

The African Diaspora  
AFA 3420-Fall 2020  
African American Studies Program – The University of Florida  
Dr. Ashley Robertson Preston- Lecturer  
Office Hours & Location: Virtual Office Hours MW 3:00-4:30 pm (Zoom)  
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### Course Description

This course provides a general overview of the African Diaspora and the trans-territorial fields of cultural contact, power, and competing economic interests in which it has come to exist. Although some attention will be given to the Indian Ocean region, the principal focus will be on the history and contemporary dynamics of inter-cultural contact, exchange, and belonging within the transatlantic region, also mapped as the Black Atlantic. Organized largely around the contents of two anthologies and two single-authored books, the course will explore the ways in which critical scholarship on the African Diaspora has raised important questions about the following recurrent themes: 1) sociocultural change over the past 500 years, including the birth of new “creole” cultures and languages as they related to the continuity or discontinuity of African cultural heritage; 2) the historical contingency and social construction of the social distinction categorized as “race”; 3) the impact of race’s interactions with other salient axes of difference and inequality, among them gender, sexuality, class, and national identity; 4) the dynamics between structures of domination and agency (i.e., the capacity of individuals or collective persons to engage in socially and politically consequential action); 5) economic marginality and social injustice as a prevalent condition and characteristic of black social life; 6) the importance of migration and travel, both intranationally and internationally, in forming new identities and new diasporas during the post-emancipation, post-colonial periods; 7) the impact of multi-directional exchanges and flows of culture, ideas, and images across the Africana world; and 8) the interplay between diasporas and globalization as interrelated historical processes.

### Student Learning Outcomes

The key objectives of the course are: 1) to expand students’ awareness of U.S. African American experience as one among many interrelated situations within the wider African Diaspora; 2) to educate students about both the diversity and similarity among various communities of African descendants across the transatlantic region as well as within many national contexts; 3) to promote understanding of the multiple forms of social inequality to which African descendants have had to adapt, resist, and mobilize against; 4) to expose students to some of the interpretive, theoretical, and methodological tools developed for researching the African Diaspora; and finally 5) to cultivate critical thinking and the interrelated ability to articulate ideas with clarity and cogency in both oral and written communication.

This course satisfies the 6,000 word writing requirement, which entails that students complete and receive feedback and guidance on writing assignments amounting to 6000 words. The Writing Requirement ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning."

### Required Book:

Gomez, Michael A. *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora*. Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

### REQUIREMENTS & EVALUATION AT A GLANCE:

Critical Reflection Papers 35%

Research Paper 25%

Module Discussions 20%

Final Exam 15%

### Grading Scale

A 100-94, A-: 90-93

B+: 87-89, B: 84-86, B-: 80-83

C+: 77-79, C: 74-76, C-: 70-73

D+: 67-69, D: 64-66, D-: 60-64

F: below 60

### Due Dates

#### Module Discussion Due Dates

9/13

9/27

10/11

10/25

11/8

11/22

12/6

#### Critical Reflection Papers

10.7

11.11

12.10

#### Final Exam

12/15 (DUE)

**\*\*The final will be posted a week before the due date. \*\***

#### Research Paper Due

10/30

#### **Module Discussions (25%)**

Every other week questions (based on the readings) will be posted. Students are expected to thoroughly respond using reading assignments, videos and our course your opinions based on the readings. In order to receive full credit, in addition to answering students must also respond to two other student posts with responses other than "I agree" or "great point." The discussion posts are a way to engage with each other, while also digging deeper into the content in a similar way in which we would do so in class. It is ok to disagree (in a respectful

manner) but be thorough in your answering of questions and responding to each other. Initial responses to the questions should be at least 250 words minimum.

### **Critical Reflections (35%)**

Students are required to write three double-spaced, 12 point font (Times New Roman) three-page papers (of about 750 words each=>2250 total words). These reaction papers are to critically reflect on some aspect of the readings done usually over a few week's period. Although the professor may suggest topics to address, students may write about whatever most interests them. Essays should examine issues that run across more than one text. Students are free to express their personal reactions and to write autobiographically; however, personal opinions and experiences should be informed by the conceptual and empirical substance of the assigned and recommended readings.

