Fall 2017
Course Title: Introduction to African-American History (History BC2440)
Class Days/Times: TuTh, 10:10-11:25 a.m. and additional class discussions on selected
Wednesdays, 3:10-4:00 p.m. or 7:10-8:00 p.m.
Venue: 409 Barnard Hall (and 403 Barnard Hall for Wednesday sessions)

Instructor: Professor Celia E. Naylor
Office Hours: Thursdays, 11:45 a.m.-1:45 p.m. and by appt. (214 LeFrak Center, Barnard Hall)
Telephone: 854-4876
E-mail: cnaylor@barnard.edu

COURSE OVERVIEW:

In this course we will examine major topics and themes in African-American history from the
colonial era to the present day. Topics include the Middle Passage and the transatlantic slave
trade; African-American slave culture(s) and communities; slave resistance; freedom
struggles/movements during slavery; Jim Crowism; mass migrations and the “New Negro”;
participation in international wars; Civil Rights and Black Power Movement(s); and challenges
and manifestations of the contemporary “color line” in the United States. We will approach the
subject matter utilizing a variety of primary and secondary sources (e.g., slave narratives, slave
ships’ logs, ex-slave interviews, oral histories, speeches, essays, documentaries, and an
autobiography). For this course, in addition to the midterm and final exam, students will write 2
(4-5 page) response papers during the course of the semester. In addition, throughout the
course, small groups of students will co-lead some sections of class discussions on selected
reading assignments. Every student will also attend at least 2 academic public lectures/panels
focused on African-American history. I will circulate information on possible events in the CU
community, as well as in New York City generally (e.g., at the African Burial Ground,
Schomburg Center, etc.).

BARNARD HONOR CODE

We, the students of Barnard College, resolve to uphold the honor of the College by
engaging with integrity in all of our academic pursuits. We affirm that academic
integrity is the honorable creation and presentation of our own work. We acknowledge
that it is our responsibility to seek clarification of proper forms of collaboration and use
of academic resources in all assignments or exams. We consider academic integrity to
include the proper use and care for all print, electronic, or other academic resources. We
will respect the rights of others to engage in pursuit of learning in order to uphold our
commitment to honor. We pledge to do all that is in our power to create a spirit of
honesty and honor for its own sake.

You are expected to observe all aspects of the Barnard Honor Code. All work submitted
for this course must be your own. Although you may discuss the assignments with your
classmates, your short response papers must reflect your own ideas and arguments. If
you include information from books, articles, and internet websites, such sources must
be clearly identified in your footnotes/end notes and bibliography. Please let me know
if you have any questions about the honor code as it relates to this course.
ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS:

If you are a student with a documented disability and require academic accommodations, you must visit the Office of Disability Services (ODS) for assistance. Students requesting eligible accommodations in their courses will need to first meet with an ODS staff member for an intake meeting. Once registered, students are required to visit ODS each semester to set up new accommodations and learn how to notify faculty. Accommodations are not retroactive, so it is best to register with ODS early each semester to access your accommodations. If you are registered with ODS, please schedule a meeting outside of class to see me and discuss your accommodations for this course; and remember to bring your faculty notification letter. Barnard College’s ODS is located in Milbank Hall, Room 008, and Columbia University’s Disability Services is on the 7th Floor of Alfred Lerner Hall.

WELLNESS

It is important for undergraduates to recognize and identify the different pressures, burdens, and stressors you may be facing, whether personal, emotional, physical, financial, mental, or academic. We, as a community, urge you to make yourself—your own health, sanity, and wellness—your priority throughout this term and your career here. Sleep, exercise, and eating well can all be a part of a healthy regimen to cope with stress. Resources exist to support you in several sectors of your life, and we encourage you to make use of them. Should you have any questions about navigating these resources, please visit these sites:

- http://barnard.edu/primarycare
- http://barnard.edu/counseling
- http://barnard.edu/wellwoman/about
- Stressbusters Support Network <pdf>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Class participation (15% of final grade): Attendance and active class participation are crucial to the course experience. Every student will also be responsible for co-leading (with one or two other students) a section of a class discussion of selected assigned readings. Students will sign up for co-leading specific discussion sessions by the end of the second week of class. These discussion sessions are required for all students. The final class participation grades of students who miss more than 2 classes will be docked for each additional absence (e.g., from a B+ → B).

