ANTH 445: African American Anthropology

Section 10744D | Spring 2022 | Wednesday 2:00-4:50PM | ONLINE

Professor: Lanita Jacobs
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Office Hours: M/W 11AM-12PM; also by appt. You can also contact me Monday-Friday via email.

Course Website: Course materials are accessible through Blackboard; to access, click on: https://blackboard.usc.edu/webapps/login/

Required Texts (I’ve requested e-copies of all books from the USC Library; if available, these texts will be freely accessible in Ares Reserves):

1. ANTH 445 Reader. [NOTE: This text is abbreviated RDR in the Reading & Exam Schedule.]

Highly Recommended Texts:


Course Description: Anthropology has undergone dramatic changes in recent decades. Historically, anthropologists resembled what Renato Rosaldo (1989) characterized as the “Lone Ethnographer” riding off into the sunset in search of the “native.” Today, those so-called natives are vigorously gazing and talking back as students, professors, and attentive audiences, with palpable implications for how anthropology is practiced. Anthropologists also conduct fieldwork in unprecedented places, including their own communities. This course’s focus on African American Anthropology is, in many ways, an outgrowth of these transitions. In this course, we will map out the parameters of “African American Anthropology,” beginning with early constructions of race and pioneering ethnographic studies of African Americans in the U.S. Later, we will explore how ongoing research on race and African American culture, as well as contributions by African American/feminist scholars, helped to both shape and shift the scope of anthropological inquiry over time. Finally, we will review new directions in the study of race and African American culture in anthropology. In pursuit of these goals, we will mine scholarship within and beyond the field of anthropology. We will also review relevant films, sounds, and images that further illuminate the place of race and African Americans in the ever-evolving field of anthropology. Our scholarly quest will traverse multiple texts, authors, places, and times, and home in on key offerings by Black ethnographers, to ultimately reveal how anthropological research concerning race and African Americans inform the discipline’s quest to understand what it means to be human.
Learning Objectives: Accordingly, seminar participants will gain essential anthropological knowledge and skills, including:

- A nuanced appreciation for “race” as a social construction with enduring implications for peoples’ worldviews and everyday experiences in the world
- Skills in describing and understanding individuals, societies, cultures, and cultural expressions throughout time and around the world
- Skills in interpreting the cultural meanings embedded in everyday behavior, language, performances, artifacts, images, and text
- Skills in critical thinking and expository writing based on logic, evidence, scholarly discernment, and inter- and cross-cultural understanding
- Insights that will help you successfully operate and negotiate within and across cultural differences in our increasingly interconnected world

Grading: There will be a midterm and final exam covering assigned readings, films, and guest speakers. The midterm is worth 30% (30 points) and the final exam is worth 40% (40 points) of your overall grade. Each of the exams will include short-answer and essay questions and will be non-cumulative. In addition, 10% (10 points) of your grade will be determined by your class participation, specifically your collegial and substantive response to at least TWO of your peer’s comments or course materials in Blackboard’s Discussion Board. (This means that each of you must post at least ONE critical response to course materials in Blackboard before the term ends.) The remaining 20% of your grade will be determined by 3-5-page essay (excluding bibliography of 3-5 sources) that address issues of racial authenticity from an anthropological perspective. This essay is worth up to 20 points and will be due on Friday, April 8, 2022 by midnight in Blackboard. Late papers will be docked 2 points and 1 additional point for every day late. Finally, a total of 4 extra-credit points can be earned on the midterm and final exam via a two-point Bonus Question. Bonus questions will be based on “optional” readings and/or additional materials presented in class.

Essay Guidelines: Essays must adhere to the following format: double-spaced, 12 point-font, 1” top, bottom, right, and left margins, pages numbered consecutively in upper right-hand corner. Each short essay should span 3-5 typed pages. Your essays should address how notions or representations of racial, gendered, class, etc. authenticity manifest in the present, either in film or everyday contexts; in either case, you will need to approach your analysis anthropologically. You will also be responsible for substantiating your claims by citing 3-5 sources [citations must adhere to APA/MLA format]. Your bibliography can include assigned course readings. However, at least one of these sources must include an article or book that is *not* in the course bibliography; note that any webpage citations must include substantial commentaries (e.g., articles, book chapters) versus blurbs, advertisements, Wikipedia, or other web-based sources. (Additional guidelines for essays will be posted in Blackboard.) Late papers will be docked points. The grading scale is as follows:

