

Fayetteville State University
College of Arts and Sciences
Department of Government & History

I. Dr. Blanche Radford Curry
Philosophy 212, African American Philosophy

3 Credit Hours Fall/2003 (**Web Enhanced Course**) Ofc.: TSA 113 Ofc#: 672-1945 or 1573
E-mail bcurry@uncfsu.edu Hours:

II. COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a critical examination of concepts and issues pertaining to African American experience in historical and contemporary periods. Concepts and issues such as oppression, resistance, justice, liberation, separatism, integration, affirmative action, identity, self-respect, race, class, gender, the universality of Western Philosophy, and cultural features of philosophy. These concepts and issues will be addressed through an analysis of writings by major figures such as: Sojourner Truth, Frederick Douglass, and W.E.B. DuBois, Alain Locke, Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, William Jones, Cornel West, Angela Davis, Leonard Harris, and Bernard Boxill. Pre-requisite: Philosophy 110.

III. REQUIRED TEXTS

W.E.B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk*
Alex Haley, *Malcolm X*
Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*
James A. Montmarquet, William H. Hardy, *Reflections: An Anthology of African American Philosophy*
Supplementary Readings, *Required Essays*

IV. COURSE OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

1. To analyze extended, involved arguments about alternative conceptual schemes, culturally complex topics, and philosophical issues.
2. To evaluate these arguments in writing and orally with special attention to the evidence presented pro and con.
3. To develop and refine skills in reading, writing, speaking, analyzing, and evaluating.

4. To develop an understanding of African American perspectives on important philosophical questions.

V. COURSE COMPETENCIES

1. Demonstrates Knowledge of the Nature of Philosophy
 - 1.1 Understands the debate over the character of philosophy
 - 1.2 Understands issues of contextuality in philosophy
 - 1.3 Understands the debate concerning Black philosophy
2. Comprehends Major Themes in African American Philosophy
 - 2.1 Understands important concepts and issues
 - 2.2 Understands historical and contemporary African Americans perspectives of philosophical inquiry
3. Demonstrates Knowledge of Major African American Philosophers
 - 3.1 Understands non-traditional philosophy figures and genre
 - 3.2 Recognizes different perspectives among African American philosophers
4. Demonstrates Analytical, Verbal, and Written Skills
 - 4.1 Develops clear and evaluative thought about African American Philosophy

VI. TEACHING STRATEGIES

Group work chat room discussions, oral presentation, and audio-visuals.

VII. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Students should complete a close reading of materials in order to engage in constructive analytical chat room discussion.
2. Your reading journal should be 3-4 typed pages and submitted in class at the end of each class week in accordance with the schedule outlined on the syllabus.
3. You will work with two other persons on a topic that represents further research on one of the concepts or issues that we have addressed. Your topic must be approved by the professor no later than the 11th week of the course. Each of you will share in an oral presentation of this topic during the final exam.

4. The final exam will cover the major contributions of the figures studied during the course.

VIII. COURSE EVALUATION

1. Regular attendance and active participation in chat room discussions, 1/4 of final grade
2. A reading journal of the course materials submitted each week, 1/4 of final grade
3. Group presentation, 1/4 of final grade
4. Final Exam, 1/4 of final grade

IX. CLASS MEETINGS

Unit 01 **Concerning The Character Of Philosophy** Aug 20- Sept 5

Readings: Bruce Kucklick, "The Changing Character of Philosophizing in America," Lucius T. Outlaw, "Philosophy, African-Americans, and The Unfinished American Revolution," Outlaw, "The Future of Philosophy in America," Alain Locke, "Good Reading," Cornel West, "Philosophy, Politics, and Power: An Afro-American Perspective." **Journal #1 Due**

Unit 02 **Debate Concerning Black Philosophy** Sept 8 -15

Readings: William Jones, "The Legitimacy and Necessity of Black Philosophy," Paul Jefferson, "The Question of Black Philosophy," Johnny Washington, "What is Black Philosophy," Outlaw, "Black Folk and the Struggle in Philosophy," Outlaw, "Philosophy, Hermeneutics, Social-Political Theory: Critical Thought in the Interest of African-Americans." **Journal #2 Due**

