

University of Florida
History Department and African American Studies Program
Fall 2017

AFA 4430/AMH 3931: Black Lives Matter

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M/W/F: 4 (10:40-11:30)
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and by appointment



Course Description

This course has two goals. First it seeks to create a comprehensive history of the Black Lives Matter movement and second it seeks to make the academy accountable to a political project created by students and young activists around the country. We will accomplish this by raising questions about, offering studied reflection upon, and allocating dedicated institutional space to the failures of democracy, capitalism, the criminal justice system, and local and national leadership as these issues directly impact African Americans and as they specifically pertain to the Black Lives Matter movement. Throughout this course, we will examine the particular historical, geographical, cultural, social, and political context out of which Black Lives Matter emerged. To do so, we will approach readings and discussions from a diversity of disciplines and perspectives. We will begin our analysis with the broader context of the urban crisis, the prison industrial complex, and racial inequality, and then move to case studies of the incidents that made Black Lives Matter into a collective (though not necessarily cohesive) movement. The hope is that in striking a balance between historical inquiry, interdisciplinary methods, current events, and collective inquiry, you will be better prepared to meld activism with the academy and leave with a more rich understanding of why #blacklivesmatter.

Note: This class is a work in progress. We will build on knowledge of past events and be prepared to interrogate new events as they unfold. Thus your participation as students is central

to this collective endeavor as we ask and answer questions about race, structural inequality, and violence together.

Course Objectives: In this course, we will be building a history of a contemporary social movement as it continues to unfold. Here are some of our goals for the semester:

1. You will not only acquire an understanding of key developments in the Black Lives Matter campaign but also understand the context out of which it emerged and the policies that produce and reinforce racial inequality.
2. You will develop the ability to read and analyze primary documents, situate them in historical context, and develop critical interpretations of their significance.
3. You will learn how to think across a number of disciplines, participate in a learning collective, and communicate important, difficult topics to a broad audience.

Required Readings:

We will read a variety of books, articles, and primary documents. There are four (4) required texts available for purchase at the UF Bookstore or from an online retailer. Note: Amazon.com offers competitive pricing on many of these books, including the option to rent books and purchase used copies. If you decide to purchase your books online, please make sure that you purchase the correct edition and that you allow enough time for shipping. In addition to these books, there will be various readings, images, and other primary documents available online via Canvas, the course e-learning site, at <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>. These are required readings and will form the basis of many assignments. Whether you print them out as hard copy or not is up to you, but please be sure that you can access them in time for class.

- TA-NEHISI COATES, *BETWEEN THE WORLD AND ME*
- MICHELLE ALEXANDER, *THE NEW JIM CROW: MASS INCARCERATION IN THE AGE OF COLORBLINDNESS* (available as eBook via UFL library)
- KEEANGA-YAMAHTTA TAYLOR, *FROM #BLACKLIVESMATTER TO BLACK LIBERATION*
- WESLEY LOWERY, *THEY CAN'T KILL ALL OF US: THE STORY OF THE STRUGGLE FOR BLACK LIVES*

Required Podcasts and Film Screenings

Podcasts and films are a crucial component of this class. There are currently four (4) required podcasts (3 episodes and 1 series) and two (2) required films all of varying lengths. Podcasts and screenings will either be played during class time or assigned to watch/listen on your own. If you miss one, you are responsible for making it up on your own time. Note: there will be writing assignments associated with the podcasts and screenings and they are considered fair material on which to be tested.

Films

13th (1hr40mins)

Stay Woke: The Black Lives Matter Movement (39mins)

Podcasts

Minnesota Public Radio, 74 Seconds

It's Been a Minute with Sam Sanders, "Charlottesville and White People"
 This American Life, "Cops See it Differently, Part One"
 This American Life, "Cops See it Differently, Part Two"

Course Assignments:

