**BLST 241/HIST 248—REVISED**

**African American History from Reconstruction to the Present *Spring 2012, Amherst College***

***MW 2-3:20***

***Webster 217***

***Professor: Julia Rabig***

***Office location: 309 Cooper House   
Office Hours: Immediately after class in 217 Webster on W, 3:20-4:20, or by appointment   
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**Course Description:** This course explores African American history since 1865 and introduces students to major debates in its interpretation. Students will read a range of historical voices reflecting the experiences of black men and women during Reconstruction and the rise of Jim Crow. We’ll use primary sources to understand how the Great Migration reshaped U.S. cities. We’ll consider how black communities transformed themselves in the wake of the Great Depression and Second World War and analyze the origins, strategies, and accomplishments of the civil rights and black power movements. Using the historical framework developed over the semester, students will analyze the persistence and reformulation of racial inequality at the beginning of the 21st century. Throughout the course, we’ll consider the varieties of black nationalist thought that have shaped African American politics and culture; the influence of African Americans’ struggle for full citizenship on other social movements; and, the explicit and implicit race, class, and gender politics of federal legislation concerning civil rights, labor rights, residential segregation, and suburbanization.

**Assignments:** One short paper (3-5 pages) incorporating an online database of historic black newspapers; a take-home midterm; three response papers; and, a take-home final. All written assignments should be submitted to me as an email attachment (Word File) at julia.rabig@gmail.com.

**Grading:**

* Attendance and active participation in class discussion: 15%
* Primary source paper: 15%
* Midterm: 25%
* Response Papers: 15%
* Final: 30%

**Readings:** The following books are required and will be available for purchase at Amherst Books. Other required readings will be available on our course web site (https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/departments/courses/1112S/BLST/BLST-241-1112S)

* Thomas C. Holt Elsa Barkley Brown, and Thomas Patterson, *Major Problems in African American History, vol. 2 From Freedom to Freedom Now, 1865-1990s* (Wadsworth Publishing, 2000) ISBN-13: 978-0669462937
* Davarian Baldwin, *Chicago’s New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, and Black Urban Life* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2007) ISBN-13: 978-0807857991
* Mary Francis Berry, *My Face is Black is True: Callie House and the Struggle for Ex-Slave Reparations* (Vintage, 2006) ISBN-13: 978-0307277053 [Available as an E-book]
* Hasan Kwame Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama’s Black Belt* (NYU Press, 2010) (ISBN-13: 978-0814743317) [Available as an E-book]
* William L. Van DeBurg *Modern Black Nationalism: From Marcus Garvey to Louis Farrakhan* (New York University Press, 1997) (ISBN-13: 978-0814787892)

Holt and Brown’s *Major Problems* is a collection of primary sources in African American history and essays by major scholars in the field that will be assigned throughout the term. Please bring books and course web site materials to class to facilitate discussion.

**Format:** This is a discussion-driven course, although I may offer brief lectures from time to time to provide context for the assigned readings or to explore other issues. You should be prepared to participate in discussion during every class period.

**Expectations:** Regular attendance and class participation is mandatory. Please let me know when you won’t be in class and keep in mind that more than three absences will affect your grade. You must comply with Amherst College’s academic honesty policy. If you violate this policy, you will fail the course and possibly face other penalties. If you have questions about this, please ask me or consult https://www.amherst.edu/campuslife/deanstudents/acadhonesty.

**Disabilities:** If you are a student with a documented disability, please see the instructor immediately so that all possible accommodations can be made; no accommodations will be made retroactively. Additional information can be found at <https://www.amherst.edu/academiclife/support/#disabilities>

**LECTURE AND READING SCHEDULE**

**January 23 (M): Introduction to African American History**

**January** **25 (W): Unfinished Reconstruction**

* Van Deburg, *Modern Black Nationalism*, 1-18
* *Major Problems*, 1-35

**January 30 (M): Labor Control and Resistance in the Post-Bellum South**

* *Major Problems,* chapter 2, “The Work of Reconstruction,” 36-85
* *Major Problems*, chapter 3, “Renegotiating African-American Life in the New South,” 87-96, 115-124

***First response paper due.***

**February 1 (W): Jim Crow and the Nadir**

* Mary Francis Berry, *My Face is Black is True*, 1-3 (6-92)

**February 6 (M): Jim Crow and Civil Society**

* Mary Francis Berry, *My Face is Black is True*, 4-6 (93-170)
* In class: Primary source analysis—lynching documents by Wells and Love.