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\begin{array}{cccc}
94-100 & A & 87-89 = B+ & 77-79 = C+ \\
90-93 & A- & 84-86 = B & 74-76 = C \\
80-83 & B- & 70-73 = C- & 64-66 = D \\
67-69 & D+ & 60-63 = D & > 59 = F \\
\end{array}
\]

An Official Note on Examinations: Make-up exams will only be given under extraordinary circumstances and will require documentation from a physician. The content and form of any make-up exam will be at my discretion. In any case, you should inform me via email or phone prior to missing an exam. If you feel you must reschedule an exam on account of having (a) two additional exams scheduled at the same time or (b) three exams in a 24-hour period, inform me at least two weeks prior to our scheduled mid-term. The final exam must be taken at the time noted below.
Class Resources: Resources for this course are available through Blackboard. Consult ANTH 445 in Blackboard for access to the course syllabus, grades, essay guidelines, announcements, mock essay and short answer questions, exam study guides, and other helpful information. The optional readings for this course are also highly recommended. Consider adding these texts to your library and read it at your leisure.

Statement for Students with Special Needs: Students requesting academic accommodations based on special needs should register with the Office for Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from OSAS when necessary documentation is filed. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible, preferably by or before fifth week. OSAS contact information is as follows: 213-740-0776 (Phone), 213-740-6948 (TDD Only), 213-740-8216 (Fax); Email: osasfrontdesk@usc.edu; Webpage: https://osas.usc.edu/about/contact-location-hours/

Statement on Academic Integrity: USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General Principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one’s own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another’s work as one’s own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, The Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at: https://sjacs.usc.edu/students/review-process/. Information on intellectual property at USC is available at: https://policy.usc.edu/files/2014/02/intellectual_property.pdf

University Policy Regarding the Sharing of Course Materials outside of the Learning Environment: USC policy prohibits sharing of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment: SCampus Section 11.12(B): Distribution or use of notes or recordings based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study is a violation of the USC Student Conduct Code. This includes, but is not limited to, providing materials for distribution by services publishing class notes. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relationship to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the Internet or via any other media. (See Section C.1 Class Notes Policy).

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in Crisis: Given the pandemic, this course will be taught asynchronously. Lecture notes (in PowerPoint) will be posted in Blackboard on a weekly basis to help students calibrate their curricular investments. Pre-recorded lectures expounding upon posted lecture notes will also be sent weekly from a platform called “Panopto”; you do NOT need a Panopto account to access recorded lectures. Opportunities for class dialogue and participation will be afforded weekly via Blackboard’s Discussion Board module. Feel free to use this forum to comment on weekly lectures, readings, and films, as well as converse with me and your peers. Optional 30-minute weekly check-ins on “Cisco Webex” (no subscription required) are also scheduled throughout the term and highlighted in the syllabus. All students will need access to a computer and the internet to vet lecture notes and links and fully participate in this course.
**USC Support Systems:** In this season of swirling pandemics, please know that there are various support systems in place at USC and beyond, including:

**USC Technology Rental Program**
We realize that attending classes online and completing coursework remotely requires access to technology that not all students possess. If you need resources to successfully participate in your classes, such as a laptop or internet hotspot, you may be eligible for the university’s equipment rental program. To apply, please [submit an application](#). The Student Basic Needs team will contact all applicants in early August and distribute equipment to eligible applicants prior to the start of the fall semester. Here, too, are several *USC Technology Support Links:*

- [Blackboard Help for Students](#)
- [Software available to USC Campus](#)

**USC Campus Support and Intervention** - (213) 821-4710; campussupport.usc.edu
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student. Specific covid-19 related support systems are noted below:

The [Office for Student Basic Needs](#) fund can assist with housing expenses, food insecurity, emergency travel, income loss related to closed workplaces, technology upgrades required for remote instruction, and other unforeseen needs stemming from the current crisis. Students interested in applying for the Student Basic Needs Emergency Grant are encouraged to email the Basic Needs Team at basicneeds@usc.edu. The team will evaluate the request and, if needed, schedule a one-on-one consultation to learn more about the student’s situation.

