AAST 200: Intro to African American Studies
Distance Education (Online)

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Course Description:
This course is an interdisciplinary approach to the African American experience in the United States. Using a model developed by African American Studies pioneer Maulana Ron Karenga that focuses on history, religion, politics, economics, sociology, psychology and the creative arts as the essential topics in the study of the African American experience, this course provides students an understanding of the African American perspective in these areas. Primary sources by African American writers and scholars are also used to support this perspective and introduce students to the latest literature and research on the African American experience.

Course Learning Outcomes:
Students in this course will demonstrate the ability to:

A. Apply concepts, terms, and theories from social science and humanities to the analysis of transnational black life and culture.
B. Identify major writers and movements in the African Diaspora literary tradition and major figures and events in African Diaspora history.
C. Make analytical connections between texts, literary and historical periods, and critical theories evolving from the Black intellectual tradition in written communication.
D. Design and implement a research paper that interprets, analyzes, and synthesizes knowledge gained within the course.

Required Materials:

• Textbook: Not Just in February: Introduction to African American Studies by CofC Staff (only available at CofC Bookstore)
• Supplemental readings, lecturers, etc. provided by the instructor via OAKS

Hardware
• A computer with Internet access, microphone, and speakers.
  • You must have a reliable Internet connection. Having to rely on the public library or Starbucks, for example, will likely make it challenging to have a consistent presence inside OAKS. If you are concerned, please contact me within the first week so we can determine if this course will be manageable for you.
• A webcam is recommended, but not required
• A headset or earphones (optional)

**Software**
• [Adobe Reader](http://www.adobe.com/products/reader.html) (free)
• [Adobe Flash Player](http://www.adobe.com/products/flashplayer.html) (free)
• Word processing software (such as Microsoft Word, which you can download for free as a CofC student by clicking [here](http://www.cofc.edu/it/itsoftware/office365.php))
• [Chrome](http://www.chrome.com) or [Firefox](http://www.mozilla.org/en-CA/firefox/new/) Internet browsers (I strongly recommend you do not use Internet Explorer)
• **Google Hangouts**: Hangouts is Google’s version of Skype, allowing us to communicate “face-to-face” as needed. Follow these steps [click here](https://support.google.com/hangouts/answer/363496) to start a Hangout. This is an optional way to communicate with me. Refer to the section below on “communication.”
• **Voicethread**: is an online tool in which you can use images, slides, video that is accompanied by voice commentary. I will use this tool to present course lectures.

**Course Requirements:**
• Reading response Journals (5) _____/10%
• Critical Essay 1 _____/20%
• Critical Essay 2 _____/20%
• Class participation/discussion _____/10%
• Midterm Exam _____/20%
• Final Exam _____/20%

Total _____/100%

**Grade Scale**: Please be advised that I will be using the +/- system in determining your final grade.

A 100-95   A- 94-90  B+ 89-87  B 86-84  B- 83-80  C+ 79-77
C 76-74   C- 73-70  D 69-60  F 59-0

**Communication: How Should I Communicate with the Instructor?**

*Ask Three, Then Me!*

I receive hundreds of emails every week, many from students asking questions that could easily be answered by reading the syllabus or asking a classmate. Thus, before emailing me, please follow these steps:

1. Consult the class schedule and syllabus.
2. Check OAKS for announcements and instructions, including the Course Lounge discussion board.

3. Confer with three classmates.

If you still don't know the answer to your question, you may email me directly at martinkl2@cofc.edu.

Email:
Most organizations are dependent on email for internal and external communications. The way you present yourself in emails says a lot about your work ethic and your priorities. When corresponding with me, please:

- Include AAST 200 DE in the subject line
- include a respectful greeting (e.g., "Hi Dr. Martin" or "Dear Dr. Martin")
- fully sign your name
- use complete sentences
- proofread your email

- Typically, I will respond to your email within 24 hours, although my response time will be slower on weekends (24-36 hours). I stop responding to emails after 8pm.

- If you do not receive a reply within 48 hours, please re-send your message (unless, of course, you haven't followed the "ask three, then me" policy).

Face to Face Meetings:
If an email will not suffice, I'd be happy to chat face-to-face. For those who are local, you are more than welcome to meet with me in my office: 206C ECTR. If, however, you are not able to meet in person, we can chat via Google Hangouts. If you don't have a webcam, we can use the chat feature inside OAKS. Please be sure to schedule face to face meetings at least 24 hours in advance to ensure availability.

Discussion Boards:
The OAKS Discussion forums are the first place you should visit when you have questions related to the course.

