

Course Syllabus

What you will learn in this course



Black History in America 1b: Exploring the Black Experience

What is the story of Black history in America? Well, the answer is—there are many! By exploring the storytelling, music, dance, and visual arts of the Black community in America, we follow those stories from the Civil War through to the present day. We discover the growing momentum of the fight for civil rights, increased political participation and power, and the lingering effects of slavery, Jim Crow, and segregation. We will hear from Black creators, activists, and politicians to see how they viewed their life in the context of the rich tapestry of Black history in America. Having examined Black history from its earliest days to the present and completing the cumulative project, you will be equipped to understand how the Black experience is shifting and changing each day in America.

Unit 1: Telling the Black American Story

What does it mean to tell the Black American story? Is there a single narrative that can cover all the collective experiences of a people? From ancient roots in Africa to modern-day television dramas, we'll trace the significance of storytelling in the Black American community. Along the way, we'll discover how storytelling—

in all its rich and diverse mediums—has become crucial to our understanding of the Black community, identity, and culture. Come with us on a journey to explore the many different aspects that make up the Black American story.

What will you learn in this unit?

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Describe the influence of African oral traditions and storytelling across the diaspora on Black American culture
2. Compare the viewpoints of prominent Black leaders from post-Reconstruction to the early twentieth century
3. Identify the influence of significant Black literary figures and their contributions to Black culture and identity
4. Explain how characteristics of Black American history and culture have been reflected in various genres of film, theater, and television

Unit 1 Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Lesson 01: Oral Traditions and Storytelling	Lesson
Lesson 02: Differing Viewpoints	Lesson
Lesson 03: A New Canon: Black Literature	Lesson
Lesson 04: Representation Over Time	Lesson
Critical Thinking Questions	Submission
Activity: What Do I Want to Learn?	Submission
Cumulative Project 1: What Do I Want Learn More About?	Submission
Unit 1 Discussion 1	Discussion
Unit 1 Discussion 2	Discussion
Unit 1 Quiz	Multiple Choice

Unit 2: Black History from the Civil War through World War I

What caused the American Civil War? What were the Jim Crow laws? And why, after years of enslavement and discrimination, would Black people still fight for America? In this unit, we'll answer these and many other questions as we journey through one of the most pivotal periods in American history. We'll begin by trying to unravel the intricate web of causes and consequences that ignited the American Civil War, examining society's feelings about slavery, money, and what it means to be human. We'll also spend some time discussing the aftermath of the war, the Reconstruction era and the rapid rise of Jim Crow laws following that period.

What will you learn in this unit?

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Describe the causes and consequences of the American Civil War, including the roles and experiences of Black soldiers and spies

2. Analyze the successes and failures of Reconstruction, including the opportunities and challenges faced by Black Americans
3. Explain the factors that led to the rise of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK)
4. Trace how Jim Crow laws affected the political, social, and economic experiences of Black Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries
5. Examine the response to the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision, including the resurgence of the KKK

Unit 2 Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Lesson 01: The War Gets Underway	Lesson
Lesson 02: The Impact of War	Lesson
Lesson 03: A Dark Chapter	Lesson
Lesson 04: Jim Crow Laws	Lesson
Lesson 05: Civil Rights Stalled, For Now	Lesson
Critical Thinking Questions	Submission
Activity 1: Was Sharecropping Fair?	Submission
Activity 2: What is the "Lost Cause" Myth?	Submission
Unit 2 Discussion 1	Discussion
Unit 2 Discussion 2	Discussion
Unit 2 Quiz	Multiple Choice

Unit 3: Black Music, Dance, and Visual Arts

When you think of art, what comes to mind? In many ways, art is all around us, but some forms of art—like music, dance, and the visual arts—have profound impacts on our lives. Black art in particular, in its many forms and styles, has had an immeasurable impact on American and global culture. In this unit, we'll examine the pivotal role various Black American individuals and movements played in shaping Black artistry. We'll also delve into the rich tapestry of Black artistic contributions and explore their impact on Black Americans and, by extension, mainstream art and culture as a whole.

