STPEC 491H
Heritage of the Oppressed:
Radical Heritage Studies in 12 Easy Lessons

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Office Hours: TBA and by appointment.

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Enrollment in STPEC 491H constitutes an agreement on your part to read, understand, and follow the procedures and policies of this syllabus as outlined below. Following this guide and keeping track of the class calendar are crucial to your success in this course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION—This course is a senior seminar that is designed to initiate you into the scholar-activist world of Africana Studies. The course is based upon and promotes an open, collegial atmosphere without intimidation or one-upmanship. It aims to help you to develop your ability to produce radical, transformative scholarship about the African American experience in the very best of the Afro-American Studies scholarly tradition—the Du Boisian way. Three interrelated processes will guide you: (1) Reflect on and use what you studied in General Education and other previous course work; (2) Study/apply key black studies concepts, epistemic formations, and knowledge revolutions; and (3) Constructively critique each other’s scholarly work in development.

What is Radical Heritage Studies?

Heritage Studies is the interdisciplinary investigation of the relationship between people and the representation, interpretation, and valuation of the past with the goal of using this information toward a practical end. “Heritage” is constructed from values and meanings derived from social, cultural, and personal experience while “history” tries to represent objective facts. Heritage studies, therefore, assumes that values and meanings are not innate characteristics of objects from the past; these objects only become “historical” when people believe that they have historical value. The goal of this class is to present heritage studies from the underrepresented perspective of the oppressed. With its interdisciplinary emphasis, Heritage Studies uses multiple perspectives to explore the inter-relationships of history, folklore, literature, geography, culture, and the environment in distinctive regions of the United States and the world. “Saunders Redding has said, in effect, that heritage is reflected in how a people have used their talent to create a history that gives them memories that they can respect and use to command the respect of other people. The ultimate purpose of heritage, and heritage teaching, is to use a people’s talent to develop an awareness and a pride in themselves. This sense of identity is the stimulation for all of a people’s honest and creative efforts. A people’s relationship to its heritage is the same as the relationship of a child to its mother. It will be our function as scholar-activists to put the components of our heritage together to weld an instrument of liberation.” (John Henrik Clarke)
REQUIRED TEXTS:

James Oliver Horton & Lois E. Horton, Slavery and the Public History (2006)
http://unc.codemantra.us/Widget/9780807859162/WP9780807859162_web.html#


Selections from David Lowenthal, Possessed by the Past(1998)

Selections from Robert H. Romer, Slavery in the Connecticut Valley of Massachusetts (2007)

*Selections from the work Neil Silberman

Selections from Tim Winter, Post-conflict heritage, postcolonial tourism: culture, politics and development at Angkor (2007)

SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS

*Barbara Little, Why the Past Matters (1992)


*Selections from the work James W. Loewen

Critical Papers

Every critical paper we read will be assigned to one student who will write a 2000-2500 word explanation and criticism/discussion of the paper targeted to a scholarly audience. For any reading assigned to you, your paper needs to be turned in by the end of the Sunday previous to the class discussion, so that you have one full day to concentrate on your presentation and any handouts or overheads. In class, you will deliver a roughly 10 minute presentation that explains one argument in the paper that seems to a key issue using any needed philosophical background or contrasts. The entire class will then discuss the material. The goal in presentation is to practice your ability to present an argument efficiently. The goal of discussion is to develop critical skills: listening, reappraising arguments, developing clear examples on the fly, being diplomatic about disagreements, resisting intimidation by brow-beating know-it-alls, avoiding tangents, etc.

You are required to attend every class session. During the following class, we will discuss the mechanics of the speaker’s presentation, how questions were answered and how questions were asked. Make notes of things that occur to you during the colloquium that are worth mentioning: When did you fall asleep? When did you give up and see the talk as pointless or trivial or ill-motivated? Was the main idea clear to you after the talk? What key idea did you remember later? Which diagrams were useful and which confusing?

You are also required to write one new paper, approx. 6000-7000 words, on a topic of your choice. We will all review and criticize the submission twice, and you will rewrite the paper to improve clarity aiming to have it suitable for submission to a journal.
LIST OF MEASURABLE COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. Students will be able to

2. Students will be able to analyze

3. Students will be able to demonstrate in both written and verbal formats the

4. Students will be able to explain an example of a

5. Students will be able to identify

6. Students will be able to explain

7. Students will be able to explain some of the basic developments in the history of

YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Attendance. You are expected to attend every class. There will be absolutely no makeups on any graded assignment without a documented excuse. Moreover, a large part of your grade in the class will be based on attendance, participation, and preparation. Please note that if you miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed. Unless you have a documented excuse such as illness or family emergency, do not expect me to help you catch up on the work.

