Howard University
Spring 2020 Semester

Introduction to Afro American Studies I[1]
AFRO 005, Section 04, CRN 10009

Tuesdays/Thursdays, 8:10-9:30 a.m.
Ernest Everett Just [Biology Building] Auditorium[2]

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[1] The Department of Afro-American Studies course catalogue notes that this course "provides a survey of selected major factors which helped create the African-American experience: the cultures of pre-colonial Africa, the slave experience in the Americas, life in post-rural and urban North America, etc."

[2] Ernest Everett Just (1883-1941), one of the most brilliant scientists of his era, was born in South Carolina, was graduated *magna cum laude* from Dartmouth College, received the Ph.D. in Experimental Embryology from the University of Chicago and chaired Howard University's Biology and Zoology Department from 1910 until his death. An NAACP Spingarn Medalist, Dr. Just was a leading figure in cell biology (particularly fertilization of marine mammal cells) and a central participant for a generation in internationally recognized biological research conducted at Woods Hole, Massachusetts. He researched, lived and taught in Germany, Italy and France and was a founder of the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, among many other achievements. See Kenneth R. Manning, *Black Apollo of Science: The Life of Ernest Everett Just* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[3] BA (Speech Communications and Theater), Tennessee State University, 1987; JD, The Ohio State University, 1990; MA (African and African American Studies), The Ohio State University, 1992; Ph.D., (African American Studies), Temple University, 1998: Dissertation: "The African-Centered Philosophy of History in the Contemporary Era (1954-Present): Its Antecedents and Methodological Implications for the African Contribution to World History."

[4] The Department of Afro American Studies is located on the 3rd floor of Founder's Library. The main office for the Department is Room 311. The Department's Administrative Assistant is Ms. Donald'a Gaddy (dgaddy@howard.edu).

[5] We will use Blackboard for class-related communication; I use Twitter and my personal website to share observations across a range of topics, many of which are related to the discipline of Africana Studies. Substantive questions related to class readings and/or discussions are encouraged. Occasionally, I will notify you of events, class assignments, etc. through Twitter: I will not, however, use the medium to respond to student class issues (e.g. grades, late arrival, policies outlined in syllabus, office hours, etc.). I also do not generally follow students on Twitter as a practice of respect for your personal space and in order to generally maintain a more manageable student/faculty relationship.

This course introduces students to the concepts and methods of the academic discipline of Africana Studies. Using a long-view genealogical approach, the course applies these disciplinary Africana Studies concepts and methods to the study of select narratives, data and/or texts derived from and/or related to the African world experience, with particular emphasis on the period of late modernity [1500-Present] [6].

This course introduces and teaches students to apply major concepts and methods of the stand-alone academic field, discipline and meta-discipline of Africana Studies to select narratives, data and/or texts derived from and/or related to the African world experience.

General Course Objectives:

Students successfully completing this course[7] will be able to:

- Identify and discuss the broad contours and some key specifics of the African intellectual tradition and genealogy, from antiquity to the present;
- Utilize vocabulary, comparative and evaluative techniques explicitly associated with the academic field, discipline and meta-discipline of Africana Studies to analyze texts, practices and narratives;
- Relate a working knowledge of the African historical experience as a discrete element of world history, and demonstrate greater acquaintance with and interpretive acuity for institutions and forces shaping Africana life in the period of late modernity [1800 to the present], for the African experience in Latin, Caribbean, and North America and Africa in general and the United States in particular; and
- Negate the condition of aliteracy through the deliberate and mandatory practice of the act of script-based reading in tandem with other cultural, technological and social literacies[8].

Interdisciplinary Course Objectives

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

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[6] As a course offering developed as part of the College of Arts and Sciences Interdisciplinary Research Course Cluster, this course's discussions, assignments, and assessments will participate in physical and cyber co-curricular "Learning Communities" in order to channel the work done in these communities into their bi-weekly essays and select Mbongi forms.

[7] Howard University is committed to providing an educational environment that is accessible to all students. In accordance with this commitment, students in need of accommodations due to a disability should contact the Office of the Dean for Special Student Services for verification and determination of reasonable accommodations as soon as possible after admission to the University, or at the beginning of each academic semester. The Dean of the Office for Special Students Services may be reached at 202.238.2420. (Revised, December 1, 2006).

[8] The challenge of Aliteracy may be the single most nettlesome issue facing education in general (and at HBCUs in particular). See Greg Carr, "Hip Hop(e): Literacy, Cultural Texts and the Politics of Student Knowledge in the Public School," School District of Philadelphia Leadership Convocation, August 24, 1999.

- Describe and use basic academic vocabulary, concepts and methods (skills) associated with the academic field, discipline and meta-discipline of Africana Studies;
- Apply basic academic vocabulary, concepts and methods (skills) associated with other academic fields, including (but not limited to): History, Literature, Art History and Physics and Mathematics in an interdisciplinary fashion;
- Demonstrate a basic understanding of conceptual approaches common to clusters of academic fields.

Research Skills Course Objectives

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

- Describe and apply basic steps in completing a research paper in the social sciences or humanities;

- Identify the steps in creating a research proposal and final research project requiring the demonstration of applied skills in the field and discipline of Africana Studies and at least one other academic field/discipline.

