

Education 15:310:561
History of African American Education
Fall, 2015
Room 011 GSE
Weds, 4:50-7:30

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Description.

This course examines the history, theory, and current reality of African-American education in the United States. The course explores several key questions: How do we explain the origins and development of educational institutions created by or for Americans of African descent? What were the successes and failures of the Civil Rights Movement in education? How have historians explained the history of African American education and how have these explanations changed with time? How have African American intellectuals engaged the problem of race through educational reform? And finally, what are the problems and promises of education for African Americans today? The course includes weekly reading responses, a research paper (done in groups or individually), and a final reflective essay.

I. Required Texts (These are NOT necessarily on sale at the bookstore, so order online ASAP!!!)

- Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (paperback/ebook 2005)
- James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (paperback 1988)
- James Patterson, *Brown V. Board of Education: A Civil Rights Milestone and its Troubled Legacy* (paperback/ebook 2002)
- EITHER Cecelski, *Along Freedom Road* OR Curry, *Silver Rights* (assigned week 1)
- Derrick Bell, *Silent Covenants* (paperback, 2005)
- Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (paperback/ebook 2012)
- Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*. (paperback/ebook 2014)
- Jean Anyon, *Ghetto Schooling* (1997)
- Other readings will be distributed via Sakai or are available online

II. The Purposes of the Course are to:

- Describe the development of African-American educational institutions and traditions in 19th and twentieth-century America, including key periods and moments, and people.
- Explain the tension between education as a source of opportunity and education as a source of oppression for African Americans.
- Analyze the ways in which historians develop competing explanations of the past.
- Identify key areas of concern for the education of African Americans in contemporary American society and critically analyze the effectiveness of policies relating to them.
- Be familiar with major scholars in the field of African American Education.

III. Course Content

This course proceeds chronologically and thematically, beginning with the role of race in the development of educational traditions and institutions in America after the Revolutionary War through the end of the 20th century. The final weeks of the course consider contemporary issues in African American Education.

IV. Instructional Format

This course is a seminar, and will, for the most part, be conducted in the form of whole-class discussions and small group discussions/assignments during class. Occasionally we may watch a film during class or Ben may offer a mini-lecture. We may also have guest speakers.

V. Evaluation

My philosophy of grading is that letter grades are marks that record your personal accomplishments. I do not use letter grades to rank or sort students. What this means is that I will set clear standards for you to meet (and when they are unclear, please tell me) and I will help you reach those standards. When I evaluate your work and find that you have not met those standards, I will tell you clearly what is missing and what has to be done. I offer you my help and another chance to meet those standards.

Late assignments will be accepted only if you have made prior arrangements. You may rewrite any paper once, in which case you must make arrangements with me prior to the revision. Rewritten reading responses may not necessarily be given a new grade, depending on the quality of the rewrite. An exception is the final integrative essay where a late paper cannot be accepted at all since grades are to be turned in to the University a few days after the assignment is due. Due dates refer to the last day I will accept an assignment without prior arrangements. You are welcome to hand in assignments before their final due date!

This course will be taken for a letter grade only. The letter grade will be calculated as follows:

- Participation during class.....20%
- Weekly Reading Responses50%
- Book review20%
- Integrative Essay10%

Active participation in discussion is an essential part of learning in this class and hence of evaluating your work. Participation means listening as well as talking, monitoring your own contributions to a discussion, helping others develop their ideas, and, of course, expressing your own thoughts in small and large group discussions. I also ask that you do not keep a laptop open during class, as research has shown that laptop use decreases engagement in class discussion. It is essential to complete the required readings before class discussion. Weekly attendance is mandatory. Students should contact the instructor in advance of any missed classes. Missing class, or excessive tardiness, will result in a grade reduction. Multiple absences without prior approval with the instructor may result in failure of the class, notwithstanding the fact that participation is 20% of the course grade. Completing each week's readings is essential to participation. If you struggle with reading, please let me know and I will discuss strategies with you. A typical week's readings will be approximately 150 pages.

I am required to inform you that this class follows the university policies on plagiarism and academic integrity. Those policies may be found here:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/>

Failure to comply with these regulations may result in failure of the assignment and or the course (and possibly dismissal from the Graduate School of Education) at the discretion of the instructor and relevant unit and university administrators. If you have any questions about how to properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others, please ask.

