**NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY**

**THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

**DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES**

**AFR 1501 – SEMINAR IN CURRENT COMMUNITY PROBLEMS**

**(AND SOLUTIONS )**

**Instructor: Dionne Bennett, Ph.D.**

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**Office Hours:**

**Class Meetings:**

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The course relies on various theories and methods in the social sciences to analyze the challenges of the Black community. Attempts are also made to explore solutions to the problems. The focus and emphasis of the course, however, is to identify issues in the community that facilitate socioeconomic empowerment of Black people. Furthermore, institutions such as the family, marriage, and the church are analyzed throughout the semester.

**Course Learning Outcomes**

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| **Learning outcomes** | **Assessment Methods** |
| Analyze how Black Communities have survived from slavery to the present; | Class discussions, student presentations, short analysis essays and longer analysis essays |
| Analyze the economic, sociopolitical, and institutions that have helped to shape the complex identities of the Black Community; | Class discussions, student presentations, short analysis essays and longer analysis essays |
| Study the role of the Black Community in social and political movements; | Class discussions, student presentations, short analysis essays and longer analysis essays |

**General Education Learning Outcomes**

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| **Learning outcomes** | **Assessment Methods** |
| To use inter-disciplinary analysis in the study of social phenomena through research and writing | Class discussions, student presentations, short analysis essays and longer analysis essays |
| To use inter-disciplinary theories and methods in order to read and write critically and thoroughly; | Class discussions, student presentations, short analysis essays and longer analysis essays |
| To develop critical skills in reasoning and argumentation. | Class discussions, student presentations, short analysis essays and longer analysis essays |
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**ADDITIONAL LEARNING OUTCOMES**

* Students will develop critical thinking, reading, writing and speaking skills that can be transferred and applied to a range of disciplines and contexts.
* Students will learn to think, read, write, and speak critically about the concepts of race and ethnicity and to explore how these concepts relate to other social categories such as gender, class, nation, etc.
* Students will build an intellectual community within the course based on mutual respect for and openness to diverse cultural backgrounds, personal experiences, intellectual perspectives, and communication styles.
* Student mastery of these concepts will be assessed through class discussion, oral presentations, and essay assignments.

##### Texts

Texts will be presented online. Links to the readings are provided on the Open Lab Site.

**Grading Procedure and Assignments**

Attendance, Participation & Journals 20%

Reading Analysis Writing Assignments 25%

Midterm Essay 25%

Final Essay 30%

**Total 100%**

**ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES**

Students must arrive on time, in order to fully participate. Participation during class is part of your grade. If lateness is unavoidable, the student is welcome to join the class, but he/she is expected not to disrupt the session already in progress.

Students must turn off cellular phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before class begins. Points will be deducted from the final average, if students consistently allow cell phones to ring in class and /or consistently leave class to answer calls.

**CLASS CONDUCT:** NYCCT, like all academic institutions, encourages and thrives on the open exchange of ideas. At City Tech, we expect students to conduct their intellectual work with honesty and integrity. City Tech's academic integrity policy aims to deter academic dishonesty by students, and allow the college to process cases of academic dishonesty more effectively. This policy is effective as of August 27, 2008. Plagiarism is the presenting of someone else’s ideas without proper credit or attribution. These ideas could come from:

* Information obtained from books, journals or other printed sources
* The work of other students or of faculty
* Information from the Internet
* Software programs or other electronic material
* Designs produced by other students or faculty

**Cheating is the unauthorized use or attempted use of material, information, notes, study aids, devices or communication during an academic exercise. Examples of cheating include:**

• Copying from another student during an examination or allowing another to copy your work

• Unauthorized collaboration on a take-home assignment or examination

• Using notes during a closed-book examination

• Taking an examination for another student, or asking or allowing another student to take an examination for you

• Changing a graded exam and returning it for more credit

• Submitting substantial portions of the same paper to more than one course

without consulting each instructor

• Preparing answers or writing notes in an exam booklet before an examination

• Allowing others to research and write assigned papers or do assigned projects,

including the use of commercial term paper services

• Giving assistance to acts of academic misconduct/dishonesty

• Fabricating data

• Unauthorized use of electronic devices such as cell phones, text messaging, devices, palm pilots, computers or other technologies to retrieve or send information during an exam

**What is academic integrity, and why is it important?**

Academic Integrity is the idea of faculty and students engaging in the process of

teaching and learning with a high level of respect for each other and great attention to the values of trust, honesty, and fairness. Academic integrity is important because it is a critical value upon which students will earn true respect and value from others, not only while at City Tech, but more importantly after they graduate and enter their chosen professional field.

In accordance with and in addition to the College's policy on academic integrity, the following rules apply in class:

• Laptops, cell phones, pdas, ipods, calculators, and other electronic or communication devices must be turned off during all examinations.

• Talking during examinations is not permitted.

• Students will be allowed to leave the class only once during an examination.

• Only one student at a time is allowed to leave the class during an examination.

ADDITIONAL COURSE GUIDELINES

**What does class participation mean?**

In this course we will take class participation very, very, very seriously. Strong participation can seriously affect a borderline grade.

In order to earn a strong participation grade, you are expected to come to every class prepared to present your analysis of the readings and media. Be sure to arrive on time everyday. Lateness is disrespectful and disrupts the momentum of the class discussion. Repeated tardiness will negatively impact your participation grade. Three or more unexcused absences will result in a failing participation grade.

In order to have active, productive class participation you must meet the following minimum requirements:

a) Attend Classes;

b) Arrive to class ON TIME

c) Complete ALL of the reading BEFORE class;

d) Verbally CONTRIBUTE YOUR THOUGHTS and ideas during class

d) Turn assignments in on time

f) REMAIN ATTENTIVE and FOCUSED throughout the class. Cell Phone use is PROHIBITED.

g) BE RESPECTFUL to the professor and your classmates at all times.

Participation is verbal interaction in class and requires more than simply attending class. Everyone is expected to make an effort to speak during every class. However, you are not invited to dominate the discussion. You are required to respect the contributions of your peers (talking out of turn, whispering, and snickering will not be tolerated).

Participation is strongly emphasized because learning is *active*. We learn as much, if not more, from speaking and writing as we do from listening and reading. *Therefore, Participating in class will improve your performance in every other area of this course.*

**How do I critique an article or chapter for class discussion?**

Your first responsibility in a critique is to make the best case for the author. Learn to read and listen critically and empathetically. Be able to convey what the author means rather than nit picking at words or taking their argument out of context. Identify what is useful and meaningful about their work and how it can be applied to other contexts and circumstances.

Critical analysis is the second step. This is your view of how the author’s argument may be flawed and how it could be improved. The key to critical thinking is calling into question the assumptions and inferences that are the basis of the arguments presented and assessing the reliability of the evidence presented in the reading. While reading the material, ask what assumptions the author made to make her/his point.

Next, suggest more effective alternatives to the author’s argument and propose additional examples that might have supported it.

Finally, present your own views clearly and concisely. Remember to try to engage in conversation rather than debate; learn from the author by acknowledging strong elements of their argument and assessing how these elements relate to your own position.