

Education 15:310:561
History of African American Education
Fall, 2021
Online
Weds, 5-8pm

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Description.

This course examines the origins and development of formal education created by and for Americans of African descent. Our readings explore important questions in that history: how did African Americans educate their children in the context of race-based enslavement and apartheid? What have been the successes and failures of the long Civil Rights Movement in education? How have historians offered competing explanations for the history of African American education and how have these explanations changed with time? And finally, what are legacies of the history of African American education for African Americans, and all Americans, today? The course includes weekly reading responses, a book review, and a final reflective essay.

I. Required Texts (These are NOT on sale at the bookstore, so order online ASAP!!! Used or e-books are fine, where appropriate)

- Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (paperback/ebook 2005)
- James Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (paperback 1988)
- Davison Douglas, *Jim Crow moves North* (paperback, 2005)
- Derrick Bell, *Silent Covenants* (paperback, 2005)
- Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (paperback/ebook 2012)
- Carter G. Woodson, *The Miseducation of the Negro* (any edition or online)
- Crystal Sanders, *A Chance for Change: Head Start and Mississippi's Black Freedom Struggle* (paperback or kindle 2016)
- Jarvis Givens, *Fugitive Pedagogy: Carter G. Woodson and the Art of Black Teaching* (2021) (any edition or kindle).
- Hilary Moss, *Schooling Citizens* (2010, paperback or kindle)
- James Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Education* (2001, paperback or kindle, NOT the study guide)
- Dionne Danna, *Crossing Segregated Boundaries* (paperback or kindle, (2020)
- Frederick Douglas, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglas* (1845) (any edition or online at: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/23/23-h/23-h.htm>)
- Other readings will be distributed via the course website or are available online

II. Learning Goals:

- Describe the development of African American educational institutions, policies, and traditions in 19th and twentieth-century America, including key periods and moments, and people.
- Explain the tension between education as a source of opportunity and education as a source of oppression for African Americans.

- Analyze the ways in which historians of African American education develop competing explanations.
- Identify key areas of concern for the education of African Americans in contemporary American society and critically analyze the effectiveness of policies relating to them.
- Be familiar with major scholars in the field of African American Education.

III. Course Content

This course proceeds chronologically and thematically, beginning with the role of race in the development of educational traditions and institutions in America after the Revolutionary War through the end of the 20th century. The final weeks of the course consider contemporary issues in African American Education.

IV. Instructional Format

This course is an online seminar. That means that each student is expected to be present, with video camera on, during class time. Students are responsible for having a reliable internet connection and for being actively engaged during our class. Please do not multitask. Class will include small and large group discussion, as well as structured activities.

V. Evaluation

My philosophy of grading is that letter grades are marks that record your personal accomplishments. I do not use letter grades to rank or sort students. What this means is that I will set clear standards for you to meet (and when they are unclear, please tell me) and I will help you reach those standards. When I evaluate your work and find that you have not met those standards, I will tell you clearly what is missing and what has to be done. I offer you my help and another chance to meet those standards.

Late assignments will be accepted only if you have made prior arrangements. You may rewrite any paper once, in which case you must make arrangements with me prior to the revision. Rewritten reading responses may not necessarily be given a new grade, depending on the quality of the rewrite. An exception is the final integrative essay where a late paper cannot be accepted at all since grades are to be turned in to the University a few days after the assignment is due. Due dates refer to the last day I will accept an assignment without prior arrangements. You are welcome to hand in assignments before their final due date!

This course will be taken for a letter grade only. The letter grade will be calculated as follows:

- Participation during class.....20%
- Weekly Reading Responses50%
- Book review20%
- Integrative Essay10%

It is essential to complete the required readings before class discussion. Weekly attendance is mandatory. Students should contact the instructor in advance of any missed classes. Missing class, or excessive tardiness and/or lack of engagement during class time may result in a grade reduction. Multiple absences without prior approval with the instructor may result in failure of the class, notwithstanding the fact that participation is 20% of the course grade.

Completing each week's readings is essential to participation. If you struggle with reading, please let me know and I will discuss strategies with you. A typical week's readings will be approximately 150 pages.

I am required to inform you that this class follows the university policies on plagiarism and academic integrity. Those policies may be found here:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/>

Failure to comply with these regulations may result in failure of the assignment and or the course (and possibly dismissal from the Graduate School of Education) at the discretion of the instructor and relevant unit and university administrators. If you have any questions about how to properly acknowledge and cite all use of the ideas, results, or words of others, please ask.

C. The written work for the course will be as follows:

1. 2 page (400-500 words) weekly reflections on the reading, **due to our class website by the start of every class**. These brief essays offer you an opportunity to respond to aspects of the weeks readings that puzzle, intrigue, or irk you. Think of it as a conversation with yourself, or with me, as I will be reading them each week. The first paragraph of all responses should provide a brief overview of the week's readings.

