



## **AFAM 200: Introduction to African American Studies**

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2025

Room: EDS 101, CRN:80585

(T-R 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM)

### **INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Instructor: Derrick McKisick, Ph.D.

Office Location: SS #119

Office Hours: T – R 8:00 – 9:00 am / 3:30 – 5:00 pm

Office Phone: 903.886.5222

Office Fax: 903.468.3230

University Email Address: [derrick.mckisick@etamu.edu](mailto:derrick.mckisick@etamu.edu)

Preferred Form of Communication: **email**

Communication Response Time: 24-hours

### **COURSE INFORMATION**

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required:

James Stewart and Talmadge Anderson, *Introduction to African American Studies: Transdisciplinary Approaches and Implications* (ISBN: 978-1-58073-039-6)

Zora Neale Hurston, *Barracoon: The Story of the Last "Black Cargo,"* New York: Amistad, 2018. (ISBN: 978-0-06-274821-8)

William Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom, or, the Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery*, (London: William Tweedie, 1860) (D2L Link)

<https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/craft/craft.html>

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William Grimes, *Life of William Grimes: The Runaway Slave* (NY: W. Grimes, 1855)  
(D2L Link) [William Grimes, 1784-1865 Life of William Grimes, the Runaway Slave. Written by Himself. \(unc.edu\)](#)

Optional Texts and/or Materials

## **Course Description**

This course provides an interdisciplinary introduction to vital historical, social, economic, and cultural issues associated with people of African descent in the United States and their rich cultural legacy. Students will explore African Americans' historical and cultural roots from their African beginnings to the emergence of the modern fight for social and economic equality. The course examines how African American culture developed independent communities, resisted oppression in their struggle for freedom and liberation through assigned readings, class discussions, writing assignments, and documentaries.

## **Student Learning Outcomes**

1. Effectively describe concepts and philosophy associated with African American Studies through written, oral, or visual communication (CT)
2. Demonstrate intercultural competence and knowledge of civic responsibility (SR)
3. Connect the struggle to achieve African American freedom and equality to ethical decision-making (PR)
4. Work collaboratively to develop a coherent activity that engages the campus community (TW)

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

### **Minimal Technical Skills Needed**

Students must have access to and the ability to use D2L, library databases, and Microsoft Word or some other word processing program.

### **Instructional Methods**

In this course, instruction includes reading and analyzing various types of materials, primary, secondary, and visual materials, lectures, and virtual instruction.

## **Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course**

Student success requires students to complete all reading assignments and course work in a timely manner.

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## GRADING

Final grades in this course will be based on the following scale:

A = 90%-100%

B = 80%-89%

C = 70%-79%

D = 60%-69%

F = 59% or Below

The grading criteria of all written work will be based on the following descriptions:

A = Superior mastery of content and reading material; clear organization and factual accuracy; innovative interpretation or argument that responds to the specific directions of the assignment, test, or essay; clearly written.

B = Excellent command of the content and reading material; factual accuracy; a generally solid thesis driven historical argument backed with specific relevant evidence.

C = Average command of content material; reasonable factual accuracy; ability to produce a specific thesis driven argument that may not be original and is not supported by the evidence.

D = Poor command of content and failure to follow directions; historical errors of fact; no real thesis or argument driving the essay.

Total points corresponding to the final letter grades:

A = 451 - 500 Points

B = 401 – 450 Points

C = 351 - 400 Points

D = 301 - 350 Points

F = 300 & > Points

Weights of the assessments in the calculation of the final letter grade:

Example:

Participation            5%

Assignments            18%

Discussions            12%

Proposal                15%

Presentation            10%

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Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
TOTAL	100

### **Assessments**

Participation	25 points
Writing Assignments 3 x 30	90 points
Discussion Boards 5 x 12	60 points
Proposal	75 points
Presentation	50 points
Midterm Exam	100 points
Final Exam	100 points

**Required Reading:** All students will be required to read and to discuss the assigned books. The books are available for purchase on internet websites (Amazon), and at a variety of regional retailers.