Evaluation System[9]:

Bi-Weekly Written Response Essays [5]: 20%[10]

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[9] Please refer to your *H-Book* and the *Student Reference Manual and Directory of Classes* for the official university policy regarding the "Academic Code of Conduct." As outlined in this Code, students enrolled at Howard University may be disciplined for the academic infractions of "academic cheating" and "plagiarism." "Plagiarism"' is defined as:

"any intentional act(s) of dishonesty in the fulfillment of academic course or program requirements. This office shall include (but is not limited to) utilization of the assistance of any additional individual(s), organization, document or other aid not specifically and expressly authorized by the instructor or department involved. (Note: this infraction assumes that with the exception of authorized group assignments or group take-home assignments, all course or program assignments shall be completed by an individual student only without any consultation or collaboration with any other individual student only without any consultation or collaboration with any other individual, organization or aid)."

According to the Code, to "Plagiarize" is "to take and pass off intentionally as one's own the ideas, writings, etc. of another without attribution (without acknowledging the author)."

[10] Writing is an essential tool for thinking and communicating in virtually every profession. Therefore, in this course you are expected to produce writing that is not only thoughtful and accurate, but also organized, clear, and consistent with the rules of Standard English. If your writing does not meet these standards, you may have points deducted from your essays or be asked to revise them. For assistance with your writing, go to the student section of the Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) website http://www.cetla.howard.edu/wac/students.aspx .

As Howard's Department of Afro-American Studies continues to review and restructure its curriculum to link courses to the highest national and international standards in the field and discipline of Africana Studies, a major objective of this semester's work is to generate draft elements of Introduction to Africana Studies materials that can be used in multiple introductory-level courses. Each of you will serve as Editorial Assistants by providing regular feedback on both written pages of draft text and in-class commentary related to the project.

Every two weeks, you will be required to submit [typed, double-spaced] a three-page response essay linked to this work. This bi-weekly essay will be submitted via Blackboard. The topic of each bi-weekly essay is the framing question for the previous two week period. ***I will post a specific set of questions related to that broad framing question on the Friday of week two of our discussion of the broad framing question. You are to provide specific answers to these specific questions*****.**

Your essay will follow the format of a mini-research paper. Accordingly, it will rely on your notes taken from the previous two week's class readings, the draft text copy and classroom discussions that integrate the two. **You are required to include no fewer than two (2) citations from your reading assignments and no fewer than two (2) citations from the draft text copy and/or discussions in class.**

Each review will include the following categories:

- **Abstract [With Clearly Worded Thesis Statement of 1-2 sentences]:** Your abstract should be a one paragraph answer to the framing question for the period. It should tell the reader what to expect from the rest of the paper. For example: Framing question one asks "How do we undertake the study of the African experience?" The first paragraph of your essay should give your clearly worded scholarly opinion on how to answer that question based on your notes from the readings and class discussions. You will spend the rest of the essay persuading the reader of the logic of your interpretation based on the evidence you have found in your textbooks and class notes to support what you have said in this first paragraph. [Many researchers refer to this paragraph as the "abstract" and also use it to summarize their paper. This requires them to compose it last, as a summary of their longer paper].
- **Critical Review of Scholarship:** You should indicate in several paragraphs what specific sources you will be referring to in your essay, and for what specific points. You will, of course, be referring to the class textbooks and draft text, but should also refer to sources introduced in class. This is also the section of the paper where you should indicate how well your textbooks help you to answer the bi-weekly framing question. This last point is critical: This section will help us understand

the strengths and weaknesses of each textbook, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the developing draft text. If you are unsure as to complete bibliographical information about sources brought up in class, please ask me. I will also demonstrate proper citation style in class.

- **Discussion:** This section will be the longest part of your essay. In it, you will answer the framing question of the period in greater detail, using the textbooks, draft text and class discussions/sources to support your points.
- **Further Questions:** Conclude your paper by indicating additional questions you have that arise from your attempt to answer the bi-weekly framing questions.

Class Intellectual Work [Mbongi] Forms [20]: 20%

The last page of this syllabus is a blank copy of our Spring 2020 "Intellectual Work" form. You are expected to make enough copies to enable you to hand in a completed form at the conclusion of 20 classes of your choice. These forms should be completed *while you are taking notes and otherwise participating in class*. They are designed to help us generate a space where every person's voice joins a collective discussion of the day's topic.

The word "Mbongi" is taken from the Bantu-Kongo and literally means "house without rooms," i.e. a house within which privacy has no room. The mbongi [lemba, lusanga, kioto, boko] is a convened space where public investigation and discussion of concerns is held: it is, in less complex words, a "think tank.[11]" Because you are valued as a member of the Howard University Mbongi in general and this one in particular, you are expected to participate, actively, daily.

Your intellectual work at Howard should aspire to three simple "ground rules": 1. Be Present. 2. Read and Write (listen and inscribe). If you follow rules 1 and 2, you can aspire to 3. "Speak to Mekhet." See the "Syllabus Glossary" at the end of this document for further explanation of these ground rules.

Midterm: 30%
Final: 30%

The mid-term and final will consist of short-answer, objective, true/false and fill-in-the-blank items designed to assess mastery of factual and conceptual material.

The final examination for this course will be administered on *Thursday, April 30, from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m.* in the Just Hall Auditorium.