If the reading is a book:

- Your first sentence should be a general statement of what the book is about, including its central argument.
- Body sentences should describe what each chapter is about and any other descriptive details that you think are important.
- The concluding sentence of the first paragraph of your response should state what the author's conclusion is.

The rest of your response paragraphs can focus on whatever you want and be structured how you wish, so long as they make sense.

If the reading is a collection of articles/chapters from more than one book:

- Your first sentence should be a general descriptive statement of what the articles this week all have in common.
- Body sentences should describe what each reading is about and any other descriptive details that you think are important.
- The concluding sentence of the first paragraph of your response should make a generalization of your own that sums up what you think having read all the pieces.

The rest of your response paragraphs can focus on whatever you want and be structured how you wish, so long as they make sense.

As long as you follow the guidelines for your first paragraph, you may use different approaches for different sets of readings, and creativity is always welcome. If there are multiple readings assigned in a given week, be sure to engage each of them.

Weekly responses will be graded excellent (A), good (B), or not acceptable. An excellent essay demonstrates clear understanding of the readings and expresses an interesting opinion of them, such as a critical analysis, a comparison, the identification of a particular theme, the development of a new idea, etc. A good essay demonstrates an adequate understanding of the readings. If your essay is not acceptable, I will ask you to revise it, in which case the revision may not receive a grade above a B. **You need to write a total of 10 weekly reading responses. You are expected to do the week's reading even if you do not write a response. We are a small group and every voice counts!**

2. **Book review**, due via email **Sunday, Nov. 28 by noon**. Write a 1500-2000 word review of a book related to the history of African American education that has been

published in the last ten years. I strongly urge you to meet with me during your process of book selection. In preparation for your review:

- a. read the book carefully and interactively.
- b. read other scholarly reviews of the book.
- c. Skim three related books that this book references as relevant peer books—books that this book is in conversation with. Your task is to see, from the introductions of these other books, how your book relates to and/or differs from them.
- d. In your review, include some discussion of the book's central argument, structure, major components, sources, and significance. Make your own opinion of the book clear. Does the book accomplish what it sets out to do? Is that goal itself a worthy one?

3. A short, final, integrative essay of five to six pages (1250-1500 words) that reflects on what you have learned in this course. Consider class discussions, presentations and lectures, readings, and written assignments. Then write an essay that answers the following question: In what ways (be specific) have your views about African American education been challenged, modified, or reinforced by what you have learned? **Due Sunday Dec. 19th by noon.**

CRITERIA FOR JUDGING WRITTEN WORK

1. *Completeness*

Are all parts of the assignment included?

2. *Accuracy*

Is what you say supported by evidence? Do you summarize main points clearly? Are you precise in use of statistics and quotes?

3. *Analysis*

Is your argument coherent, comprehensive, and convincing?

4. *Quality of writing*

Is your writing clear and succinct? Do you help the reader move easily from the beginning to the end of paper?

OVERVIEW OF COURSE¹

Week 1 (9/1): Introduction to Course. *What do we mean by "African American?" By "Education?" Is there such a thing as African American Education? Should there be? What is history? What does Douglas's autobiography tell us about the salience of education in the antebellum United States?*

- Read in preparation for tonight: *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (1845)
- There is NO READING REFLECTION due tonight.

NOTE THERE IS NO CLASS SEPT 8!!!

¹ Please Note: In the event of an emergency cancellation, the schedule will continue the following week as planned in the syllabus. I still expect readings, reading responses, and other assignments to be completed even if there is an emergency cancellation of class.

Week 2 (9/15): Formal and informal African American Education in the Antebellum North. *What are the pros and cons of looking at formal schooling as the location of education for 19th century African Americans? How did racial caste shape the formation of the common school? How did African Americans fight for access to formal education and how successful were they?*

Readings for tonight:

- Hilary Moss, *Schooling Citizens*, Introduction, Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6,
- Davison Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North*, Chapter 2 (pp. 12-60). (Reading Chapter 1, "Introduction," is optional).

In class we will discuss the Roberts Case. If you are a slow reader, or want a preview, you may find these documents in the resources folder.

Note: First reading reflection due tonight and subsequent nights.

Week 3 (9/22): Education and Emancipation. *How does the nature of slavery help us understand American education? How does Williams account for the rise of formal African American education before and after emancipation? What sources does she use? Why the issue of emancipation-era education remain important today?*

Readings for tonight:

- Matthew Desmond, "In Order to Understand the Brutality of American Capitalism, you have to Start on the Plantation," *New York Times 1619 Project*
- Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught* (2005) introduction, chaps 1- 5

Week 4 (9/29). Post-Bellum education in the South

Readings for tonight:

- W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, III "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others" and VI, "Of the Training of Black Men."
- James D. Anderson, *The Education of Blacks in the South, 1860-1935* (1988) chapters 1-3.
- Jacqueline Jones (2008) "All Educational Politics are Local," in Reese et al (eds) *Rethinking the History of American Education*.

