

Ethnicity, Race, and Migration S310 // African Studies S310 // African American Studies S310

African and Afro-Diasporic Liberation Movements:

The Black Radical Tradition

Summer 2024

Session B: July 1 – August 2

Instructor: Hamzah Baig (hamzah.baig@yale.edu)

Tuesdays and Thursdays 1pm–4:15pm

Office Hours: by appointment

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

1. Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 3rd ed. (University of North Carolina Press, 2021)

Semester Schedule

Week 1:

Tuesday: Conceptual Frameworks

- Foreword by Robin D. G. Kelley, Chapter 1: “The Nonobjective Character of Capitalist Development,” Chapter 6: “Historical Archaeology of the Black Radical Tradition,” and Chapter 7: “The Nature of the Black Radical Tradition,” in Cedric Robinson, *Black Marxism*

Thursday: Conceptual Frameworks II

- David Scott, “On the Very Idea of a Black Radical Tradition,” *Small Axe* 17, 1 (2013): 1–6.
- Yousuf al-Bulushi, “Thinking Racial Capitalism and Black Radicalism from Africa: An Intellectual Geography of Cedric Robinson’s World-System,” *Geoforum* (2020)
- Walter Rodney, “The Black Scholar Interviews Walter Rodney,” *The Black Scholar* 6, no. 3 (1974): 38–47.

Week 2:

Tuesday: Middle Passage to the Plantation South

- Cedric Robinson, Chapter 1: “The Coming to America,” and Chapter 2: “Slavery and the Constitutions,” in *Black Movements in America* (1997)
- Vincent Brown, “Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery,” *American Historical Review* 114, no. 5 (December 2009): 1231–1249.

Thursday: European Colonialism in Africa

- Frederick Cooper, Introduction, Chapter 1: “Africa and Capitalism,” and Chapter 2: “Africa and Empire,” in *Africa in the World: Capitalism, Empire, Nation-State* (2014), pp. 1–66.
- Walter Rodney, “The Year 1895 in Southern Mozambique: African Resistance to the Imposition of European Colonial Rule,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* (1971): 509–536.

Week 3:

Tuesday: The Haitian Revolution

- C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, Prologue, Chapter 6: “The Rise of Toussaint,” Chapter 13: “The War of Independence”
- 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

- W. E. B. Du Bois, “The Black Worker,” “The General Strike,” in *Black Reconstruction* (1935)
- 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
- Robin D. G. Kelley, Chapter 3: “‘Roaring from the East’: Third World Dreaming,” in *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*, pp. 60–109.

Thursday: Revolution and Decolonization in Africa

- Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, pp. 1–62, 170–180.

- Steve Biko, “Our Strategy for Liberation,” in *I Write What I Like* (1978), pp. 143–151.

Week 5:

Tuesday: Revolution and Decolonization in Africa II

- Cedric Robinson, “Amilcar Cabral and the Dialectic of Portuguese Colonialism,” *Radical America* 15 (May-June 1981): 39–58.
- Amilcar Cabral, *Unity and Struggle* (1979), pp. 28–64, 75–93.

Thursday: Futures of Black Radicalism

- H. L. T. Quan, “Geniuses of Resistance: Feminist Consciousness and the Black Radical Tradition,” *Race & Class* 47, 2 (2005): 39–53.
- Angela Davis, “An Interview on the Futures of Black Radicalism,” in *Futures of Black Radicalism*, eds., Gaye Theresa Johnson and Alex Lubin
- Yousuf al-Bulushi, “Dar es Salaam on the Frontline: Red and Black Internationalisms,” *Third World Thematics* (November 2022): 1–17.