[11] Kimbwandende Kia Bunseki Fu-Kiau, *African Cosmology of the Bantu-Kongo* (New York: Athelia Henrietta Press, 2001), pp. 58-61. Please see the syllabus glossary for an extended consideration of the concept of Mbongi and related terms.

Course Description, Learning Process and Assignment Schedule:

This course introduces you to the field and discipline of Africana Studies. You will learn the general intellectual genealogy of the discipline, and be introduced to terms, tools and techniques for thinking about the Africana experience through time and space. This is not an "Introduction to African-American History" course, although it follows a narrative progression to examine the Africana experience over time and space. This distinction poses a challenge to students (and others) who find it difficult to imagine that a self-sustaining, critical, reflective and, ultimately, disciplinary space can exist in the academy for the examination of African life across the broadest arcs of time and space. Consequently, the conflation of Africana Studies with "African-American History," "Diaspora Studies," "Black Diaspora" or other similarly area or traditionally inter or multi-disciplinary academic projects is understandable.

The African experience begins with the origin of humanity and spans the entirety of that history. The African experience in the U.S. is a tiny fraction of that larger historical arc, one that has nevertheless and unfortunately framed the study of Africana in general. In seeking to move beyond this debilitating circumstance, we will build our knowledge base incrementally, beginning with a series of discussions on interpreting evidence through disciplinary lenses. Each week, the assigned texts[12] will provide evidentiary anchors and interpretive frames for our discussions.

No "Introduction to Africana Studies" textbook has yet been written to sustain a disciplinary focus as it relates to the African historical experience[13]. Most "African-American" history textbooks follow the same normative and genealogical structure, prompted by the narrative form of Western history textbooks: a brief rehearsal of "pre-slavery" Africa, a long focus on slavery as a part of the development of the

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[12] In addition to the original materials to be posted on Blackboard, texts for this class are: Ngugi wa Thiongo, *Something Torn and New: An African Renaissance* (New York: Basic Books, 2009); Ayi Kwei Armah, *The Eloquence of the Scribes: A Memoir on the Sources and Resources of African Literature* (Popenguine, Senegal: Per Ankh, 2006); Wole Soyinka, *Of Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Movements in America* (New York: Routledge, 1997); and Arwin D. Smallwood, *The Atlas of African-American History and Politics: From the Slave Trade to Modern Times* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1998). In this syllabus, the two texts that primarily anchor the narrative benchmarks of the course will be referred to as follows: C.Rob. = Cedric Robinson; and Atlas = Smallwood. Other materials, either handed out in class or placed on reserve, will also be used. While readings will generally conform to the syllabus schedule, I reserve the right to refer to any of the texts, at any time. Accordingly, bring all texts to class with you.

[13] Part of our work at Howard has been to link the long-view intellectual genealogy of Africana Studies as an academic discipline to the development of the Department of Afro-American Studies at Howard. With your assistance as apprentice scholars applying your critical intelligence and lived experience to the study of Africana, we continue to take steps in ensuing phases of our work by generating the core of texts explaining the general normative theory, contours, vocabulary and techniques of the field as they relate both to the study of the African experience across time and space and to the study of phenomena generally. You have been assigned two such texts in the first weeks of this semester (see reading assignments for weeks 2 and 3). Another helpful source is Greg Carr, "Translation, Recovery and 'Ethnic' Archives of Africana: Inscribing Meaning Beyond Otherness," *PMLA Journal* Vol 127, No. 2 (March, 2012): 360-364.

modern Western world system, and a basic rehearsal of the struggle for Africana elites to assimilate into or otherwise negotiate existence in that World System.

In order to negotiate the challenges poised by such texts and reconcile them to Africana Studies normative theory, six "focus questions," introduced below, will serve as prompts to guide our conversations through December. *The first five of these questions are also the prompt questions for your five bi-weekly review essays.* For each Framing Question, we will search for answers to basic questions from six *Conceptual Categories*. The questions from these six categories are applicable to all human societies: Asking them of African people, sadly, remains a fairly radical proposition in the academy and is the most compelling reason to undertake the work of Disciplinary Africana Studies.

Africana Studies and The Six Conceptual Categories: A System for Studying African People, Places and Culture

We will use the following six conceptual categories to guide our daily discussion of the ways that humans in general and Africans in particular have used their abilities and memories to create living spaces. Each category is always present in human interaction: being able to distinguish between them as they relate to the African experience in recent human history (1500-present) will aid immeasurably in helping us understand the difference between Africana Studies and the simple study of materials involving Africana. At or near the beginning of most class periods, I will put the categories on the board, in grid fashion.

All human societies share some basic elements. As African people have survived the experiences of forced migrations, enslavement, colonialism and the attendant race-based world system these events created, they have shaped the lessons they have learned to the unique circumstances of the societies they have found themselves in.

