



TERM: SPRING 2023

PROFESSOR: DR. WILLIAMSON

OFFICE HOURS:

TIME/LOCATION: **MONDAYS 6-8:45PM @LH 303**

EMAIL: SAVANNAH.WILLIAMSON@SULROSS.EDU

Day	Time	Location
Mondays	10am-1pm	UC 212
Tuesdays	12:30-2pm	LH 211
Wednesdays	9am-1pm	UC 212
Thursdays	12:30-2pm	LH 211
Fridays	<i>By appointment</i>	

I. Course Description

The African American experience spans over four hundred years, from the initial settlement of the American continent by Europeans and the establishment of the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and through to the present day. Throughout generations of sufferings and ordeals, the people of African descent who were brought involuntarily to the Anglo-American colonies and eventual United States found the courage and creativity to "make themselves." They constructed their own unique rituals, traditions, and symbols; a distinct spirituality, music, art, dance, and folklore; a rich cultural heritage, kinship, and community; and a complex body of political and social ideas about the contradictory nature of American democracy and the position of black people within it. In effect, black Americans made their own history, although not always in the manner in which they chose, because they were encumbered by the constraints of institutional racism and white privilege.

This course is designed to introduce students to the major themes, issues, and debates in African American history from its African origins until today. It provides advanced undergraduate students with an overview of the African American experience through readings, lectures, discussions, group work, film, music, podcasts, and other mixed media. Some specific topics covered include African and African American experiences, colonial and antebellum slavery, the abolition movement, the free black experience, the Civil War, emancipation, Jim Crow segregation, racial violence, black culture, Black Lives Matter and the modern freedom struggle, popular culture, political movements, and investigations into ongoing forms of racial oppression and violence. Students will gain an understanding of how African Americans lived, worked, socialized, and defined themselves, both while enslaved and free, in American society.

II. Course Objectives

The graduating student in history will be able to:

1. The student will be able to develop an informed, critical, and articulate approach to the study of history.
2. The student will be able to demonstrate knowledge of historical events, movements, major turning points and personalities of the past.
3. The student will be able to demonstrate an ability to identify and relate the role that historical interpretation plays in assessments of the past.
Marketable skills---Students can utilize data to persuade various audiences.
Students can utilize data to generate and strengthen ideas.
Students can decipher stances adopted by various individuals.
4. The student will develop analytical writing skills and be able to write effectively, logically, and persuasively about topics in History.
Marketable skills---Students can identify useful resources from a pool of data.
Students can select and organize data in a relevant manner.
Students can make written presentations to various audiences.
5. The student will be able to communicate information, arguments, ideas effectively to demonstrate knowledge of History.
Marketable Skills---Students can meet deadlines in a successful manner.
Students can discharge responsibilities in an adequate manner.
Students can manage the absorption of data.

III. Student Learning Outcomes

Using this combination of teaching and assessment strategies, one goal of the class is to facilitate students' LEARNING of African American history rather than the memorization of relevant names, dates, and events. The professor recognizes the importance of knowing key figures and events; however, the primary objective is to help students develop a solid understanding of the political, social, economic, and personal lives of African Americans from their arrival through today. Students will be able to describe the ways in which black struggles for freedom, equality before the law, and social and economic justice shaped the social, political, and economic landscape of the United States from the sixteenth century to the present. Students will also gain critical reading skills and effective oral and written communication skills.

IV. Required Texts

1. Textbook: *Slavery to Liberation* Free e-book available through Blackboard. [PDF HERE](#)
2. Cooper Owens, Deirdre. *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology* (2018). Free e-book available through SRSU Library website
3. Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (2010).

V. Assignments and Grading

- **Discussion & Participation** (30%): Most weeks, we will spend a portion of a class period working, usually collaboratively, on an exercise or project focused on either “doing history” or “different ways of seeing the past.” Students are expected to read the assigned materials before the start of class and contribute to discussions of course materials. Participation is required of each individual student.
- **Two Book Reviews** (10% each, 20% of the semester grade): Prompts and guidelines will be posted on Bb.
- **Midterm Exam** (10%): Students must be prepared to answer short and long essay prompts and questions.
- **Service-Learning Project** (10%): The service-learning project offers students a chance to volunteer in their groups for 12 hours throughout the semester in a local community organization (less than an hour a week, depending on the kind of volunteer activity) **OR** the entire class may agree to organize and lead an education event for members of campus and/or the community on a topic related to African American History that is still relevant today. The intention is to offer students the opportunity to move beyond lecture halls and be part of organizations struggling with concrete social problems that affect African American communities and BIPOC in West Texas. Students must then write a 2-3 pg. report on their experiences and present it during a discussion section. The report should include a brief description of the community organization and/or cause that you have been working with, your assigned work, and your personal reflection on the experience.
- **Final Paper & Film Project** (30%): To measure the success of student acquisition of these mandated skills, one assignment during the semester will require critical analysis of an historical event in African American history.
 - **Final Paper** (15%): Each student will utilize a selection of primary and/or secondary sources to interpret and evaluate, place in historical context, and utilize to construct an analytical essay. The essay will require that students think critically about the sources, examine how individual choices and decisions influenced the course of history, and consider the ways in which individuals engage with regional, national, and/or global communities.
 - **Group Project & Presentation** (15%): In their groups, students must use the information from class and work together to create a short film, 6-8 minutes in length, to link course materials and teach that topic to the course. Completion of this assignment is an important component in the successful completion of this course. Further instructions will be provided at the appropriate time in the semester. Each group must also give feedback on each person’s contributions to the project and each person’s role in the project presentation.