**USC’s COVID-19 Resource Center** provides information, updates, and support for the USC community. Please consult the website ([https://coronavirus.usc.edu/](https://coronavirus.usc.edu/)) to learn about Spring 2022 COVID-19 Health and Safety protocols. To notify the university of a case, please call their 24/7 COVID-19 hotline at 213-740-6291 or email covid19@usc.edu.

**Counseling and Mental Health** - (213) 740-9355 (WELL) – 24/7 on call; studenthealth.usc.edu/counseling
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** - 1 (800) 273-8255 – 24/7 on call; suicidepreventionlifeline.org
Free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

**Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP)** - (213) 740-9355(WELL), press “0” after hours – 24/7 on call; studenthealth.usc.edu/sexual-assault
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm.

**Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)** - (213) 740-5086 | Title IX – (213) 821-8298; equity.usc.edu, titleix.usc.edu
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.
USC Support Systems (continued):

**Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment** - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office of Equity and Diversity [Title IX for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

**Diversity at USC** - (213) 740-2101; diversity.usc.edu
Information on events, programs and training, the Provost’s Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

**USC Emergency** - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu, emergency.usc.edu
Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency precludes travel to campus.

**USC Department of Public Safety** - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-120 – 24/7 on call
dps.usc.edu
Non-emergency assistance or information.

**Office of the Ombuds** - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC); ombuds.usc.edu
A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concerns.

### READING & EXAM SCHEDULE

| HOW DID EARLY ANTHROPOLOGISTS APPROACH THE STUDY OF RACE AND AFRICAN AMERICANS? |
| --- | --- |
| **Week 1:** 1/12 | **COURSE INTRODUCTION** To access articles in Reader (in RDR) in Blackboard, click “Content,” then click “Course Resources,” and finally, click “Course Readings.” Readings are alphabetized by author’s last name. |
| **Week 2:** 1/19 | **EARLY CONSTRUCTIONS OF RACE** |
| | • Trouillot: Anthropology and the Savage Slot [in RDR] |
| | • Willis Jr.: Skeletons in the Anthropological Closet [in RDR] |
| | • **(OPTIONAL 30-MINUTE CISCO WEBEX MEETING @ 2-2:30PM PST)** |
| **Week 3:** 1/26 | **EARLY ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF RACE:** How did early physical anthropologists approach the study of race? To what extent did these early examinations of race mark anthropology’s engagement in scientific racism? |
| | • Baker: Excerpts - From Savage to Negro [in RDR] |
| | • Sanday: Skeletons in the Anthropological Closet: The Life and Work of William S. Willis Jr. [Optional; in RDR] |
| | • Film(s): *The Life and Times of Sara Baartman* (1998; 53 mins.) – access via Ares Reserves to Alexander Street, Select Pop Culture Clips, *Bootyful World* (2006; 24 mins.; a link to stream this film will be provided.) |
# ANTHROPOLOGICAL SHIFTS IN THE STUDY OF RACE & AFRICAN AMERICAN CULTURE

## Week 4: 2/2

**FRANZ BOAS: THEORETICAL INTERVENTIONS IN THE STUDY OF RACE**

*In what ways did the work of Franz Boas intervene in early anthropological framings of race? To what extent was Boas’s work in critical dialogue with other African American scholars (e.g., W.E.B. Du Bois)?*

- Baker: The Location of Franz Boas within the African-American Struggle [in RDR]
- Boas: Race and Progress [in RDR]
- Drake: Anthropology and the Black Experience [Optional; in RDR]
- Harrison: DuBoisian Legacy in Anthropology [in RDR]
- Lewis: The Passion of Franz Boas [in RDR]
- Film: *Franz Boas: The Shackles of Tradition, Part III* (1986[1975]; 54 mins)

**[OPTIONAL 30-MINUTE CISCO WEBEX MEETING @ 2-2:30PM PST]**

## Week 5: 2/9

**BOAS’S LEGACY - THEORETICAL INTERVENTIONS IN THE STUDY OF RACE**

*How did the work of Boas’s students inform disciplinary and everyday understandings of race and the world’s understanding of African Americans? What models do early and contemporary anthropologists and Harlem Renaissance scholars pose for academics seeking to intervene in popular discussions of race, racism, and inter-ethnic relations?*

