcused absence after that will result in another half-letter grade deduction. If you are late to class, you will be counted as tardy, and every three tardies will be counted as an unexcused absence. If you are more than 10 minutes late to class, you will receive an unexcused absence. *We will begin taking official attendance on January 11.* If you have perfect attendance, you will receive a half-letter grade increase in your overall grade.

Book Reviews

There are two books assigned for this course: Richard Wright’s *Black Boy* and Laura Wexler’s *Fire in a Canebrake*. You will be expected to write a two- to three-page book review. These reviews can cover specific questions that I will provide ahead of time or any aspect of these books that you would like to

discuss, but they should NOT regurgitate the material. In writing these, you can assume that I have read the books, and you can focus on an extended analysis of relevant topics. I am not looking for you to talk about whether or not you liked the book. Instead, I want you to analyze important issues in the books.

We will talk more about these assignments as they approach, but a few pointers here may be helpful. You do not need to do any outside reading or bring in any outside sources. Simply focus on the books at hand. If you paraphrase or use a direct quote from the books, you should cite it in parentheses with a page number. I do not need a full citation. Your papers should be the full required length; one and a half pages do not count. They should not exceed 4 pages. If you do not turn in your review on time, there will be a 10-point penalty for each day that it is late. Correct spelling and grammar are an essential part of writing; PROOFREAD your papers.

Exams

There will be two exams: a midterm and a final. These will be written exams and will most likely include some identifications, short answers, and essays. The final exam will NOT be cumulative; it will only cover the material presented after the midterm. The exams will test you on the lecture material.

Extra Credit

There will be opportunities for extra credit over the course of the semester. More information will be provided as these dates approach. Take advantage of them because, unless I have made a blatant error, grade-grubbing will NOT help you.

WebCT

We will be using WebCT this semester to post important information from time to time. If you do not know what WebCT is or how to use it, come to see me or ask one of your fellow students. Do NOT use WebCT to contact me; I do not check the e-mail tool on it. Please use my regular UGA e-mail instead.

Disability or Health Related Issue

Students with a disability or health related issue who need a class accommodation should make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible.

A Culture of Honesty

All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Each student is responsible for becoming informed about those standards before performing any academic work.

Required Texts

Richard Wright *Black Boy* Laura Wexler *Fire in a Canebrake* Course packet

You may purchase the two books at the UGA bookstore; the Off Campus, Baxter Street, East Campus, and FTX Bookstores; or online. Half.com is one of my personal favorites. *The course packet can be picked up at Bel-Jean's.*

Grading

Participation	10%
First Book Review	20%
Midterm	20%
Second Book Review	25%
Final Exam	25%

DUE DATE

February 1
February 27
April 4
May

Schedule

Week 1

January 7 Introduction
January 9 The Civil War and Freedom
January 11 The Promise of Reconstruction
No discussion but begin reading *Black Boy*.

Week 2

January 14 The Failure of Reconstruction
January 16 **Reading**
Booker T. Washington:
Speech before the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=69>
W.E.B. DuBois: *Of Booker T. Washington and Others*
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=1111>
W.E.B. DuBois: *The Talented Tenth*
<http://teachingamericanhistory.org/library/index.asp?document=174>
January 18 Jack Johnson
Continue reading *Black Boy*.

Week 3

January 21 **NO CLASS—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**
January 23 Race Riots
January 25 **Reading**
Walter White, Course packet: *A Man Called White*
Continue reading *Black Boy*.

Week 4

January 28 World War I
January 30 The Great Migration
February 1 **Reading** **FIRST BOOK REVIEW**
Richard Wright: *Black Boy*

Week 5

February 4 The Blues
February 6 Lynching
February 8 **Reading**
James Allen: *Without Sanctuary*: www.withoutsanctuary.org

Week 6

February 11 Marcus Garvey
February 13 Harlem Renaissance
February 15 **Reading**
Zora Neale Hurston, Course packet: *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Week 7

February 18 Ida B. Wells-Barnett and Progressivism
February 20 The Black Church
February 22 **Reading**
Mary Church Terrell: *The Progress of Colored Women*
[http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/murray:@field\(DOCID+@lit\(lcrbmrpt0a13div2\)\)](http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/r?ammem/murray:@field(DOCID+@lit(lcrbmrpt0a13div2)))
Benjamin Mays, Course packet: *The Negro's Church*

Week 8

February 25 **REVIEW**
February 27 **MIDTERM**
February 29 **No Class—Leap Year!**

Week 9

March 3 The Great Depression and the New Deal
March 5 World War II
March 7 **No Reading**
Jackie Robinson

Week 10

March 10-14 **Spring Break. Begin reading *Fire in a Canebrake*.**

Week 11

March 17 Charles Hamilton Houston and the NAACP
March 19 *Brown v. Topeka Board of Education*
March 21 **Reading**
John Dittmer, Course packet: *Local People*
Howell Raines, Course packet: *My Soul Is Rested*, Down-Home Resistance
Continue reading *Fire in a Canebrake*.

Week 12

March 24 Emmett Till
March 26 Montgomery and Little Rock
March 28 **Reading**
Jo Ann Gibson Robinson, Course packet:
The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It
Continue reading *Fire in a Canebrake*.

Week 13

March 31 Sit-ins and Freedom Rides
April 2 1963
April 4 **Reading** **SECOND BOOK REVIEW**
Laura Wexler, *Fire in a Canebrake*

Week 14

April 7 Freedom Summer and the MFDP
April 9 Watts
April 11 **Reading**
Anne Moody, Course packet: *Coming of Age in Mississippi*

Week 15

April 14 Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam
April 16 The Rise of Black Power and the Black Panther Party
April 18 **Reading**
Malcolm X, Course packet: *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*
James Baldwin, Course packet: *The Fire Next Time*

Week 16

April 21 1970s and Black Culture
April 23 Hip Hop
April 25 **No Reading**
View Spike Lee: *Do the Right Thing*

Week 17

April 28 **REVIEW**
May ??? **FINAL EXAM**