- This is an upper-level course. As such, this class requires a serious commitment of time and energy. Please have your syllabus on hand and be sure to keep up with all of the reading and writing deadlines.
- **Readings:** Each week, you will be assigned roughly 100 pages of reading. You are expected to read all of the assigned readings before class and arrive in class with questions, comments, and opinions about what you have read. Make sure to allow enough time in your schedule to read thoroughly and critically.
- **Quizzes:** There will be six (6) quizzes given during the semester. I reserve the right to let you know when they will be administered (or not!). These quizzes will be short and will be on the day's reading. Quizzes will be graded on a 20-point scale, and you may drop your lowest score.
- **Reflections:** You are required to write a five hundred (500) word reflection on five of the films, podcasts, and/or books. These will be due at the beginning of the class following the viewing/listening unless otherwise noted. Reflections will be graded on a 20-point scale.
- **Timeline Exercise:** You are required to research an incident that resulted in either local or national Black Lives Matter protests through newspaper articles and other online reports and construct a detailed timeline about it. You will also present your findings in class. Further instructions regarding format and content will be distributed before the assignment is due. This is a group project. Timelines are due on **September 29**. Presentations will be ongoing.
- A take-home midterm exam covering all material up to that point will be on **October 13**.
- **Final Project:** You will have the option to choose from three different research projects: 1) a research paper drawing from course material and themes 2) a creative project drawing from course material and themes or 3) a public impact project drawing from course materials and themes. You must decide what type of project you want to do by **October 23**. The proposal is due on **November 8** and the final project is due on **December 6**. This will be a group project. Further instructions regarding format and content will be distributed before the assignments are due.

Grades: Your grade in this class will be determined largely by your performance on a variety of written assignments and exams. These exercises will allow you to hone your critical thinking and writing skills and allow you to reflect thoughtfully on race and the criminal justice system. Improvement over the course of the semester is not only encouraged but also rewarded.

Your grade for this class will be determined as follows:

Participation and Attendance	15%
Quizzes	10%
Reflections	10%
Timeline Exercise	15%
Midterm	20%
Final Project Proposal	10%
Final Project	20%

UF Grading Scale

Letter Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E	WF	ING	S-U
Grade Points	4.0	3.67	3.33	3.0	2.67	2.33	2.0	1.67	1.33	1.0	.67	0	0	0	0

A100-94, A-: 90-93	C+: 77-79, C: 74-76, C-: 70-73
B+: 87-89, B: 84-86, B-: 80-83	D+: 67-69, D: 64-66, D-: 60-64 F: below 60

Essays: Generally speaking, I will look for the following in your papers:

1. Analysis. Does the paper make a convincing and coherent argument?
2. Evidence. Is the argument well supported by evidence? Is evidence used effectively?
3. Organization. Is the paper structured in logical way?
4. Content and originality. Does the paper make an original contribution or insight? Does the author's own opinion and voice come through?
5. Mechanics and style. Is the paper free of spelling and grammar errors? Is it clearly written?

Attendance and Assignment Policies

- Attendance is required, expected, and central to your learning experience. Attendance is taken in a few ways including: roll call, sign-up sheets, quizzes, and in class activities.
- Class will begin and end on time each day. Please be considerate of your classmates and avoid disrupting their learning.
- In addition to showing up for class on time, be ready to articulate and defend your ideas, as well as to listen to and work with the ideas of others.
- Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date and turned in by you and you alone. Unless stated otherwise, late assignments will be penalized one-third-letter grade per 24-hour period after the deadline. So if you turn your assignment in after class ends the same day it is due, and your grade is a B, your final grade will be a B-.
- In order for assignments to be accepted without losing points, please contact me as soon as possible and provide documentation of illness or other university-approved absences. Dated documentation can include, but are not limited to: dated doctor's note, documentation of jury duty, obituary, etc. I reserve the right to contact the appropriate sources to confirm the documentation. If you know you must have an excused absence, contact me beforehand to make arrangements to turn in work before class.