For general questions about the course, schedule, assignments, etc. please post questions to the Course Lounge Discussion Board. You are highly encouraged to respond to other participants’ questions if you know the answer to their query.

All content-related questions should be posted to the Module Specific Discussion Boards. This is where you post questions, comments, and ideas related to the information shared in each module.

Discussion Board Decorum:
• Students are required to post to the module specific discussion boards for part of their participation grade. The discussion threads will be associated with each module and a specific required reading/viewing.
• Discussion posts are due on Tuesdays by 11:59pm.
• You are also required to respond to three of your peers' comments. Responses are due on Thursdays at 11:59pm.
• Remember it is good netiquette to subscribe to and maintain the discussion in threads you create.
  o Discussion boards are a place for you to reflect and respond to what you have learned by reading/reviewing the required course material. I will provide an open-ended topic to start the discussion—be sure to address the question in your comments!
  o Comments should be substantive, not simply suggesting that a reading was “good”. You will need to explain your position/opinion and support it with evidence from the course material. 300 word minimum is a good place to start.
  o I am expecting students to demonstrate the depth of their thought process and to synthesize how the material connects to the overall objectives of the course.
  o While comments can be informal, you will refrain from using obscene, profane, or discriminatory language. Remember, this is ALWAYS a professional, learning environment.
  o Please avoid inflammatory or overly aggressive language that is often used on social media. If you would not say it in a traditional classroom space, you probably should not say it on the discussion board.

Attendance:

Just like any organization, this class is a community whose success is dependent on everyone's participation. Your performance is tied to how frequently you log into the course and how actively you participate.

Please keep in mind that OAKS allows me to view your online activity. This includes number of logins, materials accessed, and time spent.

Classroom Etiquette:

The classroom is first and foremost a learning environment. Students should feel safe and comfortable to speak freely on their ideas and opinions. We will be courteous to each other and display the utmost respect for everyone in the class. I will not tolerate profane, distasteful, or discriminatory language even in an online environment. Conduct your netiquette accordingly!
**Netiquette** is a combination of the words “network” and “etiquette” and refers to codes of online conduct. Because online communication generally lacks visual cues present in face-to-face interactions, misunderstandings and conflict can easily arise. Thus, please abide by the following netiquette rules when communicating with me and your peers during this class:

- Tend your threads. If you post a question or comment to the discussion boards, reply to everyone who has contributed to the conversation you started.
- Use appropriate capitalization. Using all capital letters is the equivalent of yelling (aside from acronyms).
- Be mindful of “flames”—These are outbursts of extreme emotion or opinion.
- Think before you hit the post (enter/reply) button. Once posted, you can’t take it back!
- Use clear subject lines in emails and discussion board posts.
- Use abbreviations or acronyms only if the entire class knows them. If not, define them. Avoid distasteful acronyms used in texts and social media. This is not the appropriate space for it.
- Be forgiving. Anyone can make a mistake. We’re all learning together.
  - Keep the dialog **collegial** and **professional**. We each have different teaching philosophies and opinions about online education. We do not have to agree to learn from one another or engage in discussion.

**Course Structure:**

This course will be taught exclusively online via OAKS. All course materials are available and assignments will be uploaded and graded via OAKS. It is your responsibility to make sure your account is functioning!

This course contains **seven learning modules**, including the Orientation. Each module represents a unit of instruction taking place over the course of ___ weeks. The course modules are located in the **Content** tool in OAKS. Everything you need for instruction is located inside each module (required reading, assignments, lectures, etc.)

**Schedule:**

The course will be conducted asynchronously via OAKS; however, it is NOT self-paced. That means you can work through each module at your own pace, but you will not be able to move on to the next module until it is opened to the entire class. A new module will open on **Wednesdays**—in accordance
with the course schedule. Also, due to the collaborative nature of the course, there are due dates assigned to the learning activities that must be met.

Modules open on Wednesdays at 12:01 a.m. EST and will remain open for the duration of the course. Begin with the Module Checklist and proceed sequentially through the content listed. Most major assignments are due on Tuesdays by 11:59 p.m. EST (see course schedule for specific dates).

How can I be successful in this Course?