What will you learn in this unit?

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explore Black artistic expression from its roots in Africa through the Reconstruction period
2. Trace the evolution of Black American arts to the present, focusing on how movements like the Harlem Renaissance and Great Migration helped shape Black art and culture
3. Describe Black contributions to music, including the development and influence of various genres of music and the achievements of notable Black musicians
4. Explain Black contributions to dance, including how the contributions of Black dancers have helped to shape Black and American cultural identity
5. Analyze Black visual artists and art styles and determine how they helped to shape narratives about the Black experience in America

Unit 3 Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Lesson 01: Black Art from Africa to the Reconstruction	Lesson
Lesson 02: Black Art from the Harlem Renaissance to the Present	Lesson
Lesson 03: From Spirituals to Hip-Hop and Everything in Between	Lesson
Lesson 04: Tapping Away at Barriers	Lesson
Lesson 05: Black Visual Arts	Lesson
Critical Thinking Questions	Submission
Activity 1: How Can I Understand Art?	Submission
Activity 2: Can Art Amend History?	Submission
Unit 3 Discussion 1	Discussion
Unit 3 Discussion 2	Discussion
Unit 3 Quiz	Multiple Choice

Unit 4: Igniting a Spark for Civil Rights(1920s–1950s)

Some of the most transformative periods in American history moved our nation toward the pivotal civil rights movement. In this unit, we will discover the incredible individuals, events, and socio-political dynamics that shaped the movement in the decades before its eruption in mid-1950s. Here, we will explore the multifaceted aspects that ignited the spark for the civil rights movement—everything from the historical foundations of the movement, including the widespread racism, segregation, and inequality that fueled the demand for civil rights to the many landmark events and visionary people who led the charge for change.

What will you learn in this unit?

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain the positive and negative effects of the Great Depression and Prohibition on Black Americans
2. Explore how the New Deal and World War II influenced the Black experience in America
3. Analyze legal policies, court actions, and legislation impacting Black Americans from Jim Crow to the integration of the armed forces
4. Follow events of the 1950s that led up to the birth of the civil rights movement and stoked its early progress
5. Discover how events like the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the death of Emmett Till animated the civil rights movement

Unit 4 Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Lesson 01: The Great Depression and Prohibition	Lesson
Lesson 02: The New Deal and World War II	Lesson
Lesson 03: The Legal Legacy of Jim Crow	Lesson
Lesson 04: The 1950s, Part 1	Lesson
Lesson 05: The 1950s, Part 2	Lesson
Critical Thinking Questions	Submission
Activity 1: How Do "Biographies" Shape History?	Submission
Activity 2: What Have I Learned So Far?	Submission
Unit 4 Discussion 1	Discussion
Unit 4 Discussion 2	Discussion
Unit 4 Quiz	Multiple Choice

Midterm Exam

1. Review information acquired and mastered from this course up to this point.
2. Take a course exam based on material from the **first half** of the course (**Note:** You will be able to open this exam only one time.)

Midterm Exam Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Midterm Exam	Multiple Choice
Midterm Discussion	Discussion

Unit 5: The Civil Rights Movement Gains Momentum

We've seen the civil rights movement erupt, and once it did, there was no turning back. The 1960s bore witness to the expansion of this fight for civil freedoms and justice. In this unit, we'll continue to learn about courageous individuals, impassioned organizations, and landmark events that converged to redefine the nation's trajectory. We'll also take some time to analyze the causes and effects of government actions and legislation from 1960 to the present day to better understand the evolving landscape of policies and their impact on societal change.

What will you learn in this unit?

