

The African Diaspora

Spring 2000, Sequence 3 (MWTh 10:30-11:35)

Prof. Patrick Manning

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- * Five centuries of life in the African homeland and the African diaspora, 1500-2000.
- * Black peoples in the making of the modern world – connections and contributions under slavery and freedom.

Major themes:

Culture –language and literature, religion, music and dance

Politics – enslavement, emancipation, nationhood, globalization

Society – class, family, education

The African homeland – 500 million people on the second-largest continent, with immense differences in language and lifestyle, but a long history of interconnection.

The African diaspora – 150 million black people in South America, the Caribbean, North America, and Europe. A diaspora initiated by enslavement, but sustained by migration all around the Atlantic to maintain cultural and political connections

Course activities:

Readings from major authors of Africa and the African diaspora in the eighteenth,

nineteenth and twentieth centuries

Creative work in visual art, music, film

Readings:

- * W. E. B. DuBois, *The Negro*
- * Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life*
- * Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano*

- * Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*
- * Buchi Emecheta, *Joys of Motherhood*
- * Richard Powell, *Black Art and Culture in the Twentieth Century*
- * A packet of brief but stimulating selections

Films:

- * “Song of Freedom” (with Paul Robeson)
- * “Mandabi” (Ousmane Sembene, Senegal)
- * “Sugar Cane Alley” (Euzhan Palcy, Martinique)

Assignments:

- 10% Attendance and participation
- 25% Quizzes on readings (top 5 scores of 7 quizzes on readings)
- 5% Map exercise
- 10% Midterm exam — take-home
- 15% Group work
- 10% Term project — on a medium in popular culture throughout the diaspora
- 10% Book review — from a list of suggestions to be handed out
- 15% Final exam — comprehensive essay exam

Class format:

Mondays will usually center on a lecture by the instructor on the topic for the week. Wednesdays will center on experiencing popular culture of the African diaspora, including three films. Thursdays will usually begin with a quiz on the reading for the week, and will continue with a discussion and presentation of that reading led by a student group.

Group work:

The class will divide, for certain purposes, into groups of four to six persons. Each group will lead a discussion on one of the assigned books (on Thursday), and it will make one or more presentations on an aspect of popular culture (on Wednesday). In addition, it is possible for a group to collaborate in completion of a term project.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1. March 29, 30.

Africa and the African diaspora: demography, language, culture

Week 2. April 3, 5, 6.

Popular culture in Africa and the diaspora

Popular culture medium of the week: Visual art

Week 3. April 10, 12, 13.

Early times and Colonialism.

Popular culture medium of the week: Religion

Reading: W. E. B. DuBois, *The Negro*

Week 4. April 17, 19, 20.

Enslavement: its impact in Africa and the diaspora

Popular culture medium of the week: Dance

Reading: Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life* — discussion led by Group

C

Film: “Mandabi” (Ousmane Sembene, Senegal)

Week 5. April 24, 26, 27.

The Atlantic World

Popular culture medium of the week: Dress — Group D

Reading: Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of Olaudah Equiano* —
Group A

Week 6. May 1, 3, 4.

Creating post-slavery communities in the diaspora

Popular culture medium of the week: Music and dance — Group E

Reading: Richard Powell, *Black Art and Culture in the Twentieth Century* —
Group B

Film: “Sugar Cane Alley” (Euzhan Palcy, Martinique)

Week 7. May 8, 10, 11.

Creating new African communities in the global age

Popular culture medium of the week: Cuisine — Group C

Reading: Buchi Emecheta, *Joys of Motherhood* — Group D

Week 8. May 15, 17, 18.

Black popular culture: from survival to leadership

Popular culture medium of the week: Film — Group A

Reading: Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic* — Group E

Week 9. May 22, 24, 25.

Connection: Africa, the African diaspora, and beyond

Popular culture medium of the week: Music — Group B

Reading: review earlier reading

Film: “Song of Freedom” (starring Paul Robeson)

Week 10. May 31, June 1.

Presentation of term projects

FINAL EXAM.