**NEW YORK CITY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY  
The City University of New York**

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**DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES  
Africana Folklore AFR1130 D824 [34582]**

**FALL 2018**

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**Africana Folklore**

**African Cultural Retentions in the Americas**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES:**

**African Cultural Retentions in the Americas is presented this semester as a reading and writing-intensive course focused on the continuities, transformations, adaptations and re­inventions of African culture found within the African diaspora in the Americas since the era of the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Some of the research and writing conducted by historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, art historians, and musicologists pertinent to our subject matter will be studied. Lectures, readings, classroom discussions and writings will explore cultural developments in the Caribbean, Central and South America, and the United States. In addition to our readings, a number of documentary films will be shown and reviewed. In the Americas, Africans encountered Native Americans and Europeans; therefore, a major focus of this course is to explore and to understand the new cultural contexts which emerged, and Africa's contributions to those contexts.**

**PREREQUISITE: Cuny proficiency in reading and writing**

**REQUIRED TEXT: Open Lab Resource**

**Content-Based Learning Outcomes**

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| **Learning outcomes** | **Assessment Methods** |
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| **Students will develop a Socio/ historical understanding of the African diasporic experience in the Americas.** | **Class discussions, response papers, research paper.** |
| **Student will examine diverse sources in order to understand the socio/history of African peoples’ struggle for freedom and dignity in the Americas.** | **Class discussions, response papers, research paper.** |
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| **Students will identify the impact of African enslavement on the development of African American social and cultural behavior.** | **Class discussions, response papers, research paper** |
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**General Education Learning Outcomes**

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| **Learning outcomes** | **Assessment Methods** |
| **Develop critical skills in reasoning and thinking** | **Class discussions, response papers, research paper** |
| **Learn to read critically and thoroughly** | **Class discussions, response papers, and research paper** |
| **Develop the basic techniques of sociological/Historical research.** | **Research paper** |

**GRADING PROCEDURE:**

**Various methods will be used to evaluate student’s work throughout the semester. Attendance will be taken each day of class. Students are also expected to take notes during class. The class discussions, writing exercises, and a presentation are all designed to help students strengthen writing and critical thinking skills. Each student will be expected to prepare for class by reading all required texts and handouts prior to meeting. Preparation is essential to making thoughtful contributions to class discussions.**

**Bi-Weekly Response Papers 30%**

**Research Paper 40%**

**Participation 30%**

**TOTAL 100%**

**CLASS CONDUCT:**

**Students must arrive on time, in order to fully participate and receive full credit for attending the class session. 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. Points will be deducted from the final average, if students are consistently late and absent. 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 call. ASSIGNMENTS:**

**In this course, you will participate in weekly discussions; write bi-weekly three page critical responses to issues discussed in class combined with the reading assignments; and write a final research paper. Attendance & Participation:**

**Active participation is vital to your success in this course, thus regular attendance and thorough academic work are expected of each and every student enrolled. Your class participation and final grade will depend greatly on your contribution to the class discussion of each assigned text. In addition, your grade will be negatively affected if you miss more than three classes in the semester. However, if you must miss class due to illness or personal problems, please contact me in advance at email or phone number above. Bi-Weekly Writing:**

**At Wednesday class meetings, you will submit your bi-weekly critical papers. Your papers will explore topics related to the readings and discussion. These topics will engage you in critical thinking and analysis.**

**Mid-Term:**

**There will be no mid-term. The three page critical analyses will serve as an assessment tool for the mid-term**

**Paper Format:**

**Formal papers and their drafts must be typed and double-spaced (no larger than 12pt. font) with one-inch margins, according to MLA format. You are responsible for correct grammar, spelling, and typography. Pages must be numbered, and your name must appear on each page. You will submit all formal papers on the assigned date. (I will accept late papers but they will automatically be reduced by at least one letter grade.)**

