

African & African American Studies 4993
African American Fraternities, Sororities, and Secret Societies
Spring 2008

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Course Description

This course will explore contemporary and historical African American fraternal life. Historically, African American fraternal life was instrumental in the fight for human and civil rights because it provided educational opportunities, healthcare, widows and orphans home, as well as the ability to escape the pressures of oppression. However, many organizations took on class components such as the color complexion test that would cause rifts in the African American community. Many of these class organizations would not accept working-class African Americans. The historical complexities continue to be played out in organizational life but many of these current issues are not understood by the general public or the members of the organizations. This class will bridge the gap between the historical past and the contemporary issues. Contemporary issues surround hazing vs. pledging, gay & lesbian membership, being relevant or needed, the battle between young members and older members for control of the organization, and prestige. This class will discuss the past, present, and future of fraternal life for African Americans and come up with solutions to the current problems.

Course Objectives

The student will know the historical roots of African American fraternalism
The student will be able to name and understand the histories of different secret societies that span from the 18th century to the 21st century
The student will be familiar with the academic debates over African American fraternalism
The student will learn how class has affected African American fraternalism
The student will learn about the web of networks that African American fraternal life contributed to
The student will learn about and understand the roles of men and women in fraternal life
The student will learn about initiatic identities and the mouth to ear teaching of African American fraternal life

Required Text & Readings

Book

African American Fraternities and Sororities: The Legacy and Vision
By Tamara Brown, Gregory S. Parks, and Clarendia M. Phillips eds.

What a Mighty Power We can Be: African American Fraternal Groups and the Struggle for Racial Equality By Theda Skocpol, Ariane Liazos, Marshall Ganz eds.

Articles

“The Color Factor” in *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920*
By Willard B. Gatewood

“The Genteel Performance” in *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920*
By Willard B. Gatewood

“Upper-Class Club Life” in *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920*
By Willard B. Gatewood

“The Origins of the Black Upper Class” in *Our Kind of People: Inside America’s Black Upper Class*
By Lawrence Otis Graham

“Jack and Jill: Where Elite Black Kids are Separated from the Rest” in *Our Kind of People: Inside America’s Black Upper Class*
By Lawrence Otis Graham

“The Right Fraternities and Sororities” in *Our Kind of People: Inside America’s Black Upper Class*
By Lawrence Otis Graham

“The Links and the Girlfriends: For Black Women Who Govern Society” in *Our Kind of People: Inside America’s Black Upper Class*
By Lawrence Otis Graham

“The Boule, the Guardsmen, and the Other Groups for Elite Black Men” in *Our Kind of People: Inside America’s Black Upper Class*
By Lawrence Otis Graham

“Black Elite in Memphis” in *Our Kind of People: Inside America’s Black Upper Class*
By Lawrence Otis Graham

“African American Fraternal Associations in American History: An Introduction” in
“African American Fraternal Associations and the History of Civil Society in the United States.” Special issue, *Social Science History* 28, no 3 (Fall 2004).
By Joe Trotter

Grading Assignment	Percentage	Due Date
Exam 1	10%	02/11/2008
Exam 2	15%	03/14/2008
Exam 3	20%	04/07/2008
Project	30%	Weeks
Participation	25%	Everyday!!!

**Grading
Scale**

A	100-95
A-	94-90
B+	89-86
B	85-83
B-	82-80
C+	79-76
C	75-73
C-	72-70
D+	69-65
D	64-60
F	59 & below

Requirements:

- **Exams(3):**

The exams will be broken into two parts: part 1 will be conducted in class and will consist of short ID. The students will prepare the short ID questions for the exam. Part 2 will consist of a take home essay paper. The students in class will design their question for the exam and the question should incorporate the readings and lecture material for that exam. I will then take those questions up and give them back the next class period with any changes that need to be made to the questions. On the day of the exam, the student will receive her/his question that we created and the student's response to the question will be due at the beginning of class a week from the exam date. The take home portion should be at least 3 full pages and no more than 5 pages in length and follows the protocol for the class written assignments. All make up exams will be an in class essay.

- **Project:**

In consultation with the professor, the student will design his/her own research project. These projects include but are not limited to research papers, documentary films, oral history collection, folklore collection, etc and may be done individually or in groups. Each project must have primary source documentation as a major component of the research. Primary sources include newspapers, diaries, government publications, organization's records, etc The project will be broken into four parts and all parts must be present to receive a grade: the research proposal, the bibliography, the final product, and the presentation to the class. Each part has its own due date and one cannot move forward to the next part without completion of the previous part. Each part is due when specified and only in a rare and case-by-case situation will the student be able to turn in material late. The student must buy a three ring binder that will be turned in at the end of the semester. Labeled tab dividers should separate each part and at each checkpoint the binder should be turned in to the professor. At the end of the semester, the binder should have in it an approved proposal, an approved bibliography, a description of the in class presentation, the final project, and the written component.

