

Los Angeles Valley College
African American Studies 002
The African American in Contemporary Urban Society
Antwann Michael, Professor
Fall 2016

Mon/Wed 8-9:25a
FL 112

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Office Hours: Mondays 10a-1p, FL 119

Individual appointments are available upon request at <https://antwannmichael.youcanbook.me>.

THERE IS NO CLASS ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2016.

THERE IS NO CLASS ON WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2016.

Required Texts

From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

All other required readings and videos are uploaded on the course site

All readings and videos are to be completed before the class they are to be discussed.

Overview:

This class gives careful attention to the Black Lives Matter Movement. We will examine the historical context of Black Lives Matter, its origins, and the differences of Black Lives Matter in relation to earlier Black movements. This class will delineate the purposes of Black movements and Black liberation efforts, giving particular attention to the experiences of race, gender, class, and sexuality, as well as the various approaches to resistance within these distinctions. Further, this class will also map the national experience onto the local realities and history of Los Angeles, thus allowing for these histories and the current organizing of Black Lives Matter to be blended in such a way that students will be able to critically engage and articulate the contemporary condition of African Americans in Los Angeles and, more broadly, the United States. Using Black Lives Matter as a lens, this class will explore various inequalities (wealth, jobs, health, etc.) and how these social phenomena come to exist in the United States, as well as shape the lived experiences of African Americans. Vital to this course is the concept of intersectionality and engaging a multi-approach learning method. As a result, this class challenges patriarchy, white supremacy, capitalism, and heteronormativity as it engages innovative methods of learning in an effort to encourage students to reflect beyond their present ideological positions. A few questions which guide this course are: what is the purpose of Black Lives Matter, how is Black Lives Matter a reality in the age of President Obama, how is Black Lives Matter different from earlier Black political discourses, movements and liberation efforts, and how do institutions and policies shape Black life in America in the twenty-first century? Lastly, this class is not wholly lecture, it thrives off of student's informed positions and participation. As such this class is not necessarily a safe space, but a respectful one in which all positions are engaged and given careful and rigorous academic thought and response.

Outcomes:

Develop and demonstrate critical thinking and collaboration skills
Sharpen academic writing prowess
Encourage thoughtful and supported articulation of ideas
Identify and analyze primary documents
Enhance public speaking acumen of students by way of the exchanging of ideas and presentations

Grading and Assignments:

Mid-Term	25%
Final	35%
Presentation	20%
Participation	20%

(a) Mid-term

The mid-term will be a two page double-spaced typed paper. The topic is: compare and contrast Black Lives Matter with an earlier movement (e.g. Civil Rights, Black Power, Sanitation Workers Strike, Montgomery Bus Boycott, etc.) in relation to a specific theme (e.g. guns, women in leadership, demands, tactics, etc). The mid-term must include at least one (1) primary source and use footnotes (no bibliography is required for this paper). Follow paper guidelines; failure to do so will impact your grade.

(b) Final

The final is a five page double-spaced typed paper. The paper is to explore one organization and/or movement, placing it in conversation with Black Lives Matter. Each person will select a different organization/movement. The final must include at least two (2) primary sources and a source from class; also, use footnotes (no bibliography is required for this paper). Be sure to follow paper guidelines; failure to do so will impact your grade. The paper is to compare organizations along theme (e.g. gender, political positions, armed resistance, etc.).

(c) Presentations

Group presentations are to be 35 to 45 minutes in length (you will teach class for your designated day). Each group will present on a different presidential candidate giving

careful attention to the candidate's background and their position on TPP, healthcare, immigration, wealth, and mass incarceration. Once you have identified a candidate's background and position, you will speak to how the respective candidate's position on the identified topics will impact Black people (how does their policies/positions prolong a historical problem?). Your presentation will be timed and will be stopped at 50 minutes. Be sure to practice and time yourself; give yourself ample time to research the topic. Presentations are to be detailed and accurate. Each group is to turn in **ONE (1)** bibliography (Chicago/Turabian) with all group members listed in the top right hand corner; make sure the bibliography is paginated and in alphabetical order. Presentations may be as unique as you would like. Use your imagination to think of different modes of engaging your peers other than a standard presentation. Presentations will begin week 9.

(d) Participation

You are expected to attend each class, as this class depends on the active engagement of everyone; however, I am aware that life happens. In consideration of this, you are allowed 3 missed classes (unexcused). If your fourth absence is unexcused you *may* be removed from the course, as you are required to fulfill a set number of hours in the classroom to meet graduation requirements. I do accept medical, job, mechanical and other valid DOCUMENTED forms of absence. This does not mean that an excess of excused absences are permitted. If you have an extenuating circumstance please feel free to email me, speak with me during office hours, or see student services for other available options.