When studying Africans and/or subjects involving Africana in any fashion, placing the texts being studied into the following six conceptual categories and attempting to answer the questions for each category will allow you to see the uniqueness of the African experience and how Africans have both contributed to the societies they find themselves in and preserved unique and ever-evolving ways of life. The six conceptual categories and the questions they raise are[14]:

- **Social Structures:** What is/are the social structures in place for the people discussed? In other words, what social structure do the people being discussed live under at the time we are studying? Examples from this category include: Capitalism, Plantation, Manufacturing or Extraction-Based Enslavement, Debt

[14] For a general discussion of the development of these categories, see Greg E. Carr, "Teaching and Studying The African(a) Experience: Definitions and Categories," in Greg Carr, Ed., *Lessons in Africana Studies.* (Philadelphia: Songhai Press and the School District of Philadelphia, 2005), pp. 12-20.

Peonage, Direct or Indirect-Rule Colonialism, Rural or Urban Socio-Economic Environments, Information, Knowledge or Service-Based Economies, etc.

- **Governance:** How did the Africans being studied organize themselves during this period and under the particular social structure they find themselves in and/or subject to? Examples from this category include: family-based social groupings, village-based systems, state-based systems, empires, extended family networks (involving "experiential kin"), "maroon" socio-political-cultural networks (e.g. "Black Public Spheres" or "Convened Black Spaces"), etc.
- **Ways of Knowing:** What ways/views/senses (e.g. ideas about the nature, purpose, function and process of existence and being) did Africans develop to explain the worlds they lived in during the period being studied, and how did they use those ways to address fundamental issues of living during this period? Examples from this category include: Classical African spiritual/knowledge systems (e.g. Nile Valley); Medieval African spiritual/knowledge systems (e.g. Yoruba, Akan, Zulu, Mande, Dinka, Bambara, Ki-Kongo, etc.), Contemporary (1500-present) Abrahamic African spiritual traditions (e.g. Vodun, Santeria, Lukumi, Macumba, Candomble, Obeah, Shango/Shouter/Spiritual Baptist, Holiness, Pentecostal, Afro-Baptist) and/or knowledge traditions (e.g. voodoo, hoodoo, conjure, rootwork, laying-on-hands, et. al.), etc.
- **Science and Technology:** What types of devices were developed to shape nature and human relationships with animals and with each other during this period and how did they affect Africans and others? Examples from this category include: Architectural Inventions, Animal Husbandry, Agricultural/Crop Development Technology (e.g. rice, cotton, tobacco, etc.); Manufacturing Technology, etc.
- **Movement and Memory:** How did/do Africans remember this experience? Examples from this category include: "King Buzzard" stories explaining initial capture for enslavement; "Folk" narratives explaining intra and inter-race relations; Rituals of memory-preserving/convening Maroon spaces (e.g. family reunions, Emancipation Day, Juneenth, Church and University "Homecoming" rituals,), etc.; and
- **Cultural Meaning-Making:** What specific art, dance and/or inscriptions (literature/orature), otherwise characterizable as "texts and practices" did Africans create during this period? Examples from this category involve the broad field of sacred/secular cultural practices among African people and include: Various musical traditions (e.g. Soca, Calypso, Blues, Ska, Reggae, Jazz, Rhythm and Blues, Hip Hop, Pan, Rumba, Bomba, Afro-Beat, et. al.), material art traditions (e.g. sculpture, painting, architectural design, etc.), dance traditions (e.g. Tango, B-Boying and Girling, Line Dancing, Ring Shout, et. al.), etc.

These daily guiding questions are represented in the following chart, which we will use in a more-or-less regular fashion:

Social Structure(s)	Governance	Ways of Knowing	Science and Technology	Movement and Memory	Cultural Meaning-Making
What is/are the social structure(s) in place for the people discussed?	How did the Africans organize themselves during this period?	What kinds of systems did African peoples develop to explain their existence and how did they use those systems to address fundamental issues of living?	What types of devices were developed to shape nature and human relationships with animals and each other during this period and how did it affect Africans and others?	How did/do Africans remember this experience?	What specific music, art, dance and/or literature/orature did Africans create during this period?

It should also be noted that phenomena may fit in more than one category. For example: The use of the banjo, an African musical instrument adapted by African musicians for their use the United States may fit under "science and technology," while the specific musical traditions associated with the use of this instrument may fit under "cultural meaning-making." Similarly, the "U.S. Civil Rights/Black Power Movement" of the 1940s-70s and the Independence Movements of the Caribbean and Africa during the same period have elements of both "Social Structure" (the systems Africans opposed) and "Governance" (the internally-organized systems Africans used to survive and ultimately oppose those systems).

Applying the Questions from the Six Conceptual Categories to the Framing Questions

With the exception of Framing Question One (which describes the process by which Africana Studies creates its own disciplinary approaches to studying the African experience, including both the Conceptual Categories and the other five Framing Questions), each Framing Question guides students through the application of the Conceptual Category questions to specific times and place in the experiences of African people. The Framing Questions are as follow:

One: How do we undertake the study of African experiences?

This question takes us from the basic concepts informing Africana Studies to a discussion of the cyclical, spiral nature of the human experience in general and African experience in particular. The African experience in the "modern world system" comprises less than five percent of the time since the beginning of the last global interglacial period (marking the origin of recorded human history) and less than one fifth of a percent of the time since the appearance of the species. Well over half of human development took place exclusively in Africa. Studying Africana, therefore, requires long-view historical markers derived from intra and extra African conceptual tools. The framing and focus questions that shape the field of Africana Studies and this introductory course emerge from this central requirement. This question presumes that Africans, like all humans, move between "multiple sites of identity," and that any attempt to understand some of the similarities and differences

between Africans globally must be mindful of the unifying, as well as the distinguishing characteristics of this reality as it relates to generating normative theory around the study of Africana.

