

W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies

Fall 2019

Graduate Course Offerings

AFROAM 601. Slavery

Professor Kerth

Thursdays 4:00-6:30 p.m., NAH 302

This seminar will focus on the rise of slavery in the United States until its destruction during the Civil War. We will study slavery as a political and economic institution as well as a day-to-day lived experience. Within this historical framework, the emphasis will be on broad themes and interpretations such as the construction of race and racism, the debate origins of slavery, the nature of slave communities and culture, gender and slavery, slavery in a comparative perspective, slave resistance, and the politics of slavery.

AFROAM 652. Literature of the Harlem Renaissance, 4 credits

Professor Tracy

Tuesdays 1:00-3:30 p.m., NAH 302

An intensive study of the literature and orature associated with the Harlem Renaissance, from the philosophical underpinnings supplied by Du Bois, Johnson, Locke, Garvey, and Randolph to the varied poetic visions of Hughes, Spencer, Brown, Cullen, and McKay to the fictional explorations of Toomer, Hurston, Fisher, Larsen, Fauset, and Thurman to the inspiration supplied by blues, jazz, and folklore of the African American tradition. Journals connected with the movement and the contributions of interested patrons such as Van Vechten, Cunard, and the Spingarns, and the relations of the Harlem Renaissance to other contemporary American literary currents (realism, naturalism, and modernism.)

AFROAM 691F. Black Political Struggle and the American Political System, 4 credits

Professor Losier

Thursdays 1:00-3:30 p.m., NAH 302

An historical examination of the Black political struggle for equality and citizenship in America—the obstacles placed in the path of that struggle by the American political system in general and by the American state in particular—and the countless ways in which racial politics have shaped the system that is called American Democracy.

AFROAM 693R. Race, Caste and Capital, 3 credits (Meets with WGSS 693R)

Professor Shah

Tuesdays 4:00-6:30 p.m.

The seminar will examine the co-constitutive historical formations of race and caste in relation to the expansion of capitalism and European high colonialism in the 18th and 19th centuries. Rather than seeing this as a period for the 'origins' of race or caste, the course will examine the ways in which race and caste were discursively mediated in the period of high colonialism to shape the kind of racialized hierarchies that we are familiar with today. The course puts the urgent concerns of African American Studies, South Asian Studies and heterodox economics, with an emphasis on questions of political economy, together in a semester-long inquiry into how racialized hierarchies have been essential to producing and maintaining class stratification and geopolitical power. We will primarily draw from the American Black Radical tradition and the South Asian Dalit Radical tradition for our readings in this course. These readings will focus on how European colonial and imperial regimes of power necessitated and furthered racialized hierarchies through regimes of chattel slavery, indentured servitude and bonded labour. We will also aim to understand how these regimes elicited some of the most radical and revolutionary struggles for liberation in the world. While our readings will be wide ranging in scope, our discussions will focus on the fairly specific question of what relation we can postulate, based on historical evidence and historiographical critiques, between contemporary instantiations of race and caste in different parts of the world? We will necessarily pay close attention to axes of gender and sexuality throughout the seminar, drawing on examples and critical work from authors working in the Caribbean, South Asia, North America, South Africa, East Africa, and the UK.