Participation is not only based on your in classroom engagement, but also your reading notes and two reflection papers (that are to be 2 to 3 paragraphs). Acceptable notes are: writing and highlighting in the book itself, written separate notes, or typed notes. Notes do not follow a particular format, they are for you and should reflect what you find important. However, I strongly recommend you structure your notes in such a way that your notes will be able to help you on both your mid-term and final. I will check notes every Monday (if class is not held on Monday, I will check notes on Wednesday). Notes will not be required for week 7.

Readings & Class Schedule:

Week 1

August 29:

Introductions and Syllabus walk through/Show me the receipts

August 31:

Clarify Syllabus/Questions

Privilege, Terms and Concepts

“Angela Davis speaking at UCLA 10/8/1969” *

“In Defense of Black Rage: Michael Brown, Police and the American Dream”

Brittney Cooper *

Week 2

Sept 5:
No Class (Labor Day)

September 7:
“Structural and Cultural Forces that Contribute to Racial Inequality” WJ Wilson *
“The Forces Shaping Concentrated Poverty” WJ Wilson *

Week 3

Sept 12:
Assignment Due: Reflection essay 1
“Black Awakening in Obama’s America” (Taylor)
“A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement” Alicia Garza *
“4 Black Lives Matter Myths Debunked-Decoded-MTV News” *

Sept 14:
“A Culture of Racism” (Taylor)
“Ian Haney Lopez on the Dog Whistle Politics of Race” *

Week 4

Sept 19:
“From Civil Rights to Colorblind” (Taylor)
“Black Lives Matter with Prof. Cheryl Harris” *

Sept 21:
“From Civil Rights to Colorblind” con’t (Taylor)
“Why Color Blindness Will NOT End Racism-Decoded-MTV News” *

Week 5

Sept 26:
“Black Faces in High Places” (Taylor)
“Melissa Harris-Perry Criticizes Obama on Clemency by way of Turkey Pardon”*

Sept 28:
How to Write the Midterm & Final, mistakes not to make

Week 6

Oct 3:
“The Double Standard of Justice” (Taylor)
“Fuck Tha Police” N.W.A. *
“The Nightly Show-Ferguson Police Bias” *

Oct. 5:
“The Double Standard of Justice” con’t (Taylor)

Working with primary documents: Korryn Gaines and Freddie Gray (bring laptops, phones, iPads, etc.)

Week 7

Oct 10:
Trans Pacific Partnership
Healthcare

Oct. 12:
Immigration
Wealth

Week 8

Oct 17: Mass Incarceration
“The New Jim Crow” Michelle Alexander

Oct. 19: Mass Incarceration (Gendering the Crisis and California’s Problem)
“DonAlda” from *Voices of African American Women in Prison*, Paula Johnson
“Elizabeth” from *Voices of African American Women in Prison*, Paula Johnson
“Analysis of African American Women’s Experiences in the U.S. Criminal Justice System” Paula Johnson

MID TERM DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS

Week 9

Oct. 24: Group Presentation
Hillary Clinton (Democrat)

Oct. 26: Group Presentation
Donald Trump (Republican)

Week 10

Oct. 31: Group Presentation
Jill Stein (Green)

Nov. 2: Group Presentation
Gary Johnson (Libertarian)

Week 11

Nov. 7:
“Barack Obama: The End of an Illusion”
“Morning Joe Panel Discusses How Obama Failed Blacks” *

Nov. 9:
“Barack Obama: The End of an Illusion”
“A Thick Fog of Unreality” Eddie Glaude, Jr.

Week 12

Nov. 14: Los Angeles the 60s/70s
“Watts – Riot or Revolt. (1965)” *

Nov. 16: Los Angeles 80s/90s
“Preface” Brenda Stevenson
“March 16, 1991: Not Just Another Saturday in South Central” Brenda Stevenson

Week 13

Nov. 21: Los Angeles 80s/90s
“People v. Du: The Trial” Brenda Stevenson
“People v. Du: Sentencing” Brenda Stevenson

Nov. 23
No Class

Week 14

Nov. 28: Los Angeles in the New Millennium
“Black Lives Matter and Resistance as the New Normal” Melina Abdullah *
“Black Lives Matter with Prof. Melina Abdullah” *

Nov.30: Los Angeles in the New Millennium
“Black Lives Matter Continues Protest at LA City Hall, Seeks Police Chief’s Ouster” *
“Black Lives Matter Los Angeles – Decolonize LA City Hall” *