Two: How did Africans preserve and affirm their way of life and use their identities as a means to resist enslavement?

As we discuss basic elements of the Africana historical experience, the recent enslavement and resistance of African people will be examined in the context of extensions of Africana cultural practices and texts in hostile, anti-"black" contexts, as well as contributions to shaping these initially anti-black contemporary sites of African "citizenship" (e.g. "nation-states" of Africa, North, Central and South America, Europe, Asia, etc.). Two correlate questions emerging from this initial prompt to inform basic Africana Studies discourse are—and continue to be—"who are Africans to each other?" and "who are Africans to non-Africans?"

Three: What are some of the similarities and differences in practices of self-determination of Africans in the U.S. and their counterparts throughout the hemisphere?

By the late 18^{th}- early19^{th} century, Africans in the United States had significantly adapted their techniques of resistance to the particular contexts of the emerging U.S. nation-state, even as Africans elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere had done the same in their respective countries/colonies. Instances of maroonage, quilombismo, or other attempts to "convene black spaces" in which to self- determine began to follow the racial, class, gender and cultural particularities of the Europeanizing impulses.

Four: How did Africans begin to conceptualize unity in thought and action beyond national boundaries in the face of European and American imperialism?

By the mid 19^{th} century, Europeans and those of their former colonies controlled by Whites (e.g. the U.S., Brazil, et. al.) began to systematically dispossess Africans of natural resources (African colonialism) and reconfigure African labor from chattel slavery to debt peonage (Western Hemisphere) in a world system. Improved international communications networks, or what some scholars have called "The Practice of Diaspora," enabled Africans to begin to see themselves as part of an oppositional African world, even as they struggled against local social, economic, political and cultural racial oppressions in their perspective sites of resistance.

Five: How did Africans make sense of and participate in international developments?

The "long twentieth century" gave rise to both "the American Century" (1945-2001) and the emergence of anti-imperialism as powerful anti-western movements. African struggles for civil and human rights in the United States affected and were affected by

U.S. foreign policy in the wake of these developments, which also saw the expression of Pan-Africanism.

Six: What organizations, ideologies and leaders did Africans create and engage in the 20th century to promote and advance their liberation?

The Civil Rights/Black Power movement and the "post-Civil Rights" emergence of globalization, transnational networks and the impending end of the nation-state were attended by the emergence of self-conscious African attempts to forge lasting, trans-African alliances. In recent years, the #BlackLivesMatter movement and related social change formations have begun to join this arc of attempts to transcend state boundaries in search of political allies.

Schedule of Class Discussions

When in class, observe the *Ground Rules of Intellectual Work* [included in the Syllabus Glossary]. We are focusing on your retention of factual information as well as measuring how well you are developing your capacity to identify and create critical thinking skills from the material covered, in the larger disciplinary context of Africana Studies. Accordingly, I expect you to read, interpret, critique and be prepared to discuss all assigned class materials on the assigned day and in the order denoted below.

I believe that the world is a classroom, and also that we should enter our learning mbongi every morning by centering ourselves in a learning experience. Accordingly, I will play music each morning as our first classroom act. This music will reflect the subject of the day, the range of music produced by Africans in both historical and contemporary contexts, and broad themes of the hopes, dreams, struggles and declarations of the Black Radical Tradition.

Week 1 [1-14/16]: Introduction, Syllabus Review and Course Overview

Week 2 [1-21/23]: First Framing Question: "How do we undertake the study of African experiences?"

"Towards an Intellectual History of Africana Studies: Genealogy and Normative Theory," in Nathaniel Norment, Jr., Ed., The African American Studies Reader (2nd Ed). Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press (2007), 438-453.

Ngugi, Something Torn and New, Chapters 1 and 2

Week 3 [1-28/30]:

Syllabus and first readings quiz

Ngugi, Something Torn and New, Chapters 3 and 4

Carr, Greg E., "What Black Studies is Not: Moving From Crisis to Liberation in Africana Intellectual Work," *Socialism and Democracy*, Vol. 25, No. 1. (March 2011): 178-191.

Week 4 [2-4/6]: Second Framing Question: "How did Africans preserve and affirm their way of life and use their identities as a means to resist enslavement?"

The Eloquence of the Scribes, Chapters 9-16 [Chapters 1-8 optional]
Atlas, Units 1-2
The Coming, pp. 9-123

First Reading Response Paper Due on Blackboard by 11:59 p.m. Friday, February 7 [and every other Friday thereafter, excluding mid-term assessment week and Spring Break]. Please refer to Blackboard for the draft sections of the developing textbook materials described supra.

Week 5 [2-11/13]:

Atlas, Units 3-5; C.Rob., Ch. 1
The Coming, pp. 127-226

Week 6 [2-18/20]: Third Framing Question: What are some of the similarities and differences in the practices of self-determination of Africans in the U.S. and their counterparts throughout the hemisphere?