C. The written work for the course will be as follows:

1. 2-3 page (500-750 words) weekly reflections on the reading, **due to sakai by the start of every class. You may skip one reflection if you need to without penalty, but please still do that week's readings.** These brief essays offer you an opportunity to respond to aspects of the weeks readings that puzzle, intrigue, or irk you. Think of it as a conversation with yourself, or with me, as I will be reading them each week. You may use different approaches for different sets of readings, and creativity is always welcome. If there are multiple readings assigned in a given week, be sure to respond to each of them. These will be graded excellent (A), good (B), or not acceptable. An excellent essay demonstrates clear understanding of the readings and expresses an interesting opinion of them, such as a critical analysis, a comparison, the identification of a particular theme, the development of a new idea, etc. A good essay demonstrates an adequate understanding of the readings. If your essay is not acceptable, I will ask you to revise it, in which case it may not receive a grade above a B.
2. **Book review**, due via email **Sunday, 11/29, by 9pm**. Write a 1750-2000 word review of a book on the history of African American education that has been published in the last ten years. I strongly urge you to meet with me during your process of book selection. In preparation for your review:
 - a. read the book carefully and interactively.
 - b. read other scholarly reviews of the book.
 - c. Skim three or more related books that this book (or reviews of it) reference as relevant peer books—books that this book is in conversation with. Your task is to see, from the introductions of these other books, how your book relates to and/or differs from them.
 - d. In your review, include discussion of the book's central argument, structure, major components, sources, and significance. Make your own opinion of the book clear. Does the book accomplish what it sets out to do? Is that goal itself a worthy one?
3. **A short, final, integrative essay** of no more than 6 pages (1500 words) that reflects on what you have learned about African-American education. Consider class discussions, presentations and lectures, readings, and written assignments. Then write an essay that answers the question: In what ways (be specific) have your views about African-American education been challenged, modified, or reinforced by what you have learned? **Due 12/18 by midnight.**

CRITERIA FOR JUDGING WRITTEN WORK

1. *Completeness*

Are all parts of the assignment included?

2. *Accuracy*

Is what you say supported by evidence? Do you summarize main points clearly? Are you precise in use of statistics and quotes?

3. Analysis

Is your argument coherent, comprehensive, and convincing?

4. Quality of writing

Is your writing clear and succinct? Do you help the reader move easily from the beginning to the end of paper?

OVERVIEW OF COURSE¹

Week 1 (9/2): Introduction to Course. *What do we mean by “African-American?” By “Education?” Is there such a thing as African-American Education? Should there be? What is history? What does Rankine’s book, Citizen, tell us about the nature of racism and belonging in America? About “education?”*

- Read for tonight: Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*.
- Tonight we will assign Cecelski or Curry readings.
- There is NO READING REFLECTION due tonight.

Week 2 (9/9): Thinking About African-American Education. *How have historians’ studies of African American Education changed in the last century? How is schooling distinct from education and why does this distinction matter?*

- Shujaa, “Education and Schooling: You Can Have One Without the Other.”
- Butchart, “Outthinking and Outflanking the Owners of the World.” (Both are from Shujaa (ed), *Too Much Schooling, Too Little Education* (1994))
- In class we will also discuss Ulrich B. Phillips, “The Decadence of the Plantation System” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 35:1, The New South (Jan., 1910), pp. 37-41. You do not need to respond to this in your essay for tonight (although you are welcome to.) We will analyze the text as a primary document during class.

Note: First reading reflection due tonight and subsequent nights.

Week 3 (9/16): Formal and informal African-American Education in the Antebellum North. *What are the pros and cons of looking at formal schooling as locations of education for 19th century African Americans? How did racial caste shape the formation of the common school? How did African-Americans fight for access to formal education and how successful were they?*

- Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas (available online)
- Hilary Moss on Baltimore and Boston: “Chapter 3: Race, Labor, and Literacy in a Slaveholding City,” Chapter Four: African American Educational Activism Under the Shadow of Slavery,” and “The Tarring and Feathering of Thomas Paul Smith,” from the *New England Quarterly*.
- *In class we will discuss the Roberts Case. If you are a slow reader, or want a preview, you may find these documents in the resources folder of sakai*

¹ Please Note: In the event of an emergency cancellation, the schedule will continue the following week as planned in the syllabus. I still expect readings and reading responses to be completed even if there is an emergency cancellation of class.

Week 4 (9/23). Education and Slavery. *How did slave communities educate? How did the aims and methods of this education differ between African-American communities in the North and border states? Was slave education a product of culture, or circumstance, or what? What do you think about Webber's dichotomy of education **for** versus education **by** slaves, and what (if anything) can this way of seeing tell us about African American education today?*

- Webber, *Deep Like the Rivers*, Preface, Parts I&II (to page 155).

Week 5 (9/30): Education and Emancipation pt. 1 *How did African Americans fight for schooling during Reconstruction? What educational contradictions did the reconstruction period pose for African Americans?*

- James D. Anderson, "Ex-Slaves and the Rise of Universal Education in the South, 1860-1880" in *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (1988) p. 1-32.
- Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught* (2005) introduction, chaps 1-2, 4, 6-7, 9 and epilogue (skip chapters 3, 5, and 8).
- W.E.B. Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Forethought, I and II.