Week 15

Dec. 5:
Assignment Due: Reflection essay 2
“Black Lives Matter: A Movement, Not a Moment” (Taylor)
“From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation-Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor-TEDxBaltimore” *
“Similarities & Differences: Black Lives Matter & The Civil Rights Movement” *

Dec. 7:
“Black Lives Matter: A Movement, Not a Moment” con’t (Taylor)
Closing thoughts

Week 16

Dec. 12:
Research Day

Dec. 14:
Final Due 12 noon (online)

Paper Guidelines:

Assigned papers (midterm, final, and the group bibliography) must be formatted using Chicago/Turabian. Make sure your formatting is correct. Proper formatting for Chicago/Turabian may be located here: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>. If your paper exceeds one (1) page, you are to paginate your work as well as reference your last name in the header. Your name, followed by the professor's name, the date, and title of the assignment are to be typed (single spaced) in the upper right hand corner. If the document is more than one (1) page, it is to be stapled in the upper left hand corner. The body of ALL submitted work (including reflection papers) are to be double spaced. ALL papers are to utilize 12 point Times New Roman Font, 1 inch margins. If your paper is not in the correct format it will be returned to you, which will result in a late paper (which will impact your grade). Be sure to refer to this section of the syllabus before submitting all assignments.

Class Guidelines:

Student Access: If you are a student with a disability requiring classroom accommodations, and have not contacted SSD, do so in a timely manner. SSD is located in the Student Services Annex, Room 175 or call SSD at (818) 947-2681 or TTD (818) 947-2680 to meet with a SSD counselor. If SSD has already sent the memo to instructor confirming accommodations required by student for this class, please meet with me to discuss arrangements.

Financial Aid: Financial Aid is available! Call 818.947.2412. Go to the Financial Aid Office in the Student Services Center, first floor. For more information please see: <http://www.lavc.edu/financialaid/index.html>.

Discussion Decorum: Participation is always encouraged, however abusive and disparaging comments disrupt and detract from meaningful and productive learning; as such racist, sexist, homophobic, ableist, and other marginalizing language will not be tolerated—more than two offenses will result in your removal from the class. This is a respectful space.

Email Messaging: You are welcome to email me with questions. Please allow me 24 to 36 hours to respond. While I will answer all questions to the best of my ability, please use class time as your initial point of inquiry (especially when it is related to class material as other students more than likely have similar concerns). I strongly encourage you to utilize my office hours or make an appointment for any additional assistance if my office hours are not conducive to your schedule.

Food: Small silent snacks and drinks are permitted. Please clean up after yourselves. Foods should not give off a strong scent.

Technology: Please silence all cell phones during class. Laptops are not permitted. Notes are to be taken by hand as personal technological devices hinder the production of the classroom. When technology is needed for a particular class I will let you know.

Academic Dishonesty: Los Angeles Valley College prohibits using, copying or reproducing any and all work that is not your own. Cheating on both course work and exams is impermissible and can result in a failing grade for the assignment and/or disciplinary action. All instances will be forwarded to Student Services. See LAVC Student Conduct Code:

http://www.lavc.edu/schedule/library/Catalogs/LAVC_Catalog_2016-2017_WEB.aspx. (Particularly pages 196-197).

Recording: Section 78907 of the California Education Code prohibits the use by any person, including a student, of any electronic listening or recording device in any classroom without the prior consent of the instructor is prohibited, except as necessary to provide reasonable auxiliary aids and academic adjustments to disabled students. Any person, including a student, who willfully violates this section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Grade Grievance: (Informal) Grade grievances can be resolved informally for students. The first step for a student is to contact their professor to discuss the problem. If the issue is not resolved, or if the student is unable to meet with the professor, then the student must contact the Department Chairperson. If a resolution is not met after meeting with the Department Chairperson, the next step is to meet with the area Dean over the department in the Office of Academic Affairs. (Formal) The California Education Code Section 76224(a) specifies that the instructor's determination of student grades shall be final, except in the cases of fraud, mistake, bad faith or incompetence. A student who reasonably believes, and has proof, that their instructor has issued an evaluative final grade based on any of these grounds, may contact the Ombudsperson at (818) 947-2320 for assistance. The Grievance Hearing Request must be made within one-hundred and twenty (120) calendar days of the date of the alleged incident that is the basis of the student's complaint.

Grade Distribution:

90-100	A
89-80	B
79-70	C
69-60	D
59-0	F

Disclaimer:

The syllabus is not a fixed and/or binding contract between the student and professor. The syllabus is in place to provide the expectations of the course. As such, the syllabus may be amended as the semester proceeds based upon the progression of the class or as needs and/or proficiencies are identified by the instructor.

**indicates video, audio, or online article*