

Syllabus

African American Studies

Course Overview

Throughout US history, African Americans have faced great adversity in the form of enslavement and institutional racism. They fought for their freedom and worked to right a broken system, but their struggle continues today. This course studies the treatment of enslaved Africans as they were brought to America, the prejudices African Americans have experienced, and their important role in the social, political, and economic development of the United States.

Course Goals

By the end of this course, you will be able to do the following:

- Identify and describe the ancient civilizations of Africa.
- Examine the trans-Atlantic slave trade, including the economic motives which brought it into existence and the experiences of the enslaved.
- Describe the culture of enslavement in different colonial regions.
- List the laws defining enslavement and racism in the North American colonies.
- Describe the role that African Americans have played in major events throughout American history.
- Explain why a call for emancipation followed the American Revolution.
- Describe the life and culture of enslaved African Americans and how it changed as time passed.
- Describe the position of free African Americans in the North and the South.
- Describe the operation of the Underground Railroad.
- Assess why the Southern states seceded from the Union in 1861.
- Summarize the political and social opposition to the Emancipation Proclamation.
- Describe Reconstruction and explain the political and economic events of the era.
- Examine the methods used to disenfranchise African American voters.
- Identify African American accomplishments in business, politics, and society.
- Identify the ways that the Harlem Renaissance explored the African American experience.
- Analyze and evaluate the impact of the major civil rights legislation and court decisions.

General Skills

To participate in this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Complete basic operations with word processing software, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs.
- Perform online research using various search engines and library databases.
- Some course readings may require a visit to the school library or public library.

For a complete list of general skills that are required for participation in online courses, refer to the Prerequisites section of the Plato Student Orientation document, found at the beginning of this course.

Credit Value

African American Studies is a 0.5-credit course.

Course Materials

- Notebook
- Computer with Internet connection and speakers or headphones
- Microsoft Word or equivalent

Course Pacing Guide

This course description and pacing guide is intended to help you keep on schedule with your work. Note that your course instructor may modify the schedule to meet the specific needs of your class.

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
1 day: 1	Syllabus and Plato Student Orientation <i>Review the Plato Student Orientation and Course Syllabus at the beginning of this course.</i>	Course Orientation
3 days: 2–4	The Journey Begins in Africa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify the ancient civilizations of Africa.</i> • <i>Describe the empires and cultures of ancient Ghana, Mali, and Songhai in West Africa.</i> • <i>Describe features of African systems of enslavement.</i> • <i>List ways African culture has influenced African American culture.</i> 	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
4 days: 5–8	<p>The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Examine the origins and economic motives behind the trans-Atlantic slave trade.</i> • <i>Describe the experiences of captive Africans in the Atlantic slave trade, specifically the dangers they faced.</i> • <i>Examine the experiences of enslaved Africans in the Americas, particularly the role they played in colonial economies and the seasoning process they endured.</i> • <i>Analyze the trading process of goods and human cargo along the routes of the triangular trade.</i> 	Lesson
5 days: 9–13	<p>Africans in Colonial America</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Trace the development of African enslavement in the European colonies as a labor and social system.</i> • <i>Describe the culture of enslavement in different colonial regions.</i> • <i>List methods of African resistance to enslavement.</i> • <i>Describe the impact of interracial relationships between Europeans and Africans.</i> • <i>Summarize the relationship between economic activity and geography in the colonies.</i> • <i>Describe how the labor system of indentured servitude gave way to slavery.</i> • <i>List laws defining enslavement and racism in the North American colonies.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 14–15	<p>Modern Interpretations of Enslavement at Colonial Williamsburg</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe the experiences of enslaved people in the colonial era.</i> • <i>Evaluate how African Americans today depict enslaved people.</i> 	Lab
5 days: 16–20	<p>African Americans and American Independence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe the role that African Americans played on both sides leading up to and during the American Revolution.</i> • <i>Explain the meaning the Declaration of Independence held for enslaved African Americans.</i> • <i>Explain why a call for emancipation followed the American Revolution.</i> • <i>Identify early African American intellectuals and their contributions.</i> • <i>Describe the process of emancipation in the Northern colonies and states.</i> • <i>Describe the political and social impact of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787 and the Constitution.</i> 	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
5 days: 21–25	<p>Slavery’s Changing Landscape</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe how the life and culture of enslaved African Americans changed with the ban on the slave trade and the invention of the cotton gin. • Identify and describe legislation that addressed the issue of slavery and western expansion, including the Missouri Compromise, the Wilmot Proviso, the Compromise of 1850, and the Kansas-Nebraska Act. • Identify and interpret new legislation that tightened or reinforced enslavement of African Americans, including the Fugitive Slave Law (1850) and the Dred Scott decision (1857). • Describe the position of free African Americans in the North and the South, including the role of black churches and other organizations in free African American communities. • Evaluate arguments for and against African colonization of free African Americans. 	Lesson
5 days: 26–30	<p>Resistance and the Abolition Movement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe methods used by enslaved people to adapt and survive. • Describe the operation of the Underground Railroad and its significance in American history. • Identify and summarize the major conspiracies and enslaved uprisings in the United States and Caribbean, including Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, the German Coast Uprising, Nat Turner’s Rebellion, the Seminole Wars, and the events surrounding the Amistad and the Creole. • Compare and evaluate the goals of antislavery organizations, including changes in strategy among abolitionists and antislavery groups. • Assess why Southern states seceded from the Union in 1861. 	Lesson
2 days: 31–32	<p>Voices from the WPA Slave Narratives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the enslavement experience using primary sources such as first-hand accounts. • Evaluate the challenges scholars face in studying the history of enslaved African Americans. 	Lab

