

# Hist/AS2141

## History of African Americans, 1865 - present

Prof. Patrick Rael, Bowdoin College, Spring 2016

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Meets: Hubbard 213 (Pickering, TuTh 11:30 - 1:00)

Office hours: Th 2-4, by apt.

Office: 211C Hubbard

Phone: x3775

This course examines the history of African Americans from the end of the Civil War to the present. We will explore a wide range of topics, including: the nature and problem of black identity, the emergence of a national leadership, the development of protest strategies, the impact of industrialization and urbanization, and the public significance of black cultural styles. We will broach an equally wide range of questions: How much agency did African Americans have in crafting their own experience, and what does this say about the nature of both their oppression and their resistance? In what ways have African Americans contributed to the formation of American society? Conversely, how have the institutions and values of American society influenced upon the African-American experience? We will be concerned with the important task of re-inserting the African-American past into our national historical narrative. We will also be interested in understanding the depths to which American society has been predicated on the intersections of race, economy, and society. Throughout, we will try to work by listening to the neglected voices of African Americans themselves as we attempt to better understand this complex part of the nation's past.

**Level:** This course is taught as a 2000-level lecture course in the History Department. That means that it is open to all students, yet is particular suited for those with some experience in college-level history courses. If you are a first-year student or require help, it is imperative that you take responsibility for your experience and see me during office hours. I expect students to spend at least two hours in personal study on this course for every hour spent in class. This time should be spent reading, reviewing class notes, and preparing course assignments.

**Course websites:** The material for this course may be found online through the Blackboard system. You will find a copy of this syllabus, as well as all the reading and paper assignments. You may easily refer to the website for the most recent course assignments and requirements. You will also find my website <<http://academic.bowdoin.edu/faculty/P/prael/>> useful. It links to guides on writing, plagiarism, and other matters crucial to your success in history courses.

### BOOKS

#### Required

Thomas, Brook, ed. *Plessy v. Ferguson: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston: Bedford Books, 1997.

DuBois, W.E.B.. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Edited by David W. Blight and Robert Gooding-Williams. Boston: Bedford Books, 1997.

Kelley, Robin. *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*. New York: The Free Press, 1996.

Martin, Jr., Waldo E. *Brown v. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents*. Boston: Bedford Books, 1998.

X, Malcolm. *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Edited by Alex Haley. 1964; New York: Ballantine Books, 1991.

#### Recommended

Rampolla, Mary Lynn. *A Pocket Guide to Writing in History*. 3rd edition. Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 2001. ISBN 0312274664. \$7.99. A short, concise, and complete guide for history undergraduates.

Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 6th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. ISBN 0226816273. \$13.00. The ultimate student guide to citations and paper writing.

Hacker, Diana. *Rules for Writers: A Brief Handbook*. 4th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999. ISBN: 0312241429. \$26.30. A handy reference for tackling writing problems.

## ASSIGNMENTS

**Weekly responses (best 10 @ 3 points each = 30%):** I will discuss this assignment on the first day of class.

**Mid-term take-home examination (20%):** A take-home mid-term examination, covering material through the first half of the course.

**Census data project (20%):** This will be a group project that will challenge you to use quantitative data to make sense of some aspect of the African-American past. Using census data already collected, you will use software applications such as Excel to construct and address a historical problem. We will take time in class to work on the project, and have the help of campus IT staff.

**Final (20%):** An essay-based take-home exam, due on the scheduled final day. The due date cannot be changed for any reason.

**Discussion and participation (10%):** Your thoughtful participation in both lecture and discussion is a significant part of your course work. Please make sure that you have read the assigned readings before each class and are prepared to discuss them. While I know it is sometimes difficult or frightening to participate in class discussions, it is also necessary. Please keep your comments relevant, and consider others when speaking.

## COURSE CONTRACT

- Students are responsible for any missed class material due to absences, including especially assignments due. If you must be absent, rely on friends in class for notes. I always appreciate your courtesy in keeping me informed.
- Please do not leave the room during the class session.
- Please do not bring food to class.
- Notepads and laptops are not permitted in class.
- We will “knock” at the end of class, to acknowledge our mutual effort.
- Print out any electronically assigned readings and bring them to class. You should be highlighting your reading, writing notes in the margins, etc.
- All work must be completed in order to pass this course.

**Late assignments:** Assignments are due at the beginning of class; assignments handed in later in the day (during or after class) will be considered one day late. For your submission to be complete, I will need both an electronic and hard copy of your paper. Assignments which receive letter grades will be marked down one-third of a grade (e.g., from B+ to B), for each day late. Please do not ask me for extensions on papers or exams.