- Log into OAKS a minimum of 4 days a week. Be an active learner and participant in our online community. Set a weekly schedule for this course as with your other courses; put it in your calendar and have dedicated time to work on this course. I recommend 5-7 hours a week to complete reading, lectures, and other assignments.
- Maintain your virtual presence—this entire experience will be a bore if students are not willing to participate in discussion boards and other activities meant to keep the course interesting. Don’t troll—let us know you are present by being an active participant in the class. Besides, part of your grade relies on this.
- Don’t let the digital realm fool you—this course will cover the same amount of material as in a face to face course and will likely be more challenging in a digital environment. Please expect the same academic rigor in this course as in any other.
- Time management is key. Procrastination is your enemy. Student tend to wait until the last possible moment to complete and submit work. This is the easiest way to fall behind in class and sabotage your grade. Don’t be that person. Stay AHEAD of the course schedule.
- Use technology to your advantage—OAKS, smart phones, and cloud services allow us to stay organized with numerous apps, sync ability, reminders, alerts, etc. Please make use of all the technology to help you stay on task.

Technical Difficulties:
If you have questions or problems related to the course, please follow the communication procedures noted above. If you have technical problems, please contact Student Computing Support or Helpdesk using these methods:

- Student Computing Support
  - 843-953-5457
  - studentcomputingsupport@cofc.edu
  - blogs.cofc.edu/scs
- Helpdesk
  - 843-953-3375
  - helpdesk@cofc.edu
It's important to resolve technical problems swiftly, so do not delay getting support. Computer failure or unavailability does not constitute an excuse for not completing assignments.

Please Note: Computer failure/unavailability and internet inconsistency/unavailability do not constitute an excuse for not completing assignments by the due dates.

Required Assignments:

Reading response: There will be a total of ___ reading response journals required for the semester to assess your synthesis of the reading material. Journals should be thoughtful and reflect the depth of your critical thought process. Journals are a place for you to explore your thoughts on a given text or topic. Each journal will correspond to a text being explored during the semester. Each journal will provide a discussion question related to the required reading material. Be sure to answer the question fully and thoughtfully. You must submit original work. Each journal should be a minimum of 500 words (1.5 double-spaced pages).

Essays (2): Each student will submit TWO 5-page critical essays in which they will use two scholarly sources (journal article, book, or book chapter—NOT a book review) that address two separate topics: See Oaks for detailed explanation of the assignments.

Exams: Students will be evaluated on two exams for the semester. Exams will be administered online. See OAKS for more detail.

Late Assignments:
I do not accept late assignments. Any assignment not submitted by the due date will not be accepted and all points will be forfeited. No exceptions.

Please Note: Computer failure/unavailability and internet inconsistency/unavailability do not constitute an excuse for not completing assignments by the due dates.

I have worked extremely hard to have all of the assignments, modules, and due dates available on the first day of class. Please be sure to adhere to these dates and manage your time accordingly. Technology fails, be sure to give yourself enough time to complete the assignment AND turn it in with plenty of time to spare.

*Remember: the due date is the LAST possible moment you can turn in an assignment. I encourage you to submit work well in advance of the due date.
**Academic Honor Code:**
The academic honor code forbids lying, cheating, attempted cheating, and plagiarism. Plagiarism is defined as presenting the work of others as your own and copying sources without citation. Plagiarism or cheating on an exam will result in an XF grade for the course. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported directly by the instructor and/or others having knowledge of the incident to the Dean of Students. A student found responsible by the Honor Board for academic dishonesty will receive a XF in the course, indicating failure of the course due to academic dishonesty. This grade will appear on the student's transcript for two years after which the student may petition for the X to be expunged. The student may also be placed on disciplinary probation, suspended (temporary removal) or expelled (permanent removal) from the College by the Honor Board.

Students should be aware that unauthorized collaboration--working together without permission--is a form of cheating. Unless the instructor specifies that students can work together on an assignment, quiz and/or test, no collaboration during the completion of the assignment is permitted. Other forms of cheating include possessing or using an unauthorized study aid (which could include accessing information via a cell phone or computer), copying from others' exams, fabricating data, and giving unauthorized assistance. Research conducted and/or papers written for other classes cannot be used in whole or in part for any assignment in this class without obtaining prior permission from the instructor. Students can find the complete Honor Code and all related processes in the Student Handbook at [http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php](http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/honor-system/studenthandbook/index.php)

**American Disabilities Act:**
The College of Charleston is committed to providing reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities, as required under federal law. Students who require academic adjustments in the classroom should apply at the Center for Disability Services / SNAP, located on the first floor of the Lightsy Center, Suite 104. Students approved for accommodations, please contact the instructor to discuss appropriate academic accommodations BEFORE THE FIRST DAY OF CLASS. Please provide your instructor with the proper documentation ASAP to ensure accommodations are implemented in a timely manner.