- If you turn in an assignment and leave before class ends, your assignment will be discarded and will be considered late once re-submitted.
- You are responsible for getting the information and material you miss in class from a classmate. A student with 6 unexcused absences will have their grade dropped a full letter grade. More than 9 absences will result in automatic failure of the course. Arriving at class late and/or leaving before class is over counts as ½ an absence. I will not contact students during the semester to apprise them of their attendance status; it is the responsibility of the students to check this regularly. Religious holidays, UF athletic travel conflicts, and written explanations from a certified health professional are eligible for an excused absence when cleared with the instructor ahead of time. See UF attendance policy at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Guidelines for Discussion

Participation in discussion is an important part of your role as a member of this class. I expect students to be prepared and engaged in discussion. You should expect to be called on from time to time. Please keep in mind that conversations about race can stir up strong emotions. A great deal of this results from the environment of mistrust and misunderstanding that exists in the wider society. I start from the assumption that those of you that have chosen to take this class have come with an open mind, ready not only to share your points of view but to try to understand the perspectives of others. Thoughtful, insightful, and honest points of view are needed in order to help us all learn to communicate more effectively and openly about race. So that everyone feels respected in the classroom, use tact and understanding when presenting your ideas. Personal attacks, disparaging remarks, or attempts to dominate the conversation will not be tolerated. Remember as well that individuals in the classroom may have been personally affected by the issues that we are discussing; and to show respect to your peers and the educational process.

Mobile Electronic Device Policy

Recent studies have shown that college students retain less information when they use laptops instead of pen and paper, and that open laptops are disruptive to nearby students. However, I recognize that many of you are more comfortable taking notes on a computer, so I will allow it during lecture and discussion. Laptops will not be allowed during film screenings, so do bring pen and paper to class on these days. I reserve the right to ban laptops if they become disruptive over the course of the semester. Please silence your cell phone prior to the start of class, keep it out of sight, and do not text or use social media apps during class time.

Correspondence

I will send important course announcements and other correspondence to you via your UF email account. If you do not use this as your primary account, please make sure that you have your UF email forwarded to you and check your email regularly! Sadly I will not text you reminders about when assignments are due.

How to get in touch with your professor

- Come to office hours. I truly enjoy getting to know more about students outside of the classroom. You are encouraged to stop by with any questions that you may have about assignments, readings, your major, going grad school, or other pertinent topics.

- Email me at lpearlman@ufl.edu. I will generally get back to you within 24 hours, though my response will be slower during the weekend. Do not email me the night before an assignment is due and expect to receive a response.

Students with Disabilities

Please do not hesitate to contact the instructor during the semester if you have any individual concerns or issues that need to be discussed. Students requesting classroom accommodations must first register with the Dean of Students Office (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/). The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting an accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Academic Honesty

The University, as well as your instructor, values and expects academic integrity. Ethical violations include cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, and academic misconduct (including turning in the work of others as your own and reusing old assignments). These will not be tolerated and will result in a failure of the assignment and the risk of an automatic failing grade in the course, and possible expulsion from UF. To avoid plagiarism, you must not copy the words, phrases, arguments, ideas, or conclusions of another person or source (including Internet sources) without properly crediting the person or source with both quotation marks and a footnote. Make sure that you properly cite direct quotations, paraphrased information, and facts that are not widely known. I will provide you with guidelines for proper citations and formatting prior to your submission of all written work, but you may contact me at any time for clarification. For more information on UF's honest policy, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/scctr/honorcodes/conductcode.php>. For more information on how UF's Judicial Affairs processes cases of plagiarism, see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/academic.php>.

Student Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>.

U Matter, We Care

Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help if a member of our community is in need. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.

Course Schedule

Please Note: the schedule is provisional and may be changed as needed by the instructor.

*Reading should be completed by the beginning of class on the day they are listed

Week One: Introduction

- August 21 None
- August 23 Read Syllabus
- August 25 Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” (<https://www.deanza.edu/faculty/lewisjulia/White%20Privilege%20Unpacking%20the%20Invisible%20Knapsack.pdf>); Ezekiel Kweku, “Slow Poison,” Pacific Standard, August 15, 2015 (<https://psmag.com/social-justice/even-if-the-police-dont-kill-me-a-lifetime-of-preparing-for-them-to-just-might>)

