Intro to Africana Studies
Lehman College AAS 166
Prof. Williams

Chapters 1-2

Africana Studies Foundation
Zoom wait music: “Feed the Fire” by Betty Carter

- 1993 verve Records *Feed the Fire [Live]*
- Personnel:
  - Betty Carter: vocals
  - Geri Allen: Piano
  - Dave Holland: Bass
  - Jack DeJohnette: Drums
Week 3 Agenda: Wednesday February 17, 2021

- Introduce agenda
- College announcements
- Course announcements
- Website updates
- BRIEF REVIEW: last week’s topics
- DISCUSSION: *Introduction to Black Studies* chapter 1
- BREAK: Listening: “Snowed In” by Albert Collins and the Icebreakers
- DISCUSSION: *Introduction to Black Studies* chapter 2
- Intro next week’s topic
- END
- Individual Q&A

https://africanastudiesintrocourse.wordpress.com
2/17/2020 Lehman College announcements:

- Technology: loans for laptops, tablets, and wifi
- Food Pantry operating
- College offices operating remotely
  - Counseling
  - (Dis)ability services
  - Logistics: Bursar, Registrar, etc.

General announcements:

- The Last Poets (Monday 2/22) 7-9 PM via Zoom
- Mr. SOUL! Monday 2/22 10 PM on PBS
- Film: *The First Rainbow Coalition* streaming on pbs.org.

https://blackhistorycourse.wordpress.com
Week 3: AAS 166 Section A81: Prof. Williams

2/17/2020 AAS 166 course announcements:

• Course logistics
• Website
  • Website comments open for 14 days
  • lecture notes posted from last class; this week’s up by this weekend
• Text message service run by Remind.com
  • sign-up: text “@aas166” to 608-467-4328 or see link online
• Syllabus
• Get textbook: Dr. Maulana Karenga *Intro to Black Studies*, 4th ed. 2010

https://blackhistorycourse.wordpress.com
Black Studies Definition (3)

“Definition: “As a discipline, a specialized branch of study and knowledge, Black Studies is the critical and systemic study of the thought and practice of African people in their current and historical unfolding.” (3).”
Black Studies Relevance (16)

“A relevant education for Black Studies advocates was an education which is meaningful, useful, and reflective of the realities of society and the world.”

1 Solve pressing Black community, society, world problems
2 Join revolutionary struggle to end racist oppression in the world
Academic concerns

-Afrocentric vs Eurocentric *value systems*

Social concerns

-*Collective* outlook; resist co-optation
Black Studies Objectives (18-19)

1 *Teach* Black experience in all its variedness
2 *Assemble* / create body of knowledge contributing to intellectual, political emancipation
3 *Create* intellectuals committed to community development vs careerism
Black Studies Relevance (20-21)

1 *Definitive* contribution to humanity's understanding of itself

2 *Contribution* to US society's understanding of itself

3 *Challenge* university to teach the entire truth

4 *Contribute* to rescue/reconstruction of Black history and humanity

5 *Contribute* to new social science
"Thus, Black science like Black sociology will, of necessity, reflect a cultural context and conception. A primary task of the Black Studies scientist will be to ask if there is a uniquely African as well as General human approach to science?"
Black Studies Objectives (18-19)

1 *Teach* Black experience in all its variedness
2 *Assemble* create body of knowledge contributing to intellectual, political emancipation
3 *Create* intellectuals committed to community development vs careerism
Black Studies 7 Basic Areas (24)

1 Black History
2 Black religion
3 Black social organization
4 Black Politics
5 Black Economics
6 Black creative production
7 Black Psychology
Kawaida Philosophy (24)

*Seven Basic Cultural Areas*

1 spirituality and ethics
2 history
3 social organization
4 economic organization
5 political organization
6 creative production
7 ethos
Culture Definition

**Culture**: “all the thought and activity of a given people or society”

“[T]o talk of an African worldview is to talk of a frame of reference and conception of the world rooted in African culture.” (26)
Perspective: Maulana Karenga on Culture
Perspective: Molefe Asante on Afrocentricity
Afrocentricity (42)

“placing African ideals at the center of any analysis that involves African culture and behavior. “ “A theoretical framework or methodology which stresses African agency and thus treats Africans as active subjects of history rather than objects or passive victims”

Afrocentricity assumptions (43):

1. **African culture worthy of study and critical to understanding society and human experience** given its key role in each

2. **Methodological orientation** = studying and understanding African people from their own perspective

3. **Black Studies** is not simply a body of data but a **way of approaching and interpreting data**
Developmental Initiatives

Afrocentricity

- Intellectual and emerging popular approach

Afrocentrism (41)

“Favorable position taking on African people and issues concerning them without sufficient intellectual grounding”

Eurocentrism: (41)

“an ideology and practice of domination and exclusion based on the fundamental assumption that all relevance and value are centered in European culture and peoples and that all other cultures and peoples are at best marginal and at worst irrelevant”
Listening: “Snowed In” by Albert Collins

From *Frostbite*, Alligator Records 1980

**Personnel:** Albert Collins: guitar, vocals; Marvin Jackson: guitar; Johnny Gayden: bass; Allen Batts: keyboards; Casey Jones: drums

**Approx. 10 minutes**

**Break:**

14 minutes

*(Be right back! 7:30 PM)*

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Black Women’s Studies [and Gender Studies]

Key factors:

1 Increased advocacy in the 1990s (44)
2 Key role women played in building discipline-specific academic organizations
3 Creative tension and discourse between Black womanist and feminists and White feminists and between Black Studies and White women studies (47)
4 Criticism of relations in Black Freedom Movement (47)
Multicultural Studies

1 attempt to dilute/divert attention from demands and maintain power/worldview of established order (49)
2 superficial cultural diversion from issues of wealth/power
3 continuation of struggle for just & good society

Multiculturalism from Afrocentric framework (51)
Classical African Studies (Section 2.6)

Key moments in re-orienting the view of Pan African scholars toward the African experience:

1. ASCAC (Association for the Study of Classical African Civilizations) organization founding (1984)
2. Ivan Van Sertima’s Nile Valley Civilization Group
3. Work of Cheikh Anta Diop
Cheikh Anta Diop (54-55)

African Origin of Civilization 1974
Civilization or Barbarism 1991

Arguments for Black character of ancient Egypt

1 Physical anthropological evidence
2 Egyptian self-definition as Black: Kmtyw; Kemeti
3 Eyewitness reports from contemporaneous Greeks describing Egyptians with African features
4 Cultural similarities
5 Artistic evidence of Egyptians presenting themselves with African features
6 Geographic evidence: physical location on African continent
Diop’s counter to “falsification of history” (56)

1 Reconcile African civilization with history
2 Enable Africans to build a body of modern sciences
3 Renew African culture

“Far from being a diversion in the past, a look back toward Egypt is the best way to conceive and build our cultural future. Egypt will play in a reconceived and renewed African culture the same role that the Greco-Roman ancient past plays in western culture” -Cheikh Anta Diop, quoted by Karenga

Diop plays a foundational role in Africana Studies in centering it in the experience of the African diaspora
Why Focus on Kemet (Egypt)? (57)

“[I]t is not a question of one civilization to the exclusion of others.”

1 Antiquity
2 Abundance of historical documents
3 Level of achievement
4 Meaning to other African societies
5 Contribution to human knowledge
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