**Policy on Academic Dishonesty:**

**All WRITING, IDEAS, and INFORMATION from journal articles, the Internet, textbooks, etc. must be acknowledged. If you use words directly from these sources, the author(s) must be quoted and referenced. It is also considered plagiarism to recycle papers from other classes. I expect all assignments completed for this course to be original and innovative work. According to NYCCT Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty, the maintenance of academic integrity and quality education is the responsibility of each student within this college and the CUNY University system. Academic dishonesty is an especially serious offense and diminishes the quality of scholarship and defrauds those who depend upon the integrity of the campus programs. Such dishonesty includes:**

**A. CHEATING**

**B. FABRICATION**

**C. FACILITATING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

**D. PLAGIARISM: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words, ideas, or work of another as one’s own in any academic exercise.**

**Tentative Syllabus**

**UNIT 1:**

**Topics: Introductions, Syllabus overview & Map of Africa**

**Material: “Heritage” poem by Countee Cullen**

**Intoductory Questions**

**Discussion: What does Africa mean to you? What is the African Diaspora?**

**UNIT 2:**

**Topic: What is folklore?**

**Material: “Chapter 1” from *Africana Folklore* by Stephen James**

**Discussion: What are the categories of Folklore?**

**UNIT 3:**

**Topic: The Glory that was Africa**

**Material: “The Glory That Was Africa” Chapter 1 from *Black History* by Norman E.W. Hodges**

**Discussion: Why was the greatness of African people and their cultures distorted by the White West?**

**UNIT 4:**

**Topic: West African Cultures and the role of slavery**

**Materials:**

**“Roots” Episode 1**

**Chapter 1 from *Black History* by Norman E.W. Hodges**

**Akan and Yoruba Pantheon of Deities (power point presentation)**

**Discussion: What role did European directed enslavement of Africans play in the modern diaspora of**

**Africans and their cultures in the Americas?**

**UNIT 5:**

**Topic: Into the Americas**

**Materials:“**[**New Worlds in the Americas: Labor, Commerce, and the Columbian Exchange**](https://cnx.org/contents/p7ovuIkl@6.2:YYfUmm0Y@5/New-Worlds-in-the-Americas-Lab)**” pp 52-62 by**

**Corbett**

**“Chapter 1” from *A People’s History of the United States* by Howard Zinn**

**Discussion: Must the progress of some be at the expense of others?**

**Cultures of Resistance**

**UNIT 6:**

**Topic: BRAZIL**

**Materials:**

**“Chapter 3” from *Africana Folklore* by Stephen James**

**“Quilombo” (Movie)**

**Discussion: What role did African Folklore play in Africans resistance to slavery in Brazil?**

**UNIT 7:**

**Topic: Martinique**

**Material: “Sugar Cane Alley” (Movie)**

**Discussion: How did the perpetuation of African Folkloric history help African disaporic people to**

**survive French colonialism?**

**UNIT 8:**

**Topic: St. Vincent/Central America**

**Material: “The Garifuna Journey” (Documentary)**

**Discussion: What role can Folkloric history play in the maintenance of identity?**

**UNIT 9:**

**Topic: JAMAICA AND TRINIDAD&TOBAGO**

**Materials:**

[**Campbell, Horace. “The Rastafarians in the Eastern Caribbean” Caribbean Quarterly, December 1, 1980, Vol 26 (4), p. 42-61**](http://cityte.ch/vh)**. (NYCCT Library Access: Log in with barcode from ID required, if off campus )**

[**Ho, Christine G. T. “Popular Culture and the Aesthetization of Politics: Hegemonic Struggle and Postcolonial Nationalism in Trinidad Carnival”. Transforming Anthropology, January 2000, Vol.9 (1), pp.3-18.**](http://cityte.ch/vi)**(NYCCT Library Access: Log in with barcode from ID required, if off campus**