**A note on academic honesty:** Each author owns his or her own ideas, words, and research. You must give appropriate credit — generally in the form of quotations and proper citations — when using the work of another scholar. Be familiar both with Bowdoin's honor code, and with the guidelines for proper citation and attribution of sources provided for this course. Plagiarism, whether intentional or not, is a serious violation of academic standards and Bowdoin's honor code.

**Offensive materials disclaimer:** Students occasionally find some course materials offensive. Educating ourselves sometimes requires us to encounter material we find offensive and objectionable. Views expressed in the material we

will cover do not necessarily reflect my own personal opinions. By continuing with this course, you are agreeing to be held academically accountable for all required materials in the syllabus, regardless of your own personal reactions to it. The academic enterprise invites vibrant class discussion, which balances critical thinking with mutual respect. Students are expected to take responsibility for their experience in this course by examining their own reactions to material they consider offensive. At all times, our priority will be critical engagement with scholarly material. Students who are unwilling either to hear or think critically about such material are encouraged to drop this course at their discretion.

## SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

- This is a tentative schedule, liable to change to suit class needs. The online syllabus always offers the most recent version of the syllabus.
- All readings should be completed before class.
- We will not discuss each reading with the same degree of rigor. I will do my best to let you know when to make special efforts with your reading. You are, however, responsible for all the assigned material, whether or not we discuss it in class.

### Date      Topic and assignment

	<p><u>Introductions</u></p> <p><i>In preparation for today, please read these two recent, short pieces on MLK, and come with thoughts on this question: “Was MLK more radical than conservative, or more conservative than radical?” Feel free to bring to the discussion anything you have been taught, or have experienced more generally.</i></p> <p><a href="#">“Martin Luther King’s Conservative Principles”</a></p> <p><a href="#">“Martin Luther King Jr. Celebrations Overlook His Critiques of Capitalism and Militarism”</a></p>
1/26	<p><u>Emancipation and Reconstruction</u></p> <p><i>Central question: How did the coming of freedom shape prospects for race relations immediately after the Civil War?</i></p> <p>13th Amendment (<a href="#">Online</a>)</p>
1/28	<p>Black codes of Mississippi and South Carolina (Blackboard)</p> <p>Affidavits Concerning the 1866 Memphis Riots. (<a href="#">Online</a>)</p> <p>Frederick Douglass, “Reconstruction,” <i>Atlantic Monthly</i> (December 1866). (<a href="#">Online</a>)</p> <p>George Fitzhugh, “What Is to Be Done with the Negroes of the South?” (1866). (Blackboard)</p>
2/2	<p><u>The politics of Reconstruction</u></p> <p><i>Central question: What led to the constitutional reforms of Reconstruction? What limits were inherent in these reforms?</i></p> <p>Black codes of Mississippi and South Carolina (1865). (Blackboard)</p> <p>Hiram Revels, “On the Readmission of Georgia to the Union” (1870). (<a href="#">Online</a>)</p> <p>14th Amendment. (<a href="#">Online</a>)</p> <p>Klan documents. (Blackboard)</p>
2/4	<p><u>Land and labor from Reconstruction to Jim Crow</u></p> <p><i>Central question: In what was did “freedom” alter the southern labor system? How was gender implicated in these changes?</i></p> <p>Jacqueline Jones, “The Political Economy of the Black Family During Reconstruction,” in <i>Major Problems in the Civil War and Reconstruction</i>, Michael Perman, ed. (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1998), 497-506. (Blackboard)</p> <p>Susan Mann, “Slavery, Sharecropping, and Sexual Inequality,” <i>Signs</i> 14, no. 4 (Summer 1989): 774-98. (<a href="#">Jstor</a>)</p>
2/9	<p><u>Jim Crow</u></p> <p><i>Central question: How do we explain the rise of Jim Crow in the 1890s?</i></p> <p>Henry Grady, “The New South” (<a href="#">online</a>)</p> <p>Senator Ben Tillman from an exchange with Senator John Spooner in the United States Senate (1907). (Blackboard)</p> <p>Plessy v. Ferguson : <i>A Brief History with Documents</i>, Brook Thomas, ed. (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997). Please read the court’s decision and Harlan’s dissent (pp. 41-61), and the introductory material (pp. 1-38). If necessary, you can find the majority opinion <a href="#">here</a>, and Harlan’s dissent <a href="#">here</a>.</p>

Williams v. Mississippi (1898). ([Online](#))

### Living the blues

*Central question: How did African American folk culture react to Jim Crow?*

2/11 “Testimony of Benjamin Singleton before the Senate Investigating the Negro Exodus from the Southern States (April 17, 1880),” ([Online](#))

Ida B. Wells-Barnett, *The Red Record: Tabulated Statistics and Alleged Causes of Lynching in the United States* (1895), excerpt. (Blackboard)

