**Course Description and Core Objectives**

This course provides an introduction to African American history from the colonial period until the present, with a focus on the central roles that racist institutions, laws, and policies have had in shaping the development of the United States. Key topics include the origins and interconnections between slavery and racism in North America; the dilemmas that slavery posed in the revolutionary era and beyond; the political compromises contained within the Constitution and other policies that preserved racial oppression in a nation founded on notions of liberty and equality; and black Americans’ ongoing struggles for citizenship and human rights. As well as studying major events and nationally recognized black leaders such as Frederick Douglass, W. E. B. Du Bois, and Martin Luther King Jr., we will examine the experiences of ordinary black men and women and the ways they struggled against racism in their everyday lives. Through lectures, readings, and discussions, students will gain a sense of the complex and shifting nature of American racial ideologies, their relationship to political and economic developments, and their impact on all the nation’s people. In addition, students will learn core skills related to the study of history, such as identifying key points and arguments in assigned readings, analyzing historical documents and cultural texts, and expressing their ideas clearly and persuasively in their written work and oral expression.

This course satisfies Core Objectives 8 and 10 of the Silver Core Curriculum:

**CO8: Constitution.** Students will demonstrate familiarity with the origins, history, and essential elements of the Constitutions of the United States and Nevada, as well as the evolution of American institutions and ideals.

**CO10: Diversity and Equity.** Students will demonstrate an understanding of diversity through courses that focus on topics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, physical ability, language, and/or social class with an emphasis on the analysis of equity. Students will apply and
evaluate approaches or modes of inquiry used to analyze diversity and equity and the social barriers to these goals.

In addition, HIST 293 helps students to develop the skills described in Core Objective 1 (Effective Composition and Communication) and Core Objective 3 (Critical Analysis and Use of Information). These objectives are reinforced throughout the curriculum in other courses students take to fulfill core and major requirements. Through the assigned readings, essays, class discussions, and group activities, students will practice critical thinking and communication skills that can be applied in other academic and professional contexts. In their written work, students will adhere to ethical principles that govern scholarly inquiry, including the accurate representation of evidence, proper citation of sources, and respectful interactions with colleagues.

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Correlation to Core Objectives (COs)

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:
1. identify key events, ideas, laws, and policies that created and perpetuated systems of racial oppression in the United States from colonial times to the present (CO8, CO10)
2. summarize and analyze primary, secondary, and cultural sources and use them to answer questions about the past (CO3)
3. present ideas in a clear and persuasive manner both orally and in writing, in accordance with the ethical principles governing scholarly inquiry (CO1, CO3)
4. use relevant scholarship and historical evidence to analyze the experiences of African Americans and their struggles for equality (CO3, CO10)
5. read and interpret the United States and Nevada Constitutions with attention to the historical contexts that produced each document, the differences between them, and their legacies for African Americans (CO8, CO10)

You may notice that the abbreviation SLO followed by a series of numbers appears on some course materials. This simply means that the lecture, discussion, assignment, or other activity offers opportunities for students to practice skills related to the learning outcomes listed above (e.g., “SLO 1, 3” means the activity builds your knowledge of the history of racial oppression in the United States (SLO 1) and requires you to present ideas orally or in writing (SLO 3)).

Required Reading

Books to be purchased:
LeAlan Jones and Lloyd Newman with David Isay, Our America: Life and Death on the South Side of Chicago (New York: Scribner, 1997)

Additional readings posted on course WebCampus site:
Carolyn Garris, “Conservatives Should Lay Claim to King,” Human Events Online, 16 January 2006
Patricia J. Williams, “L’Etranger,” The Nation, 5 March 2007


Articles for Forum 1:


Articles for Forum 2:


Assessment

Students will receive grades according to how well they complete the following tasks:

- Participation in discussions and other class activities  20 percent
- Assignments (top four scores)
  Due in class on dates listed in the Weekly Schedule  20 percent
- Quizzes (top four scores)
  Held in class on dates listed in the Weekly Schedule  10 percent
- Response paper (2 pages) on Jones and Newman, Our America
  Due Thursday, February 12  10 percent
- Forum 1 preparation and participation
  Due Thursday, March 12  10 percent
- Forum 2 preparation and participation
  Due Tuesday, May 5  10 percent
- Analytical paper (5 pages) on Jones and Newman, Our America
  Due Tuesday, May 12  10 percent
- Final class review and discussion participation
  Held Tuesday, May 12, 8:00–10:00 am  10 percent

Class participation (SLOs 1, 2, 3)
This course will be taught in a lecture/discussion format. We will spend some time discussing the reading assignments in each class period. It is therefore very important that you complete these before the days they are assigned. Students who have not done the reading will find it hard to contribute to discussions, and this makes up a significant part of your grade.

