

CES 235

“BLUES & THE ABSTRACT TRUTH:”  
*Studies in Paradigms of Black  
History/Knowledge & Preliminary Critiques  
of White Supremacy  
Summer 2008*

**Instructor:** Kelvin J. Monroe

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**Office Hrs.:** By appt only

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Required Manuscripts:

- ✚ Quintard Taylor; *From Timbuktu to Katrina: Readings in African American History, vol.1*
- ✚ Quintard Taylor; *From Timbuktu to Katrina: Readings in African American History, vol.2*
  - ✚ Aimé Césaire; *Discourse on Colonialism*
  - ✚ Jamaica Kincaid; *A Small Place*
  - ✚ Frantz Fanon; *Black Skin, White Masks*
  - ✚ Gayl Jones; *Corregidora*

**Disclaimer:** My language is foul, not vulgar. However, I do not curse for the sake of cursing. Besides, we are here for some knowledge acquisition, not to be entertained by my foul mouth. We are adults and I will treat you as such. I will not curse at anyone, nor have I ever cursed at anyone. If this knowledge makes you uncomfortable, then get over it, get over yourself and welcome yourself to this process we called *growth*, which produces *change*, which is ushered in by *conflict*—often with one’s self and one’s assumptions.

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Course Synopsis

With regards to knowing and understanding history, Roman Politician, Marcus Tullius Cicero (106 BC – 43 BC), said that “[t]o be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to always remain a child.” Cicero, understood that knowledge of history is simultaneously a knowledge of self; more, it is a thorough knowledge of self that enables people to develop into conscious human beings. Still, once we begin to move in the direction of obtaining that consciousness thru the study of history, Psychologist, Dr. Amos N. Wilson cautions us by asserting that any “study of history cannot be a mere celebration

of those who struggled on our behalf." Rather, Wilson suggests, "[w]e must be instructed by history and should transform history into a concrete reality," a concrete reality that enables a kind of growth rooted in the vestiges of struggle of and for humanity.

In this class this semester, we examine history from an array of points of contention: historical documents, creative non-fiction, anti-colonial writings, psychiatric diagnosis of white supremacy, fiction, and film. Through engaging these rigorous and, albeit, enlightening texts we shall engage in a historical rediscovery as well as posit some preliminary critiques of white supremacy: a structural phenomena, a historiographic discursive formation, an ideology, that ultimately seeks to deny self knowledge through subtle interlocking systems of power. This will be our concern this semester. Dr. Wilson concludes:

Moreover, the Eurocentric social order, which the Eurocentric historiographic and behavioral science establishments legitimate and support, is essentially a "social machine" which manufactures a consciousness and behavioral orientation in Afrikan peoples designed to serve the purposes of White supremacy. (Wilson 4)

To reiterate, in this class we will

[b]egan an exploration [into] the working mechanisms of the machine and the Means by which it is to be dismantled. (Wilson 4)

This task (and consequently, this class) depends on each of us to attend everyday, and ready to tackle the formidable struggle against this "machine" for the purposes of understanding the world in which we exist, and how to negotiate daily, this world of ideological subterfuge. *Let's make it do whatit do baby...*

### Evaluation Criteria

There is no final examination for this class.

5 Written Responses.	50 pts ea.
<u>3 in -class Exam</u>	<u>100 pts ea.</u>
Total	550 pts.

### More On Evaluation Policies

There will be no acceptance of late papers.

Class participation is vital. It demonstrates that you are reading and arriving to class prepared for lively discussion.

No emailing papers. I will only take hard copies of your written assignments. I will accept assignments printed on recycled paper, colored paper, or however you hard-copy it.

It is suggested that you should set aside at least two – four hours outside of class, to get the real benefit of the subject matter. This is especially true of a summer six-week session where 1 day is equivalent to 1 week of a 15 week semester course. This brings us to. . .

### . . . Attendance

You will have three absences at your discretion. After you miss three classes, one letter grade will be deducted from your final mark. I understand that situations and circumstances come up. However, recovering from hangovers and weed-highs, do not count. Do not bullshit yourself nor me. Come to class. Its easier; plus, my classes *slap* in a major way.

### Other Business

**I reserve the right to give unannounced evaluations if I feel that there is a lack of commitment to the materials and reading.**

### Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please notify me about this documentation during the first week of class.

### Academic Dishonesty

Do your own work. Plagiarism will not tolerated and will be dealt with swiftly and firmly. If you use some else's thoughts or words, use proper citation (see MLA citation guidelines, which I will give each of you). Further, to use or borrow someone else's thoughts and ideas do not invalidate your own original thoughts and ideas. It shows that you are consulting others to further and deepen your own thoughts and ideas. This is no different than someone giving you credit for something that you did that affected their life in one way or another. Any form of cheating will result in automatic failing for the semester—no exceptions. I will cover proper forms of citation in class so that we are on the same page. Consult **WAC 504-25-010** through **WAC 504-25-015** for further explanation regarding academic dishonesty.