Leon F. Litwack, “Jim Crow Blues,” *OAH Magazine of History* 18, no. 2 (January 2004): 7-11, 58 ([Jstor](#))

“Stack O Lee Blues” by Mississippi John Hurt (online)

### Elite responses to Jim Crow: BTW and his precursors

*Central question: What debates characterized elite black responses to Jim Crow? How did these differ from folk responses?*

Booker T. Washington, “Atlanta Exposition Address.” ([online](#))

2/16 Alexander Crummell, “The Attitude of the American Mind toward the Negro Intellect.” ([online](#))

Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice From the South: By a Black Woman of the South* (Xenia, OH: Aldine Printing House, 1892), excerpt. (Blackboard)

W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, David W. Blight and Robert Gooding-Williams, eds. (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997), ch. 3.

### Elite responses to Jim Crow: DuBois

*Central question: How did DuBois approach the problems confronting African Americans? How did he differ from other elites?*

2/18 W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, David W. Blight and Robert Gooding-Williams, eds. (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997), chs. 1, 5-6, 14.

Ta-Nehisi Coates, “The Champion Barack Obama,” *The Atlantic* (January 31, 2014) ([Online](#)).

### Pan-Africanism

*Central question: What forces pushed African Americans toward internationalist perspectives around the turn of the century?*

2/23 Paul Gordon Lauren, “The Rising Tide,” in *Power and Prejudice: The Politics and Diplomacy of Racial Discrimination* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1988), ch. 2. (Blackboard)

H.M. Turner, “The American Negro and His Fatherland” (1895). (Blackboard)

“Manifesto of the Second Pan- African Congress,” *The Crisis* 23, no. 1 (November 1921), 5-8, 10. (Blackboard)

George S. Schuyler, “Pan-Africanism: A Wild Scheme” (1927), in Henry Louis Gates, Jr., and Jennifer Burton, eds., *Call and Response: Key Debates in African American Studies* (New York: Norton, 2011), 289-90. (Blackboard)

### The Great Migration

*Central question: What forces were responsible for the massive migration of African Americans out of the South in the 1910s and 1920s?*

2/25 “Sir I Will Thank You with All My Heart”: Seven Letters from the Great Migration. ([Online](#))

“Times Is Gettin Harder”: Blues of the Great Migration. ([Online](#))

“Where We Are Lacking,” *Chicago Defender*, May 17, 1919. ([Online](#))

“People we can get along without.” ([Online](#))

“Chicago and Its Eight Reasons”: Walter White Considers the Causes of the 1919 Chicago Race Riot. ([Online](#))

### Harlem Renaissance: Introduction

*Central question: How did the “problem of representation” frame the concerns of black politics and black arts in the HR?*

3/1 Henry Louis Gates, Jr., “The Trope of a New Negro and the Reconstruction of the Image of the Black,” *Representations* 24 (Autumn 1988), 129-55. ([Jstor](#))

### Harlem Renaissance: Politics

*Central question: Was Garvey a committed race leader or a race-bustling demagogue? How do we understand his appeal?*

3/3 Lawrence Levine, “Marcus Garvey and the Politics of Revitalization,” in *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History* (New York: Oxford U.P., 1993), 107-36. (Blackboard)

Marcus Garvey, “The Negro’s Greatest Enemy,” *Current History* (1923). (Blackboard)

Hubert Harrison, “Race First Versus Class First,” *Negro World* (March 27, 1920). (Blackboard)

**3/6: Take-home mid-term exam due**

### Harlem Renaissance: The arts

*Central question: Was there a distinct “Negro” art? How did the artists and writers of the HR contend with the question?*

- George S. Schuyler, “The Negro-Art Hokum” (Blackboard)  
3/8 Langston Hughes, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” (Blackboard)  
Claude McKay, “If We Must Die” (Blackboard)  
Countee Cullen, “What is Africa to me?” (Blackboard)  
Alain Locke, “The New Negro” (Blackboard)

### Introduction to census project

- 3/10 Meet in regular classroom  
*Download, print, and bring a copy of the assignment to class* (Blackboard: Assignments)

### Census project: lab session

- 3/29 Meet in Electronic Classroom, basement of H-L Library

### Harlem Renaissance: Jazz culture

*Central question: What was the relationship between jazz and the arts of the HR?*

- 3/31 Lawrence Levine, “Jazz and American Culture,” in *The Unpredictable Past: Explorations in American Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 172-88. (Blackboard)  
Chadwick Hansen, “Social Influences on Jazz Style: Chicago, 1920-30,” *American Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (Winter 1960), 493-507. ([Jstor](#))

### The Great Depression: A New Deal for African Americans?

*Central question: How did the federal government’s approach to the Great Depression impact African Americans?*

- 4/5 Caleb Southworth, “Aid to Sharecroppers: How Agrarian Class Structure and Tenant-Farmer Politics Influenced Federal Relief in the South, 1933–1935,” *Social Science History* 26, no. 1 (2002): 33-70. (Muse)

### The Great Depression: black responses

*Central question: How did African Americans respond to the Great Depression?*

- 4/7 Victoria W. Wolcott, “The Culture of the Informal Economy: Numbers Runners in Inter-War Black Detroit,” *Radical History Review* 69 (Fall 1997), 47-75. (Blackboard)  
Robin Kelley, “‘Afric’s Sons With Banner Red’: African American Communists and the Politics of Culture, 1919-1934,” in *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 103-22.