**“Nanny of the Maroons” (Documentary)**

**Discussion: How has the perpetuation of African folklore helped to shape postcolonial societies?**

**UNIT 10:**

**Topic: CUBA AND PUERTO RICO**

**Materials:**

[**Scott Corbett, P. at all. (2017) “The Spanish American War and Oversees Empire,” *OpenStax***](https://d3bxy9euw4e147.cloudfront.net/oscms-prodcms/media/documents/U.S_History-LR.pdf)**(Pdf)**

**Only read and print Chapter 22, Section 2, pages 640-646.**

[**de la Fuente, Alejandro. “The Resurgence of Racism in Cuba,” *NACLA* 3, 6 (May 2001): 29-49.**](http://citytech.ezproxy.cuny.edu:2048/login?url=http://citytech.ezproxy.cuny.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=f6h&AN=4626481&site=ehost-live&scope=site)**(NYCCT Library Access: Log in with barcode from ID required, if off campus )**

[**Puerto Rican Culture through Music, Bomba, Plena and Jibara**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VItcQEbIQYs)**(YouTube)**

[**La Santeria in Matanzas Cuba, An Interview with Alfredo Calvo**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xq3yxf0HvY)**(YouTube)**

**Discussion: What role did Africana Folklore play in resistance to oppression in Cuba and Puerto Rico?**

**UNIT 11:**

**Topic: Haiti**

**Materials: “Egalite for All” (Video Documentary)**

**Discussion: How did African folklore inspire Haitians to fight for freedom?**

**UNIT 12:**

**Topic: Resistance to Slavery in the USA**

**Materials: “Sankofa” (Movie)**

**Discussion: How did African Folklore influence resistance in the USA?**

**UNIT 13:**

**Topic: The Low Country Resistance Culture**

**Material: “Daughters of the Dust” (Movie)**

**Discussion: What role does African Filklore play in indentity formation of African people?**

**UNIT 14:**

**FINAL PAPER AND PRESENTATIONS**

**Requirements:**

**1) Bi-weekly 3 page paper (typed, double spaced) 30%**

**2) Term paper (8-10pp) due at term’s end 40%**

**3) Class participation 30%**

**Skills: 1) Criteria for critical analysis**

**2) Syllogistic analysis**

**BROAD AREAS FOR TERM PAPER**

**The following is a list of broad topics suggested as research areas for the term paper. Topics must be narrowed and refined. Term papers are due on the last day of class. All topics must be approved by the professor. Students must present a written proposal of their topic for approval.**

1. **African elements in African American Folklore/Oral Tradition, historically**
2. **Reviewing recent scholarly works on Santeria, conjurers and traditional healers in the American South, historically: how African beliefs influenced their work?**
3. **Did the griot in African oral tradition survive in adapted form in the Americas?**
4. **African religions and Brazilian Candomble: the connections**
5. **Understanding Obeah in the Caribbean and among West African immigrants to the United States**
6. **Islamic influences in the Americas during the era of slavery**
7. **Hairstyles as a part of the transition from Africa to the Americas**
8. **African traditional beliefs and their significance to resistance against enslavement in the Americas**
9. **Bottle Trees in the American South: their ties to Africa**
10. **The African origins of Haitian Voodoo**
11. **African culture among Maroons in the Americas**
12. **Congo cultural continuities in the Americas**
13. **Altars invoking African deities in the Americas**
14. **Spirit possession from Africa to the Americas**
15. **Africa within burial customs among Blacks in the Americas**
16. **Exploring the African elements of musical tradition in the Americas**
17. **African contributions to creole languages in the Americas**
18. **African influence on foodways in the Americas**
19. **The work of African American mid-wives, as seen through the prism of traditional beliefs and customs**
20. **Zora Neale Hurston and her Work on the African cultural legacy in the Americas**
21. **The Gullah culture of South Carolina and Georgia**
22. **Dance traditions from Africa to the Americas**
23. **Yoruba continuities in the Americas**
24. **Igbo continuities in the Americas**