

**SS113T: What is Africa to Me? Black Diasporic Encounters**  
**Hampshire College | Fall 2010**

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Office Hours: M 12:30-3pm, Tu 2:30-5:30pm, W 3-5pm, Th 2:30-4pm  
Schedule meetings via email request or in person

**Course Description**

Africa has always held a special if tenuous place in the formation of African Diasporic self and group identity, as well as shaping various meanings of blackness. To some, Africa is considered the ancestral homeland of humanity. For other African Descendants around the world, Africa has historically been viewed as a point of origin and possible place of refuge from the racial and class oppression experienced in the West. W.E.B. Du Bois, for example, relocated to Ghana in 1961 just two years before his death. At the turn of the 20th century poet Countee Cullen asked "What is Africa to Me" And recently, President Barack Obama's Kenyan heritage led many to consider him a "son of Africa." Though international definitions of diaspora are common, how does the formation of domestic diasporas impact notions of home for African Americans? Recognizing the value of a complex diasporic lens that includes race, gender and class, this course will introduce students to some of the diasporic encounters African descendants have experienced historically and contemporarily from the Harlem Renaissance to Hurricane Katrina.  
MCP, REA, WRI



"Magic of Nigeria,"(1971),  
Lois Mailou Jones

**Course Texts** – Available for purchase at Food for Thought Books,  
106 N. Pleasant St., Amherst (413) 253-5432

**1. Saidiya Hartman**, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007).

**2. Manning Marable and Vanessa Agard-Jones, eds.**, *Transnational Blackness: Navigating the Global Color Line* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

# Other Readings for the Course will be posted to the course Moodle, which you will all have access to.

## Course Objectives

- To understand the importance of a diasporic perspective in studying Black experiences
- To identify some of the core issues in 20<sup>th</sup> Black political and cultural experiences
- To interpret critical and significant events that shaped those experiences

\* **Prof. Tinson's Ground Rules:** As we are seeking a courageous vocabulary of race and social justice, active, informed dialogue is encouraged and appreciated (attacks are not); we encourage getting real about race, staying engaged with the readings, avoiding self-pity. We expect some discomfort, and anticipate that some issues will be left unresolved. And remember: critical thinking is valued over self-righteousness.

**N.B. Disclaimer:** For purposes of efficacy, any part of this syllabus may be changed at the discretion of the professor.

## COURSE PARTICULARS

**ATTENDANCE AND TARDINESS**—Attendance is critically important and therefore mandatory. *Three unexcused absences will result in no evaluation.* Persistent tardiness is unacceptable under any circumstances. Your attendance and tardiness will be included as a part of the overall course participation portion of each student's course evaluation.

**EMAILING THE PROFESSOR**—Please type the course number (SS113T) in the subject line of all correspondence directed to me. If you need an answer to a burning question or need to inform me of a pressing issue (e.g. a medical absence), do not wait until the last minute to notify me. I need at least 24 hours lead time to answer you. Plan accordingly.

**COURSE EVALUATION POLICY**—In accordance with the student assessment practices of Hampshire College, each student will be evaluated based upon their course attendance and participation, and the fulfillment of all assignments in a satisfactory and timely manner. Formal evaluations are processed via TheHub. (Non-Hampshire students see "Five College Students" next.)

**FIVE COLLEGE STUDENTS**—Those who are not Hampshire students will receive a letter grade instead of a written evaluation. For Five College Students who would like a grade in the course, the course assignments will be converted into points and placed on a conventional A-Fail grading scale. Each assignment will be graded accordingly, including the final project. If you would like a letter grade for this course, please inform Prof. Tinson by the end of the first week of class.