2 (4-5 page) response papers (each paper is worth 15% of final grade): Response papers should analyze specific issues regarding the required readings (with a focus on primary sources). Use these response papers as a tool for exploring your own questions and interpretations that have emerged as a result of the readings and class discussions. Students should submit 1 response paper before the midterm and 1 after the midterm.

Midterm (25% of final grade)

Final exam (30% of final grade)
COURSE OBJECTIVES:

* Critically examine historical documents (primary sources) and scholarly interpretations (secondary sources) concerning key elements of African-American history

* Explore different methods and theories of historical analysis related to African-American historiography

* Analyze the impact of enslavement and discrimination, as well as ideologies of race, gender, sexuality, status and domination, on the experiences of African-Americans

* Explain the causes and ramifications of mass migrations of African-Americans from rural to urban areas, as well as from southern to northern sites

* Analyze the effects of significant events on African-Americans (e.g., the Great Depression and wars)

* Identify and compare strategies of organizations and movements focused on the civil rights of African-Americans

* Examine the “place” of race and the presence of the “color line” in the twenty-first century

* Hone and demonstrate critical analytical and writing skills in exams and two response papers

REQUIRED TEXTS:

NOTE: ALL REQUIRED TEXTS ARE ON RESERVE AT BARNARD’S LIBRARY


ADDITIONAL REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TEXTS (AVAILABLE IN THE BARNARD COLLEGE-COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY SYSTEM):


REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED FILMS (MOST OF THESE FILMS ARE AVAILABLE IN THE BARNARD COLLEGE-COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY SYSTEM):

* Digging for Slaves, Films for the Humanities and Sciences, 1989, 50 minutes.
* I am Not Your Negro, Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2017, 94 minutes.
* The Negro Soldier, Mad Phat Enterprises, 2009, c1944, 50 minutes.
* No Vietnamese Ever Called Me Nigger, Cinema Guild, 1968 (68 minutes).
* Unearthing Secret America, PBS Video, 2002, 60 minutes.
COURSE SCHEDULE:

Week 1: African Identities

September 5: Introduction


September 7

* White, Bay, and Martin, Freedom on My Mind, Chapter 1—“From Africa to America, 1441-1808”


Week 2: (Re)Constructing Ethnicity, Gender, Nation, and Race in the Atlantic World during the Transatlantic Slave Trade

September 12: “Old World” Conceptions of “Race,” Femaleness/Womanhood, and Blackness


September 13 (ADDITIONAL SECTION): “Crossing the Danger Water”: The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Middle Passage (Part 1)

* Equiano, The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano: Introduction and Chapters 1-2. (THE ENTIRE NARRATIVE IS AVAILABLE ONLINE)


**September 14: Cont. “ Crossing the Danger Water”: The Transatlantic Slave Trade and the Middle Passage (Part 2)**

**Week 3: Race and Power in the “Strange New Land”: Africans in Colonial America**

**September 19**


**September 21**


**Week 4: Race and National Identities in the Revolutionary Era**

**September 26**

* White, Bay, and Martin, *Freedom on My Mind*, Chapter 3—“African Americans in the Age of Revolution, 1741-1783”


* In class viewing and discussion of parts of *Unearthing Secret America* (PBS Video, 2002).

**September 28**

* White, Bay, and Martin, *Freedom on My Mind*, Chapter 4—“Slavery and Freedom in the New Republic in North America, 1775-1820”

* Digging for Slaves* (1989). (RECOMMENDED)
Week 5: Master-Slave Relations, Slave Resistance, and “The World the Slaves Made”

October 3

* White, Bay, and Martin, Freedom on My Mind, Chapter 5—“Black Life in the Slave South, 1820-1860”

October 4 (ADDITIONAL SECTION)


October 5


Week 6: “Let Your Motto Be Resistance! Resistance! Resistance!”