Although the student will design each project, each student will be required to present her/his research to the class in an appropriate format. Also, no matter what the project is there will be a written component of no more than 3 pages and at least two pages that gives an analytical analysis of the project. This analysis should include the type of project, its tie to African American fraternalism, the class, and finally what you learned from the project. Please make sure you have a thesis statement and etc that goes along with writing an academic paper. Include a bibliography and citations in the text of the paper as well as make sure you follow the rubric for writing in this class (at the end of the syllabus). These papers are due the day of your presentation.

- **Participation/attendance**

Attendance is vital during a semester and I will be taking attendance daily. The student will receive two days of unexcused absences before her/his attendance adversely affects the grade. After the 2nd absence the course grade will be dropped one letter grade for each day you miss passed two. An example would be if someone missed 4 days and had an A in the class. The new grade would be a C for the two extra days. Of course, emergencies happen and will be considered only with written documentation (doctor's note, funeral program, traffic accident ticket, etc). Also, tardies will be counted and a tardy constitutes being more than ten minutes late or leaving early by my watch. Two tardies will count as one absence. So please come to class on time. When the projects start, attendance is mandatory and you must be on time to hear your classmates' presentations the ten-minute rule is not observed during projects because it is rude to walk in late during someone's presentation. If you do not show up during the presentations or leave early, you will receive a 0 on your project and these projects are 30% of your final grade.

Participation is also a vital part of the class. Participation is calculated in three forms: reading presentations, quizzes, response papers, and daily participation. The only quiz scheduled will be over the syllabus on the 2nd day of class in the first ten minutes of class. Daily participation will be noted when the student comes prepared to discuss and has a substantial contribution. Participation will be graded on a ✓+, ✓, or ✓-. The corresponding grades are full credit/excellent, credit, and no credit.

- **Extra Credit**

The extra credit must encompass all the readings for the entire course and answer the questions how has African American fraternalism addressed the needs of the African American community? How has it introduced serious problems afflicting the community? This assignment is due in my office the last day of class. The extra credit will receive a letter grade and will replace the lowest test grade.

- **Computer Resources:**

Students are required to activate their University of Memphis email addresses and regularly check or forward their UofM student email to a personal account. The university sanctions student email accounts as the official method of contact and will use your student email account for any university related notifications. In addition, university policy requires that instructors use these accounts to contact groups of students. Contact technology services for any help with getting a UofM email address.

- **Students with Disabilities:**

Any student who may need class or test accommodations based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to speak with me privately to discuss your specific needs. Students with disabilities should also contact Student Disability Services (SDS) at 110 Wilder Tower, 678-2880. SDS coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

- **Academic Honesty** is fundamental to the principles and activities of a university. You are responsible for knowing the university's policy on academic honesty. Ignorance is NOT a defense for any charge of dishonesty. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized collaboration, fabrication or falsification of information, submission of work or substantial portion of a piece of work more than once without permission from all professors involved. For your protection, please familiarize yourself with the university's policy on academic honesty. If you are suspected of academic dishonesty, your case will be turned over to the appropriate academic officials for review. If an allegation of dishonesty is proven, **you will receive an F for the course.**
- **ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS** for the class shall have the following format. The papers must be typed or word processed, with 12 point font using Times New Roman (the size and font used on this syllabus), double spaced, and with standard margins. Every paper should have citations and these citations should not be long meaning if it has to be put in block quotes then leave out and paraphrase. Also, use quotes when you have to and the paper should not be filled with quotes, a three page paper should not have more than 4 direct quotes. The citation formats that must be used for all papers are Turabian and the use of footnotes. There should be a back sheet that includes the title, the type of project, your name, and date and none of this information should be included anywhere else in the paper. The back page will be the last page stapled. All papers need to be stapled and have page numbers without any accompanying headers or footers. Please ask any questions or concerns about this format to the professor in a timely manner. All assignments that do not follow this format will receive an automatic F.
- **All work is due when specified and late materials will not be accepted unless accompanied with written documentation (e.g. doctor's note, funeral program).** If you have an emergency please contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss how to handle the assignment.
- Eating in class is acceptable if it is a snack e.g. potato chips, candy bar, or a drink. Please do not bring a full course meal to class and expect to eat it.