**Course Calendar & Reading Schedule:**

**Module 1: Orientation**
- Syllabus Overview & quiz
- Navigating OAKS tutorial
Module 2: Africa and the Ancestors

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Identify major figures, cultural heritage, and historical movements in pre-colonial African history.

- **Voicethread Lectures:**
  - Ancient African Empires
    - Excerpt from Sundiata: An Old Epic of Mali (Video? Reading?)
  - African Spirituality (Introduction)
  - Akan/Ghana: Folklore, Kente Cloth, Day Names, etc.
- **Module Exit Quiz**

Module 3: Creating the Black Atlantic

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Analyze and recognize the cultural transformation and retentions of the African Diaspora during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

- **Film:** The Black Atlantic (Films on Demand)
- **Reading:** Olaudah Equiano Ch. 1-2
  - Discussion Board assignment
  - Slides/Voicethread images from Elmina Castle (Ghana)
- **Reading:** "Gullah Attitudes about Life and Death"
  - Short Lecture about Gullah Geechee Culture
  - Film: "The Language You Cry In"
  - Discussion Board assignment
- **Reading:** "What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?" Frederick Douglass
  - Reading response journal assignment (Douglass)
- **Module Exit Quiz**

Module 4: Black Intellectuals and New Negroes

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Make analytical connections between texts, literary/historical periods, and critical debates evolving from the Black Intellectual Tradition in written communication

- **Reading:** Booker T. Washington, "Atlanta Cotton Exposition Speech" (1895)
- **Reading:** W.E.B. DuBois, "Of Mr. Washington & Others" (1903)
  - Group Assignment: Washington v DuBois debate
  - Reading Response Journal assignment
- **Reading:** Ida B. Wells, "Ch.1: The Case Stated" from *A Red Record*
  - Discussion Board assignment
  - **Essay 1 Assignment Due--**
• Review plagiarism slides and how Turnitin.com functions
  • Reading: Richard Wright, “The Ethics of Living Jim Crow”
    o Discussion Board Assignment
  • Module Exit quiz

Module 5: Black Transnationals & Pan-Africanism

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Synthesize social and cultural politics of freedom, creativity, and racial uplift to the analysis of transnational black life and culture.

• Reading: Marcus Garvey, “Africa for the Africans” (1927)
• Voicethread lecture: Garvey, UNIA, & Pan-Africanism
  o Discussion Board Assignment
• Reading: Kamau Braithewait’s “Nation Languages” and Geneva Smitherman’s “Black Modes of Discourse”
  o Video: Yoruba v. Lukumi (OAKS)
  o Voicethread Lecture: Black Modes of Discourse or Black English
  o Discussion Board Assignment
• Midterm Exam (Asynchronous)
• Film: Blacks in Latin America (Dominican Republic & Haiti)
  o Reading Response Journal & Discussion Board Assignment
• Reading: Julia Alvarez, “A White Woman of Color”
  o Discussion Board Assignment
• Zora Neale Hurston, Excerpt from Tell My Horse (Jamaica)
• Module Exit Quiz

Module 6: Black Power, Black Studies and Black Art

LEARNING OUTCOMES: Understand the historical and social context from which Black Studies as a discipline evolved and recognize its major questions and debates

• Voicethread Lecture: 1960s-70s overview
• Video: Malcolm X, “The Ballot or the Bullet”
  o Reading Response journal--Analyzing Malcolm’s speech
  o Discussion Board Assignment
• Reading: “Black Panther Party 10-point Platform”
  o Discussion Board Assignment
• Film: The Black Power Mixtape 1965-1972 (Available on DVD; find a way to make it accessible to online class)
  o Discussion Board Assignment
• Essay 2 Assignment due
• Reading: Maulana Karenga “Black Art: Mute Matter Given Force”
Module 7: Black Feminism:

**LEARNING OUTCOMES:** Analyze and synthesize the impact of black feminism on Black Studies as a discipline; comprehend the intersectionality of being black and female.

- Reading: “Combahee River Collective: A Black Feminist Statement”
- Video: June Jordan, “Poem About My Rights”
  - Discussion Board Assignment
- Reading: Alice Walker, “In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens” and “Womanism”
  - Discussion Board Assignment
- Video: Audre Lorde, “The Uses of the Erotic: Erotic as Power”
  - Discussion Board Assignment
  - Video: Beyoncé’s 2017 Grammy Performance
  - Reading Response Journal
- Reading: Angela Davis and Ice Cube Interview
  - Discussion Board Assignment: Black Feminism and Hip Hop?
- Module Exit Quiz
- Final Exam (Asynchronous)