Week 6 (10/7): Education and Emancipation pt. 2 *What was the official discourse of Freedman's Education? What was the discourse of resistance? What type of rhetorical education did Lydia Maria Child offer freed slaves, and how did race figure in this education?*

Readings:

- Jessica Enoch, "Revising Rhetorical Education," from *Women Teaching African American, Native American, and Chicano/A Students, 1865-1911* (University of Southern Illinois Press, 2008)
- Pick several selections from *The Freedman's Book*, and be prepared to discuss them with your colleagues in class. Do you agree with Enoch's interpretation?

Week 7 (10/14): The Politics of Progress: Conflicting Visions *How did the issue of education figure in the thinking of Progressive-era black intellectuals? What were the tensions in the thinking on higher education?*

- James D. Anderson, "Education and the Race Problem in the New South" "Training the Apostles of Liberal Culture, Black Higher Education, 1900-1935," chapters 3, 7 in *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (1988) p. 79-109, 238-286.
- *Anna Julia Cooper, "The Higher Education of Women" chapter 4 from *A Voice from the South* (1892) (p. 48-79). (avail online)
- W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, III "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others" and VI, "Of the Training of Black Men"
- Derrick Alridge, *The Educational Thought of W.E.B. Dubois*, Chapters 2-4.

Week 8 (10/21) The Mis-Education of the Negro. How does Woodson craft his classic and in what ways can we situate it historically?

- Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*
<http://historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/misedne.html>
- Jeffrey Snyder, "Progressive Education in Black and White: Rereading Carter G. Woodson's Miseducation of the Negro," *HEQ* 55:3 (August, 2015).

Week 9 (10/28): Brown versus Board of Education *How do we explain Brown? Is Eyes on the Prize biased?*

- Patterson, *Brown versus Board of Education*, chapters 1-5

- Bell, *Silent Covenants: Brown vs. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform* (2004), chapters 1-3, 6
In class we will watch a portion of “Eyes on the Prize.”

Week 10 (11/4): The creation of the “ghetto school.” *How do urban schools naturalize state and private oppression of people of color? What role have various levels and branches of government played in this process?*

- Jean Anyon, *Ghetto Schooling*. (Select chapters TBA)
- Ta’Nihisi Coates, “The Case for Reparations,” *the Atlantic Monthly*, June, 2014. (online)
- Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Ed* chaps 6-8

Week 11 (11/11): The Legacy of Brown in the South: *Why did some African Americans in the South welcome desegregation while others resisted? What did Brown accomplish? What was the cost? Read one of the following (assigned week 1), and be prepared to teach others about it.*

- Cecelski, *Along Freedom Road OR*
- Curry, *Silver Rights*

Week 12 (11/18): Higher Education. *What factors led to the rise, and recent decline, of the Historically Black College and Universities? What are recent trends in higher education for Black students and institutions?*

- Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (2012), read intro and chaps. 1, 4-6, 8, and conclusion.

*****No Class 11/25—Thanksgiving Break*****

Book Review Due by Sunday, 11/29 by 9pm.

Week 13 (12/2):Reproducing Racism. *In what ways have scholars attempted to explain the persistence of racial inequality? How does Roithmayr’s argument both synthesize and challenge this scholarship? What role does history play in this analysis. If Roithmayr is correct, what are the promises and limitations of schooling for reducing racial inequality?*

- Daria Roithmayr, *Reproducing Racism: How Everyday Choices Lock in White Advantage* (2014).

Week 14 (12/9): Thinking Big. *What civic education does the United States of America offer to/inflct upon African Americans outside of schools? What is legal socialization and why should we care? What “civic education” do the urban poor get at the hands of the criminal justice system and other social structures? What’s the school-to-prison pipeline?*

- Vesla Weaver and Amy Lerman, “The Political Consequences of the Carceral State,” *American Political Science Review* 104:4 (Nov. 2010).
- Benjamin Justice and Tracey Meares, “How the Criminal Justice System Educates Citizens,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 651, January, 2014, pp. 159-177.
- “Collected Posts: Deconstructing Ferguson One Year Later” at <http://balkin.blogspot.com/2015/08/collected-posts-deconstructing-ferguson.html>

Week 15 (12/16) Wrapping up. No readings due.

What themes emerge over the last two hundred years of African-American educational history? What puzzles emerge? What questions remain?

Your final, integrative essay is due on Friday, 12/18 by midnight. All revisions to coursework are due at that time as well.