

**HIST 510:563:01**  
**African American History Colloquium:**

**“Blackness, Violence, and Incarceration”**

Fall 2017

*M, 1:10-4:10 pm*  
*011 Van Dyck Hall*

Walter C. Rucker

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<b>Office Hours:</b> T, 9-10:00 am & 1-3:00 pm W, 1-3:00 pm	<b>Phone:</b> 848-932-8355

**OVERVIEW:**

This colloquium will be the intellectual foundation for a book project tentatively entitled “The Birth of a Notion: A Century of Racial Violence and Mass Incarceration in America.” The course and the book will focus—in part—on post-bellum constructions of “blackness” as deviant, dangerous, and criminal. These racialized notions were significant departures from ante-bellum racial stereotypes—namely, “Sambo,” “Coon,” “Mammy,” and “Jezebel”—which depicted enslaved peoples as compliant, harmless, and obedient to white patriarchal and paternalistic regimes of power. Ultimately, both sets of ante- and post-bellum racialized notions were elaborate psycho-political mechanisms meant to sate ethical concerns, reconcile religious contradictions, and provide rationales for the twin paradoxes of slavery and Jim Crow in the land in which all people were “created equal.” Notions of postbellum blackness, then, did both psychological and political work in the white imaginary and the histories and legacies of lynching, mass incarceration, and the rise of the “new” Jim Crow form a long continuum of thought, action, “memory,” and race making in the modern U.S. Through the assigned readings and discussions, this course seeks to assess the various connections between race, gender, anti-black violence, and mass incarceration in the U.S. from Reconstruction to the present.

**REQUIRED WORK:**

Each student will write no fewer than ten two-page analytical response papers of assigned readings, a five-page review essay of a book related to the colloquium topic, and a fifteen- to eighteen-page historiographic essay using seven books—at least four assigned books and three others selected from the attached “Bibliography” at the end of the syllabus. Consult the attached “Writing Guidelines” for details on all writing assignments. All review essays will be due no later than November 13 and all historiographic essays will be due at the very beginning of Finals Week (December 18). All written assignments should be submitted as hardcopies only.

It should go without saying that attendance is mandatory in a graduate seminar. All students are expected to attend and actively participate during each session. Unless specifically and explicitly excused, each absence will reduce your course grade by half a letter. Also, please note that I will not grant incompletes without a university approved excuse.

**REQUIRED READINGS:**

Each student is required to purchase or borrow the following books:

1. Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Color Blindness* (2010)
2. Anderson, Carol. *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide* (2016)
3. Baker, Lee D. *From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954* (1998)
4. Du Bois, W.E.B. *Souls of Black Folk* (1903)
5. Feimster, Crystal Nicole. *Southern Horrors: Women and the Politics of Rape and Lynching* (2011)
6. Fredrickson, George M. *The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914* (1987)
7. Gross, Kali N. *Hannah Mary Tabbs and the Disembodied Torso: A Tale of Race, Sex, and Violence in America* (2016)
8. Kendi, Ibram X. *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (2017)
9. Litwack, Leon F. *Trouble in Mind: Black Southerners in the Age of Jim Crow* (1999)
10. Muhammad, Khalil Gibran. *The Condemnation of Blackness: Race, Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America.* (2011)
11. Ritterhouse, Jennifer. *Growing Up Jim Crow: How Black and White Southern Children Learned Race* (2010)
12. Wood, Amy Louise. *Lynching and Spectacle: Witnessing Racial Violence in America, 1890-1940* (2011)

In addition to the required books, short essays, articles, book chapters, and web links will be posted on the course Sakai site. Students are required to bring with them the required readings each week.

**GRADING:**

Discussion:	20%	Ten Critical Response Papers:	20%
Book Review:	20%	Historiographic Essay:	40%

## SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS:

### **Week One**

September 11: Welcome & Introduction

Videos: "Ethnic Notions" & "Race: The Power of an Illusion"

### **Week Two**

September 18: Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning*

Article: Berlin, Ira. "From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America." *The William and Mary Quarterly* (1996): 251-288. [Sakai]

Due: Analytical Reading Response

### **Week Three**

September 25: Fredrickson, *The Black Image in the White Mind*

Due: Analytical Reading Response

Article: Morgan, Jennifer. "Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder": Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1770. *William and Mary Quarterly*, (1997), 167-192.