I will post guidelines and questions to consider for each week’s material on the course WebCampus site to help you prepare for discussions. Students are also welcome to raise questions of their own regarding the reading assignments and lectures. I encourage you to look for connections or comparisons between past events and things that are happening in the present and to share any related knowledge you have acquired in other courses.

Absences from class can significantly affect your participation grade. See “Participating in Discussions” in the Course Mentor folder on WebCampus for information about how class participation will be graded and how to participate effectively.

Assignments and quizzes (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)
The assignments and quizzes are designed to encourage you to keep up with the reading and help you to prepare for class discussions and activities each week. In addition, the assignments provide opportunities to practice research and writing skills related to studying history. Developing these skills through short assignments will help you to do well on the longer writing assignments required later in the course.
Guidelines and questions to consider as you work through the readings will be posted on WebCampus before the start of each week. You should familiarize yourself with these before you begin the reading assigned for the week. You should also download or print out the assignments in the weeks when these are due so that you know what to focus on as you are reading. Assignments will be posted on WebCampus one week before they are due.

Assignments are due in class on the dates indicated in the Weekly Schedule below. (If you cannot make it to class, you may e-mail your assignment to me.) The assignments will be brief and should not take you too long to complete. Some assignments may be short essays or response papers designed to help you to develop your writing skills. Others may involve some research, such as finding a historical document or a contemporary news item related to one of the course topics. Each assignment will be graded out of 20 and scores will be averaged over the semester. Only the top four scores will be counted in your final grade.

Quizzes will be held on the dates indicated in the Weekly Schedule below. Each quiz will consist of five multiple-choice questions covering the readings and lectures for the week in which it is given. Although the quizzes will not be cumulative (i.e., they will only cover material assigned during that week), you may sometimes be asked to think back to things we looked at earlier in the semester and draw comparisons or make other connections to the current week’s material. This is another reason why regular attendance and paying close attention to lectures and discussions are essential. Quizzes will be graded out of 10 and scores will be averaged over the semester. Only the top four quiz scores will be counted in your final grade.

**Response paper and analytical paper (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)**
You will write two papers on *Our America* by LeAlan Jones and Lloyd Newman. The first will be a response paper summarizing the major themes and topics covered in the book and your reactions to it. The second will be a formal analysis of the book—a rewritten version of your response paper that reflects a more sophisticated understanding of the issues discussed in *Our America* in light of what you have learned about African American history during the semester. More detailed guidelines for writing these papers are posted in the Essays and Forums folder on WebCampus.

**Forums (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 5)**
Two forums will be held during the semester to give students an opportunity to research, discuss, and debate topics relating to African Americans’ experiences in the United States. For each forum, students will read several short articles presenting varying views on the forum topic and prepare a 1–2 page summary and analysis of the key arguments presented in one of the assigned articles, along with at least two questions to discuss with the class. We will spend the class period discussing and debating the ideas presented in the readings as well as questions raised by students. More detailed guidelines for the forums are posted in the Essays and Forums folder on WebCampus.

**Final class review and discussion (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 5)**
Instead of a final exam, the final class period will consist of a mixture of discussions and activities designed to assess what students have learned over the course of the semester. You may consult your books and notes during this class, so be sure to keep detailed, well organized records of everything we do in the course—i.e., take notes on the assigned readings, lectures, discussions, group activities, and videos played in class; keep copies of handouts, assignments, and essays; and file things in your course folder in a way that makes them easy to refer back to when needed.
Grading Criteria

Grading criteria for written work are set out below. Students should also read and follow the guidelines set out in “Advice for Writing Assignments and Essays” and “Common Problems in Student Essays” in the Course Mentor folder on WebCampus to ensure they meet the highest standard possible in their written work.

