

**Ethnic Studies 184, Winter 2016**  
**Black Intellectuals in the Twentieth Century**  
**Sequoyah Room 148—Tuesdays 5:00-7:50pm**

**Prof. Gabriel N. Mendes**

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**Office Hours:** Wednesdays 10:30-Noon & 1:00-2:30pm and by appointment.

“Are American Negroes simply the creation of white men, or have they at least helped to create themselves out of what they found around them? Men have made a way of life in caves and upon cliffs, why cannot Negroes have made a life upon the horns of the white man’s dilemma?”

—Ralph Ellison (*An American* 1944)

**Course Description and Overview**

The aim of this course is to develop a general reading knowledge of the traditions, contexts, and trajectories of Black intellectual discourse during the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, particularly from the time of the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to the urban North. The emphasis will be placed on foundational texts in the field, yet students can expect to engage a wide range of works representing the diversity of Black thought in the 20th Century. The work of contemporary historians and other scholars (secondary sources) will provide background and context to supplement our reading of the foundational texts (primary sources) in the field.

In the course we will trace the continuities and disjunctures in the texts produced by Black intellectuals in the so-called American century. Taking our cue from the questions Ralph Ellison posed back in 1944, we will explore how Black writers and political figures have fashioned unique sets of ideas and arguments aimed at addressing the condition of being Black in an anti-Black society—ideas and arguments that often focused on *the question of identity* and *the meaning of freedom*.

**This course has four specific objectives:**

1. To further develop students’ critical study of American culture and history through an interdisciplinary examination of such important topics as race and racism, class and economic inequality, gender and sexism, and how what we in the academy say about these topics matters.
2. To introduce students to the key terms of debate in the study of African American thought and culture(s) and to chart the significant impact of Black intellectual discourses on U.S. institutions, communities, and individuals.
3. To expose students to a wide range of writers and speakers in the Black intellectual tradition in order to aid you in developing well-grounded approaches to the study of the history of ideas and the social role of intellectuals in modern American society
4. To guide students in strengthening their skills at “reading” American society and history, with the aim of being able to write well-formed essays based on their “readings.”

## Course Requirements and Evaluation

1. Attendance and Active Class Participation	15%
2. Four Short Critical Response Papers	20%
3. Midterm Take-Home Exam	25%
4. Final Research Paper	40%

**1. Attendance and participation** constitute a significant portion of your grade. Arrive to each class session on time and stay for its duration. Tardiness and absences will be noted and result in the lowering of your grade. You will be allowed **one unexcused absence**; any subsequent absence(s) requires a note from an official source or agency, i.e. a doctor. Since we only meet 10 times in the quarter, more than one absence will result in a failing grade.

\*Active participation means thoughtful engagement with the readings/lectures, meaningful contributions to class discussions, and respectful collegiality toward your classmates and instructor.

\*Visits to my office hours will also count toward class participation.

**\*Please complete the readings prior to Monday the week they are assigned, and bring the text(s) we are covering that week to class. I recommend you print and bind all readings found on Blackboard/TritonEd.**

**2. Critical Response Papers:** During the course each student will write **four** 250-300 word (double-spaced, 12pt. Times New Roman font) critical responses to their chosen week's readings. Students must submit two responses **prior to the end of Week 4** and two responses **prior to the end of Week 9**.

These reflection/response papers must be submitted to me (at these **two** email addresses:

[gmendes@ucsd.edu](mailto:gmendes@ucsd.edu) & [gnathaniel.mendes@gmail.com](mailto:gnathaniel.mendes@gmail.com)) by Monday at 9pm for the week you've chosen.

Each response will be scored on a 5-point scale (0-5), depending on evidence of engagement with the week's readings. Some possible questions to consider each week are:

1. What was the general argument or point the author(s) or editor(s) made?
2. What major premises, themes, and concepts of culture or race, did the author employ?
3. What evidence did the author use? (i.e. scientific, ethnographic, personal experience)
4. How were ideas about "America" or the ideology of democracy engaged?
5. Who was the audience, why was that audience chosen, and how was it received?
6. What intellectuals (or schools of thought) was this author engaged in a dialogue with or drew from?

