AFA 4243

GLOBAL CAPITALISM AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA IN THE MODERN WORLD-SYSTEM

Jean Muteba Rahier

Date / Time / Location

Course Instructor: Jean Muteba Rahier, Ph.D. Professor of Anthropology and African & African Diaspora Studies

Course Description

The African diaspora as an analytic for studying the black experience is integrally tied to the formation of the modern world-system and the proliferation of global capitalism, starting in the 16th century. The conscription and exploitation of black labor and human capital has been essential to each cycle of accumulation that has sustained capitalism. Violent dispossession by imperial powers, starting with the systematic enslavement of African people and continuing through neocolonial formations, created conditions of dependency within the diaspora nationally and globally that continue to shape the material realities of diasporic subjects. The World-Systems approach is foundational to understanding the relationship between the African diaspora and global capitalism; in the final analysis, it is unequal integration into the capitalist world-system that both established and sustains the African diaspora over time and space.

This course surveys the emergence and evolution of the African diaspora in relation to changes in the global capitalist economy, and how that history continues to shape material conditions of African descendants. Drawing upon a range of theoretical perspectives, we will examine structural features of the contemporary global political economy and how they produce, reproduce, and reconstitute the African Diaspora based on the ways in which diasporic subjects are represented in the racial global axial division of labor. The course will encourage critical analyses to more adequately understand and potentially address conditions of inequality within the African diaspora locally, nationally, and globally.

This is a Global Learning Discipline-Specific course that counts towards your Global Learning graduation requirement.

The readings are interdisciplinary and engage texts across fields.

Student Learning Outcome

By the end of this course, enrolled students:

- will have gained an enhanced historical knowledge and understanding of the development of the African diaspora within the context of global capitalism’s history.
- Will have acquired a basic understanding of practices, structures, issues and
dynamics constituting African diaspora studies as a field of inquiry.

- Will have developed critical awareness of, and critical skills in analyzing how capital operates in, and is sustained by, the African diaspora.
- Will be able to self-reflect upon theorizing of the African diaspora.

**GL Student Learning Outcomes**

- **Global Awareness:** Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural dimensions of African diaspora realities, which is the main focus of this course.
- **Global Perspective:** Students will be able to use the knowledge and diverse theorizing accumulated in the field of African diaspora studies to conduct a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural issues as they relate to the great experiential diversity of African diaspora communities.
- **Global Engagement:** Students will be able to demonstrate willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving as it pertains to the challenges of racism, xenophobia, marginalization, discrimination, etc.

**Course Expectations**

This is an upper-division course and presumes some familiarity with the basics of African diaspora theory. In an upper-division course students are expected not only to be well prepared but also to show initiative in class participation and in taking up the challenge of critical, intellectual inquiry. I will conduct the course more as a seminar than as lecture-based, with the expectation of active participation by all enrolled students; participation in class discussion is a significant part of your grade.

**Course Requirements**

- 5 Reader Responses 50%
- Final Paper 30%
- Class Participation 20%

**Required Texts**


All other required readings will be provided online.

**Written assignments**

All assignments must be type-written hard copies, appropriately formatted (12 point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins, double spaced, right justified, etc.), with the course name, student name, date, and assignment clearly visible. They must be uploaded
onto the Blackboard site associated with this course.

**Reader Response**
Students are responsible for a 5-7 page reader response based on the following required texts:

- **Response 1:** *World Systems Approach: An Introduction*
- **Response 2:** *Black Marxism*
- **Response 3:** *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*
- **Response 4:** *Citizen and Subject*
- **Response 5:** *Escape from Empire*

Although only selected chapters may be assigned for the course, reader responses should cover the *entire* book, addressing the author’s main thesis/purpose; main theme(s) of each chapter/section; critical response to the author’s position (agree, disagree, qualify); and a discussion of how the text relates to the theme of the course as a whole. Please note that this is not a book report or a mere summarization of the text, but rather a critical engagement with the author’s ideas. Familiarity with the argument(s) being made is essential to articulate your own point of view; basic regurgitation of the text is not acceptable.