***Primary source assignment handed out and explained in class.***

**February 8 (W): Beyond Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois: Varieties of Black Leadership in the early 20th Century**

* *Major Problems*, chapter 5, “Defining a Race Politics,”156-170
* Michelle Rief, “Thinking Locally, Acting Globally: The International Agenda of African American Clubwomen, 1880-1940,” *Journal of African American History* 2004 (89) 3: 203-222

***Second response paper due.***

**February 13 (M): The Great Migration**

## *Major Problems,* chapter 4, “Rural Exodus and the Growth of New Urban Communities,”126-132, 138-144

* Davarian Baldwin, *Chicago’s New Negroes*, 1-52

**February 15 (W): Cultural Politics in the Urban North and West**

**Readings:**

* *Major Problems*, chapter 6, “The Culture Wars,” 186-218
* Davarian Baldwin, *Chicago’s New Negroes,* 53-90

**February 20 (M): Black Nationalism and the Diaspora**

* *Modern Black Nationalism*, 23-39, 51-58
* Davarian Baldwin, *Chicago’s New Negroes,* 121-192

**February 22 (W): The Great Depression and the Racial Politics of the New Deal**

* Course Web Site: Wendell Pritchett, *Robert Clifton Weaver and the American City: The Life and Times of an Urban Reformer* (Chicago, 2008), chapters 2-4, 31-87
* *Modern Black Nationalism*, 59-63

**ASSIGNMENT DUE FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 24:** ***3-5 page paper* *incorporating articles from* Chicago Defender *or* Amsterdam News—will be provided in class.**

**February 27 (M): “Double V” for Victory?**

* *Modern Black Nationalism*, 73-77
* Course Web Site: “Double V in New Jersey” in *Newark: A History of Race, Rights, and Riots in America* (NYU Press, 2007) 32-49

**February 29 (W): On the streets and in the courts: A movement takes shape**

* *Major Problems*, chapter 8, “Origins of the Civil Rights Movement,” 264-280
* *Major Problems*, chapter 9, “The Civil Rights Movement,” 283-311

**March 5 (M): Civil Rights in the South**

* Hasan Kwame Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes*, 7-116

## March 7 (W): Multiple Movements

* ~~Course Web Site: Thomas Sugrue,~~ *~~Sweet Land of Liberty~~*~~, “God have pity on such a city,” 163-199~~
* Course Web Site: Danielle McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance*, “They’d Kill Me If I Told”, 3-47

## ASSIGNMENT DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 9 BY 5:00 pm: *Take-home mid-term exam.*

## March 12 (M): Civil Rights and the War on Poverty

* Course Web Site: Kent German, *New Orleans After the Promises*, chapter 3 (59-82), chapter 5 (104-125)

## March 14 (W): No Class

## SPRING BREAK: March 17-24

## March 26 (M): The Roots of Black Power—North and the South

## Hasan Kwame Jeffries, *Bloody Lowndes,* 117-246

## *Modern Black Nationalism*, 93-115, 119-26

**March 28 (W): Urban Uprisings and the Limits of Liberalism**

* Course Web Site: Thomas Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty*, “Long, Hot Summers,” 313-355
* View *Revolution ‘67*

## April 2 (M): Mobilizing Black Power at the Polls and Beyond

* *Modern Black Nationalism*, 127-135, 136-174, 192-196, 240-241, 244-251
* View: *Unbought and Unbossed, Shirley Chisholm in ‘72*

## April 4 (W): Black Feminism

* Course Web Site: Frances Beal, “Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female,” 801-806
* Course Web Site: Barbara Smith, “Black Feminism,” 723-33
* Course Web Site: Rhonda Y. Williams, “Black Women, Urban Politics, and Engendering Black Power,” in Joseph, *The Black Power Movement*, 79-104

**April 9 (M): Black Feminism**

* Course Web Site: Patricia Hill Collins, excerpts from *Black Feminist Thought* (2000), chapters 1-4, pp. 1-106

## April 11 (W): Race, Gender, and Deindustrialization

* Course Web Site: Jeff Chang, *Can’t Stop, Won’t Stop*, 7-20, 89-189

## April 16 (M): Class and Mobility in the late 20th Century

* Course Web Site: E. Franklin Frazier, *Black Bourgeoisie*, 734-741
* Course Web Site: Mary Pattillo-McCoy, *Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril Among the Black Middle-Class* (University of Chicago, 1999), Introduction, chapters 1-3 (1-67)

## April 18 (W): Public Policy and Black Conservatism: Debate over the Legacies of Affirmative Action

## Course Web Site: “Views on Affirmative Action” (featuring Clarence Thomas, Glen C. Loury, Randall Kennedy, William Julius Wilson, Cornel West, and Brent Staples), 934-963

***Third response due.***

**April 23 (M): Race and Sexuality**

* View Marlon Riggs, *Black is/Black Ain’t*
* *Major Problems,* chapter 11, “Progress and Poverty: African Americans at the Dawn of the Twenty-First Century, 338-387

**April 25 (W): Race, Gender, and Inequality: Persistence and Reformulation**

* Course Web Site: Michael B. Katz, Mark J. Stern, and Jamie J. Fader, “The New African American Inequality,” *Journal of American History*, June 2005, 75-108
* Kevin M. Kruse, “The Politics of Race and Public Space: Desegregation, Privatization, and the Tax Revolt in Atlanta,” *Journal of Urban History* 31 (2005): 610-633

**April 30 (M): Black Politics in the 21st Century**

* JoAnn Wypijewski, “The Rainbow's Gravity,” *The Nation*, August 2, 2004. This article is posted to Course Web Site under course materials or, visit <http://www.thenation.com/doc/20040802/wypijewski>
* *Modern Black Nationalism*, 275-294, 333-341
* View *Street fight!* (dir. Marshall Curry, 2005)

**May 2 (W): Final discussion and review**

## ASSIGNMENT DUE FRIDAY, MAY 4 BY 5 PM: *Take-Home Final Exam*

3/14/12