African American Studies 190
Introduction to African American Studies
Dr. C J Fontenot, Jr.
205 Willingham Hall; x2345 (office)
Office Hours Monday & Wednesday 10 am – noon
Fall Semester 2002
Syllabus

Required Texts:

7. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk

Course Requirements

1. Attendance and Discussion—Each student is required to attend class regularly and participate in
discussion of the texts. I will permit up to 3 unexcused absences without penalizing this
percentage of your grade. After the 3rd unexcused absence, I will deduct from this grade until the
6th unexcused absence, at which time you will receive no credit for either attendance or discussion.
In order for an absence to be excused, it must fall within the guidelines of an emergency (i.e.,
ilness, family emergency, etc.), and be supported by “official” written documentation. (10%)

2. Midterm and Take-Home Final Exam—Each student is required to complete both the
take-home final exam. This exam is worth 20% of the final grade. (20%)

3. Quizzes—Each student is required to complete a minimum of 10 quizzes based on weekly reading
materials. (30%)

4. Critical Papers—Each student is required to write 2 critical papers (5-7 pages in length). I will
provide specific information about these papers during the semester. No papers may be turned in
late except when a student has an emergency supported by written documentation. (40%)

COURSE GOALS

1. To develop in students a historical perspective that will provide a context for them to evaluate the
history of the development of African American Studies as an academic discipline.

2. To develop in students critical abilities to evaluate cultural texts using a number of different
methodologies.

3. To cultivate in students the skills necessary to evaluate cultural texts within the cultural milieu in
which they were produced.

4. To encourage students to appreciate the diversity of the African American critical tradition
through an indepth survey of the historical periods from its inception to the present.

5. To improve student’s critical writing skills.
Statement on Disabilities

Students who believe that they possess disabilities for which accommodation is required must so inform the instructor at the close of their first class meeting. They must then indicate the nature of their disability and the sort of reasonable accommodation requested.

If you believe that you possess a disability for which reasonable accommodation must be made, you must consult with the instructor of this class immediately after your first class meeting. You will then identify the disability, and the reasonable accommodation requested. The instructor will refer you to the office of the Dean of Students for evaluation, documentation of your disability, and a recommendation as to the accommodation, if any, to be provided.

If you do NOT consult with the instructor and follow up at the office of the Dean of Students, as provided above, you will thereby waive any claim to a disability and the right to any accommodation pertaining thereto.

Schedule of Readings and Course Work

Week 1---The Birth of African American Culture—Its West African Cultural Precursors
Week 2---The Controversy Over the Nature of African American Culture—Read The Birth of African American Culture
Week 3---The 18th Century Debate About Black Humanity—Selected Readings from Course Packet
Week 4---The 19th Century Debate About Black Intelligence & The Status of Blacks—Selected Readings from Course Packet
Week 5---The Negro Conferences of Booker T. Washington—Selected Readings from the Booker T. Washington Papers
Week 6---W.E.B. Du Bois and the Negro Academy—Selected Readings from The Negro Academy Papers
Week 7---Film Showing on Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois—Paper # 1 due in class
Week 8---Review for Midterm Examination—Midterm Examination in class
Week 9---Reconsidering African Cultural Survivals in the New World—Read The Myth of the Negro Past
Week 10---Africanisms in American Culture—Selected Readings from Course Packet
Week 11---The Birth of Black Studies on College Campuses—Read Black Studies: Threat or Challenge
Week 12---Reconsidering and Framing Black Studies as a Discipline—Read An Introduction to Black Studies
Week 13---The Challenge to Black Studies from Afrocentrists—Read The Afrocentric Idea
Week 14---The Current Debates Concerning African American Studies As An Academic Discipline—Selections from Course Packet
Week 15---Review of Course Materials—Paper #2 due in class—Handout Take-Home Final Exam