### **Discussion Board**

During this course, there will be weekly discussion board questions based on assigned readings from Stewart and Anderson, *Introduction to African American Studies*, Hurston, *Barracoon*, and additional assigned readings. All students must post an answer to the question and respond to the responses of two different classmates. There are three parts to the discussion board responses. **To receive full credit for the assignment, students must respond to the discussion question with a 150-word post, include an original question at the end of the initial post, and respond to at least two different classmate's questions with at least 100-word responses each that directly address their response. If you do not participate in all parts of each discussion board thread, you will not receive full credit for your response.**

### **Discussion Board Post (Quantity)**

- You are required to post one original message for each topic.
- The post should be 150-words that directly address the discussion question, not merely describing the historical events or person in the discussion prompt. Each response should indicate awareness of historical context and importance.
- You must respond to at least two of your classmate's questions and your response must be at least 100 words each that directly address your classmate's question.

### **Discussion Board Post (Quality)**

- Your posts must demonstrate your knowledge and understanding of the topic being discussed.
- You must demonstrate connections between lecture materials, textbook

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content, and discussion.

- You should relate discussion responses to material covered earlier in the course to give your responses clarity and context.
- Your post should be grammatically correct and proofread.
- Your post should go beyond reciting facts, but it should examine the material at a critical level and include facts from Stewart and Anderson, *Introduction to African American Studies*, Hurston, *Barracoon*, and William Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles to Freedom*.

### **Discussion Board (Timeliness)**

- You must provide at least three days for your classmates to respond, so it is incumbent for every student to post and respond as soon as possible to give all students an opportunity to participate. If you do not post a response with an ample amount of time for your classmates to respond, you will not receive credit for your discussion board post.
- You will be given one week to respond to each topic.

**TURNITIN.COM:** All typed assignments, exams, papers, and reviews must be uploaded to the appropriate listing of the course's Dropbox. Turnitin automatically scans writing assignments uploaded to the dropbox for both plagiarism and originality (Artificial Intelligence). This is a requirement for the course, and the students will not receive a grade until they have completed this process.

### **Writing Assignments**

All writing assignments must be typed in 12 pt. New Times Roman font and doubled spaced with a 1" margin. Additionally, all assignments must include, on the first page, your name, assignment, my name, course number, and date. Students must submit an electronic copy to dropbox that turnitin.com can analyze. If the student does submit a readable electronic copy to dropbox, the assignment will not be graded, and the student will receive a zero.

### **Primary Source Paper**

There are a variety of paper assignments that you can use the information gathered from primary sources to address specific questions, make comparisons, and evaluate

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change over time. In this exercise, I will provide specific questions that students must use primary sources as the basis of their response. Additionally, students are required to produce essays that contain a thesis and specifically respond to the question. All sources must be cited in the paper. If students fail to cite their sources, they will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

### **Student Presentation**

All students are required to make a class presentation regarding their research paper. Each presentation should include: a brief statement regarding the historical relevance of the topic, a statement of the research question, an analysis of the different historical arguments on the topic, a discussion of the primary and secondary sources, and finally, statement of the student's position. Additionally, all presentations must include a PowerPoint presentation. The presentations will last approximately 10-15 minutes.

### **Participation**

The student's participation grade will be earned through taking part in classroom discussion sessions and attendance. Each student will lead discussions, participate in group discussions, and present their research. Although the student will not have a designated discussion leader role in each class, all students are encouraged to be prepared to participate class discussions and contribute if called upon. Class disruptions will not be tolerated.

### **Black History Month Event Proposal Competition**

The entire class will be divided into five different groups. Each group is responsible for producing a proposal for a Black History Month program that is consistent with the goals and ideals associated with African American studies. The proposal must include purpose, rationale, description, duration, target audience, budget, and projected outcomes. Complete instructions are posted in D2L.

### **Late Submissions**

All students are required to submit their assignment to the class dropbox and provide a hard copy on the day the assignment is due to the professor. For every assignment, there will be a five-point penalty for each day the assignment is late. The assignment is not complete unless the student has submitted an electronic copy to the dropbox and a hard copy to the professor.

