Black Studies Matter  
Continuing Studies AAAS 01, Fall 2020  
Tuesdays, 6:30-7:50pm  
September 15 to November 17  
no class on November 3; 1 class meeting on Thursday, November 5

Teaching Team

Faculty Instructor  
Professor Allyson Hobbs

Teaching Assistants  
Kimya Loder  
Luke Williams

Course Overview

This interdisciplinary course will introduce students to ten foundational texts in Black Studies, including classic works by Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, Lorraine Hansberry, C. L. R. James, W. E. B. DuBois, Langston Hughes, Cathy Cohen, and Audre Lorde. The discussions will connect these texts to contemporary conversations about Black feminism, Black politics, the Black Lives Matter Movement, mass incarceration, policing, and Black life in America in the twenty-first century. We welcome a wide range of students to enroll in this class: undergraduates and graduate students and members of the larger Stanford community who would like to gain a deeper understanding of Black Studies. This class is particularly urgent in our current moment. Taken together, the selected readings will provide critical historical and cultural context to grasp the meanings of our own tumultuous times.

This course draws on primary sources that reveal the centrality of Black Studies to understanding our world and the major themes that animate our lives: history, identity, memory, gender, sexuality, belonging, exclusion, and the varied responses and forms of resistance to four hundred years of racial oppression. These texts invite students to delve deeply into the lived experiences of African Americans across time periods, class positions, sexual orientations, and geographic locations. The lectures and discussions are led by faculty in African and African American Studies (AAAS), Comparative Studies in Race and Ethnicity (CSRE), History, Theater and Performance Studies, English, and Philosophy.
Grade Options and Requirements

- No Grade Requested (NGR)
  - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  - Students must attend 8 out of 10 live class sessions.
  - Participation in online discussion boards is encouraged, but not required.

*Please Note: If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.

Weekly Creative Writing Assignment: This is not required for Continuing Studies students, but they are welcome to participate. Each week, matriculated students will write a short letter between any two figures in the reading that explores a tension, debate, or conflict. If you would like to try this assignment, please connect the themes that you raise in your letters to the readings and to previous class discussions. Feel free to post your letters in the Canvas Discussions and interact with fellow students on the discussion board.

Required texts: Please note that the readings are not distributed equally over the quarter; the amount of reading and the level of difficulty will vary. The reading should be completed before the weekly class meeting.

Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (1977)
  *Link will be posted in Canvas*
James Baldwin, *Stranger in the Village* (1953)
Lorraine Hansberry, *A Raisin in the Sun* (1959)
Langston Hughes, *The Selected Poems of Langston Hughes* (1967)
The Combahee River Collective Statement (1977)
  *Link will be posted in Canvas*

**Please note: There will not be a class meeting on Election Day (Tuesday, Nov 3). The class will meet on Thursday, Nov 5.**
Black Studies Matter
Lecture Schedule & Reading Assignments

**Please watch a short (20 minute) introductory lecture before the class begins. This introductory lecture will provide framing and context for the class. It will be available on Canvas on Sept 7.**

Sept 15  Professor Matthew Clair (Sociology) on W.E. B. DuBois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903)

Sept 22  Professors Lanier Anderson (Philosophy) and Professor Vaughn Rasberry (English) on Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (1977)

Sept 29  Professor Ato Quayson (English) on Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (1987)

Video:  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ex9Vm6woYt=90s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ex9Vm6woYt=90s)

Video:  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gu_vf-q10XM&t=50s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gu_vf-q10XM&t=50s)


Oct 13  Professor Michele Elam (English) on James Baldwin, “Stranger in the Village” (1953) and the Cambridge Union debate between William Buckley and James Baldwin (1965)

Video:  [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Tek9h3a5wQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Tek9h3a5wQ)


Optional:  Watch *A Raisin in the Sun* (1961)


Nov 3  Election Day—No Class

Nov 5  Professor Clayborne Carson (History) on C. L. R. James, *A History of Pan-African Revolt* (originally published in 1938 and expanded in 1969)

Nov 10  Professor Jim Campbell (History) on Langston Hughes, *The Selected Poems of Langston Hughes* (1967)

Nov 17  Professor Allyson Hobbs (History) on The Combahee River Collective Statement (1977)