

AAST 206
Interdisciplinary Research Methods in African American Studies

Fall 2019
9:30am – 10:45am
Lincoln Hall 214

Instructor: Professor Johari Jabir
Office Hours: Mon/Wed 11:00am-12:00 noon (or by appointment)
University Hall, Room 1203
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Course Description

African American Studies, the study of Africans in America and throughout the Diaspora, is an interdisciplinary field of study informed by several critical and analytical traditions. This class is an introduction to approaches and tools used in African American Studies. Critical to the founding of African American studies was a critique to the canons and assumptions at work in traditional disciplines of study. We will consider the political, social, spiritual, and cultural underpinnings of research and how scholars in the field have sought to adapt various methods to the needs of marginalized and sometimes invisible communities. Conceptions of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, and national origin are essential components of a research agenda in our field.

Course Goals

Students will learn how to conceptualize an interdisciplinary research project and how to choose appropriate methods to answer their research questions.

Students will be introduced to a range of qualitative research strategies and sources, including ethnography, oral history, archival investigation, and textual analysis.

Students will learn how to design a research project using one or more of these methods.

Required Text

Research Methods in Africana Studies (revised edition), by Serie McDougal III

Additional articles will be posted on Blackboard

<u>Grade Breakdown:</u>	Research Development papers	60% (15% each)
	Final Project	20%
	Reading presentation	10%
	Participation: attendance, discussion	10%

Schedule

Monday, August 26, 2019, Introductions and Course Expectations.

Why African American Studies?

Wednesday, August 28, 2019: Chapter 1, *Africana Studies and the Science of Knowing*

Assignment: Practicum – finding and evaluating a primary document.

And, compose a response essay based on the Activities put forth at the end of Chapter 1

Monday, September 2, 2019 – Labor Day, No Class

Wednesday, September 4, 2019: “Activist Research” in African American Studies

Guest Faculty: Prof. David Stovall,

Blackboard: *Are We Ready for School Abolition*

Text: Chapter 2, *Methodology in Africana Studies Research*

Monday, September 9, 2019: Chapter 2, *Methodology in Africana Studies Research*

Blackboard: Roland Barthes and Stuart Hall on “Interdisciplinarity.”

Wednesday, September 11, 2019, Film Clip: “Glory” (1989)

Blackboard: from Conjuring Freedom

History and Memory

Monday, September 16, 2019: **Research Development Paper #1:** 2-page research proposal.

What methods(s) would you consider? What resource(s) would you need?

Blackboard: Deborah Gray White, “Mining the Forgotten: Manuscript Sources for Black Women’s History,” Journal of American History 74:1 (June 1987): 237-242.

Wednesday, September 18, 2019: TBD

Whiteness Studies

Monday, September 23, 2019, blackboard: “White Skins, Black Masks: Minstrelsy and White Working Class Formation before the Civil War,” from The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class by David Roediger

blackboard, *On Being White and Other Lies*, James Baldwin

Wednesday, September 25, 2019, Blackboard: Ruth Frankenberg, “White on White,” in White Women, Race Matters The Social Construction of Whiteness

Monday, September 30, 2019: Chapter 3, *Ethics in Research*

Blackboard: *The Vocation of the Black Scholar*

Wednesday, October 2, 2019: Chapter 4, *Research Design*

Blackboard: Lee D. Baker. “History and Theory of a Racialized World View” from Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954”

History and Historiography

Monday, October 7, 2019: Chapter 5, *Choosing a Topic, Writing a Question, Reviewing the Literature*

Wednesday, October 9, 2019: **Research Development Paper #2,** 2-page discussion of chosen methodology, anticipated challenges, questions, AND literature review of research topic.

Blackboard: Charles Payne, “The Social Construction of History,” in I’ve Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle

Monday, October 14, 2019: Chapter 7, *Sampling Procedures*

Wednesday, October 16, 2019: **Guest Faculty: Rachael Haverlock, Department of English, Freshwater lab project.**

Oral History, Personal Narrative, and Material Culture

Monday, October 21, 2019: **Due: Research Development Paper #3 Due Wednesday**, Research preparation report and preliminary bibliography, 3-4 pages.

Blackboard: Maynes, Pierce and Laslett, "Intersecting Stories: Personal Narratives in Historical Context," in Telling Stories: The Use of Personal Narratives in the Social Sciences and History

Blackboard: Chafe, et al., eds. "Better Truths" in Remembering Jim Crow: African Americans Tell about Life in the Segregated South

Wednesday, October 23, 2019: **AACC (Meet in African American Cultural Center)** Chapter 8, *Non-Reactive Methods, Material Culture*

Engaging with subjects and studying communities; ethnographic approaches

Monday, October 28, 2019: Blackboard, Mitchell Duneier, "Ethnography, the Ecological Fallacy, and the 1995 Chicago Heat Wave," from American Sociological Review 2006, Vol. 71., pp.679-688

Blackboard, "The Conflict of Crisis: Critical Reflections on Feminist Ethnography and Anthropological Activism," from American Anthropologist, Vol. 116, No. 2, pp. 408-420

Wednesday, October 30, 2019: **Assignment Due In Class**, Practicum: close to home observation; students will practice observing a group, activity or setting and write research notes. What did you learn? What are the challenges?

Monday, November 4, 2019, blackboard: Chapter 10, *Survey Design: Asking Questions*

Blackboard, "The Conflict of Crisis: Critical Reflections on Feminist Ethnography and Anthropological Activism," from American Anthropologist, Vol. 116, No. 2, pp. 408-420

Wednesday, November 6, 2019, blackboard: In-Class Roundtable Research Workshop **Assignment**, Practicum: Sketch a personal inventory for group discussion that answers the following questions: Who are you? What aspects of your background, identity, and interests shape your proposed research? How might your positionality influence your research practice, findings, or conclusions?

The Researcher as Subject

Monday, November 11, 2019, blackboard: John Jackson, "Introduction: Doing Harlem, Touring Harlemworld," in Harlemworlds: Doing Race and Class in Contemporary Black America

Wednesday, November 13, 2019, blackboard: selection from Sweet Tea: Black Gay Men of the South, by E. Patrick Johnson

Critical Race Theory and Whiteness Studies

Monday, November 18, 2019, blackboard: *introduction*, in Critical Race Theory: An Introduction, R. Delgado and J. Stefancic, eds.

Wednesday, November 20, 2019, blackboard: selection from, “The Possessive Investment in Whiteness” in The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit From Identity Politics, by George Lipsitz

Contemporary Critique and Politics

Monday, November 25, 2019: blackboard: *introduction*, from Policing the Planet: Why the Policing Crisis Led to BLACKLIVESMATTER, J. T. Camp and C. Heatherton, eds.

Wednesday, November 27 – Class?