Unit 03 **African American Philosophy: Transformative Philosophy of Frederick Douglass** Sept 17 –29 **Readings:** Broadus N. Butler, "Frederick Douglass: The Black Philosopher in the United States: A Commentary," Lectures on Liberation, Angela Y. Davis, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (Selected Chapters) Film: "When The Lion Wrote History" **Journal #3 Due**

Unit 04 **African American Philosophy: Transformative Philosophy of W.E.B. Dubois**

Oct 1 – Oct 10 **Readings:** Robert C. Williams, W.E.B.Dubois: Afro-American Philosopher of Social Reality, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Selected Chapters) **Sojourner Truth, Ain't I A Woman** **Journal #4 Due**

Unit 05 **Malcolm X: Personal, Political, and Economic Transformation** Oct 13-22

Readings: *Malcolm X* (Selected Chapters) **Journal #5 Due**

Unit 06 **Alain Locke: Unity Within Diversity** Oct 24-29

Readings: Washington, “Alain Locke, Yesterday and Today,” *Locke*, “Unity through Diversity”

Unit 07 **Martin Luther King, Jr. : Spiritual and Moral Transformation** Oct 31- Nov 7

Readings: King, *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* (Selected Chapters)

Journal #6 Due

Unit 08 **Angela Davis: Transformative Philosophy** Nov 10-14

Readings: Judith M. Green and Blanche Radford Curry, *Notorious Philosopher: The Transformative Life and Work of Angela Davis* **Journal #7 Due**

Unit 09 **The Politics of Commonalities and Differences** Nov 17-21

Readings: Outlaw, “Against the Grain of Modernity: The Politics of Difference and the Conservation of Race,” Outlaw, “Life-Worlds, Modernity, and Philosophical Praxis: Race, Ethnicity, and Critical Social Theory,” Bernard Boxill, “Self Respect, Blacks and Social Justice,” Boxill, “The Color-Blind Principle,” Boxill, “Affirmative Action.” **Journal #8 Due**

Unit 10 **More Dimensions of African American Philosophy** Nov 24- Dec 3

Readings: “Foundations,” “Moral and Political Philosophy,” *Philosophy and Related Disciplines*”

Group Presentations

Please note that all syllabus dates are bench marks, meaning approximate dates.

Aug 20th Classes Begin, Aug 27th Late Registration/Drop Add End, Sept 1st Labor Day; Sept 4th Fall Convocation, Oct 16th-17th Fall Break, Oct 20th Advisement for Spring, Oct 24th Last Day to Withdraw from Classes/ Clear “I” Grades, Oct 25th Homecoming, Nov 7th Last Day for WN Submissions, Nov 18th Last Day for WN Appeals, Dec 3rd Last Day of Class

BIBLIOGRAPHY

AFRICAN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVE

Leonard Harris, "The Lacuna Between Philosophy and History," *Journal of Social Philosophy*, XX:3 (Winter 1989) 109-114.

Asanti Molefi, *The Afrocentric Idea*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987.

James A. Montmarquet and William H. Hardy, *Reflections: An Anthology of African American Philosophy*, Belmont CA: Wadsworth Press, 2000

Lucius Outlaw, "African American Philosophy," *Social Science Information*, 26:1 (1987) 75-97

Herbert W. Schneider, A History of American Philosophy, New York: Columbia University Press, 1963.

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND RACISM

Margaret Andersen, Patricia Hill Collins, eds., Race, Class and Gender, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Press, 1991.

Gary E. Kessler, Voices of Wisdom: A Multicultural Philosophy Reader, Belmont CA: Wadsworth Press, 1992.

Dominick Lacaps, The Bounds of Race, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991.

HISTORY

John Dewey, Boston: Reconstruction in Philosophy, Beacon Press, 1963.

Daphne D. Harrison, Black Pearls, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1988.

John J. McDermott, Culture of Experience, New York: New York University Press, 1976.