-Gary Provost

Just write words. Write music.  
sentences. Create a sound that pleases the reader's ear. Don't  
do write with a combination of short, medium, and long  
the cymbals—sounds that say listen to this, it is important;  
the impetus of a crescendo, the roll of the drums, the crash of  
length, a sentence that puns with energy and puns with all  
is rested, I will engage him with a sentence of considerable  
medium length. And sometimes when I am certain the reader  
happily, I use short sentences. And I use sentences of  
Music. The writing sings. It has a pleasant rhythm, a lilt, a  
Now listen. I vary the sentence length, and I create music.  
The ear demands some variety.  
getting boring. The sound of it drones. It's like a stuck record.  
monotonous. Listen to what is happening. The writing is  
five-word sentences are fine. But several together become  
This sentence has five words. Here are five more words.

3. The **Midterm Take-Home** exam will consist of a short analytical essay (1000-1200, i.e. 4-5 pages double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman) in response to a question I pose that addresses key themes in Black intellectual discourse drawn from the readings of the first half of the course. **Students will be able to choose between two questions/prompts**, which I will hand out in class on **Tuesday, Jan. 26<sup>th</sup>**. You must submit the essay to the Turnitin portal on Blackboard/TritonEd **by noon, Monday, Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>**. I will provide you with detailed guidelines for writing the essay well in advance of the assignment.

4. The **Final Research Paper** will consist of a 2000-2250 word critical analytical essay (8-9 pages) in which you explore one specific topic/theme within one journal's published articles during one particular year. The Final Paper is due online at Turnitin (Blackboard/TritonEd) by **Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at 5pm**. Your essay must present a specific **thesis**, which **argues** for how best to **interpret** how the journal you select has addressed the topic/theme you've chosen to focus on. For instance how does the journal discuss Black Nationalism, Pan-Africanism, Liberalism, Feminism, Religion, etc. Please select one of the following journals devoted to the Black intellectuals' thought and action:

- *The Journal of Negro Education*
- *Phylon: The Atlanta University Review of Race and Culture*
- *Black Scholar: Journal of Black Studies and Research*
- *Transition: An International Review*
- *Callaloo: A Journal of African Diaspora Arts and Letters*
- *Freedomways Magazine*
- *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture and Society*
- *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*

Each one of these journals has been a vital forum for Black intellectuals wrestling with the themes we examine in this course. And each of these journals are now available online through [libraries.ucsd.edu](http://libraries.ucsd.edu).

We will have one session with the Ethnic Studies Librarian, Alanna Aiko Moore on **Tuesday, January 26<sup>th</sup>** to become familiar with the digital offerings for research in Black Intellectual History/Studies. We will meet at the **Geisel Library reference desk (Second Floor West) at 5:00pm, 1/26/16**.

**For both the Midterm and the Final Paper, I will provide considerably more details in a separate handout and discussion. Also I will not accept any late submissions.**

### **Grading Standards:**

- A **Superior** performance; meets assignment requirements, and demonstrates exceptional execution of those requirements; reflects outstanding insight and depth; grammatically and stylistically excellent; would be considered a model example of assignment completion.
- B **Good**, solid performance; meets assignment requirements, and demonstrates competent execution of those requirements; reflects insight and depth; grammatically and stylistically strong; may have one or more problem areas.
- C **Average** performance; meets assignment requirements, minimally; grammatically and stylistically adequate; may have two or more problem areas; paper has more than two errors per page.
- D **Below average** performance; does not meet minimal assignment requirements; has several fundamental problem areas; has several errors throughout the paper.
- F **Inferior** performance; does not meet assignment requirements; not deserving of credit.

## **Required Books**

Many of these books are available digitally through the library.ucsd.edu portal. They can be purchased at the UCSD Campus Bookstore and are on reserve at Geisel Library.

### **Listed in the order in which we will read them:**

- Week 4: Gabriel N. Mendes, *Under the Strain of Color: Harlem's Lafargue Clinic and the Promise of an Antiracist Psychiatry* (Cornell University Press, 2015: ISBN 080145350X)
- Week 5: Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann (Grove Press, 1967 [1952] ISBN 9780802150844)
- Week 6: Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (Vintage Press, 2004 [1959]: ISBN 0679755330)
- Week 7: James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (Vintage, 1992 [1963]: ISBN 067974472X)
- Week 8: Albert Murray, *The Omni-Americans: Black Experience & American Culture* (Da Capo Press, 1990 [1970], ISBN 030680395X)
- Week 9: bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (South End Press, 1981: ISBN 089608129X)
- Week 10: Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (Spiegel and Grau, 2015: ISBN 0812993543)