C.Rob., Ch. 2; Atlas, Units 3-4

Week 7 [2-25/27]:

C.Rob., Ch. 3; Atlas, Units 4-5

Week 8 [3-3/5]:

Midterm Assessment: Thursday, March 5 [Unless Otherwise Notified in Class]

Week 9 [3-10/12]: Fourth Framing Question: How did Africans begin to conceptualize unity in thought and action beyond national boundaries in the face of European and American imperialism?

C.Rob. Ch. 4; Atlas, Units 4-5
Soyinka, Part I

Spring Break [March 14-22]

Week 10 [3-24/26]:

C.Rob., Ch. 5; Atlas, Units 6-7

Week 11 [3-31/2]: Fifth Framing Question: How did Africans make sense of and participate in international developments?

Soyinka, Part II
Atlas, Unit 8

Week 12 [4-7/9]:

Atlas, Unit 9
Armah, Chapters 17-24.

Week 13 [4-14/16]: Sixth Framing Question: What organizations, ideologies and leaders did Africans create and engage in the 20th century to promote and advance their liberation?

C.Rob, Ch. 6; Atlas, Unit 9

Week 14 [21/23]:

Atlas, Unit 10-11
Semester Overview and Review

Week 15 [4-28/30]:
Semester Overview and Review, Cont'd

Final Examination

Thursday, April 30, 8:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., Just Hall Auditorium

Appendix: Syllabus Glossary[15]

African: While Africa is the continent of origin for the human species, "African" is used generally to refer to humans who trace their biological and cultural origin to Africa as a point of origin since the beginning of recorded human memory. The term also refers to those who, regardless of other geographical and/or biological points of physical origin, maintain identifiable cultural, political and racial connections to Africa as the site of origin for their combined biological and cultural genealogy[16]. The term "African" should be distinguished from "black."

Africana Studies: The study of Africa when and wherever you find it, utilizing normative theory generated from the long-view genealogy and constellation of Africana cultural meaning-making texts and practices[17] to practice acts of translation and recovery[18].

Aliterate (adj)/Aliteracy (n): Of a person or group; unwilling to read, although able to do so; disinclined to read. Disinclination to read, despite having the ability to do so[19].

Black: A social categorical description of humans associated by non-Africans with Africa, either phenotypically, culturally or both. Also, in ways particular to non

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[15] Because Africana Studies often bears the (understandable) burden of having to explain the intellectual ground on which it stands, I have included this glossary so you can have a ready shorthand reference to some of the terms we will use more frequently over the course of the semester. It is not, however, a substitute for the ongoing discussion of these and other terms. I also encourage you to think about, play with and challenge the assumptions behind these terms, not only as they relate to Africana Studies, but as they relate to all academic and extra-academic areas of knowledge production.

[16] Texts representing the range of theoretical perspectives on this stipulated definition of "African" include: V.Y. Mudimbe, T*he Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988); *Cedric Robinson, Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); Molefi Asante, *An Afrocentric Manifesto: Towards an African Renaissance* (New York: Polity Press, 2007) and James Merriwether, *Proudly We Can Be Africans: Black Americans and Africa, 1935-1961* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), among many others.

[17] Nathaniel Norment Jr., Ed., *The African-American Studies Reader (2nd Edition)* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2007), especially Greg E. Carr, "Towards an Intellectual History of Africana Studies: Genealogy and Normative Theory," pp. 438-452. See also Greg E. Carr, "What Black Studies is Not: Moving From Crisis to Liberation in Africana Intellectual Work," *Socialism and Democracy*, 25: 1 (June, 2011), 178-191

[18] This definition constitutes the only one within a broader arc of perspectives on the field of Africana Studies to declare disciplinarity as the primary and legitimizing methodological objective of the field. Cf., *inter alia*, Martha Biondi, *The Black Revolution on Campus* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

[19] s.v. The Oxford English Dictionary

African-oriented societies, used to define "whiteness" and "blackness" as poles on a continuum of social, cultural and/or economic value and/or privilege[20].

Black Radical Tradition: The pre-existing constellation of African intellectual work, shaped by millennia of migration, adaptation and improvisation, that emerged in modern relations between European and African peoples[21].

Conceptual Categories: The six categories used in this course (and, by extension, in this disciplinary Africana Studies project) to facilitate the consideration of human activity in general and by African people in particular in the context of Western Modernity[22].

Cultural Practice: Ritual human behavior that can be read by a set of general rules[23]

Cultural Text: Things produced by humans that can be read by a set of general rules[24]

Dance of Inspiration: The active process of engaging memory as the venue of inspiration. This process, which results in what Ayi Kwei Armah has called "the

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[20] Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); and *Roots Too: White Ethnic Revival in Post Civil Rights America.* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009); George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006); and *Marimba Ani, Yurugu: An African-Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behavior* (Trenton: Africa World Press, 1994). On the creation and uses of "blackness," see Nikhil Pal Singh, *Black is a Country* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[21] See, *inter alia*, Greg Carr, ""What Black Studies is Not: Moving From Crisis to Liberation in Africana Intellectual Work," *Socialism and Democracy*, Vol. 25, No. 1. (March 2011): 178; Cedric J. Robinson, Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press (1983), p. 3. Robinson goes on to note that:

> "the obscuring of the Black radical tradition is seated in the West's suppression of Europe's previous knowledge of the African (and its own) past. The denial of history to African peoples took time—several hundreds of years—beginning with the emergence of Western Europeans from the shadow of Muslim domination and paternalism. It was also a process that was to transport the image of Africa across separate planes of dehumanization latticed by the emerging modalities of Western culture." (3)