October 10

* White, Bay, and Martin, Freedom on My Mind, Chapter 6—“The Northern Black Freedom Struggle and the Coming of the Civil War, 1830-1860”

October 12

* Walker, David Walker's Appeal (1829)

* Marilyn Richardson, ed., Maria W. Stewart, America’s First Black Woman Political Writer: Essays and Speeches (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), Introduction, “Lecture Delivered at the Franklin Hall” (1832) and “An Address Delivered Before the Afric-American Female Intelligence Society of America” (1832) (AVAILABLE ON COURSEWORKS)
Week 7: Free at Last?

October 17

* White, Bay, and Martin, Freedom on My Mind, Chapter 7—“Freedom Rising: The Civil War, 1861-1865”


* White, Ar’n’t I a Woman?, Chapter 6—“From Slavery to Freedom” (RECOMMENDED)

October 19: MIDTERM

Week 8: The Color Line and Jim Crowism

October 24

* White, Bay, and Martin, Freedom on My Mind, Chapter 8—“Reconstruction: The Making and Unmaking of a Revolution, 1865-1885”


October 26

* White, Bay, and Martin, Freedom on My Mind, Chapter 9—“Black Life and Culture during the Nadir, 1880-1915”

* W.E.B. DuBois, The Souls of Black Folk—“The Forethought,” and “Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others.” (AVAILABLE ON COURSEWORKS)

* Booker T. Washington, Up From Slavery, “Two Thousand Miles for a Five-Minute Speech” and “The Atlanta Exposition Address.” (AVAILABLE ON COURSEWORKS)


* Before this class session, view Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice (1989). (ON RESERVE AT BARNARD’S LIBRARY)

Week 9: The Great Migration, WW I, the “New Negro”, the Great Depression, and WWII

October 31

* White, Bay, and Martin, Freedom on My Mind, Chapter 10—“The New Negro Comes of Age, 1915-1940”

* Before this class session, view Marcus Garvey: Look for Me in the Whirlwind (2002). (ON RESERVE AT BARNARD’S LIBRARY AND ALSO AVAILABLE ON YOUTUBE)
November 2


(ON RESERVE)

* Before this class session, view *The Negro Soldier*, Mad Phat Enterprises, 2009. Issued in 1944 by the War Department as a 16-mm. motion picture.

(ON RESERVE AT BARNARD’S LIBRARY AND ALSO AVAILABLE ON ARCHIVE.ORG)

Week 10

November 7: NO CLASS—ELECTION DAY—COLLEGE HOLIDAY

November 9: NO CLASS (NOTE: ATTENDING CONFERENCE OUT OF THE COUNTRY)

Week 11: The Civil Rights Movement(s)

November 14


November 15 (ADDITIONAL SECTION)

* Before this class session, view *I am Not Your Negro*, Magnolia Home Entertainment, 2017, 94 minutes.

November 16

* Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*.

* *Eyes on the Prize*, Part 4 “No Easy Walk.”

(RECOMMENDED—ON RESERVE AT BARNARD’S LIBRARY AND ALSO AVAILABLE ON YOUTUBE)

Week 12: Black Power, Black Panthers, and Black Feminism(s)

November 21


* Selections regarding the Black Power Movement, Black Panthers, and Combahee River Collective (AVAILABLE ON COURSEWORKS)

**November 23:** NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK

**Week 13:**

**November 28: The Vietnam War—On the Homefront and on the Front Lines**


* Before this class session, view *No Vietnamese Ever Called Me Nigger*, Cinema Guild, 1968. (AVAILABLE ON YOUTUBE)

**November 29 (ADDITIONAL SECTION): The Politics of Progress and Poverty at the End of the Twentieth Century**


**November 30:**

* Jones and Newman, *Our America: Life and Death on the South Side of Chicago.*

**Week 14: The Twenty-First-Century “Color Line” in the Age of Obama and Trump**

**December 5**


**December 6 (ADDITIONAL SECTION): #Black Lives Matter and #Say Her Name**

* Selected articles regarding recent shootings, #Black Lives Matter Movement and #Say Her Name Movement (AVAILABLE ON COURSEWORKS)

**December 7**

**“Show and Tell” Class Discussion**

Each student will bring to class one document (poem, cartoon, photograph, song, etc.) and briefly discuss (3 minutes maximum) why (s)he/they believe(s) the item reflects this moment in the history of African-Americans in the United States.