**ALL OUT-OF-CLASS ASSIGNMENTS MUST BE TYPED.** Handwritten assignments will not be accepted.

**CRITICAL RESPONSE PAPERS** – Students are required to write two critical response papers throughout the semester. These essays should demonstrate your understanding of the particular themes and concepts we have read, observed and discussed in the course. **The first of these essays should be no shorter than 4 full double-spaced pages in length and the second should be between 6-8 pages in length.** In these essays you are expected to draw upon one or more of the aspects of the reading, film/video, musical, literary contents that pertain to historical, social and or political developments in African American global struggle. *Generally, response papers include a brief overview of the reading followed by discussion of what was intriguing or interesting about the reading, etc., and an explanation of what it says about African diaspora politics and culture. The best papers are those that, in addition to the above, also compare and contrast issues and ideas across texts. Additionally, it is **essential** that students use proper citation methods (Chicago or MLA) in these essays. If you don't know what this means, now is a good time to find out.*

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS AND REWRITE POLICY** – Yes, students are allowed to rewrite their written/evaluated assignments. All rewrites must be received no later than one week (or two class meetings) after the assignment was evaluated by the instructor and returned to the student. However, assignments turned in late cannot be revised for reconsideration.

**FINAL RESEARCH ESSAY OR FINAL PROJECT**—Students have the option of writing a final paper or creating a final project. All Final Projects must be first Proposed. A proposal is a brief essay outline of what you plan to research. The instructor will provide further details and expectations for this assignment at a later date.

**PORTFOLIOS** – Portfolios are representations of each student's fulfillment of all assignments in the course. At the end of the course, students are required to turn in to the instructor all of their written and evaluated assignments (including rough drafts). In addition to your class participation, your portfolio is the core of your semester evaluation (or grade).

**SEVERE WEATHER & CLASS CANCELLATION**—On severe weather days please call the Hampshire College Hotline: 559-5508 (off-campus) or ext. 5508 (on-campus) to check the status of school closing. If the school is open plan to attend class. If school is closed due to weather, I usually issue (via email) a small assignment to make up for lost class time; so don't be surprised. ☺ If for some reason the professor is unable to come to class the School of Social Science administrative assistants will place a written notice of class cancellation on the classroom door.

**PLAGIARISM IS ILLEGAL – AND YOU WILL GET CAUGHT. IF YOU BITE, YOU BETTER CITE YOUR SOURCES. SEE THE HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE STUDENT HANDBOOK FOR MORE EXTENSIVE AND SPECIFIC DETAILS. Go to: <http://www.hampshire.edu/casa/9063.htm> for more information.**

### **Course Readings**

{Preparation: readings will be discussed on the day indicated.}

All readings uploaded to course Moodle site. This does not include the course books.

### **AT HOME IN THE WORLD: MAKING AND CONSTRUCTING DIASPORA**

Week 1

Wed., Sept. 8<sup>th</sup> Course Introduction & “Unfinished Migrations”

Week 2

Mon., Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> Lewis “Overlapping Diasporas”

Wed., Sept. 15<sup>th</sup>

Henrikson, “African Intellectual Influences on Black Americans”  
**and** Gomez, “Of Du Bois and Diaspora”

**Paper #1 Due on 9/20: “Defining the African Diaspora” Students may choose to address one or more of these questions in their essays: How have historians, anthropologists, and writers defined diaspora? To what degree is the concept of the “African Diaspora” a political, cultural, or linguistic concept? Who are some of the seminal figures throughout history who have helped to contextualize African Diasporic experiences?**

### **DIASPORA AND DOUBLE-CONSCIOUSNESS**

Week 3

Mon., Sept. 20<sup>th</sup>

**Paper #1 Due**

W.E.B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk, Chapter 1

Wed., Sept. 22<sup>nd</sup>

Du Bois, Souls, Chapters 2 and 3

Week 4

Mon., Sept. 27<sup>th</sup>

Du Bois, Souls, Chapters 11, 12, and 14

Wed., Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>

Watch: “Du Bois: A Biography in Four Voices”

Week 5  
Mon., Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> Sawyer, "Du Bois's Double Consciousness Versus Latin American Exceptionalism" **and** Sharpley-Whiting, "Femme Negritude" in Transnational Blackness, pp. 135-147; pp. 205-214.