[22] These categories were developed by Dr. Carr as a consequence of his work with a team of scholars, teachers, administrators and students from the School District of Philadelphia and first appeared as part of "Lessons in Africana Studies," a curriculum framework and module in support of the mandatory African- American history course required for all Philadelphia public high school students. The categories were further refined by student curriculum writers during a Spring 2012 course at Howard University entitled "Teaching African American Studies" [AFRO 115, Sec. 01]

[23] Yvonne Daniel, *Dancing Wisdom: Embodied Knowledge in Haitian Vodou, Cuban Yoruba and Bahian Condomble (C*hampaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005); Robert Farris Thompson, *African Art in Motion: Icon and Art* (Los Angeles: UCLA Press, 1974), pp. 1-47.

[24] Thompson, 1-47.

embrace of memory as resource," is triggered by human initiative that is fed, in turn, by a search in "the vast storehouse of information constituted by the accumulated knowledge and values of all the ancestors who have ever thought, dreamed, aspired, acted, achieved, and died, leaving traces of their passage here."

Discipline: Process for ordering inquiry about a subject as a distinct dimension of social reality. Disciplines are usually described by the subject they study, such as biology (the body), psychology (the mind), history (the past) or sociology (human society). "Area" studies, such as Women's Studies, Whiteness Studies, African Studies or Africana Studies, are also described by subject, but not usually called disciplines because they are not generally said to possess normative rules for defining (vocabulary), comparing (research methodology) or evaluating new knowledge produced about their subjects. Accordingly, scholars in Area Studies fields usually do not attempt to approach their field in a disciplinary fashion. Because Africana Studies emerged as a bureaucratic university response to a growing social movement, suggestion of rules for defining, comparing and evaluating knowledge in the field are often ignored or rejected by scholars who nevertheless claim to "do" Africana Studies but do not see the need to to master the intellectual genealogy of the field or to undertake deliberate attempts to generate language and norms for the discipline.

Talking about fields as academic disciplines does not predate the rise of "Western" models of inquiry, grounded largely in the "physical sciences." While *"inter-disciplinarity"* (using information from several fields to inform study) and *"meta-disciplinarity"* (viewing the study of a subject as using categories which cross or have the potential to cross all academic fields/disciplines) is growing in popularity in the university, Africana Studies seeks disciplinary status in order to "convene academic black space" out of which to theorize about the nature and dynamics of the African modal experience as mediated through the cultural meaning-making (texts and practices) of African people[25].

Ground Rules for Intellectual Work[26]: (1) Be Present (vertically (time) and horizontally (space)); (2) Read (listen) and Write (inscribe); and (3) Speak to Mekhet [After] (producing enduring high quality intellectual work).

Being Present vertically and horizontally means bringing a long-view awareness of historical events and genealogies to the study of a subject, including the history of the subject. Being Present horizontally means cultivating an awareness of

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[25] Steve Fuller, *The Knowledge Book: Key Concepts in Philosophy, Science and Culture* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007), 19-23. On the rise of the Western University System, and the creation of modern "disciplines," see William Clark, *Academic Charisma and the Origins of the Research University* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). On the political nature of knowledge production in Africana Studies, see Fabio Rojas, From *Black Power to Black Studies: How a Radical Social Movement Became an Academic Discipline* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007).

[26] These principles were developed during my work with the "listening writers" of the Philadelphia Freedom Schools and first appeared in print in Greg E. Carr, "Africana Cultural Logics and Movement Building: A Brief Essay and Study Bibliography," Research Essay for Children's Defense Fund Advanced Service and Advocacy Workshop for HBCU Student Leaders, Clinton, TN (2003).

how contemporary events locally, regionally and globally may affect your study of the subject.

Reading and Writing (or listening and inscribing) means taking in information and concepts (reading or, in the Kemetic (Egyptian) language, "listening"), allowing you to ultimately demonstrate mastery of content (repetition) as well as to contribute your own creative intelligence (improvisation) to the ongoing production of knowledge and understanding. The process of repeating what has been heard and improvising out of it can be called "writing" or, more fully, "inscribing," and allows you in the discipline of Africana Studies to contribute to the ongoing project of generating normative grammar and vocabulary to the field.

Mekhet is a Kemetic (Egyptian) concept which translates in European American English (EAE) to "After" but shares a grammatical genealogy with the African-American English (AAE) infinitive "be.[27]" It is a description of the ultimate aspiration of all intellectual workers: to contribute (inscribe) something of lasting worth. Something that speaks, not only to the work that has gone one before (the past, or that which you are "after"), but to the past, present, and future. Your intellectual work should be so exceptional that others will comment, "s/he be brilliant" in your field.

Inscribing: Process of reducing ideas ("writing" or encoding) to representative symbol system that can be "read" (decoded) by others conversant in the requisite grammar and vocabulary. Inscription sites include the body, inanimate objects (e.g. statuary, architecture, paper, long-playing records, compact discs, digital video discs, etc.). Africans created the world's first inscription systems and continue to inscribe in remarkably diverse and creative ways[28].