### World War II

*Central question: How did Malcolm’s experience as a young man shape his later radicalism?*

- 4/12 Kelley, “The Riddle of the Zoot: Malcolm Little and Black Cultural Politics During World War II,” in *Race Rebels*, 161-82.  
Malcolm X, *Autobiography of Malcolm X* (New York: Grove, 1965), through chapter 9.

### World War II and the Cold War

*Central question: How did de-colonization interact with fears of Communist influence abroad?*

- 4/14 “Communist Propaganda.” (Blackboard)  
Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955) (Blackboard)  
Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) (Blackboard)

### Origins of the Civil Rights Movement

*Central question: What possibilities existed for positive change before the emergence of the CRM in the mid-1950s?*

- 4/19 Harvard Sitkoff, “Harry Truman and the Election of 1948: The Coming of Age of Civil Rights in American Politics,” *Journal of Southern History* 37, no. 4 (November 1971), 597-616. ([Jstor](#))  
Robert Korstad and Nelson Lichtenstein, “Opportunities Found and Lost: Labor, Radicals, and the Early Civil Rights Movement,” *Journal of American History* 75, no. 3 (December 1988), 786-811. ([Jstor](#))

### Brown vs. Board of Education

*Central question: What reasoning inspired the Supreme Court in the Brown decision?*

- 4/21 Waldo E. Martin, Jr., *Brown v. Board of Education: A Brief History with Documents*, “Introduction to Ch.4” (pp. 121-23); “The Effects of Segregation and the Consequences of Desegregation: A Social Science Statement” (pp. 142-51); “Federal Friend-of-the-Court Brief” (pp. 164-68); “Opinion of the Court in Brown v. Board of Education” (pp. 168-74); “Introduction” (1-41). **4/24:**

## Census assignment due

### The Civil Rights Movement

*Central question: How does Robin Kelley complicate the traditional narrative of the CRM?*

- 4/26 Robin Kelley, "Birmingham's Untouchables: The Black Poor in the Age of Civil Rights," in *Race Rebels*, ch. 4.  
Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail." ([Online](#))  
Martin Luther King, Jr., "I Have a Dream." ([Online](#))  
*Autobiography of Malcolm X* (chs. 10-15).

### Black power

*Central question: How did the Black Power movement differ from the CRM?*

- 4/28 Timothy B. Tyson, "Robert F. Williams, 'Black Power,' and the Roots of the African American Freedom Struggle," *Journal of American History* 85, no. 2 (September 1998), 540-70. ([Jstor](#))  
*Autobiography of Malcolm X*, ch. 16-end.

### Race and culture in the post-CRM era

*Central question: Which, the CRM or Black Power, had a more significant impact on black cultural production in the post-CRM era?*

- 5/3 Trey Ellis, "The New Black Aesthetic," *Callaloo* 38 (Winter 1989): 233-43. ([Jstor](#))  
Robin Kelley, "Kickin' Reality, Kickin' Ballistics: 'Gangsta Rap' and Postindustrial Los Angeles," in *Race Rebels*, 183-228.

### Inequality and the carceral state

*Central question: How do we explain the persistence of inequality despite the gains of the CRM?*

- 5/5 Loic Wacquant, "From Slavery to Mass Incarceration: Working Notes for Rethinking the 'Black Question' in the US ." (Blackboard)  
Sanyika Shakur, "Muhammad Abdulla" and "Epilogue," in *Monster: The Autobiography of an L.A. Gang Member* (New York: Penguin, 1993). (Blackboard)

### Post-racial America?

*Central question: How do we explain the persistence of inequality in an age of racial neutrality?*

- 5/10 Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, "Racism without 'Racists,'" ch. 7 of *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology*, Margaret L. Andersen, ed., 6th ed., (Stamford, CT: Cengage, 2007). (Blackboard)  
D. Watkins, "[Poor Black People Don't Work?: Lessons of a Former Dope Dealer](#)," *Salon* (Tuesday, April 22, 2014).  
Linda Tirado, "[This Is Why Poor People's Bad Decisions Make Perfect Sense](#)," *Huffington Post* (November 22, 2013).

- 5/19 **Take-home final exam due, 5pm**