Wed., Oct. 6<sup>th</sup> Harrison, "Diasporadas: Black Women and the Fine Art of Activism," **and** Giddings, "Missing in Action: Ida B. Wells, the NAACP, and the Historical Record"

**October Break – 10/9 thru 10/12 (Week 6)**

**ANTI-COLONIALISM AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA**

Week 7  
Wed., Oct. 13<sup>th</sup> McDuffie, "...Black Women Radicals in the Garvey Movement..." in Gomez, Diasporic Africa, pp. 219-250.

Week 8  
Mon., Oct. 18<sup>th</sup> Clarke, "Marcus Garvey: The Harlem Years"  
**\*Begin Garvey/UNIA Papers Project\***

Wed., Oct. 20<sup>th</sup> Amy Jacques Garvey, "The Role of Women in Liberation Struggles," Massachusetts Review 13, Nos. 1 & 2 (Winter-Spring 1972): 109-112.

Week 9  
Mon., Oct. 25<sup>th</sup> Drake, "The American Negro's Relation to Africa" Africa Today 14, No. 6 (Dec. 1967): 12-15, **and** Mahon, "Eslanda Goode Robeson's African Journey..." in Transnational Blackness, pp. 115-134.

**Wed., Oct. 27<sup>th</sup>** Mazucci, "Going Back to Our Own..." in Transnational Blackness, pp. 245-264, **and** Hayes, "A Free Black Mind is a Concealed Weapon..." in Transnational Blackness, pp. 175-187.  
**Garvey Papers Project Due!!!**

**REIMAGINED ROOTS AND ROUTES**

Week 10  
Mon., Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> Hartman, Lose Your Mother, Chaps. 1-3

Wed., Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> NO CLASS -- ADVISING DAY

**Paper #2 Due 11/10: Topic of your choice related to the course readings. Students might think about the role of gender in shaping African diaspora politics. Is there a difference in the ways men and women engage in diaspora organizing? Discuss the activities of women as compared to their male counterparts. You are encouraged to include your research from the Garvey/UNIA Papers exercise.**

Week 11

Mon., Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> Hartman, Lose Your Mother, Chaps. 4-7

Wed., Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> Hartman, Lose Your Mother, Chaps. 8-10

**Paper #2 Due**

Week 12

Mon., Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> Hartman, Lose Your Mother, Chaps. 11-12

Wed., Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> Watch: "This Far By Faith," Episode 6

**Final Paper Proposal Due**

Week 13

Mon., Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup> Bonilla-Silva and Ray, "When Whites Love a Black Leader..."  
Journal of African American Studies 13 (2009): 176-183.

**Fall Break – 11/25 thru 11/29**

## **THE POLITICS OF RETURN: NEW ORLEANS, HAITI, AND DOMESTIC DIASPORAS**

Week 14

Mon., Nov. 29<sup>th</sup> TBD

Wed., Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> TBD

Week 15

Mon., Dec. 6<sup>th</sup> TBD

Wed., Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> Last day of class.

***Final Papers/Projects and Course Portfolios due Dec. 17<sup>th</sup>.***

**Bring your portfolio to my mailbox in the main Social Science office. Please Note: Students who miss this deadline cannot be guaranteed a Final Course Evaluation.**

**Assignment Deadlines**

Critical Response #1 "Defining Diaspora" .....	September 20 <sup>th</sup>
Garvey Papers Project.....	October 27 <sup>th</sup>
Critical Response #2	
"Gendering Diaspora" .....	November 10 <sup>th</sup>
Final Paper/Project Proposal.....	November 17 <sup>th</sup>
Final Paper/Project.....	December 17 <sup>th</sup>

**Books to Further Your Research** – Between course lectures and readings you will come across a number of books that did not make it on to the syllabus. Use the space below to jot down the authors and titles so you can look them up later. This will help you build your knowledge of this area of study.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.