### **Final Exam (15%)**

There will be a final exam which will be comprehensive. It will largely consist of essay questions which will require you to use information from the readings, lectures, and any other course materials.

### **Research Paper (25%)**

Your term paper should focus on some aspect of the African Diaspora. Your paper should utilize outside research as well as relevant readings from the required course texts. My suggestion to you all is this: peruse the syllabus and begin looking for topics that are of interest to you. Start doing preliminary research to see what other sources (both primary and secondary) are available to you. Don't paint yourself in a corner by choosing a topic where you can't find many sources. Additionally, don't choose a topic so broad that you are overwhelmed with potential sources. I'm happy to speak with you about potential topics, and you will receive more feedback on your term paper proposal.

Your paper must be a minimum of 1750 words , following the formatting guidelines laid out in the critical reflections section. Your paper will be evaluated on these criteria:

1. Your ability to articulate a strong argument
2. The clarity of your prose
3. The quality of your sources and how you use them to support your arguments
4. Your organization and writing (do you use proper grammar? Is everything spelled correctly? Does your paper flow well?)
5. The quantity/quality of your citations. (i.e. in a 10 page paper do you only cite two sources? Is the majority of your paper simply direct quotes from your sources?)

Consider these the grading guidelines for all writing assignments!

Evaluation of all Assignments Criteria

- 1) Quality, scope and organization of documentation;
- 2) Clarity and coherence of expression;
- 3) Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation;
- 4) Quality of critical analysis;
- 5) Demonstration of an understanding of information and concepts addressed in the readings and/or discussed in module lecture;
- 6) Following directions and completing assignments on time.

\*UF has an online writing for students Visit their site at <http://web.cwoc.ufl.edu/owl>

### **Presentation of Work**

All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced using Times Roman 12 point font in MS Word. You must use a standard one-inch margin – no Bold-faced or large fonts. Use the style APA, MLA or Chicago that is used in your academic discipline. All pages should be numbered. Do not include a cover sheet. Put identifying information in the top, right corner, single spaced. The assignment title or paper title may be centered.

### **Makeup Policies/Late Work**

**No late assignments will be accepted.** Please take note of the due dates at the beginning of the semester! When submitting work online please be sure to double check that the assignment has been properly submitted. Any corrupted files that are submitted will automatically receive a 0% It is your responsibility to make sure that assignments are on time. Please do not send anything to me by email. Canvas is the only acceptable submission portal. Also, please try to keep your similarity scores below 20%

### **Communication**

Allow 24 hours for replies to emails. This may be extended to 72 hours if the email is left over a weekend or holiday. Be sure to read the syllabus and the instructions again before sending an email. Lastly, be as descriptive as possible in the subject line of the email.

### **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/](http://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 at the beginning of the semester. You must submit this documentation prior to submitting assignments or taking the quizzes or exams. Accommodations are not retroactive, therefore, students should contact the office as soon as possible in the term for which they are seeking accommodations.

### **University of Florida Honor Code**

In this course, a student who is discovered plagiarizing on any assignment will automatically receive a grade of zero (0) for that assignment and the assignment cannot be redone to obtain a different grade on the plagiarized assignment. A second incidence of plagiarism will result in automatic failure of the course. If on any of the assignments you quote directly from the textbook or readings without attributing them to the source, you will receive a zero. For further details on the issue of academic misconduct, including plagiarism, see the Student Conduct and Honor Code available on UF's website at: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/> According to UF's Student Conduct & Honor Code, plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: “1. Quoting oral or written materials including but not limited to those found on the internet, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. 2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.”

## Lectures

Dr. Preston will pre-record and upload weekly lectures to discuss weekly readings. These may sometimes consist of documentaries also.

## Weekly Schedule

Week 1: Conceptualizing the African Diaspora (8.31-9.6)

Reading of Week 1:

Harris, Joseph E. "The Dynamics of the Global African Diaspora." In *The African Diaspora*, edited by Alusine Jalloh & Stephen E. Maizlish, 7-21. Arlington: Texas A&M University Press, 2000.