Unacceptable excuses for missing graded work: Make-ups for graded assignments will be allowed only in emergency cases. Examples of circumstances under which you will not be allowed to make up missed work:

* Leaving early for school breaks.
* Having to be in court for speeding tickets, underage drinking, or any other violation that is your fault.
* Having to attend or do work for fraternity or sorority events.
* Having to finish work for another class.

2. Academic Honesty. You are expected to observe high standards of academic honesty. If you are found cheating on any class assignment I will follow the procedures explained in the University’s Academic Honesty Policy (particularly section C), so please familiarize yourself with them:

http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/

Possible sanctions for dishonesty, depending on the nature of the violation, include: receiving a grade of zero on the assignment in question or in the course; loss of funding; being placed on academic probation or suspension; or being dismissed from the University. All students have the right of appeal through the Academic Honesty Board.

3. Come to class prepared. Keeping up with the assignments is essential for understanding what we cover in class, for participating in discussions, and for doing well in the course. It is your responsibility to
make sure that you have access to the required texts for this class and that you complete the readings and other class assignments on time. Part of your grade in the class will be based on your preparedness.

4. Class protocol. This is for the sake of courtesy and efficiency. Please arrive on time and stay for the duration of the class. Doing otherwise adversely affects the learning environment for your fellow students. If you must arrive late or leave early, please inform me in advance. Be aware that arriving late affects your attendance/participation grade: if you come ten minutes late to every class meeting, you will have missed the equivalent of nearly 8 entire class meetings (almost three weeks' worth of class!).

ACCOMMODATION POLICY STATEMENT: The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS) or the Center for Counseling and Psychological Health (CCPH) you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that required an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements. Accommodations will not be made after the fact.

IMPORTANT: In a college course you should expect to spend an average of two hours a day outside of class in preparation for every hour in class. Thus, for a Classics course like this one that meets for 2 1/2 hours a week, you should expect to put in an average of five hours a week outside of class. I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of regular study habits and of keeping up with the material in a course that requires a lot of reading, memorization, and frequent quizzes and tests.

Student Learning Outcomes

You the student through your guided reading, independent research, and participation in class meetings are expected to gain a combination of specific skills to include:

- Selecting and defining a realistic problem to be solved.
- Identifying multiple relevant resources of literature.
- Integrating mathematical/statistical concepts appropriately.
- Coherently presenting technical material in written form, using one of formats for the standard scientific journals.
- Making valid suggestions for improvement or further study.
- Effectively presenting results orally.
- Managing time appropriately in oral presentation.
- Responding effectively to constructive feedback.
- Executing project objectives timely.
Delivering acceptable product on time.

The Written Report

The written report should follow the broad subheadings provided on the sample Table of Contents page. See Appendix A. It is expected that the written report be at least ten pages long, typed double-spaced. Slight deviations to this format are left to the judgment of the Seminar Advisor.

A good introduction defines the problem under consideration in concise and succinct fashion without ambiguity. It also highlights the importance or relevance of the problem to provide some rationale or motivation for the study. An attempt should be made to inform the reader about the focus and thrust in order to give a context to the research. While the Introduction serves as an invitation to read the rest of the report, it is also an opportunity for the researcher to put the direction of the research effort in perspective, leaving no false expectations to the reader. A review of the literature regarding the problem should be documented with appropriate references, as opposed to a complete bibliography. It should document the existing background information (related theories and theorems, results of experiments, axioms, etc.) that forms the foundation for the main work. If the literature review is voluminous, it could form a separate chapter.

The Main Body of the written report should contain the major part of the student's research. It should be organized in appropriate subheadings to clearly distinguish between and among components of the work.

The Conclusion should include a summary of the results as well as any conclusions that may be drawn from the project as a whole. The researcher should also point to possible directions of further study of the problem.

Furthermore, the researcher's personal thoughts, opinion, and conjectures on the subject, based mainly on the new experience, could also be included in this section.

See

The Oral Presentation

Students will be allowed 15 to 20 minutes each to make an oral presentation of their proseminar. Students should prepare PowerPoint, slides, overhead transparencies, or any advisor-approved visual aids to help them make their presentations effectively. A good presentation should be such that it is readily understandable by classmates, regardless of the complexity of the problem [i.e. oral presentations should pass the classmate test]. The essence is to communicate the student's research in a medium similar to a professional conference.