

HI2B1-15 America in Black and White? Contemporary US Race and Racism in Historical Context

24/25

Department

History

Level

Undergraduate Level 2

Module leader

Lydia Plath

Credit value

15

Module duration

10 weeks

Assessment

100% coursework

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module aims to equip students with the ability to make use of the past to understand the present through a study of African American history, culture, and politics. Students on this module will take contemporary racial issues, such as mass incarceration or the Black Lives Matter movement, and trace their historical antecedents through both primary and secondary sources. In doing so, students will examine how race in the United States has been, and continues to be, socially constructed. The module will include some discussion of whites, Latino/as, Native Americans, and Asian Americans (as well as other groups), but it will prioritise the voices of African Americans in its use of source material.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

The module will encourage students to consider the role of historians and other scholars in contemporary racial activism, and will allow students to articulate their findings in a range of ways,

including through class participation, social media and podcasting, in order to develop their transferable skills.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Negotiated curriculum decided by students in the first week of the module. Topics will vary based on recent developments and contemporary events. Past topics have included:

- The Role of Historians in American Public Life
- Obama's Legacy, Black Politics, and Voting Rights
- Black Lives Matter
- Mass Incarceration
- Legacies of the Civil Rights Movement
- Whiteness and White Privilege
- Confederate Monuments
- Immigration
- "Celebrity Activism"

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the key themes and issues in US race relations in the present, and to evaluate them in historical context.
- Communicate ideas and findings about US race relations in historical context, adapting to a range of situations, audiences and degrees of complexity.
- Generate ideas through the analysis of a body of primary source material, including online sources.
- Analyse and evaluate the contributions made by existing interdisciplinary scholarship on US race relations.
- Act with limited supervision and accept responsibility to interact effectively within a team, giving and receiving information and ideas.

Indicative reading list

- Carol Anderson, *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth About our Racial Divide* (Bloomsbury, 2016).
- Chip Berlet and Matthew N. Lyons, *Right-wing Populism in America: Too Close for Comfort* (Guilford Publications, 2000).
- Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, *White Supremacy and Racism in the Post-Civil Rights Era* (Lynne Rienner, 2001).
- Margot Canaday, *The Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton University Press, 2009).
- Clayborne Carson, David J. Garrow, Gerald Gill, Vincent Harding, and Darlene Clark Hine

(eds), *The Eyes on the Prize Civil Rights Reader: Documents, Speeches, and Firsthand Accounts from the Black Freedom Struggle, 1954-1990* (Penguin, 1991).

- Dan T. Carter, *The Politics of Rage: George Wallace, the Origins of the New Conservatism, and the Transformation of American Politics* (Simon & Schuster, 1995).
- Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Color Blindness, History, and the Law," in Wahneema Lubiano (ed.) *The House that Race Built: Black Americans, US Terrain* (Pantheon, 1997).
- Angela Davis, Frank Barat, and Cornel West, *Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement* (Haymarket, 2016).
- Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (Vintage Books, 1981).
- Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore and Thomas J. Sugrue, *These United States: A Nation in the Making, 1890 to the Present* (Norton, 2015)
- Stuart Hall, "Authoritarian Populism: A Reply to Jessop et Al." *New Left Review*, no. 151 (1985).
- Elizabeth Kai Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Harvard University Press, 2016).
- Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith, *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But some of us are Brave*, 2nd ed. (Feminist Press, 2015)
- Stephen D. Kantrowitz, *Ben Tillman and the Reconstruction of White Supremacy* (University of North Carolina Press, 2000).
- Ian Haney Lopez, *Dog Whistle Politics: How Coded Racial Appeals Have Reinvented Racism and Wrecked the Middle Class* (Oxford University Press, 2014).
- Audre Lorde, *I Am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities* (Women of Color Press, 1980).
- Manning Marable, *How Capitalism Underdeveloped Black America: Problems in Race, Political Economy, and Society* (South End Press, 1983).
- Khalil Gibran Muhammad, "Where Did All the White Criminals Go?: Reconfiguring Race and Crime on the Road to Mass Incarceration," *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture and Society* vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 72–90.
- Christopher S. Parker and Matt A. Barreto, *Change They Can't Believe In: The Tea Party and Reactionary Politics in America* (Princeton University Press, 2013).
- Leah Wright Rigueur, *The Loneliness of the Black Republican: Pragmatic Politics and the Pursuit of Power* (Princeton University Press, 2015).
- Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (Haymarket Books, 2016).
- Heather Ann Thompson, *Blood in the Water: The Attica Uprising of 1971 and its Legacy* (Pantheon, 2016).
- Chad Williams, Kidada Williams and Keisha N. Blain (eds), *Charleston Syllabus: Readings on Race, Racism and Racial Violence* (University of Georgia Press, 2016).

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Subject specific skills

See learning outcomes.

Transferable skills

See learning outcomes.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	9 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Tutorials	4 sessions of 1 hour (3%)
Private study	128 hours (85%)
Total	150 hours

Private study description

History modules require students to undertake extensive independent research and reading to prepare for seminars and assessments. As a rough guide, students will be expected to read and prepare to comment on three substantial texts (articles or book chapters) for each seminar taking approximately 3 hours. Each assessment requires independent research, reading around 6-10 texts and writing and presenting the outcomes of this preparation in an essay, review, presentation or other related task.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A4

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Seminar contribution	10%		No
1500 word group project	50%		No
2000 word blog posts	40%		Yes (extension)

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback via online system and tutorials

Availability

Courses

This module is Optional for:

- Year 2 of UENA-VQ32 Undergraduate English and History
- Year 2 of UENA-VQ34 Undergraduate English and History (with a term in Venice)
- Year 2 of UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
- Year 2 of UHIA-V102 Undergraduate History (Renaissance and Modern History Stream)
- Year 2 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- Year 2 of UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics
- Year 2 of UHIA-VM13 Undergraduate History and Politics (with a term in Venice)
- Year 2 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology
- Year 2 of UHIA-VL15 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with a term in Venice)

This module is Option list A for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-V1V5 Undergraduate History and Philosophy
- Year 2 of UHIA-V1V7 Undergraduate History and Philosophy (with a term in Venice)
- Year 2 of UHIA-VM13 Undergraduate History and Politics (with a term in Venice)
- Year 2 of UHIA-VL15 Undergraduate History and Sociology (with a term in Venice)

This module is Option list B for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
- Year 2 of UHIA-V102 Undergraduate History (Renaissance and Modern History Stream)
- Year 2 of UHIA-VM11 Undergraduate History and Politics

This module is Option list C for:

- Year 2 of UHIA-V100 Undergraduate History
- Year 2 of UHIA-V102 Undergraduate History (Renaissance and Modern History Stream)
- Year 2 of UHIA-VL13 Undergraduate History and Sociology