Course Grading

A 90-100% B 80-89% C 70-79% D 60-69% F 59% or lower

VI. Course Policies

- **Objectionable Materials Warning**
 - At times this semester we may be discussing historical events that may be disturbing, even traumatizing, to some students. If you suspect that specific material is likely to be emotionally challenging for you, I’d be happy to discuss any concerns you may have before the subject comes up in class. Likewise, if you ever wish to discuss your personal reactions to course material with the class or with me individually afterwards, I welcome such discussions as an appropriate part of our coursework.
 - If you ever feel the need to remove yourself from a class discussion, you may always do so without academic penalty. You will, however, be responsible for any material you miss. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please arrange to get notes from another student or see me individually to discuss the situation.

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- **Classroom Climate of Respect**

- Importantly, this class will foster free expression, critical investigation, and the open discussion of ideas. This means that all of us must help create and sustain an atmosphere of tolerance, civility, and respect for the viewpoints of others. Similarly, we must all learn how to probe, oppose, and disagree without resorting to tactics of intimidation, harassment, or personal attack. No one is entitled to harass, belittle, or discriminate against another on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, age, gender, national origin, or sexual preference. Still, we will not be silenced by the difficulty of fruitfully discussing politically sensitive issues.

- **Classroom Demeanor**

- Students should not engage in any behavior that disrupts class: talking during the lectures, passing notes, reading materials unrelated to the course, and the like. Persistent disruptive behavior will result in a failure for the course. The professor also reserves the right to drop disruptive students from the class.
- Be respectful of your classmates and the course instructor. This means that ALL ELECTRONIC DEVICES MUST BE SILENT DURING CLASS. Do not under any condition text message on your phones and only use your computers for taking notes.
- Watching videos, playing video games, surfing the internet, emailing, Facebooking and similar behaviors disrupt the class and will not be tolerated. Students who violate the computer policy will not be allowed to use their computers in the future.

Students **are not** allowed to record or distribute lectures, course materials, or use any kind of electronic recording equipment without the professor's permission. This includes audio and video recordings, as well as photographs of slides and visual aids.

- **Diversity Statement**

- I aim to create a learning environment for my students that supports a diversity of thoughts, perspectives, and experiences, and honors your identities (including race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, ability, socioeconomic class, age, nationality, etc.). I also understand that the crisis of COVID, economic disparity, and health concerns, or even unexpected life events could impact the conditions necessary for you to succeed. My commitment is to be there for you and help you meet the learning objectives of this course. I do this to demonstrate my commitment to you and to the mission of Sul Ross State University to create an inclusive environment and care for the whole student as part of the Sul Ross Familia. If you feel like your performance in the class is being impacted by your experiences outside of class, please don't hesitate to come and talk with me. I want to be a resource for you.

- **Children in the Classroom**

The policy described here is thus, a reflection of my own beliefs and commitments to students, staff, and faculty parents:

- All exclusively nursing/breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary to support the nursing/breastfeeding relationship. Because not all women can pump sufficient milk, and not all babies will take a bottle reliably, I never want students to feel like they have to choose between feeding their baby and continuing their education. You and your nursing baby are welcome in class anytime.
- For older children and babies, I understand that minor illnesses and unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to choose between missing class to stay home

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with a child and leaving him or her with someone you or the child does not feel comfortable with. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.