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
5 days: 33–37	<p>African Americans in the Civil War</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>List reasons why African Americans volunteered to fight for the Union, and describe their experiences.</i> • <i>Interpret President Lincoln’s views on slavery and emancipation and how they influenced his actions.</i> • <i>Summarize the political and social opposition to the Emancipation Proclamation.</i> • <i>Explain the short-term and long-term effects of the Emancipation Proclamation.</i> • <i>Describe how African American soldiers were treated by both the Union and the Confederacy.</i> • <i>Assess the achievements of African American soldiers and sailors in the Civil War.</i> • <i>Describe the importance of African American spies to the Union war effort.</i> 	Lesson
5 days: 38–42	<p>The Lost Promise of Reconstruction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Define Reconstruction and explain the political and economic events of the era.</i> • <i>Describe how African Americans reunited with family, found housing and land, sought work, and set up schools.</i> • <i>Identify key African American politicians, and evaluate their successes and failures.</i> • <i>Identify and explain the Civil War Amendments and the Enforcement Acts.</i> • <i>List ways that the lives of African Americans changed politically and economically during Reconstruction.</i> • <i>Describe how the Freedman’s Bureau supported African Americans.</i> • <i>Explain how Southern lawmakers, the Ku Klux Klan, and other conservative forces disenfranchised African Americans.</i> • <i>Summarize the events that led to Reconstruction’s collapse and the Compromise of 1877.</i> 	Lesson
1 day: 43	<p>Midterm</p>	Assessment