Intellectual Genealogy: An intellectual genealogy is a deliberate accounting of the individual and social influences that produce a particular intellectual perspective on a subject. While most academics point to particular mentors, texts and/or "schools of thought" that influenced their research and teaching, intellectual genealogies which also include the cultural assumptions a human being brings to systematic study (scholarship) will correctly include the wider influence of other socializing factors (family, community, media, etc.) on intellectual work. Lack of awareness of the intellectual genealogy of a subject, scholar, field and/or discipline can lead to confusion about otherwise invisible normative assumptions guiding intellectual work[29].

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[27] On the grammatical usage of the infinitive "be" in AAE (as distinct from EAE) see Lisa J. Green, *African American English: A Linguistic Introduction* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 44-70.

[28] See Christine Mullen Kreamer, Mary Nooter Roberts, Elizabeth Harney, Allyson Purpura, Eds., *Inscribing Meaning: Writing and Graphic Systems in African Art* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, 2007).

[29] See Robert O. Collins, *The Sociology of Philosophies: A Global Theory of Intellectual Change (*Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998) and Jacob Carruthers, *Mdw Ntr (Divine Speech): A Historiographical Reflection of African Deep Thought from the Time of the Pharaohs to the Present* (London: Karnak House Press, 1995).

Mbongi: The Mbongi and its related cognate terms afford Africana Studies a working conceptual device to imagine collective academic intellectual work in the classroom learning space. As used traditionally and described by Ki-Kongo scholar F. Kia Bunseki Fu-Kiau, *mbongi* is both a physical and intellectual space, or "common shelter" which constitutes many traditional African functions: law and order, cultural education, maintenance of social and political life, conflict resolution, the council of elders, and more. Intellectual work within the mbongi seeks to extend and preserve that which allows the community (village, federation, etc.) to function properly. The mbongi serves this function by encompassing a space where everyone is allowed to speak, but at the same time being required to speak with authority and clarity. This space serving all of these important functions, necessitates its status as a "think tank" which develops the best ways of knowing and keeping the traditions which characterize the group and order thought. Privacy has no place in the mbongi, as the traditional Kongo dictum states, "What you think belongs to you, what you say belongs to the public."

Congnate terms that flesh out the broad contours of the mbongi function are: boko, yemba, lusanga and kioto. The mbongi serves a boko function by providing a place where problems are "broken" or "cut" (e.g. laid out to be considered and decided upon). The mbongi serves a yemba function by creating a shelter in order to cover and/or protect the discourse taking place therein. The mbongi provides a lusanga function by allowing its participants to mix, put together and or assemble ideas and experiences in a collective fashion. The mbongi provides a kioto function by generating a space in which its participants "inhale" (e.g. intake an experience that creates a healing property, both individually and collectively). [30]

Normative Theory: Generally, rules for governing the conduct of inquiry and the production of knowledge. These rules can come from any individual or group, depending on the power they hold to explain reality or, alternatively, to convince others that they do. Africana Studies' attempt to articulate normative theory is a direct challenge to the often invisible normative assumptions that inform the "traditional" academic disciplines[31].

Transnational[32]: Communities which connect economically, politically, socially and/or culturally across the boundaries of traditional nation-states. Increasingly in academic fields devoted to the study of Africana (such as "African Diaspora Studies").

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[30] For an extended consideration of mbongi, see Fu-Kiau, *Mbongi: An African Traditional Political Institution (A Eureka to the African Crisis)* (Atlanta: Afrikan Djeli Publishers, 2007), *passim*.

[31] Lucius T. Outlaw, Jr., *On Race and Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 134.

[32] See Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G, Kelley ,"Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (April 2000): 11-46; Anthony Bogues, "Teaching Radical Africana Political Thought and Intellectual History," *Radical History Review* (Special Issue on Transnational Black Studies), Issue 87 (Spring, 2003): 146-156; Michael A. Gomez, Ed., D*iasporic Africa: A Reader* (New York: New York University Press, 2006), pp. 1-24 and W.F. Santiago-Valles, "Producing Knowledge for Social Transformation: Precedents from the Diaspora for Twenty-first Century Research and Pedagogy," *The Black Scholar*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Summer, 2005): 50-60.

Anti-Aliteracy and Intellectual Work Pledge

Initial, sign and return to Dr. Carr [make a copy for yourself]:

I, _____,
pledge, to the best of my ability, to my classmates, my professor and to all who I am responsible for learning in this course, to:

Prepare for class by undertaking the deliberate and focused act of reading class materials _____;

Attend class and, while in class, be present _____;

Read and write (which includes bringing class materials and taking in-class notes) _____; and

Speak to Mekhet (which includes completing substantive Mbongi forms, in class, and submitting them after class) _____.

Introduction to Afro-American Studies I Spring 2020 Mbongi Form

Date: / / Name:_____ Class period assessment (1-10): _____ Dr. Carr's teaching effectiveness (1-10): _____ Your preparation level (1-10): _____

Summarize this class session topic, in one paragraph:

List one contemporary topic discussed today:

List, by region, major concepts, figures, events mentioned or discussed today:

Africa	United States	Caribbean	Latin America

Other (Indicate):

List two new things you thought about during today's intellectual work:

What could Dr. Carr have done better to assist your learning experience today?

What could you have done to have improve the learning experience today?

What can you do to erase aliteracy today?