For those of you wish to have a further grounding in African American history the following text is a useful reference: *To Make Our World Anew: A History of African Americans*, edited by Robin D.G. Kelley and Earl Lewis (Oxford University Press, 2000). It will be available on

## **Course Schedule**

### **Week 1—January 5<sup>th</sup>: Introducing the Modern Black Intellectual Tradition**

#### **Required Reading:**

- Cornel West, "The New Cultural Politics of Difference" in Trinh Minh Ha, et al., eds. *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures* (The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1991), pp. 19-36.
- Michael Eric Dyson, "Thinking Out Loud: Emerging Black Digital Intelligentsia," *The New Republic* (September 10, 2015): <https://newrepublic.com/article/122756/think-out-loud-emerging-black-digital-intelligentsia>.

**Required Listening:** <http://www.newblackmaninexile.net/2015/10/intersection-with-jamil-smith-its-good.html>

**Suggested Further Reading:** Antonio Gramsci, "The Intellectuals," in *Selections from the Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. Edited and Translated by Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith. (New York: International Publishers, 1971), pp.3-23; E. Franklin Frazier, "The Failure of the Negro Intellectual," *Negro Digest* 11 (February 1962), pp. 26–36; Cornel West, "The Four Traditions of Response," in *Prophesy Deliverance: An Afro-American Revolutionary Christianity* (Westminster Press, 1982), pp. 69-91; Barbara Christian, "The Race for Theory," *Cultural Critique*, No. 6, The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse (Spring, 1987), pp. 51-63.

## Week 2—January 12<sup>th</sup>: “What are we worth?”: Black Intellectuals at the Turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

### Required Reading:

- W.E.B. Du Bois, “Of Booker T. Washington and Others” & “Of the Training of Black Men,” in *The Souls of Black Folk: Essays and Sketches* (Chicago: A.C. McClurg & Co., 1903), pp. 41-59 and pp. 88-109.  
(<http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/dubois/souls/dubois.html>)
- Anna Julia Cooper, “Womanhood: A Vital Element of Regeneration and Progress of a Race” and “What Are We Worth,” in *A Voice From the South* (Xenia, Ohio: The Aldine Printing House, 1892), pp. 9-47 and pp. 228-85.  
(<http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/cooper/cooper.html#coope48>)
- Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, “African American Women’s History and the Metalanguage of Race,” *Signs*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Winter, 1992), pp. 251-274.

**Suggested Further Reading:** Michele Mitchell, *Righteous Propagation: African Americans and the Politics of Racial Destiny After Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Samuel Kelton Roberts, Jr., *Infectious Fear: Politics, Disease, and the Health Effects of Segregation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

## Week 3— January 19<sup>th</sup>: New Negroes in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

### Required Reading:

- Nathan Irvin Huggins, “Introduction” and “The New Negro,” in *Harlem Renaissance* (Oxford University Press, 1971), pp. 3-12 & pp. 52-83.
- Langston Hughes, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” (1926) and George Schuyler, “The Negro-Art Hokum” (1926) in Lewis, ed., *The Portable Harlem Renaissance Reader* (Penguin Classics, 1995), pp. 91-99.
- Hazel V. Carby, “It Jus Be’s Dat Way Sometime: The Sexual Politics of Black Women’s Blues,” *Radical America*, Volume 20 Issue 4 (June-July 1986), pp. 9-24.
- Michelle Ann Stephens, “The Conjunctural Field of New Negro Studies,” in Baldwin and Makalani, eds., *Escape from New York: The New Negro Renaissance beyond Harlem* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2013), pp. 401-14.
- **Suggested Further Reading:** Alain Locke, “Enter the New Negro,” *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (New York: Albert and Charles Boni, 1925), pp. 1-16; Langston Hughes, “When Harlem Was In Vogue,” in *The Big Sea* (Hill and Wang, 1940), pp. 223-72; Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* and “The Characteristics of Negro Expression,” *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* (W.W. Norton), 1019-32; John Henrik Clarke, “Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years,” *Transition*, no. 46 (1974): 14–19. Robert Trent Vinson, “‘Sea Kaffirs’: ‘American Negroes’ and the Gospel of Garveyism in Early Twentieth-Century Cape Town,” *The Journal of African History*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (2006), pp. 281-303; George Hutchinson, “Mediating ‘Race’ and ‘Nation’: The Cultural Politics of the Messenger,” *African American Review*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Winter, 1994), pp. 531-548.