### **Week Four**

October 2: Baker, *From Savage to Negro*

Article: Gates, Henry Lewis, "The Trope of a New Negro and the Reconstruction of the Image of the Black," *Representations* (1988): 129-155. [Sakai]

Due: Analytical Reading Response

### **Week Five**

October 9: Du Bois, *Souls of Black Folk*

Due: Analytical Reading Response

### **Week Six**

October 16: Litwack, *Trouble in Mind*

Due: Analytical Reading Response

### **Week Seven**

October 23: Wood, *Lynching and Spectacle*

Article: Bederman, Gail. "The White Man's Civilization on Trial: Ida B. Wells, Representations of Lynching, and Northern Black Middle Class Manhood," in Bederman's *Manliness and Civilization* (University of Chicago, 1996), 45-76.

Due: Analytical Reading Response

**Week Eight**

October 30: Feimster, *Southern Horrors*  
Due: Analytical Reading Response

**Week Nine**

November 6: No Class [Read Book Review Selection]

**Week Ten**

November 13: Ritterhouse, *Growing Up Jim Crow*  
Due: Analytical Reading Response  
Book Review

**Week Eleven**

November 20: Gross, *Hannah Mary Tabbs and the Disembodied Torso*  
Due: Analytical Reading Response

**Week Twelve**

November 27: Muhammad, *The Condemnation of Blackness*  
Due: Analytical Reading Response

**Week Thirteen**

December 4: Alexander, *The New Jim Crow*  
Due: Analytical Reading Response

**Week Fourteen**

December 11: Anderson, *White Rage*  
Due: Analytical Reading Response

**Week Fifteen**

December 18: Historiographic Essays Due

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Bay, Mia. *The White Image in the Black Mind: African-American Ideas about White People, 1830-1925* (2000)
2. \_\_\_\_\_. *To Tell the Truth Freely: The Life of Ida B. Wells* (2009)
3. Blackmon, Douglas A. *Slavery by Another Name: The Re-Enslavement of Black Americans from the Civil War to World War II* (2012)
4. Brophy, Alfred L. *Reconstructing the Dreamland: The Tulsa Riot of 1921: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation* (2003)
5. Carroll, Anne Elizabeth. *Word, Image, and the New Negro: Representation and Identity in the Harlem Renaissance* (2003)
6. Freund, David M. P. *Colored Property: State Policy and White Racial Politics in Suburban America* (2010)
7. Gilmore, Glenda. *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (1996)
8. Goodman, James. *The Stories of Scottsboro* (1995)
9. Gross, Kali N. *Colored Amazons: Crime, Violence and Black Women in the City of Brotherly Love, 1880-1910* (2006)
10. Haley, Sarah. *No Mercy Here: Gender, Punishment, and the Making of Jim Crow Modernity* (2016)
11. Hannah, Rosen. *Terror in the Heart of Freedom: Citizenship, Sexual Violence, and the Meaning of Race in the Postemancipation South* (2008)
12. Hartman, Saidiya V. *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (1997)
13. Hinton, Elizabeth. *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (2017)
14. Jeffries, Hasan Kwame. *Bloody Lowndes: Civil Rights and Black Power in Alabama's Black Belt* (2010)
15. LeFlouria, Talitha L. *Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South* (2016)
16. Litwack, Leon F. *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (1980)

17. Mitchell, Koritha. *Living with Lynching: African American Lynching Plays, Performance, and Citizenship, 1890-1930* (2012)
18. Ortiz, Paul. *Emancipation Betrayed: The Hidden History of Black Organizing and White Violence in Florida from Reconstruction to the Bloody Election of 1920* (2005)
19. Painter, Nell Irvin. *The History of White People* (2011)
20. Scott, Daryl Michael. *Contempt and Pity: Social Policy and the Image of the Damaged Black Psyche, 1880-1996* (1997)
21. Shapiro, Herbert. *White Violence and Black Response: From Reconstruction to Montgomery* (1988)
22. Smith, J. Douglas. *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics, and Citizenship in Jim Crow Virginia* (2002)
23. Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. *From #Blacklivesmatter to Black Liberation* (2016)
24. Woodward, C. Vann. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (1966)

## WRITING GUIDELINES

### **I. WEEKLY RESPONSE PAPERS:**

These should be no more than two pages (600 words) in length. The paper should record your interpretive response and reaction to the week's assigned reading as a "journal" of your thoughts. These responses should have more structure than a stream of consciousness or a random and unconnected set of ideas. In essence, these will be miniature book analyses in which you are to clearly convey how you are thinking critically about the readings. You might want to write about items in the readings to which you had either strong positive or negative reactions. In any event, each student should address the required book and the interpretive connections between it and any of the additional articles or book chapters.

