



AFAM 200: Introduction to African American Studies

COURSE SYLLABUS: Fall 2026

Room: SS #150, CRN:80585

(T-R 12:30 PM – 1:45 PM)

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor: Derrick McKisick, Ph.D.

Office Location: SS #119

Office Hours: Tuesday 9:00 -11:00 am and 3:30 – 4:30 pm / Thursday 9:00 – 11:00 am

Office Fax: 903.468.3230

University Email Address: derrick.mckisick@etamu.edu

Preferred Form of Communication: **email**

Communication Response Time: Within 24 hours

COURSE INFORMATION

Materials – Textbooks, Readings, Supplementary Readings

Textbook(s) Required:

Ogechi Anyanwu, et al., eds., [Slavery to Liberation: The African American Experience, Richmond: Eastern Kentucky University Libraries \(2022\)](#)

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>

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. \(unc.edu\)](#)

[Library of Congress, Digital Collections, Born in Slavery Slave Narratives, 1936-1938.](#)

Optional Texts and/or Materials

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

Course Description

This course provides an interdisciplinary introduction to significant 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 African origins to the emergence of the modern struggle for social and economic equality. Through assigned readings, class discussions, writing assignments, and documentaries, the course examines the development of African American culture, the formation of independent communities, resistance to oppression, and the continuing struggle for freedom and liberation.

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 be able to use D2L, library databases, Microsoft Word, or another word-processing program.

Instructional Methods

Instruction in this course includes lectures and virtual instruction, as well as the reading and analysis of primary, secondary, and visual sources.

Student Responsibilities or Tips for Success in the Course

Success in this course requires students to complete all assigned readings and coursework in a timely manner.

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

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

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

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

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

D = Poor command of the content or failure to follow directions; significant historical errors of fact; no clear thesis or argument guiding 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 or Below

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

Example:

Participation	5%
Assignments	18%
Discussions	12%
Proposal	15%
Presentation	10%
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

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Required Reading

All students are required to read and discuss the assigned books. Required materials are available through the sources identified in the syllabus and through a variety of online and regional retailers.

Discussion Board

During this course, discussion board questions will be based on assigned and additional readings. Each discussion board has three required components. To receive full credit, students must (1) post an initial response of at least 150 words that directly addresses the discussion question, (2) include an original question at the end of the initial post, and (3) respond to the questions of at least two different classmates with responses of at least 100 words each. Each reply must directly address the classmate's question. Students who do not complete all required components will not receive full credit.

Discussion Board Post (Quantity)

- You are required to post one original message for each topic.
- The initial post must be at least 150 words and directly address the discussion question rather than merely describe the historical event or person identified in the prompt.
- Each response should indicate awareness of historical context and importance.
- You must respond to the questions of at least two classmates. Each response must be at least 100 words and directly address the 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 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 the assigned readings.

Discussion Board (Timeliness)

- You must allow at least three days for classmates to respond to your initial post. Therefore, post your initial response early enough to give classmates a reasonable opportunity to participate. Initial posts submitted too late to allow the required response period will not receive credit.
- You will be given one week to respond to each topic.

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TURNITIN.COM

All typed assignments, exams, papers, and reviews must be uploaded to the appropriate course Dropbox. Turnitin automatically reviews writing assignments submitted to the Dropbox for originality. Submission through the designated Dropbox is a course requirement; work will not be graded until this requirement has been completed.

Writing Assignments

All writing assignments must be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins. The first page must include your name, the assignment title, the instructor's name, the course number, and the date. Students must submit a readable electronic copy to the designated Dropbox for Turnitin review. If a readable electronic copy is not submitted, the assignment will not be graded and the student will receive a zero.

Primary Source Paper

Primary-source paper assignments require students to use evidence from primary sources to address specific questions, make comparisons, and evaluate change over time. For each assignment, students will receive specific questions and must use primary sources as the basis of their response. Essays must include a clear thesis and directly answer the assigned question. All sources must be cited. Failure to cite sources will result in a failing grade for the assignment.

Student Presentation

All students are required to give a class presentation on their research paper. Each presentation must include a brief explanation of the topic's historical significance, the research question, an analysis of differing historical interpretations, a discussion of the primary and secondary sources, and a statement of the student's position. Each presentation must include a PowerPoint and should last approximately 10–15 minutes.

Participation

The participation grade is based on attendance and active participation in classroom discussions. Students will lead discussions, participate in group activities, and present their research. Although students will not serve as designated discussion leaders in every class meeting, everyone should come prepared to participate in class discussions and contribute when called upon. Class disruptions will not be tolerated.

Black History Month Event Proposal Competition

The class will be divided into groups, and each group will develop a proposal for a Black History Month program consistent with the goals and principles of African American Studies. The proposal must include the program's purpose, rationale, description, duration, target audience, budget, and projected outcomes. Complete instructions are posted in D2L.

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Late Submissions

All students must submit each assignment to the course Dropbox and provide the instructor with a hard copy on the due date. Late assignments will receive a five-point deduction for each day they are late. An assignment is not considered complete until both the electronic copy and the hard copy have been submitted.

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

Zoom Video Conferencing Tool

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.

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.

COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

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

The syllabus/schedule are subject to change.

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 24 hours, except between 5:00 p.m. Friday and 8:00 a.m. 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>

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>

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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

Email: studentdisabilityservices@tamuc.edu

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

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

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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 connections 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

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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
8/20	Course Outline / Introduction	
8/25-27	Slavery and Liberation (Chapter 2); Albright, Jeffries and Goecke, "A Ruckus on High Street: The Birth of Black Studies at the Ohio State University (<i>Journal of Race & Policy</i> , Volume 9, No. 1, 2013)	Discussion Board # 1
9/1-3	<i>Slavery and Liberation</i> (Chapter 13)	
9/8-10	William Grimes/ BHM Group Assignments	Discussion Board #2
9/15-17	<i>Slavery and Liberation</i> (Chapter 4)	Writing Assignment 1 – Grimes
9/22-24	Craft, <i>Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom</i> , 1-70.	
9/29-10/1	<i>Slavery and Liberation</i> (Chapter 5)	Discussion Board #3
10/6	<i>Slavery and Liberation</i> (Chapter 6)	Writing Assignment 2 – Craft
10/8	Fall Break	
10/13-15	Review / Exam 1 (10/15/26)	
10/20-22	<i>Slavery and Liberation</i> (Chapter 7)	BHM Proposals Due
10/27-29	<i>Slavery and Liberation</i> (Chapter 8)/ WPA Slave Narrative Assignment	Discussion Board #4
11/3-5	<i>Slavery and Liberation</i> (Chapter 9)	
11/10-12	<i>Slavery and Liberation</i> (Chapter 10)	Discussion Board #5
11/17-19	Presentations	
11/24	No Class	Writing Assignment 3 – WPA Slave Narrative Essay – Due 11/24
11/25-11/30	Thanksgiving Break – Campus Closed 11/25-11/30	
12/1-3	Review Presentations	Black History Month Projects Due 12/6
12/10	Final Exam 10:30 -12:30	

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