

## **HSTA 415: The Black Radical Tradition**

**T/Th, 12:30 p.m. to 1:50 p.m. LA 342**

Tobin Miller Shearer

LA 262, History Department

406-243-6225 (voice only)

406-662-8227 (text or voice)

tobin.shearer@umontana.edu

Historians have generally framed African-American resistance to institutional, political, and cultural racism in the United States according to one of two strategies: the non-violent integrationist efforts of the Civil Rights Movement *or* the armed, revolutionary efforts of Black Nationalist groups like the Black Panthers. This dichotomy sets up a polar opposition that ignores the continuities within and seamless perspectives of the Black Radical tradition throughout American history. This course seeks to answer the question, “What are the sources, practices, and effects of the Black Radical tradition in the entirety of United States history?” From slave revolts through to the MOVE rebellion in Philadelphia, this course examines how the African-American community has engaged in radical efforts to change the status quo in the name of seeking racial justice.

**Objectives:** students will be able to –

- define the meaning of radicalism;
- identify the cultural, ideological, religious, and political sources of the black radical tradition in U.S. history;
- compare and contrast the various types of black radical movements – rebellions, revolts, political organizations, armed resistance, etc. – in order to assess their effectiveness according to participants’ stated goals;
- analyze black radical movements through social movement theory in order to evaluate their influence in history.

### **Assignments**

Each week’s classes will include input on African-American history, opportunities for student discussion, topical readings, and regular

writing assignments. In all classroom activities, students will draw on readings from the history of the black radical tradition and the writing of research papers. This course is designed to support each student in writing a 20-page research paper that analyzes primary sources and engages with secondary source literature on the student’s chosen topic. The research paper will be submitted once as a research topic, once as an outline, once as an initial draft, once as a second draft, and once as a final draft with the expectation that each draft will improve upon the previous one. In order to receive full credit for the paper, each draft must be submitted in full. This course fulfills the Upper Division Writing Course requirement.

### **Grading**

- Participation – 20%
- Research paper – 80%

### **Participation**

For each class you attend having read the assigned readings by their respective deadlines, you earn two points (27 classes x 2 points = 54 points). You can earn the remaining 46 points of the possible 100 participation points by:

- Earning 7 points for each 3-paragraph book summary you write and turning it in by the date it is assigned (8 books (not including Turabian) x 7 points = 56 points)

If you write all possible summaries and attend all classes, you can earn a total of 110 points. Any points earned over 100 will be added to the grade of your third research paper draft.

### **Research paper**

Each research paper is worth 200 points. You can earn those points in the following manner:

1. turn in a clearly focused, 3-4 sentence research topic by the assigned date = 15 points
2. turn in a paper outline:
  - o on time = 5 points
  - o meets minimum length requirement = 5 points

- identifies the ten secondary sources that will be used = 10 points
3. turn in draft one of a research paper:
    - on time = 5 points
    - meets minimum length requirement (19 ½ pages) = 10 points
    - is written with complete sentences in standard paragraph form = 5 points
    - includes a minimum of five primary sources plus the ten secondary sources required above = 5 points
  4. turn in draft two of a research paper:
    - on time = 5 points
    - meets minimum length requirement (19 ½ pages) = 10 points
    - is written with complete sentences in standard paragraph form = 5 points
    - in includes a minimum of five primary sources plus the ten secondary sources required above = 5 points
    - demonstrates clear improvement on previous draft = 5 points
  5. turn in final draft of research paper
    - on time = 10 points
    - meets all criteria of the research paper rubric = 100 points (pro-rated according to grade scale below)

**Grade scale:**

A+ 98-100    A 93-97    A- 90-92    B+ 87-89    B 83-86    B- 80-82  
 C+ 77-79    C 73-76    C- 70-72  
 D+ 67-69    D 63-66    D- 60-62    F ≤59

**Classroom etiquette:**

I expect that all students will join me in creating a supportive and focused learning environment by:

- turning off all cell phones (and thus doing no texting, e-mailing or instant messaging);
- using laptops only for note taking;
- not doing crosswords, reading newspapers, or other recreational activities;

- not talking or whispering with fellow classmates unless instructed to do so.

During lectures, I will give you my complete attention. I ask the favor of the same from my students. Should a student's behavior interrupt our learning environment, he or she will first be given a private verbal warning. Upon second infraction, the student will receive a public warning. Should disruptive behaviors continue following two warnings, the student will be issued a warning in writing. Any subsequent disruptive behaviors will be turned over to the University's disciplinary committee.

**Instructor contact:**

I maintain regular office hours that I will post on the course website. You are also welcome to contact me by e-mail. My goal is to respond within 24 hours. In case of emergency, you may contact me by phone as listed on the course website.

**Missed deadlines:**

My goal is always to encourage your best work in the midst of multiple classroom demands and real life emergencies. Limited deadline extensions can be arranged if the student makes advance contact. Late papers or projects will be marked down 1/3 grade/day. Make-up exams will not be offered unless they are arranged along with appropriate documentation from medical, athletic, cultural, or administrative officials.