Weekly papers are due each session in class beginning Week Two. Students submitting fewer than ten total responses will receive significant grade penalties.

### **II. BOOK REVIEW:**

A critical book review is not a book report or a summary. It is basically an extended response paper in which you point out strengths and weaknesses of the selected book, and how it helps—or misleads you—in understanding the realm of knowledge to which the book contributes. All book reviews must be at least five pages (1,500 words) long. Below is a general outline to follow in order for you to take adequate notes as you read the book:

#### **A. THE BOOK'S TOPIC, AUTHOR AND AUTHOR'S BACKGROUND**

- Who is this author? Is he or she considered an expert in this topic? Is there a discernible intellectual genealogy the author or work belongs to?
- Does the author's background, time, or place affect the conclusions reached? Do you find any obvious bias?
- What are the author's intention(s), point(s) of view, frame(s) of reference, or theoretical assumption(s) (usually found in the preface, foreword, introduction or opening paragraphs)?

#### **B. THE BOOK'S THESIS AND SPECIFIC EXAMPLES FROM THE TEXT**

- What are the author's major thesis and conclusions? Are they convincing? [Be sure to accurately quote or paraphrase the author to avoid over-simplifying the argument.]
- What are the most important pieces of evidence to support the book's thesis?
- How would you, in a sentence or two, summarize the book and its content?

#### **C. YOUR OBJECTIONS/CONTRARY VIEWS**

- What is the quality of the evidence—convincing? adequate? Are the sources recognized by others in the field?
- What are the book's interpretive strengths and weaknesses?
- Are there other works on the same or a similar topic? If so, what unique contribution does the book under review make?
- Does any of the author's information (or conclusions) conflict with other books you have read, courses you have taken or just previous assumptions you had of the subject?

#### **D. THE BOOK'S IMPACT ON YOU AND OTHER POTENTIAL READERS**

- Were any previous ideas you had on this subject changed or abandoned due to this book? Were they strengthened?

I strongly urge everyone to consult published book reviews in current peer-reviewed history journals for guidance. Among the best in this regard are the *American Historical Review*, the *Journal of African American History, Slavery & Abolition*, the *William & Mary Quarterly*, and the *Journal of American History*. Book reviews written by recognizable scholars, as opposed to graduate students or junior scholars, may be more helpful.

All book reviews will be due **WEEK TEN (November 13)** in class. You are also strongly advised to select a book for your book review that you can also use as one of the seven books you will analyze for the historiographic essay.

### **III. HISTORIOGRAPHIC ESSAY:**

Essentially, an historiographic essay is a combined assessment and review of a series of books on a single topic covered in the required readings or class discussions. All essays must be fifteen- to eighteen-pages (4,500 to 5,400 words) long and you should use your book review selection and four of the required course readings as five of the seven books for your historiographic assessment.

You should address each book chronologically, emphasizing common themes and commonalities or differences in interpretations. The goal of an historiographic essay is to highlight the ways in which books “speak” to each other. Scholars write books to respond to prior scholarship, adjust to new interpretive trends, or incorporate new sources of evidence. Your goal then will be to trace the lines of dialogue between the books you have chosen. Be sure to emphasize the common themes which connect together your selections. This may mean, for example, that for an historiographic essay on African American women and the carceral state, you only deal with two or three chapters of a book in one case and the entire book in another. In this regard, you can also include peer-reviewed journal articles—**in addition to the required seven books**—for your historiographic analysis.

Explain what social circumstances, theoretical approaches, or sources of evidence shaped each scholar’s approach to the topic. After reading each of the books, you may want to look at published book reviews or review essays to help shape your own views. Finally, be sure to analyze and discuss the arguments of the books for their significance, implications, and contributions to scholarly knowledge on African American History. You should consult review essays in *Reviews in American History* for guidance.

All historiographic essays will be due at the beginning of **FINALS WEEK (December 18)**. Unless otherwise excused by the instructor, students who do not submit historiographic essays at the end of the term will receive either a “C” or an “F” for the final course grade.