**Course Description:** The primary goal of the course will be to study the writing of African people throughout the world in order to discover how these works serve as reflections of resistance to slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, and other means of oppression and domination. Thus, Studies in the Diaspora will have several objectives. These include: (1) providing a sampling of writing by Africans and those of African descent; (2) drawing connections between people of African descent who are dispersed throughout the world; (3) contextualizing their writing with historical and theoretical texts; and (4) analyzing the writing to discover what it tells us about identity formation, diversity, oppression, resistance, and human rights. These goals and objectives will be met through reading, short writing assignments, class discussion, and analytical essays.


**On Reserve:** James—“The Atlantic Slave Trade and Slavery: Some Interpretations of Their Significance.”

**Course Requirements:** Attendance is mandatory. It is the English Department’s policy to fail any student who misses more than 20% of scheduled classes (3). Absences also affect participation grades, as one cannot participate when not in class. Participation grades are determined not only by attendance, but also by contributions to class and small group discussions. (In other words, you will not receive an A for participation just because you attend every class—you must add to the discussion.) The participation grade will also include a brief report on the final paper (3-5 minutes). Pop Quizes are always possible and will be factored into the participation grade. Students will be required to do 4 written assignments. 1) Students will complete a 2-3 page critical response to one or two essays regarding Afrocentrism and/or Africana Womanism and/or Black Feminism. 2) Students will participate in and write a 2-3 page critical response to the “Bridging the African Diaspora” Conference held at the City Union (2/23 & 2/24). 3) Students will also complete a 2-3 page paper proposal, which lays out the argument to be pursued in the final paper and provides a working bibliography. 4) Students will compose a 10-15 page original research paper regarding one or more of the primary texts in the class and utilizing secondary sources from class reading and the library. Assignments should be typed according to MLA requirements (see attached example). In order to meet the minimum page requirement, complete 2 full pages for the first two essays and paper proposal and 10 full pages for the research paper.

**Grading Distribution:** Participation—10%, 1st essay—15%, 2nd essay—15%, Paper Proposal—10%, and Essay 50%. For your information, see attached grading standards.

**Graduate Students:** Students will do two 3-5 page essays (30%) as described above, a 3-5 page paper proposal (10%) an oral report (10%), and a 15-20 page essay (40%) which incorporates class readings
and library research. Class participation including report on final paper will make up the remaining 10% of your grade. **The quality of your written work should reflect your graduate standing.**

Reading & Assignment schedule: Come to class with the day’s reading already completed. All assignments are due at the beginning of class. **I do not accept late work unless prior arrangements are made.**

**Course Assignments:**

**Afrocentric Thought:**

1/10 Introduction of the course & Video: *Black Athena*

1/17 Course pack: Gilroy, Asante, Hoskins, Hall, & Hill Collins,

1/24 Course pack: Carby, Walker, Hudson-Weems, & Hill Collins & **1st essay due**

**Pre-colonial Africa:**

1/31 Course Pack: Obichere & Diop

**Slavery and the Slave Trade:**

2/7 Douglass in *The Classic Slave Narratives* & James **on reserve**


2/21 *Dessa Rose* & *Women in Chains* 121-47

**Colonized Africa:**

2/28 *Things Fall Apart* & *Discourse on Colonialism* & **2nd Essay Due by noon on Friday**

3/7 *Nervous Conditions* (**begin thinking about Paper Proposal**)

3/14 *A Grain of Wheat* (**begin working on Paper Proposal**)

**Postcolonial Africa:**

3/21 *A Month and a Day* & **Paper Proposal Due (may be turned in earlier)**

**African American Identity:**

3/28 *Invisible Man*

4/4 *The Bluest Eye*

**The African Diaspora:**

4/11 *Beyond the Limbo Silence*

4/18 *She Tries Her Tongue* 10-25, 47-100 & *Krik? Krak!* 1-49, 101-22 & **Final Paper Due**

4/25 Reports on final paper & Course Evaluation

**This syllabus is subject to revision.**
Reminder: The Writing Assistance Center is available to provide free help with your writing projects.
**Graduate Student Oral Report:** Sign up for one of the assigned readings and be prepared to lead discussion for a minimum of 20 minutes. You should have an understanding of the reading and be prepared to provide a brief synopsis, but most of your time should be focused on asking questions and generating discussion.

1/17  Gilroy—excerpt from *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*

No more than two reports selected from the following:

1/17  Asante—excerpt from *The Afrocentric Idea*

1/17  Hoskins—“Eurocentrism VS. Afrocentrism: A Geopolitical Linkage Analysis,”

1/17  Hall—“Beyond Afrocentrism: Alternatives for African American Studies”

1/17  Hill Collins—“When Fighting Words Are Not Enough: The Gendered Content of Afrocentrism”

No more than two reports selected from the following:

1/24  Carby—“Rethinking Black Feminist Theory”

1/24  Walker—excerpt from *In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens*

1/24  Hudson-Weems—“Africana Womanism and the Critical need for Africana Theory and Thought”

1/24  Hill Collins—“Coming to Voice, Coming to Power: Black Feminist Thought As Critical Social Theory”

One or both of the following:

2/21  Obichere—“African History and Western Civilization,“

2/21  Diop—excerpt from *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*