## Week 4—January 26<sup>th</sup>: Richard Wright’s Blues

### Required Reading:

- Richard Wright, “The Blueprint for Negro Writing,” *New Challenge: a Literary Quarterly*. Vol. 2, no. 1 (Fall 1937).

- Gabriel N. Mendes, *Under the Strain of Color: Harlem's Lafargue Clinic and the Promise of an Antiracist Psychiatry* (Cornell University Press, 2015), Required: Introduction, Chapters 1, 3, Epilogue.

**Suggested Further Reading:** Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, [2000 ed.]), Chapters 9-11.

#### **Week 5—February 2<sup>nd</sup> –The Radical Dis-Alienation of the Colonized Black**

##### **Required Reading:**

- Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann (Grove Press, 1952), Introduction, Chapters 1 & 5-8. Conclusion.
- Ralph Ellison, Editorials, *The Negro Quarterly*, (Summer 1942 and Winter 1943).

**Suggested Further Reading:** Nikhil Pal Singh, “Internationalizing Freedom,” *Black is a Country: Race and the Unfinished Struggle for Democracy* (Harvard Univ. Press, 2005), 101-33. Lewis R. Gordon, “A Problem of Biography in Africana Thought” in *Existential Africana* (New York and London: Routledge, 2000); Gabriel N. Mendes, *Under the Strain of Color: Harlem's Lafargue Clinic and the Promise of an Antiracist Psychiatry* (Cornell University Press, 2015), Chapter 4.

**Recommended Viewing:** *Home of the Brave*. Directed by Mark Robson (United Artists, 1949), FVLV-462-1, Geisel Library.

#### **Week 6—February 9<sup>th</sup>—Race, Nation, Gender, Class and the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Black Freedom Struggle I**

##### **Required Reading:**

- Lorraine Hansberry, *Raisin in the Sun* (1959)
- Claudia Jones, “An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!” (1949) in *Let Nobody Turn Us Around: An African American Anthology*. Second Edition (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), pp. 316-326.

**Suggested Further Reading:** Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past,” *Journal of American History* 91:4 (March 2005); Dayo F. Gore, *Radicalism at the Crossroads: African American Women in the Cold War* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

#### **Week 7—February 16<sup>th</sup>— Race, Nation, Gender, Class and the 20<sup>th</sup> Century Black Freedom Struggle II**

##### **Required Reading:**

- James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (New York: Vintage, 1963)
- LeRoi Jones, “Black is a Country,” *Home: Social Essays* (William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1966), pp. 82-86.
- Eldridge Cleaver, “Notes on a Native Son,” in *Soul on Ice* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1970), pp. 96-107.
- Required Listening: Malcolm X, “Ballot or the Bullet” (1964) and “Message to the Grassroots” (1963)

**Suggested Further Reading:** LeRoi Jones, “The Legacy of Malcolm X, and the Coming of the Black Nation,” in *Home: Social Essays* (William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1966), pp. 238-50; Melani McAlister, “One Black Allah: The Middle East in the Cultural Politics of African American Liberation, 1955-1970,” *American Quarterly* 51.3 (1999): 622-656; Robert L. Allen, *Black Awakening in Capitalist America: An Analytic History* (New York: Doubleday, 1970).

**Week 8—February 23<sup>rd</sup> –“Some Alternatives to the Folklore of White Supremacy”**

**Required Reading:**

- Albert Murray, *The Omni-Americans: Black Experience & American Culture* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1990 [1970]), pp. 1-66, pp. 113-20, pp. 142-88.
- LeRoi Jones, “The Myth of a ‘Negro Literature’ and ‘Black Writing,’” in *Home: Social Essays* (William Morrow & Co., Inc., 1966), pp. 105-15 & pp.161-65.

**Suggested Further Reading:** Harold Cruse, *The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual* (1967); Hortense J. Spillers, “The Crisis of the Negro Intellectual: A Post-Date,” *boundary 2*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (Autumn, 1994), pp. 65-116; Robert Chrisman & Nathan Hare, eds., *Contemporary Black Thought: The Best from the Black Scholar* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973).

**Week 9—March 1<sup>st</sup>— “Ain’t I a Woman?: Black Women and Feminism”**

**Required Reading:**

- bell hooks, *Ain’t I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (Boston: South End Press, 1981)
- Combahee River Collective Statement (1977), in *Let Nobody Turn Us Around: An African American Anthology*. Second Edition (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2009), pp. 501-507.