Article may be accessed using:

<https://www.amherst.edu/media/view/168850/original/Harris%2B%25E2%2580%2593%2BThe%2Bdynamics%2Bof%2Bthe%2Bglobal%2BAfrican%2Bdiaspora%2B.pdf>

Colin A. Palmer, "Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora," *The Journal of Negro History* 85, no. 1-2 (Winter-Spring 2000): 27-32.

Week 2: Antiquity (9.7-9.13)

Reading of Week 2: Gomez, Michael A. *Reversing Sail*, 7-27. (Chapter 1)

Excerpts from *Black Women in Antiquity* by Ivan Van Sertima  
(Specific chapters will be sent)

Week 3: Muslim World (9.14-9.20)

Reading of Week 3: Gomez, Michael A. *Reversing Sail*, 29-52. (Chapter 2)

Week 4: Atlantic Slave Trade (9.21-9.27)

Reading of Week 4: Gomez, Michael A. *Reversing Sail*, 59-79.

Week 5: Indian Ocean Slave Trade (9.28-10.4)

Harries, Patrick. 2016. "Mozambique Island, Cape Town and the Organisation of the Slave Trade in the South-West Indian Ocean, c.1797–1807." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42 (3): 409–27. doi:10.1080/03057070.2016.1178000.

(2008) "Slavery and the Slave Trades in the Indian Ocean and Arab Worlds," *African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter*: Vol. 11 : Iss. 3 , Article 17.

Week 6: Slavery and Enslavement (10.5-10.11)

Readings of Week 5: Gomez, Michael A. *Reversing Sail*, 82-106.

Weeks 7&8: Resistance (10.12-10.25)

Reading of Week 6: Gomez, Michael A. *Reversing Sail*, 109-141.

"Black Purgatory: Enslaved Women's Resistance in Nineteenth-Century Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil." *Slavery and Abolition* 36, no 4, 568–585.

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Week 9: Emancipation (10.26-11.1)

Reading of Week 7:

Gomez, Michael A. Reversing Sail, 141-159.

BROYLD, Dann j. "A Success in Every Particular": British August First Celebrations in Canada and America and the Black Quest for Unblemished Commemorations, While Critiquing July Fourth, 1834–1861. *American Review of Canadian Studies*, [s. l.], v. 47, n. 4, p. 335–356, 2017.

Week 10: Women (11.2-11.8)

Readings of Week 9:

Gaspar, David B, and Darlene C. Hine. *More Than Chattel: Black Women and Slavery in the Americas*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996. Print.  
(Excerpts will be sent)

Week 11: Religions (11.9-11.15)

Reading of Week 11:

Andrés I. Pérez Y Mena. "Cuban Santería, Haitian Vodun, Puerto Rican Spiritualism: A Multiculturalist Inquiry into Syncretism." *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 37, no. 1 (1998): 15-27. Accessed July 27, 2020. doi:10.2307/1388026.

An Introduction to the Church in the Southern Black Community

<https://docsouth.unc.edu/church/intro.html>

Martin, Sandy Dwayne. "Black churches and the Civil War: Theological and ecclesiastical significance of Black Methodist involvement, 1861-1865." *Methodist History* 32, no. 3 (1994): 174+. Gale Academic OneFile (accessed July 27, 2020).  
<https://link-gale-com.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/apps/doc/A352751328/AONE?u=gain40375&sid=AONE&xid=11f3791f>.

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Week 12: Music (11.16-11.22)

Reading of Week 12: Alpers, Edward A. "Recollecting Africa: Diasporic Memory in the Indian Ocean World." *African Studies Review* 43, no. 1 (2000): 83-99. Accessed July 27, 2020. doi:10.2307/524722..

Week 13: Cultural Traditions (11.23-12.1)

Reading of Week 13: Assunção, Matthias Röhrig. *Capoeira: The History of an Afro-Brazilian Martial Art* (Chapter 2) London: Routledge, 2005, 31-66.

Week 14: African Diaspora and Globalization (12.2-12.8)

Reading of Week 14: Gomez, Michael A. Reversing Sail, 162-192.

Week 15: Final Exam (Due 12.15)

\*Dr. Preston reserves the right to modify this schedule at any time during the semester.