Week Two: Setting the Stage

- August 28 Southern Poverty Law Center, The Alt-Right on Campus (https://www.splcenter.org/sites/default/files/soc_alt-right_campus_guide_2017_web.pdf); Lawrence Ware, “How to Survive, Be Safe and Thrive at a Predominantly White Institution,” August 8, 2016 (<http://www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2016/08/how-to-survive-be-safe-and-thrive-at-a-predominantly-white-institution/>)
- August 30 <http://blacklivesmatter.com/about/>; <http://blacklivesmatter.com/herstory/>; <http://blacklivesmatter.com/guiding-principles/>; <http://blacklivesmatter.com/11-major-misconceptions-about-the-black-lives-matter-movement/>
Syllabus Acknowledgement form due
- September 1 Listen: NPR, Fresh Air, “Historian Says Don’t ‘Sanitize’ How our Government Created Ghettos,” May 14, 2015 (<http://www.npr.org/2015/05/14/406699264/historian-says-dont-sanitize-how-our-government-created-the-ghettos>)
Read: Coates, Between the World and Me, 1-50

Week Three: Reckoning With Our History

- September 4 No Class
- September 6 Coates, Between the World and Me, 50-100
Podcast Reflection due on Fresh Air
- September 8 Coates, Between the World and Me, 100-150

Week Four: Cops and Black Lives Matter

September 11 Listen: NPR, This American Life: Cops See it Differently, Part One
 (<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/547/cops-see-it-differently-part-one>)
 Book Reflection due on Coates

September 13 Listen: NPR, This American Life: Cops See it Differently, Part Two
 (<http://www.thisamericanlife.org/radio-archives/episode/548/cops-see-it-differently-part-two>)

September 15 Listen: NPR, It's Been a Minute with Sam Sanders, "Charlottesville and White People," August 14, 2017
 (<https://www.npr.org/player/embed/543545843/543555197>)

Week Five: The New Jim Crow

September 18 Alexander, The New Jim Crow, ch 2
 Podcast Reflection due

September 20 Alexander, The New Jim Crow, ch 3

September 22 Group work on Timeline Project

Week Six: Making a Movement

September 25 Taylor, From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation, ch 4

September 27 Taylor, From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation, ch 5

September 29 **Timelines Due**

Week Seven: Making a Movement (cont.)

October 2 Taylor, From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation, ch 6

October 4 Taylor, From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation, ch 7

October 6 No Class

Week Eight: Policing the Movement

October 9 Policing the Planet (excerpts) on Canvas

October 11 Policing the Planet (excerpts) on Canvas

October 13 **Midterm Exam Due**

Week Nine: Living in the Black Lives Matter Era

October 16 Lowery, *They Can't Kill Us All*, intro

October 18 Lowery, *They Can't Kill Us All*, ch 1

October 20 Lowery, *They Can't Kill Us All*, ch 2

Week Ten: Living in the Black Lives Matter Era (cont.)

October 23 Lowery, *They Can't Kill Us All*, ch 3-4
Final Project Topics due

October 25 Lowery, *They Can't Kill Us All*, ch 5

October 27 Lowery, *They Can't Kill Us All*, ch 6

Week Eleven: Trayvon Martin

October 30 Blog posts and news articles posted on Canvas

November 1 Blog posts and news articles posted on Canvas

November 3 Group work on final projects

Week Twelve: Ferguson

November 6 Blog posts and news articles posted on Canvas

November 8 Class: *Stay Woke: The Black Lives Matter Movement* (39mins)
Final Project Proposals due

November 10 No Class

Week Thirteen: Eric Garner, Michael Brown, Say Her Name

November 13 Blog posts and news articles posted on Canvas
Film Reflection due on *Stay Woke*

November 15 Blog posts and news articles posted on Canvas

November 17 Blog posts and news articles posted on Canvas

Week Fourteen: Thanksgiving Break

November 20 Watch: *13th* (1hr40mins)

November 22 No Class

November 24 No Class

Week Fifteen: New Crises: Charlottesville and Beyond

November 27 Blog posts and news articles posted on Canvas
Film Reflection due on *13th*

November 29 Blog posts and news articles posted on Canvas

December 1 Group work on final projects

Week Sixteen: Conclusions?

December 4 Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*, ch 6

December 6 **Final Projects Due**

Syllabus Acknowledgement and Acceptance

I _____ have carefully read the syllabus in its entirety and agree with the requirements, policies, and all other terms. I have asked clarifying questions to ensure that I understand what I read.

Signature: _____ Date: _____