A *hard copy* of each reader response will be due during the last discussion date of each section as denoted on the syllabus. They must be uploaded onto the Blackboard site associated with this course. *No e-mail or late copies are permitted.*

The Reader Response 3 will be directly linked to the GL Student Learning Outcome “Global Awareness.” Specific questions that have for objective to have students discuss and demonstrate their knowledge of the interrelatedness of local, global, international, and intercultural dimensions of African diaspora realities, which is the main focus of this course, will be asked. The answers will have to use each individual student discussion of *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa.*

The Reader Response 5 will be directly linked to the GL Student Learning Outcome “Global Engagement.” Specific questions that have for objective to have students discuss and demonstrate their willingness to engage in local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving as it pertains to the challenges of racism, xenophobia, marginalization, discrimination, etc. will be asked. The answers will have to use each individual student discussion of *Escape from Empire.*

**Final Paper**
Each student will be required to write a comprehensive 15-20 page research paper that examines, exhaustively, some aspect of the intersection between global capitalism and the African diaspora, or should critically examine relevant theoretical and analytical issues raised in the readings and class discussions. Students are required to attend office hours to discuss the proposed paper topic; the instructor must approve it. A *hard copy* of the paper is due on the last day of class.
This assignment is directly linked to the GL Student Learning Outcome “Global Perspective.” Therefore, students are here asked to use the knowledge and diverse theorizing accumulated in the field of African diaspora studies to conduct a multi-perspective analysis of local, global, international, and intercultural issues as they relate to the great experiential diversity of African diaspora communities as it relates to global capitalism. Specific additional instructions will be given in class.

Class Participation
Students are expected to attend all class sessions and to participate in class discussions on the basis of an engaged and critical reading of each session's assignments prior to sessions. Arrive on time and turn off cell phones and other noise-making devices during class. Because this is an upper-division course, lectures will not focus on ‘explaining’ the readings to you; I expect you to bring question you may have to class and to be prepared to discuss the readings from the perspectives of analytically engaged informed students. Make sure you grasp the key points of all readings (what is the author saying and why?) and think relationally (how do the readings relate? How does each reading converge with or contradict other readings? How are the main points of the readings related?)

Final Grade
Your final grade will be based on your cumulative points, not on a curve. The maximum number of points you can earn for the course is 100. I will be using the following conversion from number to letter grade:

- A+ 93 and> A- 90-92.9
- B+ 87-89.9  B 83-86.9  B- 80-82.9
- C+ 77-79.9  C 73-76.9  C- 70-72.9
- D+ 67-69.9  D 63-66.9  D- 60-62.9
- F below 60

Weekly Readings
PART I: PRECOLONIAL AFRICA

Week 1: Introduction
Day 1:
Syllabus and Course Overview
Documentary: “500 Years Later”
Day 2:
How Europe Underdeveloped Africa: Chapter 2

Week 2: World-Systems and Global Capitalism
Day 1:
World-Systems Theory: An Introduction: Entire Book
The Long Twentieth Century: Chapter 1
“Exiting the Crisis of Capitalism or Capitalism in Crisis?”
Day 2:
“Phases of Capitalist Development in World-Historical Perspective”
Black Marxism: Chapter 1
How Europe Underdeveloped Africa: Chapter 3  
Capitalism and Slavery: Chapter 7

Week 3: Diaspora Theory  
Day 1:  
Black Marxism: Chapter 4  
Becoming Black: Chapter 1  
Day 2:  
“Unfinished Migrations”  
“The Violence of Diaspora”  
“Theorizing the African Diaspora: Metaphor, Miscognition, and Self-Recognition”  
“The Uses of Diaspora”  
**Reader Response 1 Due

PART II: ENSLAVEMENT (1600-1880)

Week 4: Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade in the Diaspora: A Comparative Approach  
Day 1:  
Black Marxism: Chapters 5 & 6  
Capitalism and Slavery: Chapter 1  
“Eric Williams and Slavery: A West Indian Viewpoint?”  
“Capitalism, Slavery and Bourgeois Historiography”  
Day 2:  
How Europe Underdeveloped Africa: Chapter 4  
Capitalism and Slavery: Chapter 2  
“Slavery, Race, and Ideology in the U.S.”