**Missed classes:**

Class absences can be excused if proper document from medical, athletic, cultural, or administrative officials is supplied. For a full description of the university's cultural and ceremonial leave policy, see: <http://catalog.umt.edu/academics/policies-procedures/>

**Academic honesty:**

Stealing someone else's ideas is the same as stealing someone's property. Cite others' ideas in standard footnote format (in written work and all projects). Paraphrase whenever possible. In general, a

paraphrase uses no more than three of the same words in a sentence as the original source. See: <http://www.umt.edu/student-affairs/dean-of-students/default.php> for a full review of the [University of Montana's student conduct code](#)

#### **Accessibility:**

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommasson 154 or visit their website <http://www.umt.edu/disability>. I will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate accommodation.

#### **African-American Studies Program:**

This course is one of the elective classes for the Major, Minor, and certificate in **African-American Studies**. If you enjoy this course and would like to know more about the African-American Studies Program, please contact me, drop by the AAST office, LA 262, or visit the African-American Studies website <http://hs.umt.edu/aas/>

#### **Readings:**

- Aptheker, Herbert. *American Negro Slave Revolts*. International Publishers Co., 1983.
- Bates, Beth Tompkins. *Pullman Porters and the Rise of Protest Politics in Black America, 1925-1945*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.
- Biondi, Martha. *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Gilmore, Glenda Elizabeth. *Defying Dixie: The Radical Roots of Civil Rights, 1919-1950*. New York: Norton, 2008.
- Hahn, Steven. *A Nation under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South, from Slavery to the Great Migration*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Orleck, Annelise. *Storming Caesars Palace: How Black Mothers Fought Their Own War on Poverty*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2005.
- Roll, Jarod. *Spirit of Rebellion: Labor and Religion in the New Cotton South*. Chicago, IL: University Of Illinois Press, 2010.
- Turabian, Kate L. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Seventh Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers* [in English]. 7th edition ed. Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2007.
- Tyson, Timothy B. *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1999.

**Schedule:**

Week 1 – August 28, 30: Introduction, Definitions of Radicalism, Social Movement Theory

Week 2 - September 4, 6: Slave Revolts – 1

**Aptheker, 1-208.**

**Session in Mansfield Archives for part of class.**

Week 3 - September 11 [No class on Thursday, September 13 – reading day]: Slave Revolts – 2

**Aptheker, 209-374.**

**Turabian, Part I – Research and Writing**

**Writing workshop 1 (focusing on writing book reviews)**

**Aptheker book summary due in class, printed out, on**

**Tuesday, September 11**

Week 4 - September 18, 20: Civil War Participation

**Hahn, 1-162.**

Week 5 - September 25, 27: Reconstruction and Martin R. Delany

**Hahn, 163-316.**

**Research paper topic due (by 11:59 p.m., Thursday,**

**September 27)**

Week 6 - October 2, 4: Post- Reconstruction and Jim Crow

**Hahn, 317-478.**

**Turabian, Part II – Source Citation**

**Writing workshop 2 (focusing on research papers and footnotes)**

**Hahn book summary due in class, printed out, on Tuesday, October 2**

Week 7 - October 9, 11: Conferences with Tobin

**Outline due by meeting time with Tobin; need to bring printed copy to scheduled meeting**

Week 8 - October 16, 18: Communism, Anti-Fascism, and the Popular Front

**Gilmore, 1-200.**

**Gilmore book summary due in class, printed out, on Thursday, October 18**

Week 9 - October 23, 25: Worker's Unionism

**Bates, 1-188.**

**Bates book summary due in class, printed out, on Thursday, October 25**

**Research papers first drafts due (by 11:59 p.m., Thursday, October 25).**

Week 10 – October 30, November 1: Northern Organizing

**Biondi, 1-207.**

**Biondi book summary due in class, printed out, on Thursday, November 1**

Week 11 – November 8 [no class on Tuesday, November 6, election day]: Violence vs. Non-violence in the Black Freedom Struggle

**Tyson, 1-137, 244-308.**

**Tyson book summary due in class, printed out, on Thursday, November 8**

Week 12 - November 13, 15: Research and writing week – Tobin Available for consultations on Tuesday and Thursday during class time

**Research papers second drafts due (by 11:59 p.m., Thursday, November 15)**

**African-American Studies Soup and Pie night, Thursday, November 15, 6-9 p.m.**

Week 13 - November 20 [no class on Thursday, November 22, Thanksgiving Day]: Religion and Resistance

**Roll 1-169**

**Roll book summary due in class, printed out, on Tuesday, November 22**

**Guest Skype interview with Jarod Roll.**

Week 14 – November 27, 29: Culture as Organizing tool

**Orleck, 1-169.**

**Writing workshop 3 – bring 10 pages of your paper, printed out to class with you – ticket for admission.**

Week 15 – December 4, 6: Gender and Resistance

**Orleck, 170-310.**

**Research papers final drafts due (by 11:59 p.m., Thursday, December 6)**

**Orleck book summary due in class, printed out, on Thursday, December 6**

**Final exam:**

**Monday, December 10, 10:10-12:10 p.m. usual classroom  
(each student will do a brief, informal report on their paper)**