

BLACK ABOLITIONIST THOUGHT

Political Science 295-04 / History 295-05

Meeting Time: 7:00-9:50 PM
Location: Room N2112
Instructor: Lucien Ferguson
Contact Info:

and democracy; and consider how the contemporary movement to abolish prisons and policing has roots in eighteenth- and nineteenth-

We all learn in different ways. Thus, I encourage you to talk to me as soon as you can about your individual learning needs. Every possible attempt will be made to accommodate you. Please let me know if I can help you access the materials for this course and if you think there is a better way that I can assess your work for this course. There are resources available to accommodate students with disabilities and I will do all I can to support you.

Students with documented disabilities, including invisible disabilities such as chronic illness, learning disabilities, and psychiatric disabilities, are encouraged to discuss appropriate accommodations with me. You will also need to have a conversation about and provide documentation of your disability to the Coordinator for Disability Resources, located on the ground level floor of Steiner Hall ([641-269-3124](tel:641-269-3124)).

GRADES

Attendance and Participation:	20%
Op-Ed:	15%
Class Presentation:	15%
Oral Mid Term:	25%
Final Project:	25% (5% presentation + 20% written)

Participation:

It is also essential that participate in every class session (remember, we spend a long time together each week!). But participation is not the same as vocalization, you need to be an **active contributor** to do so, you must ask earnest, critical questions, genuinely respond to classmates, ask for clarification or identify difficult passages, terms, and ideas, make connections to previous class sessions, provide examples to shed light on the discussion, and explain the real-life relevance of a topic we are discussing.

Sometimes, however, it is also important to make space for others to contribute. While we often assume everyone shares the same ability to participate, each of us comes to the table with different levels of comfort, urgency, and readiness. The purpose of participation is to make an inclusive, engaging, and thoughtful environment in which we can all learn from each other.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment #1:

on canvas, but I encourage those who choose this option to do their own poking around too, as there are many potential zine formats and approaches.

- x Write a **podcast episode** with minimum 3,750 words of text and using a citation format of your choice, so long as you are consistent. I will post examples of podcasts and several podcasting resources, but I also encourage students to do their own research on various podcast formats. Student may **but are not required** to record these podcast episodes and submit the recording alongside the written text and citations.

Note: All assignments must employ gender-neutral language. Academics no longer use the pronoun “he” to apply indiscriminately to everyone, nor the term “man” to refer to humanity and people in general. Though you will see such usages in the historical texts we read, in your own writing you should make such generalizations using terms like “one,” “s/he,” “they,” “him or her,” or other inclusive language. Further when referring to specific persons or groups of people you should use the specific language or pronouns they prefer. You should also be attentive to the spelling and accents of authors’ names. Finally, all authors should be referred to by their entire name, or simply their last name (i.e., never just their first name).

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Score Range	Letter Grade	GPA
97-100%	A+	4.00
93-96%	A	4.00
90-92%	A-	3.67
87-89%	B+	3.33
83-86%	B	3.00
80-82%	B-	2.67
77-79%	C+	2.33
73-76%	C	2.00
70-72%	C-	1.67
<70%	F	0.00

REQUIRED TEXTS

You are not required to purchase any texts for this course. I will make all texts available

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: January 24

Welcome to class!

Mariame Kaba, "[Towards the horizon of abolition: A conversation with Mariame Kaba](#)," *The Next System Project*, November 9, 2017; "Yes, We Mean Literally Abolish the Police," *New York Times*, June 12, 2020.

Rachel Kushner, "Is Prison Necessary? Ruth Wilson Gilmore Might Change Your Mind," *The New York Times*, April 17th, 2019.

Garrett Felber, "[The Struggle to Abolish the Police is Not New](#)," *Boston Review*, June 9, 2020.

Week 2: January 31

Black Radicalism in the Early Republic

David Walker, *Walker's Appeal* (1829) (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Library, 2011), 1-79.

Thomas Jefferson, "Declaration of Independence" (1776), and "Notes on the State of Virginia" (1785) (Query XIV), *Political Writings* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 102-105, 474-480.

Week 3: February 7

No Class: "Working Differently Day"

Week 4: February 14

Emigration and Colonization

James T. Holly, "The Negro Race, Self-Government, and the Haitian Revolution," in *Lift Every Voice: African American Orators, 1800-1875*. Philip S. Foner and Robert James Branham (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1998), pp. 288-304.

Martin R. Delany, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* (1852) & Letter to William Lloyd Garrison, 14 May 1852, in Levine, Robert S., ed. *Martin R. Delany: A Documentary Reader* (Raleigh: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), pp. 189-223.

Week 7: March 7

Ida B. Wells

Ida B. Wells, *Southern Horror: Lynch Law in All Its Phases as Recorded* (1895), "Lynch Law in America" (1900), "Lynching and the Excuse for It" (1901), in *The Light of Truth*, Mia Bay and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Penguin, 2014), pp. 57-82; 218-236, 307-312, 394-403, 408-414.

Week 8: March 14

Anna Julia Cooper

Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South by a Black Woman* (1892) (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 9-47; 80-126.

Recommended:

Sojourner Truth, "Equal Rights for All, Three Speeches," excerpt from Philip S. Foner and Robert James Branham, *Lift Every Voice: African American Oratory, 1787-1900* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1998), pp. 463-

Du Bois, W.E.B. **Black Reconstruction in America** (1886) (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1998), Chs. I, II, IV, and XVI.

W.E.B. Du Bois, **Darkwater/**Voices from Within the (Meritcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920), 29-52.

Recommended:

Cheryl Harris, "Whiteness as Property," in *Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings that Formed the Movement*, eds. Crenshaw et al. (New York: W.W. Norton Press, 1995), 276-292.

Week 12: April 25

Civil Rights, Protest Politics, Capitalism

Bayard Rustin, "[The Failure of Black Separatism](#)," *Harper's Magazine*, January 1970, pp. 24-34.

Martin Luther King, Jr., *Where Do We Go from Here: Chaos or Community?* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2010), Ch. 6 (pp. 143-176).

Week 13: May 2

Abolition in/of the Present

Ruth Wilson Gilmore, *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California* (Berkeley: University of California Press), 1-30; 128-248.

Recommended:

Angela Y. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), pp. 1-9; 84-115.

Week 14: May 9

Final Project Presentations

IMPORTANT DATES

January 24: First day of classes

February 7: No class—“Work Differently Day”

February 18: Assignment #1, Op-Ed, Due at 5:00 PM

_____ : Assignment #2, Class Presentation (write in your date)

March 19: Spring Break begins

April 4: Classes Resume

April 4: Assignment #3, Mid-Term, during class time, at _____ (write in your specific timeslot)

May 13: Last day of classes

May 16: Exam Week begins

May 20: Last Day of Exam Week

May 20: Assignment #4, Final Project due

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Plagiarism is a serious form of academic dishonesty and will not be tolerated. No credit for the assignment is the usual consequence. But particularly egregious cases may lead to further action such as automatic failure of the course.

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

1. The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
2. Copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement.
3. Submitting as one's own work

Grinnell College's Academic Honesty policy is in the online [Student Handbook](#). The College expects students are aware of and meet the expectations expressed in this policy.

Remember that, though there are no group assignments in this course, collaborating, discussing, and studying with one another is expected and encouraged. Collaboration will be especially helpful to you in studying for the mid-term; and discussing your presentation, opened, and final projects with one another is an excellent way to develop your ideas. If you have questions about how a particular assignment relates to the College's policy, I will gladly consult with you in advance of the assignment's due date.