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
5 days: 44–48	<p>No Longer Enslaved, Still Not Free</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Examine attitudes during the post-Reconstruction era that allowed racism to flourish.</i> • <i>Examine the methods used to disenfranchise African American voters and their effects on voting.</i> • <i>Analyze the impact of race riots and lynching on the African American community.</i> • <i>Describe the rise of Jim Crow segregation in the late 19th century.</i> • <i>Analyze the importance of African American churches in the post-Reconstruction era.</i> • <i>Identify key African American figures of the post-Reconstruction era.</i> • <i>Evaluate the reasons for African American migration both within the U.S. and overseas.</i> • <i>Describe the experience of African American soldiers in the late 19th century.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 49–50	<p>Segregated Parks Offered No Haven from Jim Crow</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify previously segregated recreational sites or activities.</i> • <i>Research a recreation location that was segregated.</i> • <i>Produce a historical marker for a state or national recreation site that was historically segregated.</i> 	Lab
5 days: 51–55	<p>Laboring for Civil Rights</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Relate the Progressive Movement to the Niagara Movement and the formation of the NAACP and the Urban League.</i> • <i>Describe the evolving importance of African American news publications.</i> • <i>Compare and contrast the philosophies of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois on African American empowerment.</i> • <i>Identify African American accomplishments in business, politics, and society.</i> • <i>Explain the idea of the Talented Tenth and the role of the African American upper class in black progress.</i> • <i>Describe the achievements of African American soldiers in World War I.</i> • <i>Explain how the rise of corporations, heavy industry, and mechanical farming affected African Americans in the late 1800s and early 1900s.</i> • <i>Identify the factors that contributed to racial violence in the U.S. during the early 20th century.</i> 	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
5 days: 56–60	<p>Black Nationalism and the Harlem Renaissance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trace the origins of Black Nationalism and Pan-Africanism as a response to the resurgence of the KKK and scientific racism. • Describe the efforts of Marcus Garvey and the UNIA to unite and appeal to African Americans. • Identify ways that the Harlem Renaissance explored the African American experience through performance and visual arts. • Identify the significance of African American athletes at home and abroad. 	Lesson
5 days: 61–65	<p>The Great Depression and the New Deal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contrast the struggles African Americans faced during the Great Depression with those of white Americans. • Analyze the shift in black political support from the Republican Party to the Democratic Party during the New Deal. • Describe the new political role of African American men and women during the Roosevelt administration. • Identify the gains of African Americans within the labor movement. • Identify and examine early racial discrimination challenges in the American court system. 	Lesson
5 days: 66–70	<p>Fighting Abroad and Fighting Back Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how the civil rights struggle in the U.S. benefited from the struggle against fascist policies abroad. • Name important issues faced by civil rights groups and leaders during World War II. • Describe how World War II led to increased economic opportunity and urban migration. • Explain how African Americans in the armed forces changed the public perception of their ability in World War II and Korea. • Analyze tactics of economic discrimination used against African Americans in the civilian world. • Illustrate the impact of the cultural contributions made by African Americans in the 1940s and 1950s. 	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
5 days: 71–75	<p>The March to Justice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Analyze and evaluate the impact of the major civil rights legislation and court decisions, including Brown v. Board of Education, the Civil Rights Act of 1957, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Voting Rights Act of 1965.</i> • <i>Identify the NAACP, CORE, SCLC, and SNCC, and describe their different goals and tactics.</i> • <i>Evaluate the results of Johnson’s Great Society.</i> • <i>List methods used by protestors to gain political and social victories during the civil rights movement.</i> • <i>Trace and explain the increase of militancy in some African American groups.</i> • <i>Identify the contributing factors to racial violence in American inner cities in the 1960s.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 76–77	<p>Two Men who Delivered the Civil Rights Message</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify the speaking styles and rhythms of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr.</i> • <i>Describe their persuasive arguments and strategies.</i> • <i>Evaluate their ability to persuade both their contemporary audiences and people today.</i> 	Lab
5 days: 78–82	<p>The March Continues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe the continued urbanization of African Americans.</i> • <i>Assess the impact of interracial diversity and integration on African Americans and the U.S.</i> • <i>Examine poverty and wealth among African Americans, including the impact of the Moynihan Report and the Family Assistance Plan.</i> • <i>Examine the current health issues of greatest concern to African Americans and other minority communities.</i> • <i>Assess the impact of police brutality and racial profiling.</i> • <i>Describe the causes and consequences of disproportionate rates of imprisonment among African Americans.</i> 	Lesson

Day	Activity/Objective	Type
4 days: 83–86	<p>Cultural Pride and Political Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Identify and describe the accomplishments of African American artists, writers, musicians, and actors.</i> • <i>Describe how African American history and culture became officially recognized by governments and schools.</i> • <i>Describe the role and significance of Shirley Chisholm and Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Coalition.</i> • <i>Assess the role of African American conservatives in the Republican Party after the civil rights era.</i> • <i>List reasons for overwhelming African American support of the Democratic Party after the civil rights era.</i> • <i>Assess the significance of Barack Obama as the first African American president.</i> 	Lesson
2 days: 87-88	<p>Hollywood’s Take on African American History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describe a major film depicting African American struggles and successes.</i> • <i>Write a critical essay that considers how African Americans are portrayed in film.</i> 	Lab
1 day: 89	Semester Review	
1 day: 90	Final Exam	Assessment