

African American History since 1865

Last Updated: Mon, 01/05/2026

Course prefix: HTS

Course number: 3025

Section: A

CRN (you may add up to five):

202602

Instructor First Name: Sherie

Instructor Last Name: Randolph

Semester: Spring

Academic year: 2026

Course description:

Course Description

This course explores African American history from the abolition of chattel slavery to the present. In addition to examining Black people's centuries-long striving for community, identity, and solidarity across local, national, and global contexts, we pay special attention to differences and diversity—particularly gender distinctions within African American communities.

We will consider the contours of Black life, thought, and resistance in the late 19th, 20th, and early 21st centuries, and the ways African American communities resisted state-sanctioned policing and violence. Students will gain new insights into lynch victims and lynch mobs, working people and employers, the rich and the poor. More importantly, students should understand how these relationships are interconnected with U.S. culture, the economy, politics, power, and tradition.

Our intention is not simply to “add more color” to the historical painting, but to revise the painting altogether.

Course learning outcomes:

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

Knowledge & Understanding

1. Describe major developments in African American history from emancipation to the present, including labor, migration, activism, community-building, and cultural expression.
2. Identify key events, organizations, strategies, and figures in Black freedom struggles across the late 19th, 20th, and early 21st centuries.
3. Explain how race, gender, class, sexuality, and region shaped diverse experiences within African American communities.
4. Recognize the forms and legacies of state-sanctioned and extralegal violence (lynching, policing, incarceration) and the range of Black responses to such oppression.

Critical Analysis & Interpretation

1. Analyze primary and secondary sources (speeches, letters, films, court cases, essays, organizational documents) related to Black life, resistance, and politics.
2. Interpret historical narratives through documentaries and visual culture, paying attention to power, memory, and representation.
3. Develop analytical arguments using textual and visual evidence to challenge simplified or traditional narratives about U.S. history.

Research & Communication Skills

1. Write concise, thoughtful response papers that demonstrate critical engagement with assigned readings.
2. Formulate discussion questions that reflect deeper inquiry into course themes, debates, and contradictions.
3. Cite sources effectively to support interpretations in both written and oral formats.

Participation & Engagement

1. Contribute meaningfully to class discussion by listening carefully, posing questions, and building on others' insights.
2. Demonstrate preparation by completing readings, participating in in-class activities, and connecting ideas across weeks.

Assessment & Evaluation

1. Recall and explain key concepts, figures, and events on exams based on lectures, readings, and films.
2. Synthesize course material (community, resistance, policing, incarceration, gender, culture) to answer comparative and interpretive exam questions.

Required course materials:

Required Reading

- Robin D.G. Kelley and Earl Lewis, eds., ***To Make Our World Anew: A History of African Americans since 1880, Volume II*** (Oxford University Press)
- James Kilgore, ***Understanding Mass Incarceration*** (New Press)

* Additional readings will be posted on Canvas.

* Documentaries are used as key texts; students should take notes and analyze them alongside readings and lectures.

Grading policy:

Assignments

- 20% — In-Class Test 1
- 20% — In-Class Test 2
- 20% — Take-Home Test 3
- 20% — Participation
- 20% — Response Papers

Final Letter Grade Range

A — 90-100

B — 80-89

C — 70-79

D — 60-69

F — 0-59

Attendance policy:

Course Policies

Attendance: More than three unexcused absences will reduce your final grade by one full letter.

Tardiness: Being late more than three times will reduce your final grade by one full letter.

Internet & Phone: Using devices for non-class purposes counts as an absence.

Academic honesty/integrity statement:

Students are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All work submitted must be original and properly cited. Plagiarism, cheating, or any form of academic dishonesty will result in immediate consequences as outlined in the university's academic integrity policy.

Core IMPACTS statement(s) (if applicable):

This is a Core IMPACTS course that is part of the Social Sciences area.

Core IMPACTS refers to the core curriculum, which provides students with essential knowledge in foundational academic areas. This course will help master course content, and support students' broad academic and career goals.

This course should direct students toward a broad Orienting Question:

- How do I understand human experiences and connections?

Completion of this course should enable students to meet the following Learning Outcome:

- Students will effectively analyze the complexity of human behavior, and how historical, economic, political, social or geographic relationships develop, persist or change.

Course content, activities and exercises in this course should help students develop the following Career-Ready Competencies:

- Intercultural Competence
- Perspective-Taking
- Persuasion