A– (90–94%), A (95–100%)
A is for work of exceptional quality. This grade is for essays that present a clear thesis supported by persuasive evidence and analysis, logically organized, and free from typing or grammatical errors. The A essay does more than just competently summarize material from the readings or lectures. It shows the student has thought things through on a deeper level and offers his or her own perspective on the topics under consideration.

B– (80–82%), B (83–86%), B+ (87–89%)
B denotes work that is above average in quality. It demonstrates that the student knows and understands the material covered in class, and that s/he is capable of synthesizing it into a competent essay. It is accurate, detailed, and well organized, with an introduction, a thesis, and a conclusion.

C– (70–72%), C (73–76%), C+ (77–79%)
C is given for work that is average. The student shows familiarity with the material and is mostly accurate, but the paper lacks detail or effective organization. The C essay might make general points but fail to support them with specific evidence, or it might be merely a collection of facts, with no coherent theme or thesis. You can pass the course with this kind of work, but you should aim higher.

D– (60–62%), D (63–66%), D+ (67–69%)
D is given for work that is inadequate. It omits important points, contains more than a few inaccuracies, and is badly organized. It suggests that the student has not been paying much attention to the course or is having problems understanding the material. If you receive a D grade for a writing assignment, please come and see me for help. I will do everything I can to assist students who want to work to improve their grades.

F (less than 60%)
F is for work that is not acceptable. It demonstrates that the student has no idea what the course material is about, suggesting a lack of interest or effort and possibly some absences from class. Students who do the reading and come to class regularly rarely receive an F. If you think you have been trying hard and you get an F on an assignment, I encourage you to come to me for help.

Deadlines and Policies Regarding Missed Work

Writing assignments and essays are due in class on the dates indicated in the Weekly Schedule below. Late assignments and papers will be penalized (3 points deducted from your grade for the late work) unless you have contacted me before or on the due date to arrange an extension. There are ways to make up for points lost for late work or absences and to earn extra credit points to improve your grade—see “Policies Regarding Missed Work” in the Course Mentor folder on WebCampus for more information.
Academic Dishonesty

I expect all students to do their own work in this course unless I have specifically assigned a group activity or project. Copying someone else's work, or allowing your own work to be copied, is dishonest and unfair to other students who are striving to complete assignments and essays on their own.

The university’s Academic Standards policy states:

Academic dishonesty is against university as well as the system community standards. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

Plagiarism: defined as submitting the language, ideas, thoughts or work of another as one's own; or assisting in the act of plagiarism by allowing one's work to be used in this fashion.

Cheating: defined as (1) obtaining or providing unauthorized information during an examination through verbal, visual or unauthorized use of books, notes, text and other materials; (2) obtaining or providing information concerning all or part of an examination prior to that examination; (3) taking an examination for another student, or arranging for another person to take an exam in one’s place; (4) altering or changing test answers after submittal for grading, grades after grades have been awarded, or other academic records once these are official.

Sanctions for violations of university academic standards may include the following:

(1) filing a final grade of “F”; (2) reducing the student’s final course grade one or two full grade points; (3) awarding a failing mark on the test or paper in question; (4) requiring the student to retake the test or resubmit the paper.

Copying someone else’s entire paper or article is a clear example of academic dishonesty, but note that plagiarism can take other, less obvious forms as well. “Language, ideas, thoughts or work of another” includes any material used in your assignments and essays that was written or produced by others. Using brief phrases or sentences from books, articles, internet sites, documents, or other sources without letting your reader know where they came from is a form of plagiarism. You must properly acknowledge your use of other people’s words by placing them in quotation marks and citing all sources used in your paper. Even if you paraphrase someone else’s ideas and do not quote them directly, you must still indicate where those ideas came from. Citations should also be given for little-known facts and statistics.

Any student found violating academic standards in this course will receive a zero for the assignment in question. A second offense will result in an F in the course. In addition, all cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Office of Student Conduct and become part of the student’s academic record. Potential employers as well as the directors of graduate and professional programs to which students may apply can request copies of these records, in which case the academic dishonesty charge will be disclosed.

Academic Success Services

Your student fees cover use of the Tutoring Center, the University Writing Center, and the Math Center. Students are encouraged to take advantage of these services as needed.