Week 5: Abolition and the transition to Industrial Capitalism  
Day 1:  
Africans and the Industrial Revolution in England: Introduction  
Black Reconstruction: Chapter 4  
“Slavery in Capitalism”  
Day 2:  
“Capitalism and the Origins of the Humanitarian Sensibility Part I”  
Capitalism and Slavery: Chapters 10-12  
**Reader Response 2 Due

PART III: FORMAL COLONIALISM (1884-1957)

Week 6: The Partitioning of Africa (Berlin Conference and Beyond)  
Day 1:  
How Europe Underdeveloped Africa: Chapter 5  
Citizen and Subject: Part I  
Day 2:  
“License to Colonise”  
“The Spoils of Berlin
“Africa: The 1884 scramble was for resources to develop Europe”


Day 1:
“**The Economic Philosophy of Marcus Garvey**”
“**Marcus Garvey: The Remapping of African and its Diaspora**”
“**Caribbean labor politics in the age of Garvey, 1918-1938**”

Day 2:
“**‘A Negro Within the Nation’: W.E.B. DuBois and the Creation of a Revolutionary Pan-Africanist Tradition, 1903-1947**”
“**DuBois the pan-Africanist and the development of African nationalism**”

**PART IV: FIRST AMERICAN EMPIRE (1945-1980)**

**Week 8: The Cold War and Decolonization**

Day 1:
“**The end of the Third World?**”
“**After the Third World: History, destiny, an the fate of Third Worldism**”
“**Nation and the Cold War: Reflections on the Circulous Routes of the African Diaspora**”

Day 2:
“**Kwame Nkrumah: Cold War Modernity, Pan-African ideology and the Geopolitics of Development**”
“**Black Power, Decolonization, and Caribbean Politics: Walter Rodney and the Politics of The Groundings with my Brothers**”
“**Walter Rodney’s Pan-African Nationalism**”

*The Wretched of the Earth: Chapter 1* pp 52-63

**Week 9: Bretton Woods and Embedded Liberalism**

Day 1:
*Escape From Empire*: Chapters 1-4
“**The Pillars of the System**”

Day 2:
*Escape From Empire* Chapters 5-8
*Global Capitalism*: Chapter 15 (The End of Bretton Woods)

**Week 10: Modernization Theory vs. Dependency Theory**

Day 1:
“**The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto**”
“**The Change to Change: Modernization, Development, and Politics**”

*The Politics of Development Cooperation*: Chapter 2-pp. 31-35
“**Women and Modernization Theory: A Decade of Feminist Criticism**”

Day 2:
*The Challenge of Third World Development*: Chapter 1
“**The Development of Underdevelopment**”

*How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*: Chapter 1
Week 11: Underdevelopment and Internal Colonialism
Day 1:
Documentary: “Speaking Freely Volume 2: Susan George”
“How the Poor Develop the Rich”
Unequal Development: Chapter 4- Sections 1, 4 & 5
Day 2:
“Internal Colonialism and Ghetto Revolt”
Black Power: The Politics of Liberation: Chapter 1
“Internal Colonialism: An American Theory of Race”
**Reader Response 4 Due

PART V: SECOND AMERICAN EMPIRE (1980-Present)

Week 12: Neoliberal Globalization
Day 1:
Globalization and its Discontents: Chapter 1 & 4
A Brief History of Neoliberalism: Chapter 3
Day 2:
“The Uses of Neoliberalism”
Globalisms: Chapter 1&3

Week 13: Rollback: Debt Crisis, Structural Adjustment and Punishing the 3rd World
Day 1:
Escape From Empire: Chapters 9-11
Dark Victory: Chapter 4
Day 2:
Dark Victory: Chapters 5-7
Global Shadows: Chapter 3

Week 14: Poverty Reduction and Growing Inequality
Day 1:
Global Shadows: Introduction & Chapter 1
Documentary: “The End of Poverty?”
Day 2:
“Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers: A New Convergence”
“The new Biopower: Poverty Reduction Papers and the obfuscation of international collective responsibility”

Week 15: Alternatives to Neoliberalization
Day 1:
A Brief History of Neoliberalism: Chapter 6 & 7
“Toward an Inclusive-Neoliberal Regime of Development: From the Washington to the Post-Washington Consensus”
Day 2:
“Geography and development: development/s beyond neoliberalism? Power, culture, political economy”

Globalisms: Chapter 9
**Reader Response 5 Due
***Final Paper Due

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List of readings, order in which they appear on the syllabus; sources not repeated.


Sanokre, Rotimi. “Africa: The 1884 scramble was for resources to develop Europe.” *New Africa* (2005): 25.