- I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.
- In all cases where babies and children come to class, I ask that you sit close to the door so that if your little one needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, you may step outside until their need has been met. Non-parents in the class, please reserve seats near the door for your parenting classmates.
- Finally, I understand that often the largest barrier to completing your coursework once you become a parent is the tiredness many parents feel in the evening once children have *finally* gone to sleep. The struggles of balancing school, childcare, and often another job, are exhausting! I hope that you will feel comfortable disclosing your student-parent status to me. This is the first step in my being able to accommodate any special needs that arise. While I maintain the same high expectations for all student in my classes regardless of parenting status, I am happy to problem solve with you in a way that makes you feel supported as you strive for school-parenting balance.
- Don't forget to check out the SRSU Lactation Room on the 2nd floor of Lawrence Hall!

- **Grading**

- While I am always happy to discuss ways to improve your writing and performance on exams, I am not in the business of haggling over grades. Grades in this class are the product of careful deliberation and are not negotiable. If you find that the instructor—who is human—made a mathematical error, please bring the matter to my attention during office hours.
- In addition to following guidelines and meeting requirements, students will be graded on:

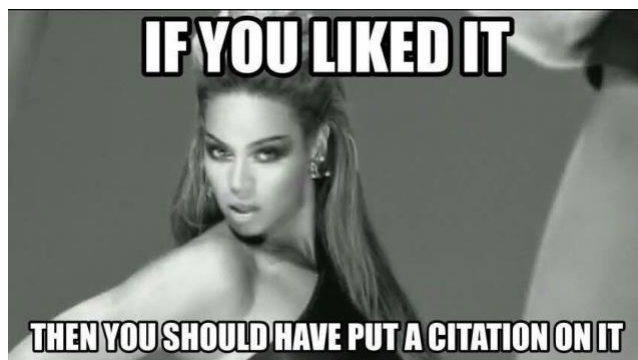
THE 5 C'S OF HISTORICAL REASONING

1. **Change and Continuity:** Historians debate what has changed over time and what has remained the same. Change can be a dramatic pivot or a slow shift.
2. **Causation:** Historians debate the causes of historical events. Actually, it would be more accurate to say that we often discuss about causality, sometimes passionately. Few events have only one cause (monocausal), so we debate with one another about which cause should be considered the most important.
3. **Context:** Historians insist that the past must be understood on its own terms. Any historical event, person, idea must be placed in the context of its historical era to be interpreted. The historian's goal is to discover how people in the past understood their own lives, which is often quite different from how we may react to their situation.
4. **Contingency and Connections:** Historians are aware that events happen for a variety of reasons, which are often interconnected. Change one factor, and the event might not have happened at all. This idea helps us to remember that historical events are not inevitable.
5. **Complexity:** Historical reasoning is not about memorizing dates and names. It is about making sense of the messiness of the past, in all its complexity. That often means recognizing that different historical groups experienced events in different ways.

- **Late Work**

- All exams and course work will **only** be accepted on the due dates in the class calendar. In the case of extraordinary medical or personal circumstances, you must contact the instructor **before** the due date of the assignment or exam. If you miss a class for extraordinary

circumstances, you must submit appropriate paperwork--a doctor's note, obituary, a bill for a tow truck, and the like.



- **Academic Honesty**

- The University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is beyond reproach and to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of their classroom. The University may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. "Cheating" includes:
 1. Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, or computer files, data listings, and/or programs, or allowing another student to copy from same.
 2. Using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test.
 3. Collaborating, without authorization, with another person during an examination or in preparing academic work.
 4. Knowingly, and without authorization, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting, copying, or possessing, in whole or in part, the contents of a non-administered test.
 5. Substituting for another student; permitting any other person, or otherwise assisting any other person to substitute for oneself or for another student in the taking of an examination or test or the preparation of academic work to be submitted for academic credit.
 6. Bribing another person to obtain a non-administered test or information about a non-administered test.
 7. Purchasing, or otherwise acquiring and submitting as one's own work any research paper or other writing assignment prepared by an individual or firm. This section does not apply to the typing of a rough and/or final version of an assignment by a professional typist.
 8. "Plagiarism" means the appropriation and the unacknowledged incorporation of another's work or idea in one's own written work offered for credit.
 9. "Collusion" means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing written work offered for credit.
 10. "Abuse of resource materials" means the mutilation, destruction, concealment, theft or alteration of materials provided to assist students in the mastery of course materials.
 11. "Academic work" means the preparation of an essay, dissertation, thesis, report, problem, assignment, or other project that the student submits as a course requirement or for a grade.
 12. "Falsification of Data" means the representation, claim, or use of research, data, statistics, records, files, results, or information that is falsified, fabricated, fraudulently altered, or otherwise misappropriated or misrepresented.
- All academic dishonesty cases may be first considered and reviewed by the faculty member. If the faculty member believes that an academic penalty is necessary, he/she may assign a penalty but must notify the student of his/her right to appeal to the department chair, the dean

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and eventually, to the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs before imposition of the penalty. At each step in the process, the student shall be entitled to written notice of the offense and/or of the administrative decision, an opportunity to respond, and an impartial disposition as to the merits of his/her case. The decision of the Provost and Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs shall be final.