**Suggested Further Reading:** Frances Beale, “Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female.” in Morgan, Robin, Ed. *Sisterhood is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women’s Liberation* (New York: Random House, 1970), 340-353; Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984); bell hooks, “Black Women Intellectuals” in hooks and West, *Breaking Bread: Insurgent Black Intellectual Life* (Boston: South End Press, 1991); Hazel V. Carby, “Race and the Academy: Feminism and the Politics of Difference,” in *Cultures in Babylon: Black Britain and African America* (London and New York: Verso Books, 1999); Evelyn Hammonds, “Black (W)holes and the Geometry of Black Female Sexuality,” *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 6.2-3 (1994): 126+.

**Week 10—March 8<sup>th</sup>—What is the Meaning of Progress?**

**Required Reading:**

- Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me* (New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2015)
- Lorene Cary, “Chapter Eleven,” *Black Ice* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), pp.194-206.
- Adolph Reed, Jr., “What Are the Drums Saying, Booker?”: The Curious Role of the Black Public Intellectual,” in *Class Notes: Posing As Politics and Other Thoughts on the American Scene* (The New Press, 2000), pp. 77-90.

**Suggested Further Reading:** Cornel West, “Nihilism in Black America,” in *Race Matters* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 15-31; Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric* (Minneapolis, MN: Graywolf Press, 2014); Erica R. Edwards, *Charisma and the Fictions of Black Leadership* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

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## **Logistics and Policies**

You can reach me by email, in my office hours, or by appointment at any time during the quarter. I respond to students' emails by 10am every weekday; I do not answer students' emails on weekends.

This syllabus is subject to change; any changes will be announced well in advance in class or by email.

### **Computers of any type are not allowed in this class.**

Turn off phones and refrain from text messaging during class. If I notice you texting, I will ask you to leave the classroom and that will count as an absence.

**ADA Statement:** If you have a disability or condition that compromises your ability to complete the requirements of this course, **you should inform me as soon as possible of your needs.** I will make all reasonable efforts to accommodate you. If, as a result of a disability, you cannot accept the content or terms of this syllabus, you need to notify me in writing within one week of receiving it.

**Policy on Late Papers and Make-up Assignments:** Excepting emergencies, I do not allow late papers and do not allow make-up assignments. You have the syllabus well enough in advance to know what is due and when.

**Primary Ground Rules:** (a) The number one ground rule to which we will all adhere is to engage in respectful and considerate debate and discussion in the classroom. You will be expected to approach this course with a patient, open mind, ready to absorb new facts and new ideas about topics that are, by their nature, subjects of controversy and disagreement. A good classroom environment should stimulate you to think for yourselves and raise critical questions based upon a thorough survey of the evidence before you. Please take note that abusive and harsh language will not be tolerated in this classroom. These ground rules are reflected in the UCSD Principles of Community to which we are all expected to adhere (<http://www-vcba.ucsd.edu/principles.htm>).

(b) Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form. This means plagiarism and other forms of dishonesty such as producing assignments for others. Please become familiar with the UCSD Policy on Academic Integrity (<http://senate.ucsd.edu/manual/Appendices/app2.htm>). Any academic work that you submit in this course, which violates the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship will automatically receive an "F" for the assignment and may result in you failing the course.

**Other Ground Rules:** All phones and portable electronic devices (PDA/ Smartphones/ iPads/etc.) must be turned off and may not leave your bag in the classroom. With the exception of students with a documented need for accommodation, laptop computers cannot be used in lecture or section. Students with permission to take notes on their laptops must mute all sounds, disable their wireless connections, and sit in the front row of class. For all cases of students texting/facebooking/instant messaging, I have a zero tolerance policy: you will promptly be asked to leave class and your participation/attendance grade will drop 5 points. The same goes for students who are sleeping or reading. Rest assured, I will notice. You are not invisible and not anonymous in my classroom.

## **Majoring or Minor in Ethnic Studies at UCSD**

Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a social science, non-contiguous, or other college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of "interest" yet have no information about the major or minor and don't realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An Ethnic Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, public policy, government and politics, journalism, education, public health, social work, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor at UCSD, please contact Daisy Rodriguez, Ethnic Studies Department Undergraduate Advisor, at 858-534-3277 or [d1rodriguez@ucsd.edu](mailto:d1rodriguez@ucsd.edu).