- Benedict & Weltfish: Excerpts from *The Races of Mankind* [in RDR]
- Gordon: The Quest for the Authentic [Optional; in RDR]
- Herskovits: Excerpts from *The Myth of the Negro Past* [in RDR]
- Hurston: Court Order Can’t Make the Races Mix [Optional; in RDR]
- Mead & Baldwin: Excerpts from *A Rap on Race* [in RDR]
- Powdemaker: *Mississippi in Stranger and Friend* [Optional; in RDR]
- Price & Price: *The Root of Roots* [in RDR]
- Film: *The Brotherhood of Man* (1946; 10:35); *Herskovits at the Heart of Blackness* (2009; 57 mins.) – access via Alexander Street

## Week 6: 2/16

**ANTHROPOLOGICAL TRANSITIONS – THE NATIVES ARE GAZING AND TALKING BACK**

*How do African American “native” scholars participate in these wider transitions shaping the discipline? How do their critical reflections serve to qualify the nature of ethnographic fieldwork and the challenges of “thickly” representing African American culture? Further, to what extent does their scholarship speak back to early framings of race in anthropology?*

- Bunzl: Boas, Foucault, and the “Native Anthropologist” [in RDR]
- Jacobs-Huey: The Natives Are Gazing and Talking Back [in RDR]
- Moore: Anthropological Theory at the Turn of the Century [in RDR]
- Thomas: Becoming Undisciplined: Anthropology & Cultural Studies [Optional; in RDR]
- Film: *Papua New Guinea: Anthropology on Trial* (1983; ~57 mins.)

**[OPTIONAL 30-MINUTE CISCO WEBEX MEETING @ 2-2:30PM PST]**

## Week 7: 2/23

**MIDTERM**

(open-book exam administered in Blackboard; instructions to come)
Week 8: 3/2  
**ANTHROPOLOGY’S STANCE ON RACE TODAY:** What is the field of anthropology’s official stance on race today? To what extent do their official statements about race seek to redress earlier stigmatizing framings of race and Blackness? Might this stance be both applauded and critiqued? On what grounds?  
- American Anthropological Association, Official Statement on Race [in RDR]  
- American Anthropological Association Statement on “Race” and Intelligence [in RDR]  
- Harrison: Expanding the Discourse of Race  
- Cartmill: The Status of the Race Concept in Physical Anthropology [Optional; in RDR]  
- Lieberman: Gender and the Deconstruction of the Race Concept [in RDR]  
- Shankles: The Profession of the Color Blind [in RDR]

Week 9: 3/9  
**RACE INTO CULTURE?** Does anthropology’s embrace of the concept of “culture” displace the concept of “race” in productive (e.g., illuminative) ways? What is potentially gained or loss by the discipline’s embrace of the concept of culture? Further, what does the concept of “culture” afford that the concept “race” does not?  
- Baker: Fabricating the Authentic and the Politics of the Real [in RDR]  
- Brumann: Writing for Culture [Optional; in RDR]  
- Hartigan Jr.: Culture against Race: Reworking the Basis for Racial Analysis [in RDR]  
- Michaels: Race into Culture [in RDR]  
- Visweswaran: Race and the Culture of Anthropology [in RDR]

**OPTIONAL 30-MINUTE CISCO WEBEX MEETING @ 2-2:30PM PST**

Spring Recess: 3/16  
NO CLASS THIS WEEK (3/14-3/18)

Week 10: 3/23  
**BLACK FEMINIST ANTHROPOLOGY:** How do scholars engage notions of race, gender, and culture in anthropology? What does/would a Black Feminist Anthropology look like? Further, how do Black feminist sensibilities inform anthropology today?  
- Griffin: Black Feminists and Du Bois [in RDR]  
- Gwaltney: On Going Home Again [Optional; in RDR]  
- McClaurin: Theorizing a Black Feminist Self in Anthropology [in RDR]  
- Mikell: Feminism and Black Culture in the Ethnography of ZNH [in RDR]  
- Rodriguez: A Homegirl Goes Home [Optional; in RDR]  
- Visweswaran: Betrayal: An Analysis in Three Acts [Optional; in RDR]  

