AAAD 487 (class no. XXXX)  
Intellectual Currents in African and African Diaspora Studies  
Tues & Thurs, 9:30-10:45am  
XXX Hamilton Hall  
(Spring 2021)

Instructor: Prof. XXXX  
Office: XXXX Battle Hall  
Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11am-12:00pm, 2:15-2:45pm, or by appointment  
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Course Description: This course examines the intellectual traditions of people of African descent in Africa and across the globe. It is particularly concerned with the literary and theoretical productions of selected individuals who are representative of the political, social, and cultural aspirations and creativity of black populations from a transnational perspective. While the course is more weighted toward analyzing the intellectual trajectories of diasporic communities, it will also take into consideration both historical and contemporary trends in African intellectualism.

General Education Objectives (This course satisfies the following Gen. Ed. Focus Capacities):

I. Power, Difference, and Inequality
Students engage with the histories, perspectives, politics, intellectual traditions, and/or expressive cultures of populations and communities that have historically been disempowered, and the structural and historical processes by which that disempowerment has endured and changed.

Questions for Students to Keep in Mind during the Semester
1. What are the relevant structures, institutions, ways of thinking, and practices that create, maintain, and change social, economic, and political inequalities?
2. What practices have been implemented and institutionalized to address social, economic, and political inequalities?

Learning Outcomes of the Course
1. Recognize the relationship between inequality and social, economic, and political power.
2. Analyze configurations of power and the forms of inequality and bias they produce.
3. Evaluate dynamics of social, economic, and political inequality in relation to specific historical contexts.
4. Interrogate the systemic processes by which forms of inequality are sustained and how these processes have been and are resisted and transformed.

Recurring Capacities
Through the completion of various assignments including written exams, response papers, and book analyses (described below), students will regularly address problems and questions that require systematic thinking about evidence, argument, and uncertainty. These activities will involve small-group debate teams that will take pro- and con- positions regarding how concepts such as race, gender, culture, nation, and colonialism are handled by the authors of selected
books. Further, students will be called upon to discuss how certain readings have been pivotal in shaping African and diasporic thinking about political identities and social consciousness, as well as how to recognize and interpret primary and secondary historical sources, taking into consideration authorship and purpose. Moreover, the course will encourage students to consider human differences between and within societies, as well as change over time.

Textbook/Readings: The textbooks for this course are listed below. All books can be purchased at the student bookstore or other venues where books are sold.


Also, students will be responsible for reading articles during most weeks of the semester. These documents can be accessed at the class’s website on Sakai (log into https://www.unc.edu/sakai/ and click the “Resources” tab for the course). Readings should be completed by the first class session of the week (Tuesday).

Requirements:

1. **Examinations:** Two tests, a mid-term and a final, will be administered during the term. Each will consist of at least 1-2 essay questions. Each exam will account for 15% of the student's grade, for a total of 30% of the semester grade.

2. **Book Analysis:** Each student is required to write three original review essays based on Adam Ewing’s *The Age of Garvey*; Tanisha Ford, *Liberated Threads*; and Saidiya Hartman’s *Lose Your Mother*. These essays, 5-7 pages in length, should not be simply summaries of the books, but a critical assessment of each author's narrative, point of view, historical accuracy, writing style, use of sources, and so forth. Each of these assignments is worth 16% of the student's grade, for a total of 48% of the semester grade. Stylistic elements of your paper (such as grammar and spelling) will be considered during grading, as well as content. Please see the guidelines below for further information.

3. **Response Papers:** During several weeks of the semester, students will be required to
read and respond to assigned readings. These response papers should be at least 500 words in length (approximately 2 double-spaced pages in 12-point font) and typed. Your paper should demonstrate that you have read and thought about the reading. The readings will be from the assigned textbooks and/or available on our Sakai website under “Resources.” Students should post their response papers on the class’s Sakai website under “Assignments” prior to the listed due date. Students should also bring a printed version of their response paper to class on the due date and be prepared to discuss both the reading(s) and their paper. Each response papers—there are 6 in all—will account for 2% of the student's grade, for a total of 12% of the semester grade.

4. Attendance and Participation: Regular class attendance is necessary for participating in discussions and mastering the course’s subject matter. Students are obligated to complete all coursework assigned either in class or as homework. Students are also expected to participate in class by asking questions and offering answers and observations, as well as engage in the small-group debates. To track attendance and participation, an attendance sheet will be circulated during each class session for students to sign. Missed classes and lack of participation in discussions will negatively impact a student’s attendance and participation grade, which accounts for 10% of the semester grade. There will be no make-up or extra-credit assignments given.

5. Plagiarism: Please be sure to use your own words and thoughts in your written work. That is, your graded assignments for this course should be in your own original words and express your own thoughts. When discussing the thoughts and writings of other people, it is best to paraphrase, although the use of quotes is permissible. When quoting or citing other authors, you should make it clear that you are doing so and explicitly attribute their works (for example, list the referenced author’s name and publication in a footnote). Plagiarism is considered a very serious academic offense that could lead to a number of penalties, including failure of the course or academic suspension. If you have questions about the University’s policy regarding plagiarism, please contact me or refer to the UNC Writing Center website (http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/plagiarism/) or the “Instrument of Student Judicial Governance” (https://studentconduct.unc.edu/sites/studentconduct.unc.edu/files/documents/Instrument.pdf).

6. Sakai: Periodically, information about assignments will be posted at the class’s Sakai website. Students can visit this site for electronic versions of the syllabus, course readings, assignments, and grades (https://www.unc.edu/sakai/).