Week 5 (10/6): Post Bellum Education in the North

Readings for tonight:

- *Anna Julia Cooper, "The Higher Education of Women" chapter 4 from *A Voice from the South* (1892) (p. 48-79) (available online).
- Davison Douglas, *Jim Crow Moves North*, Chapters 3,4,5 (pp. 62-218)

Week 6 (10/13): The Politics of Progress *How did the issue of education figure in the thinking of Progressive-era Black intellectuals? What were the tensions in the thinking on higher education?*

Readings for tonight:

- Givens, *Fugitive Pedagogy*, Intro, Chapters 1, 2, 3
- In class—analysis of portions early Woodson textbooks

Week 7 (10/20) *The Mis-Education of the Negro*. How does Givens use the idea of “fugitivity” to explain Woodson’s work and his classic book, *Miseducation of the Negro*?” What is the nature of the “miseducation?” Who is to blame?

Readings for tonight:

- Givens, Chapters 4-6 and conclusion
- Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro*. Available widely, including: <http://historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/misedne.html>

Week 8 (10/27): *Brown v. Board of Ed prelude*. How did the NAACP strategize its assault on Jim Crow education? What role did individuals, groups, and chance have on the unfolding of events? What broader contextual issues worked for and against the effort? How can we compare and contrast Douglas with Patterson?

Readings for tonight:

- Davison Douglas, *Jim Crow moves North*, Chapter 6, pp. 219-279
- Patterson, *Brown v. Board of Ed*, Chapters 1-5

Week 10 (11/3): *Workshop*. Tonight’s workshop time will be spent as a whole class and in small working groups. We will spend half our workshop time looking at and analyzing book reviews as a way to come up with a set of common elements and “tricks” to writing an effective review. We will spend the other half of our workshop talking about the books people are interested in reviewing and sharing some initial thoughts about how to approach reviews of them.

Readings for tonight:

- The book you intend to review.

Also, this week the History of Education Society will hold its annual meeting, which will run today, 11-3 online only, and Thurs to Sunday, 11/7 in person with an online viewing option. Online registration is available at low cost. Ask Ben if you are interested, or visit the History of Education Society website: <https://www.historyofeducation.org/>

Week 9 (11/10): *Brown v. Board of Education*. How do we explain Brown? What is the Basis of Bell’s critique of the decision? What’s the implicit argument of *Eyes on the Prize*?

Readings for tonight:

- Bell, *Silent Covenants: Brown vs. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform* (2004).
- In class: “Eyes on the Prize” video covering Little Rock High School. We will devote part of our online time to viewing this video at the start of our session. If you would like to watch in advance instead, that’s fine. Our class will convene at 5:40 tonight to give everyone time to watch either in class or at home.

Week 11 (11/17): *The Feds in the Deep South*: What was public education like in Mississippi for African American children and families in the early to mid twentieth century? How did federal policy (especially Head Start) in the 1960s and 1970s change, and not change, that education? Why? In what ways does Sanders use sources and construct a narrative that challenges more typical approaches to this topic?

Readings for tonight:

- Sanders, *Chance for Change*.
- Optional reading for tonight: *Patterson* Ch 6-7.

Week 12 (11/22): Reminder: THIS IS A MONDAY!!!! YES, this is Thanksgiving week!!! Higher Education. According to Biondi, what were the driving forces for change at universities across the country? What tensions existed within the movement? What did it accomplish?

Readings for tonight:

- Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (2012), read intro and chaps. 1, 4-6, 8, and conclusion.

Book Review Due no later than Sunday, Nov. 28, by noon.

Week 13 (12/1): Crossing Segregated Boundaries. How did the high school class of 1988 experience Chicago's city-wide desegregation plan?

Readings for tonight:

- Dionne Danks: *Crossing Segregated Boundaries* (2020).

Week 14 (12/8): The Punitive turn and the birth of BLM.

Readings for tonight:

- Justice, "Hobbling: The Effects of Proactive Policing and Mass Imprisonment on Children's Education," *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* (2021) 17:3, 1-21
- Justice, "Schools, Prisons, and Pipelines: Fixing the toxic relationship between public education and criminal justice," *Choice* 55:10 (June 2018)
- Justice and Meares, "The Wolf We Feed: Democracy, Caste, and Legitimacy," *Michigan Law Review* 119 (May 2021), 95-120.
- Adrienne Dixon, "What's Going On? A Critical Race Theory Perspective on Black Lives Matter and Activism in Education," *Urban Education* 2018 53:2, 231-247.

Week 15 (12/15). Course Wrap-up. What important facts, major themes, and enduring understandings emerge from our 15 weeks together? Where do we go from here?

- No readings due tonight. Think about your final, integrative essay and be ready to think broadly about the course.

Final, Integrative Essay is Due Sunday, 12/19, by noon. All remaining work must also be turned in today by noon to avoid an incomplete for the course.