**AFRICAN AMERICAN ETHNOGRAPHY: CASE STUDIES**

Week 11: 3/30  
**AFRICAN AMERICAN ETHNOGRAPHY AND FOLKLORE:** Zora Neale Hurston is a pioneer “native” anthropologist; she is also one of Boas’s students. What does her fieldwork teach us about African American folklore in her all-Black hometown of Eatonville, Florida, the practice of ethnography, and the place of gender and “voice” in anthropology more broadly?  
- Bolles: Seeking the Ancestors [Optional; in RDR]  
- Hurston: How It Feels to Be Colored Me [in RDR]  
- Hurston: Mules and Men, Part I  
- Szwed: An American Anthropological Dilemma [Optional; in RDR]  
- Film: *Zora Neale Hurston: A Heart with Room for Every Joy* (2005; 42 mins)

**OPTIONAL 30-MINUTE CISCO WEBEX MEETING @ 2-2:30PM PST**
### Week 12: 4/6
#### Essays due Fri 4/8

**FOLKTALES, THE “DOZENS, AND WIT-LARGE IN MULES & MEN:** Hurston’s work in *Mules & Men* highlights the work of humor, folktales, and “mother wit”/culturally-inflected wisdom in the lives of African Americans. What themes, cultural experiences, and political and cultural imperatives inform African American humor today?

- Gwaltney: More than Mere Survival [in *Drylongso*]
- Hughes: Jokes Negroes Tell on Themselves [Optional; in RDR]
- Jacobs-Huey: Introduction, *From the Kitchen to the Parlor* (FKTP)
- Jacobs-Huey: Gender, Authenticity, and Hair in AfAm Stand-up Comedy [in FKTP]
- Film: *Why We Laugh: Black Comedians on Black Comedy* (2016; 86 mins.) – NOTE: A Google link will be provided to stream this film.

**Essays Due in Blackboard before midnight on Fri 4/8. (Do NOT email papers to me.)**

### Week 13: 4/13

**AFRICAN AMERICAN HAIR, GENDER, AND LANGUAGE:** How can multi-sited ethnography and discourse analysis serve to untangle the linguistic and cultural nuances of Black women’s hair care practices? Further, how might the author’s positionality as a “native” anthropologist shape the insights she uncovers over the course of this six-year multi-sited study? Finally, what can we learn from black feminist scholars who critically revisit their work years later?

- Collins: Reflections on the Outsider Within; Learning from The Outsider Within Revisited [Optional; in RDR]
- Gwaltney: Introduction; The Many Shades of Black [in *Drylongso*]
- Harrison: A Labor of Love: An Emancipated Woman’s Legacy [in RDR]
- Jacobs-Huey: *From the Kitchen to the Parlor* (read the rest of the book)
- Jacobs: Into the Breach [Optional; in RDR]
- Film: *A Question of Color* (1993; 59 mins.) – access via Kanopy

### Week 14: 4/20

**NO CLASS – Study & Wellness Day**

### Week 15: 4/27

**AFRICAN AMERICAN AUTHENTICITY:** How does John Jackson's ethnographic research as a native anthropologist broaden our understandings of “real” Blackness – moving us beyond the problematic concept of “racial authenticity” towards a new and potentially more fruitful concept: racial sincerity? How might an ethnographically-informed appreciation of “a real” as opposed to “the real” – born of fieldwork in comedy clubs – further inform our attempts to interrogate “realness” as a cultural imperative in African American culture?

- Jacobs: Kevin Hart as a Modern-Day Trickster [in RDR]
- Jackson: Real Black: Adventures in Racial Sincerity; A Little Black Magic [in RDR]
- Film/Sound Clips: To be announced

**(OPTIONAL 30-MINUTE CISCO WEBEX MEETING @ 2-2:30PM PST)**

### FINAL EXAM: Monday, May 9, 2022, 2-4PM (in Blackboard)
COURSE BIBLIOGRAPHY: African American Anthropology

(NOTE: Articles are alphabetized by last name in Course Reader in Blackboard. Required and optional textbooks are included below, in bold.)


Hurston, Zora Neale. 1955. Court Order Can’t Make the Races Mix. Letter to the Editor, Orlando Sentinel, August.