- **INCOMPLETE GRADES**
An Incomplete grade is assigned when extenuating circumstances, such as illness, the death of a family member, or a family emergency, prevent a student from completing assignments and other course requirements by the end of the semester. An incomplete grade must be changed by the deadline specified on the college calendar or will be automatically changed to an “F.” The removal of an “I” grade does not guarantee a passing grade.
- **CELL PHONES**
All cell phones and other electronic communications devices are to be switched off or turned on “silent” for the duration of the class (silent does not mean vibrate!!!). Using the phone to text or talk in class is prohibited. If a phone or any other electronic device goes off during class the student will receive a 0 the day and will be asked to leave. If a device goes off during a test the student will automatically receive a 0 on the test
- **My professor often said, “The law of common courtesy has not yet been repealed.” I hope that we will engage in many debates over the semester. I expect that we will all treat each other and each other’s ideas with respect.**

Schedule

Week 1 Readings:	Introduction, Africa, & the Diaspora Trotter pgs 355-366, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Skocpol Ch. 1, Womanism	1/15-1/17
Week 2 Readings:	Origins of Fraternalism cont & Classism Skocpol Ch. 2-3, Gatewood 153-215	1/22-1/24
Week 3 Readings:	19th century Blossoms with Upper Class Clubs Gatewood pgs 216-254 Graham pgs 1-44, 101-150 Research Proposals Due	1/29-1/31
Week 4 Readings:	Boule & Review Ch. 4 in Brown; Review	2/5-2/7
Week 5 Readings:	Test 1 & Fraternalism comes to Campus Test 1; Ch. 1 & 5 in Brown, Graham pgs 83-100	2/12-2/14
Week 6 Readings:	Fraternalism comes to Campus Cha. 1 & 5 in Brown, Graham pgs 83-100	2/19- 2/21

Week 7	The Culture of Greekdom	2/26-2/28
Readings:	All of Part II in Brown-Begin Review	
***** Spring Break *****		
Week 8	Pledging or is it Hazing?; Test 2	3/11-3/13
Readings:	chapter 16 in Brown; Test 2	
Week 9	Fraternalism & the fight for Human & Civil Rights	3/18-3/20
Readings:	Skocpol Ch. 5-6 & Ch. 7 in Brown Bibliography Due	
Week 10	Current Problems & The Future	3/25-3/27
Readings:	Part III of Brown, Skocpol ch. 7	
Week 11	Current Problems & The Future	4/01-4/03
Readings:	Part III of Brown, Skocpol ch. 7 Review	
Week 12	Test & Class Review	4/8-4/10
Week 13	Guest Lecture	4/15-4/17
	I will be in Atlanta Lecturing at GSU on OES & Womanism. Optional—People may join me for this trip. Details in Class	
Week 14	Projects	4/22-4/24
Final Exam period---Projects cont		4/29/2007
*****Presentations attendance is mandatory*****		10:30-12:30

GENERAL INFORMATION

NAME _____

COURSE _____ SEMESTER _____

MAJOR _____ MINOR _____

CAREER GOALS _____

YEAR _____

PHONE NUMBER (home, dorm,
cell) _____

LOCAL ADDRESS _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS _____

COMPUTER SKILLS _____

MUSICAL AND/OR OTHER TALENTS _____

Rubric for written assignments

Thesis:							20%		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Clear, concise, developed and viable thesis statement

Comments _____

Content: **30%**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Facts and ideas developed to prove the thesis

Comments _____

Logic & Argument: **20%**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Internal and external consistency (consistency of ideas within the paper and to the thesis).

Comments _____

Organization & Structure: **20%**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Elaborate of ideas, flow of ideas, completeness of thoughts, follows the outline made by thesis

Comments _____

Technical Writing Quality: **10%**
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Turabian, spelling, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary

Comments _____

Evaluation for Ephemeral Projects

Prof. Lanois

Type of Presentation: _____

Evaluation: 5=best to 1=No Credit

1. **Imagination:** 1 2 3 4 5
Uniqueness of the ephemeral project

2. **Organization** 1 2 3 4 5
Extent of preparedness and flow of the performance

3. **Substance:** 1 2 3 4 5
Relevance to African American Fraternalism. How well did the project blend culture and history?

4. **Creativity:** 1 2 3 4 5
How well did imagination and substance blend together to make a clear statement?

5. **Insight:** 1 2 3 4 5
How well did the project give a sound understanding of African American Fraternalism and culture?

6. **Group Presentation:** 1 2 3 4 5
Was everybody involved and was this involvement enthusiastic?

Overall:

A+ A- A B+ B B- C+ C C- D F

Comments

Evaluation for Oral History/Folklore Collection

Prof. Lanois

Type of Presentation: _____

Evaluation: 5=best to 1=No Credit

1. **Oral history/Folklore:** 1 2 3 4 5
Grasp of oral history/folklore; the story the interviewer told

2. **Organization:** 1 2 3 4 5
Extent of preparedness and flow of presentation

3. **Substance:** 1 2 3 4 5
Relevance to African American Fraternalism. How well did you blend the interviewer to history and culture?

4. **Creativity:** 1 2 3 4 5
How well did substance, organization, & oral history/folklore blend together to make a clear statement?

5. **Insight:** 1 2 3 4 5
How well did you give a sound understanding of African American Fraternalism and culture through your interview and research?

6. **Presentation:** 1 2 3 4 5
Are you involved enthusiastically?

Overall:

A+ A- A B+ B B- C+ C C- D F

Comments