**\$200 Reward.**

RANAWAY from the subscriber, on the night of Thursday, the 30th of September.

**FIVE NEGRO SLAVES,**

To-wit: one Negro man, his wife, and three children.

The man is a black negro, full height, very erect, his face a little thin. He is about forty years of age, and calls himself *Washington Reed*, and is known by the name of Washington. He is probably well dressed, possibly takes with him an ivory headed cane, and is of good address. Several of his teeth are gone.

Mary, his wife, is about thirty years of age, a bright mulatto woman, and quite stout and strong.

The oldest of the children is a boy, of the name of FELDING, twelve years of age, a dark mulatto, with heavy eyelids. He probably wore a new cloth cap.

MATILDA, the second child, is a girl, six years of age, rather a dark mulatto, but a bright and smart looking child.

MALCOLM, the youngest, is a boy, four years old, a lighter mulatto than the last, and about equally as bright. He probably also wore a cloth cap. If examined, he will be found to have a swelling at the navel.

Washington and Mary have lived at or near St. Louis, with the subscriber, for about 15 years.

It is supposed that they are making their way to Chicago, and that a white man accompanies them, that they will travel chiefly at night, and most probably in a covered wagon.

A reward of \$150 will be paid for their apprehension, so that I can get them, if taken within one hundred miles of St. Louis, and \$200 if taken beyond that, and secured so that I can get them, and other reasonable additional charges, if delivered to the subscriber, or to THOMAS ALLEN, Esq., at St. Louis, Mo. The above negroes, for the last few years, have been in possession of Thomas Allen, Esq. of St. Louis.

**WM. RUSSELL.**

ST. LOUIS, Oct. 1, 1847.

## Tentative Class Schedule

### Week One

- ✚ Introductions to each other, to concepts, terminology, and syllabus.
- ✚ **Handouts:** excerpt from Michel-Rolph Trouillot's *Silencing the Past: Power and Production of History*; Dr. Amos Wilson's *The Falsification of the Afrikan Consciousness*; John Henrik Clarke, *Christopher Columbus and The African Holocaust*.
- ✚ **Readings:** Quintard Taylor, *Timbuktu to Katrina*—vol. 1, chaps. 1 – 8;
- ✚ **Exam #1 (100pts)**—Wilson, and excerpts from Taylor and outside video. Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup>.
- ✚ **Written Response #1 (50pts):** due on Wilson's reading, Thursday, May 8<sup>th</sup>.
- ✚ **Film:** *Slavery and The Making of America*, vols. 1 – 4. on reserve

### Week Two

- ✚ **Handouts:** excerpts from Vijay Prashad's *The Darker Nations: A People's History of the Third World*; David N. Lawyer's "The Domestic Colonial Model."
- ✚ **Reading:** Aimé Césaire's *Discourse of Colonialism*
- ✚ **Written Response #2 (50pts):** Summarize Lawyer's reading & respond to videos. Wednesday, May 14<sup>th</sup>.
- ✚ **Exam #2 (100 pts)**—on Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism*, Thursday, May 15<sup>th</sup>.
- ✚ **Films:** *Tools of Exploitation*, Ali Mazrui; *Ghosts of Rwanda*; *Lumumba*—on reserve

### Week Three

- ✚ **Handouts:** James Baldwin, "White Man's Guilt;" "Stranger in the Village;" "The American Dream and the American Negro;" "White Racism or World Community."
- ✚ **Readings:** Quintard Taylor, *Timbuktu to Katrina*—vol. 2, chaps. 1 – 6.
- ✚ **Written Response #3 (50pts):** on Baldwin's readings, due Wednesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>.
- ✚ **Exam #3 (100pts)**—On Taylor and Baldwin. Friday, May 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- ✚ **Film:** *Black Power, White Backlash*; on reserve

### Week Four

- ✚ **Reading:** Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place*
- ✚ **Written Response #4 (50pts)**—Summarize *A Small Place* in the context of videos, due Thursday, May 29<sup>th</sup>.
- ✚ **Films:** *Profit and Nothing But* by Raoul Peck; *Deadly Embrace: Nicaragua, The World Bank and International Monetary Fund*; *Life and Debt* by Stephanie Black; on reserve

### Week Five

- ✚ **Reading:** Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*
- ✚ **Written Response #5 (50pts)**—Summarize and respond to Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* and the film *Good Fences*, due Friday, June 6<sup>th</sup>.
- ✚ **Film:** *Good Fences (In Class Viewings)*

## Week Six

✚ **Reading:** Gayl Jones' *Corregidora*

✚ **Film:** *Assault at West Point: The Court Marshall of Johnson Whitaker*

✚ *Have a good summer!!! Best of luck to you wherever you go and in whatever you do...*

### X-tra Credit Opportunities

**(10pts)** You can receive 10pts extra credit for submitting one of your papers from this class into your Junior Writing Portfolio.



*The greatest weapon of the oppressor is the  
MIND of the oppressed . . .*

—Steve Biko