7. Classroom Protocol: Students are expected to be courteous and civil on all occasions. Differences of opinion are welcome, but should be expressed in a respectful way. Students should arrive on time for each class and stay for the entire session. Additionally, students should turn off the sounds for all electronic devices during class time. No texting or internet surfing will be allowed during class. These practices are both disruptive to the learning of other students and hinder the progression of the class. No laptop computer usage is allowed unless a student has received prior permission from the instructor.

8. Course Changes: The instructor reserves the right to revise the topics and readings listed on this syllabus, though graded assignments and their weightings will remain as initially stated. Any proposed changes will be announced as early as possible.
Accommodation for Disabilities: Students who feel they may need accommodations based on the impact of a disability should contact the course instructor to discuss their needs. Students with documented disabilities should also contact the Department of Accessibility Resources & Service at 919-962-8300 in SASB North Building, Suite 2126 to coordinate necessary accommodations for exams and other in-class assignments. Visit the internet address of this office at http://accessibility.unc.edu for more information.

Lecture Topics, Readings, and Assignments for the Class Sessions of:


***Response Paper #1 due in class and on Sakai (January 15)***


***Response Paper #2 due in class and on Sakai (January 22)***


***Response Paper #3 due in class and on Sakai (January 29)***


** Book Analysis of Ewing’s The Age of Garvey Due in Class and on Sakai (February 5)**

**Small-group debate on Ewing’s The Age of Garvey (February 7)**


***Response Paper #4 due in class and on Sakai (February 12)***

**February 19 & 21:** Toward Revolution. **Readings:** Nelson Mandela, “The Case for a Violent Resistance Movement,” 319-332 (Sakai website); Frantz Fanon, “Concerning Violence,” 35-95 (Sakai website); and Walter Rodney, “Towards the Sixth Pan African Congress,” 729-739 (in Asante and Abarry, eds. *African Intellectual Heritage*).

***Response Paper #5 due in class and on Sakai (February 19)***


***Response Paper #6 due in class and on Sakai (February 26)***

**March 5 & 7:** From the Diaspora Looking In. **Readings:** Kevin Gaines, “Richard Wright in Ghana,” 52-76 (Sakai website); James H. Meriwether, “The Year of Africa: Lows, Highs, and Corners, 1960,” 181-207 (Sakai website).

***Mid-term Exam (March 7)***

**March 12 & 14:** ***No Class This Week (Spring Break)***


****Book Analysis of Ford’s *Liberated Threads* Due in Class and on Sakai (March 26)****

**Small-group debate on Ford’s *Liberated Threads* (March 29)**


**April 9 & 11:** Afrocentricity, Pan-Africanism, and Sexuality. **Readings:** Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 84-153; Molefi Kete Asante, “The Essential Grounds,” 1-30 (Sakai website); and


*** Book Analysis of Hartman’s Lose Your Mother Due in Class and on Sakai (April 16)***

**Small-group debate on Hartman’s Lose Your Mother (March 28)**

April 23 & 25: Wrap-up and review for final exam.

***The Final Exam will be at 8am on Friday, May 3, in 420 Hamilton Hall***
GUIDELINES FOR BOOK ANALYSIS

Title

Your book analysis should start with a title page that is separate from the text of your paper. On this page, you should print in bold, italics, or otherwise attractive print the title of your paper. Be creative. A book analysis of Alex Haley’s *Roots* should not be simply entitled “A Book Analysis of Alex Haley’s *Roots.*” More eye-catching to a reader would be a title such as “Been in the Storm So Long: A Critical Analysis of Alex Haley’s *Roots.*” Your title page is the first opportunity that you have to get your reader interested in your work. In addition to the title of the paper (which should be centered in the middle of the first page), the title page should also include (in the lower right of the page) your name, the instructor’s name, the course title and section number, and the date.

Introduction

The first paragraph of your paper should summarize the author’s major points and theses and briefly indicate the things about the book that you found interesting, persuasive, and unconvincing (or even inaccurate). In essence, a person should only need to read your introductory paragraph to get a good idea of what the book under review is about as well as your general opinion of the book’s strengths and weaknesses. This paragraph should be the strongest of the paper, for it ideally should capture the author’s ideas and your reaction to the book. Again, be imaginative. If you would like to start your paper off with a short quote from the book under review or any other source, feel free to do so. This is your second opportunity to arouse the interest and curiosity of your reader.

At the bare minimum, the introduction should contain the author’s full name, the full title of the book to be reviewed, the theme(s) of the book, and your impression of the work.

Body of the Paper

Using the paper’s introduction as a guide, plan the major sections of the paper’s body and make sure that each section relates directly to the introduction and logically to the other sections of the paper. Provide transitional elements (phrases and sentences) in the paper’s body to connect ideas. Avoid repetitious words and clichés. This will allow you to keep the paper in focus as your discussion proceeds. The reader should never have to wonder how the discussion, at any given point in the paper, relates to your overall purpose. In addition to the author’s major points, you should discuss issues such as the use (or misuse) of sources/bibliographical materials; the structure of the book (Is it chronologically coherent? Do the chapters and sections logically follow one another? etc.); the use of illustrations, pictures, maps, charts, and other visuals; the author’s writing style; the author’s biases; and other things that affect the substance and presentation of the book.

Conclusion

A paper’s conclusion might summarize the central points of the paper (a closed conclusion) or it might deal with issues closely related to the topic, but not covered directly in the body of the paper (an open conclusion). The conclusion might also include a more personal reaction of the reviewer to the book and/or the subject matter.