In his influential *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, political theorist Cedric Robinson defines the Black Radical Tradition as “the continuing development of a collective consciousness informed by the historical struggles for liberation and motivated by the shared sense of obligation to preserve the collective being, the ontological totality.” Beginning with the ruptures of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and European colonialism in Africa, this course traces major intellectual currents and liberation movements in the history of Black radicalism in Africa and the African diaspora. It proceeds by foregrounding the multiplicities of Blackness as a lived experience and political identity. Moving between local, hemispheric, and global perspectives, we will explore the social and political contexts in which African and Afro-diasporic movements developed, the ways in which they negotiated structures of racial/colonial power, and the diffuse intellectual geographies they gave voice to. By means of readings and discussion, we will consider a range of movements and ideas, including African anti-colonialism, slave revolts in the Americas, Black Reconstruction, the U.S. Black Freedom Movement, Black Feminism, and Third Worldism, among others.

**Requirements**

The final course grade is based on participation (15%), discussion facilitation (25%), weekly posts (25%), and a final essay (35%):

1. **Facilitation:** each course meeting (apart from our first session on Tuesday, Week 1), one student (or groups of two) will offer a ten-minute presentation on the readings and their interventions. I am not looking for just a summary of the authors’ arguments but rather a broader analytical assessment of the assigned readings. You might focus on the strengths and/or weaknesses of particular pieces (e.g., What was most striking? What ideas demand further study and elaboration?) or compare and contrast their primary theses. Please also come up with two to three questions to get us into our discussion. The presenter must post an outline of their presentation on Canvas in the discussion forum by **11am the day before class** (I will provide examples of outlines from previous classes for reference).

2. **Two weekly posts (Mondays and Wednesdays):** all other students are to respond to the presenter/facilitator’s outline and address what they see as the most important aspects of the readings. Due by **8pm the day before class,** these posts should demonstrate your thoughtful engagement with the material. We will incorporate them into our discussion, so it is key that your submission is uploaded in a timely manner. Posts should be no longer than **250 words.**
3. Literature review: 10–12 pages. This paper will be a critical review of a major trend or debate in the historiography/literature review (the collective body of texts on a particular topic) on Black radicalism, to be developed in consultation with the instructor.

This seminar offers students the opportunity to engage in focused academic research and writing. In addition to stylistic and general writing feedback, students will receive guidance throughout the early semester on the ins and outs of developing a strong thesis and outline in preparation for the final paper.

Academic Integrity Statement
Course participants are expected to adhere to the university’s Academic Regulations. Plagiarism and academic dishonesty are serious offenses and will not be tolerated. Guidelines on proper citational practice and plagiarism can be found on the Yale Center for Teaching and Learning website (https://ctl.yale.edu/writing/using-sources/understanding-and-avoiding-plagiarism/what-plagiarism). For further clarification on this matter, please consult with the instructor.

Required Books


Semester Schedule

Week 1:

Tuesday: Conceptual Frameworks


Thursday: Conceptual Frameworks II


Week 2:
**Tuesday: Middle Passage to the Plantation South**


**Thursday: European Colonialism in Africa**


**Week 3:**

**Tuesday: The Haitian Revolution**

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, “The Three Faces of Sans Souci: Glory and Silences in the Haitian Revolution,” in *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*

**Thursday: Black Reconstruction to Jim Crow**

- Alys Eve Weinbaum, “Gendering the General Strike: W. E. B. Du Bois’s Black Reconstruction and Black Feminism’s ‘Propaganda of History,’” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 112, no. 3 (Summer 2013)

**Week 4:**

**Tuesday: Black Power**

- Malcolm X, “Message to the Grassroots” (November 10, 1963)
- Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*, Chapters 1–2, 8, 10

**Thursday: Revolution and Decolonization in Africa**

Week 5:

Tuesday: Revolution and Decolonization in Africa II


Thursday: Futures of Black Radicalism

- Angela Davis, “An Interview on the Futures of Black Radicalism,” in *Futures of Black Radicalism*, eds., Gaye Theresa Johnson and Alex Lubin