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## TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

### LMS

All course sections offered by Texas A&M University-Commerce have a corresponding course shell in the myLeo Online Learning Management System (LMS). Below are technical requirements

LMS Requirements:

<https://community.brightspace.com/s/article/Brightspace-Platform-Requirements>

LMS Browser Support:

[https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser\\_support.htm](https://documentation.brightspace.com/EN/brightspace/requirements/all/browser_support.htm)

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

[https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom\\_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu](https://inside.tamuc.edu/campuslife/CampusServices/CITESupportCenter/Zoom_Account.aspx?source=universalmenu)

## ACCESS AND NAVIGATION

You will need your campus-wide ID (CWID) and password to log into the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact the Center for IT Excellence (CITE) at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamuc.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamuc.edu).

**Note:** Personal computer and internet connection problems do not excuse the requirement to complete all course work in a timely and satisfactory manner. Each student needs to have a backup method to deal with these inevitable problems. These methods might include the availability of a backup PC at home or work, the temporary use of a computer at a friend's home, the local library, office service companies, Starbucks, a TAMUC campus open computer lab, etc.

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## **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

If you have any questions or are having difficulties with the course material, please contact your Instructor.

### **Technical Support**

If you are having technical difficulty with any part of Brightspace, please contact Brightspace Technical Support at 1-877-325-7778. Other support options can be found here:

<https://community.brightspace.com/support/s/contactsupport>

### **Interaction with Instructor Statement**

The instructor will respond to email within twenty-four hours, except on weekends starting at 5:00 pm Friday to 8:00 am Monday.

## **COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES/POLICIES**

### **Course Specific Procedures/Policies**

**A&M-Commerce requires the use of face-coverings in all instructional and research classrooms/laboratories. Exceptions may be made by faculty where warranted. Faculty have management over their classrooms. Students not using face-coverings can be required to leave class. Repetitive refusal to comply can be reported to the Office of Students' Rights and Responsibilities as a violation of the student Code of Conduct.**

**Students should not attend class when ill or after exposure to anyone with a communicable illness. Communicate such instances directly with your instructor. Faculty will work to support the student getting access to missed content or completing missed assignments.**

### **Syllabus Change Policy**

The syllabus is a guide. Circumstances and events, such as student progress, may make it necessary for the instructor to modify the syllabus during the semester. Any changes made to the syllabus will be announced in advance.

### **University Specific Procedures**

#### **Student Conduct**

All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment. The Code of Student Conduct is described in detail in the [Student Guidebook](http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/Admissions/oneStopShop/undergraduateAdmissions/studentGuidebook.aspx>

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Students should also consult the Rules of Netiquette for more information regarding how to interact with students in an online forum:

<https://www.britannica.com/topic/netiquette>

### **TAMUC Attendance**

For more information about the attendance policy please visit the [Attendance](#) webpage and [Procedure 13.99.99.R0.01](#).

<http://www.tamuc.edu/admissions/registrar/generalInformation/attendance.aspx>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/academic/13.99.99.R0.01.pdf>

### **Academic Integrity**

Students at Texas A&M University-Commerce are expected to maintain high standards of integrity and honesty in all of their scholastic work. For more details and the definition of academic dishonesty see the following procedures:

[Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty 13.99.99.R0.03](#)

[Undergraduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/documents/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyForm.pdf>

[Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty Form](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/academics/graduateschool/faculty/GraduateStudentAcademicDishonestyFormold.pdf>

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/13students/undergraduates/13.99.99.R0.03UndergraduateAcademicDishonesty.pdf>

### **Students with Disabilities-- ADA Statement**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

#### **Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**

Texas A&M University-Commerce

Velma K. Waters Library Rm 162

Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835

Fax (903) 468-8148

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Email: [studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu)

Website: [Office of Student Disability Resources and Services](#)

<http://www.tamuc.edu/campusLife/campusServices/studentDisabilityResourcesAndServices/>

### **Nondiscrimination Notice**

Texas A&M University-Commerce will comply in the classroom, and in online courses, with all federal and state laws prohibiting discrimination and related retaliation on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, age, genetic information or veteran status. Further, an environment free from discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression will be maintained.