Tutoring Center: ph. 784-6801 or visit www.unr.edu/tutoring
Students with Disabilities

The University of Nevada, Reno is committed to equal opportunity in education for all students, including those with documented physical disabilities or documented learning disabilities. If you have a documented disability and will be requiring assistance, please contact the instructor or the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations.

Audio and Video Recording

Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may be given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

Submissions to The Montag

The Montag is a student-edited undergraduate research journal that publishes essays, art, creative writing, and other work by students taking courses in the College of Liberal Arts. Submissions to The Montag are accepted any time and may be e-mailed to themontag@unr.edu.

Weekly Schedule

Week 1 (SLOs 1, 3)

January 20  Introduction: Black history as American history
January 22  Historical and contemporary perspectives on America’s racial divide
de Jong, Invisible Enemy, 1–29
Unknown author, “The Longest Sit”
Garris, “Conservatives Should Lay Claim to King”
Williams, “L’Etranger”

Week 2 (SLOs 1, 2, 3)

January 27  Africans in Africa
Jones and Newman, Our America, pp. 11–26 (suggested)
Assignment 1 due
January 29  European exploration and the Atlantic slave trade
Jones and Newman, Our America, pp. 27–83 (suggested)
Finkenbine, Sources of the African American Past, pp. 1–9
Week 3 (SLOs 1, 2, 3)
February 3  Slavery in the Caribbean and Latin America
Jones and Newman, *Our America*, pp. 85–155 (suggested)

February 5  Slavery in North America
Jones and Newman, *Our America*, pp. 157–201 (suggested)
Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 10–15

Quiz 1

Week 4 (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4)
February 10  Slave communities and cultures
Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 15–17

February 12  Surviving and resisting slavery
Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 51–60

Response paper on Jones and Newman, *Our America* due

Week 5 (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
February 17  African Americans and the Revolution
Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 19–28

February 19  A more perfect Union, or a “covenant with death”? What the Constitution meant for African Americans
Constitution of the United States, 3–14
Finkelman, “Garrison’s Constitution,” Parts 1 & 2

Quiz 2

Week 6 (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 5)
February 24  Cotton and the expansion of slavery in the nineteenth century
Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 42–51

Assignment 2 due

February 26  Free black communities
Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 30–40

Week 7 (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 5)
March 3  The abolitionist movement
Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 62–70

March 5  Battle born: The road to Emancipation and Nevada Statehood during the Civil War
Excerpts from the Nevada Constitution, 202–205
Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 72–82

Week 8 (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)
March 10  From slavery to free labor during Reconstruction
Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 84–92

March 12  Forum 1: Should African Americans receive reparations for slavery?

| March 16–20 | Spring break—no classes |
| Week 9 (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) | |
| March 24 | “Redeemers” and the end of democracy in the South |
| | Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 93–94 |
| March 26 | White supremacy and the rise of Jim Crow |
| | *Plessy v. Ferguson*, 41–60 |
| | Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 96–115 |
| | Assignment 3 due |

| Week 10 (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 5) | |
| March 31 | Black politics and culture in the Jim Crow era |
| | Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 118–130 |
| April 2 | The Great Migration |
| | Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 132–135 |
| | Quiz 3 |

| Week 11 (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5) | |
| March 7 | Harlem Renaissance and the “New Negro” |
| | Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 135–144 |
| April 9 | African Americans and the New Deal |
| | Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 146–147, 152–154 |
| | Assignment 4 due |

| Week 12 (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 5) | |
| April 14 | Black workers and the labor movement |
| | Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 147–148 |
| April 16 | Fighting fascism and fighting Jim Crow in the 1940s |
| | Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 156–167 |
| | Quiz 4 |

| Week 13 (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 5) | |
| April 21 | Origins of the civil rights movement |
| | Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 169–176 |
| April 23 | The early civil rights movement |
| | Quiz 5 |
**Week 14 (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)**

April 28  
The struggle for economic justice  
Reich, “Individual Rights and Social Welfare,” 1245–1257  
Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 196–208

April 30  
After the movement  
Finkenbine, *Sources of the African American Past*, pp. 210–225

**Assignment 5 due**

**Week 15 (SLOs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)**

May 5  
**Forum 2: Debating affirmative action**  

May 12  
Past and present: Review and discussion of African American experiences  
**Note:** Class meets from 8:00–10:00 am on this date (final exam period)  
**Analytical paper on Jones and Newman, Our America due**