- Please read the complete policy at http://www.sulross.edu/sites/default/files/sites/default/files/users/docs/stulife/student_conduct_discipline.pdf

VII. Student Resources

- **Learning Strategies, Styles, and Centers**

The University offers tutoring for many subjects, holds numerous workshops on developing better note-taking, reading, and study skills as well as assisting students with writing and test taking strategies through the **Academic Center for Excellence (ACE)**. **Location:** FH 214 **Web:** <http://www.sulross.edu/academic-center-excellence>

- **Library**

The Bryan Wildenthal Memorial Library in Alpine. Offers FREE resources and services to the entire SRSU community. Access and borrow books, articles, and more by visiting the library's website, library.sulross.edu. Off-campus access requires logging in with your LobolD and password. Librarians are a tremendous resource for your coursework and can be reached in person, by email (srsulibrary@sulross.edu), or phone (432-837-8123).

- **Counseling and Psychological Services**

Provides counseling services and offers other services to students in need.

Students seeking counseling services must contact:

Mary Schwartz-Grisham, M. Ed., L.P.C., Coordinator for Counseling and Accessibility Services

Location: Ferguson Hall 112.

Hours: M-F 8am-12pm and 1pm-5pm.

Phone: (432) 837-8203.

Web: <http://www.sulross.edu/section/2408/counseling-accessibility-services>

- **Accessibility Services**

Sul Ross State University (SRSU) is committed to equal access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1973. It is SRSU policy to provide reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. It is the student's responsibility to initiate a request for accessibility services each semester and for each class.

Students seeking accessibility services must contact:

Mary Schwartz-Grisham, M. Ed., L.P.C., Coordinator for Counseling and Accessibility Services

Location: Ferguson Hall 112

Telephone: 432-837-8691

E-mail: mschwartz@sulross.edu

Mailing Address: P.O. Box C-122, Sul Ross State University, Alpine, Texas, 79832

[CLICK HERE to OPEN TEXTBOOK PDF](#)

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 (Monday, 16 January 2023): MLK Day—No Classes

For Week 2—READ: Textbook, Ch. 1-2 (p.1-26).

Recommendation—WATCH: [“Remembering MLK: The Man. The Movement. The Moment.”](#) *National Civil Rights Museum* (April 4, 2021).

Week 2 (Monday, Jan. 23rd): Introductions & African Origins

Course Introductions + Discussion over assigned readings

For Week 3—READ: Textbook, Ch. 3-4 (p.57-73); Film: *The Middle Passage*

Week 3 (Monday, Jan. 30th): Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade

For Week 4—READ: Textbook, Ch. 5-6 (p.74-118); WATCH: Black beauty, discrimination, standards. Video of small children, little girls, dolls. 77% attributed negative traits to Black, positive to White dolls. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tkpUyB2xgTM>

Week 4 (Monday, Feb. 6th): Antebellum Slavery

For Week 5—READ & REVIEW: *Medical Bondage*, by Deirdre Cooper-Owens

Week 5 (Monday, Feb. 13th): *The Black Body*

***Medical Bondage* review due to Bb before the start of class**

For Week 6—READ: Textbook, Ch. 7-8 (p.119-176)

Week 6 (Monday, Feb. 20th): *Towards Freedom*

Week 7: (Monday, Feb. 27th): *The Great Migration, WWI, & the Harlem Renaissance*

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Week 8 (Monday, March 6th): MIDTERM EXAM, on Bb

Week 9 (Monday, March 13th): SPRING BREAK, No Class

For Week 10—READ: Textbook, Ch. 9-10 (p.177-231)

Week 10 (Monday, March 20th): *The Civil Rights Era*

For Week 11—READ: Textbook, Ch. 11-14 (p.232-333)

Week 11 (Monday, March 27th): *Radicalism & Consciousness*

For Week 12—READ & REVIEW: *The New Jim Crow*, by Michelle Alexander

Week 12 (Monday, April 3rd): *Mass Incarceration*

***The New Jim Crow* review due on Bb before the start of class**

Week 13 (Monday, April 10th): *Research & working day, no class*

Week 14 (Monday, April 17th): *Service-Learning Project(s) due in class*

Week 15 (Monday, April 23rd): *Research & working day, no class*

Week 16 (Monday, April 30th): *Research & working day, no class*

Week 17 (Monday, May 8th): *PROJECT PRESENTATIONS DUE in class*