### **Campus Concealed Carry Statement**

Texas Senate Bill - 11 (Government Code 411.2031, et al.) authorizes the carrying of a concealed handgun in Texas A&M University-Commerce buildings only by persons who have been issued and are in possession of a Texas License to Carry a Handgun. Qualified law enforcement officers or those who are otherwise authorized to carry a concealed handgun in the State of Texas are also permitted to do so. Pursuant to Penal Code (PC) 46.035 and A&M-Commerce Rule 34.06.02.R1, license holders may not carry a concealed handgun in restricted locations.

For a list of locations, please refer to the [Carrying Concealed Handguns On Campus](#) document and/or consult your event organizer.

Web url:

<http://www.tamuc.edu/aboutUs/policiesProceduresStandardsStatements/rulesProcedures/34SafetyOfEmployeesAndStudents/34.06.02.R1.pdf>

Pursuant to PC 46.035, the open carrying of handguns is prohibited on all A&M-Commerce campuses. Report violations to the University Police Department at 903-886-5868 or 9-1-1.

### **A&M-Commerce Supports Students' Mental Health**

The Counseling Center at A&M-Commerce, located in the Halladay Building, Room 203, offers counseling services, educational programming, and connection to community resources for students. Students have 24/7 access to the Counseling Center's crisis assessment services by calling 903-886-5145. For more information regarding Counseling Center events and confidential services, please visit [www.tamuc.edu/counsel](http://www.tamuc.edu/counsel)

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## **AI Use in Courses (Draft)**

Texas A&M University-Commerce acknowledges that there are legitimate uses of Artificial Intelligence, ChatBots, or other software that has the capacity to generate text, or suggest replacements for text beyond individual words, as determined by the instructor of the course.

Any use of such software must be documented. Any undocumented use of such software constitutes an instance of academic dishonesty (plagiarism).

Individual instructors may disallow entirely the use of such software for individual assignments or for the entire course. Students should be aware of such requirements and follow their instructors' guidelines. If no instructions are provided the student should assume that the use of such software is disallowed.

In any case, students are fully responsible for the content of any assignment they submit, regardless of whether they used an AI, in any way. This specifically includes cases in which the AI plagiarized another text or misrepresented sources.

13.99.99.R0.03 Undergraduate Academic Dishonesty

13.99.99.R0.10 Graduate Student Academic Dishonesty

## COURSE OUTLINE / CALENDAR

Date	Assigned Reading	Submissions
Aug 24-30	Stewart and Anderson, 1-26: Albright, Jeffries and Goecke, "A Ruckus on High Street: The Birth of Black Studies at the Ohio State University ( <i>Journal of Race &amp; Policy</i> , Volume 9, No. 1, 2013)	Discussion Board # 1
Aug 31- Sept 6	Stewart and Anderson, 27-50: William Grimes/ Group Assignments	
Sept 7-13	Stewart and Anderson, 51-74: Craft, 31-70: Craft, <i>Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom</i> , 1-30.	Discussion Board #2
Sept 14-20	Hurston, <i>Barracoon</i> , xi-24.	Writing Assignment 1 – Grimes
Sept 21-27	DBDT—Instruction (African Roots)	
Sept 28 – Oct 4	Stewart and Anderson 105-169	Discussion Board #3
Oct 5-11	Hurston <i>Barracoon</i> , 25-50	Writing Assignment 2 – Craft
<b>Oct 12-18</b>	<b>Review/ Exam 1 (10/16/25)</b>	
Oct 19-25	Hurston, <i>Barracoon</i> , 25-50: Stewart and Anderson, 181-205.	BHM Proposals Due
Oct 26- Nov 1	DBDT – Instruction	Discussion Board #4
Nov 2-8	Stewart and Anderson, 213-278:	
Nov 9-15	Stewart and Anderson, 286-324	Discussion Board #5
Nov 16-22	Stewart and Anderson, 332-374: Presentations	
Nov 23-25	Thanksgiving Break – Campus Closed 11/26-11/29	Writing Assignment 3 – Hurston due 11/25— No Class 11/25
Nov 30- Dec 6	Stewart and Anderson, 382-415: Review Presentations	
<b>Dec 11</b>	<b>Final Exam 10:30 -12:30</b>	

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