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain the key contributions of the NAACP, SNCC, CORE, and Dr. Martin Luther King in the civil rights movement
2. Describe the origin and ideals of the Black Power movement in America
3. Discuss the ways Black Americans conflicted and cooperated with other groups to build coalitions during the civil rights movement

4. Examine the interconnectedness of the freedom movements for Black Americans, Latinx Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and women
5. Explore the causes and effects of government actions and legislation addressing racial and social injustices from 1960 to the present day
6. Evaluate how the civil rights movement transformed American politics and society

Unit 5 Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Lesson 01: An Ongoing Struggle, Part 1	Lesson
Lesson 02: An Ongoing Struggle, Part 2	Lesson
Lesson 03: Conflict and Cooperation	Lesson
Lesson 04: Organizing in Pursuit of Human Rights	Lesson
Lesson 05: Injustice By Many Other Names	Lesson
Lesson 06: Changing Society: The Impact of the Civil Rights Movement	Lesson
Critical Thinking Questions	Submission
Activity 1: How Can I Analyze a Political Message?	Submission
Activity 2: How Can Local Activism Cause National Change?	Submission
Unit 5 Discussion 1	Discussion
Unit 5 Discussion 2	Discussion
Unit 5 Quiz	Multiple Choice

Unit 6: Struggle, Change, and Progress

In 1990, the world witnessed Nelson Mandela's historic release from prison, marking a pivotal moment in the fight against apartheid in South Africa and inspiring global calls for equality and justice. In our nation as well, the decades after the civil rights era, including the 1970s to the early 2000s, echoed the triumphs of resilience and unity, sparking hope for change in the struggle against racial oppression worldwide. In this unit, we'll traverse through these decades, exploring the progress made by Black Americans. We'll also cover the challenges faced by Black communities across the nation. Along the way, we'll meet more Black Americans who shaped our nation's political and social landscapes as they fought in the ongoing struggle for equality and justice.

What will you learn in this unit?

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Identify and explain the issues confronting Black Americans in legal and economic spheres as they fought to achieve equality after the civil rights era
2. Explain how education and social forces impacted Black Americans in the 1970s to early 2000s
3. Explore the flourishing of Black-owned businesses and pop culture icons in the post-civil rights era
4. Analyze how events in the 1990s and early 2000s impacted daily life for Black Americans
5. Trace Black participation in government during the 1970s through the early 2000s

Unit 6 Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Lesson 01: Legal and Economic Landscapes	Lesson
Lesson 02: Social Concerns and Important Influencers	Lesson
Lesson 03: Magazines, Basketball, and Miss America: The 1970s and 80s	Lesson
Lesson 04: Social Shifts: The 90s Through the Early 2000s	Lesson
Lesson 05: Black Americans in Government	Lesson
Critical Thinking Questions	Submission
Activity 1: How Does One Person's Life Impact History?	Submission
Activity 2: What Are the Consequences of the War on Crime?	Submission
Unit 6 Discussion 1	Discussion
Unit 6 Discussion 2	Discussion
Unit 6 Quiz	Multiple Choice

Unit 7: Education, Innovation, & Invention

What impact has education had on the Black experience in America? To answer this question, we'll venture back to the time of slavery and trace the history of Black education through to *Brown v. Board of Education* and beyond. As we go, we'll unravel the historical and evolving landscape of educational opportunities for Black Americans, including challenges Black students face, the pivotal role of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and the "Divine Nine." Finally, we'll meet (or re-meet) some influential Black scientists, mathematicians, and thinkers who have been on the cutting edge of their fields over the last century and a half.

What will you learn in this unit?

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Explain educational opportunities for Black Americans before the US Supreme Court decision of *Brown v. Board of Education*
2. Describe contemporary issues in education for Black American students
3. Analyze the expansion of college and university educational opportunities for Black Americans, including the founding of historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs)
4. Understand the role of the National Pan-Hellenic Council (Divine Nine) in Black higher education
5. Discover how Black American achievements in mathematics, philosophy, science, and technology have contributed to economic and social development in the United States

Unit 7 Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Lesson 01: Black Education from Slavery to <i>Brown</i>	Lesson
Lesson 02: Black Education from the 1970s to Present	Lesson
Lesson 03: Higher Education and HBCUs	Lesson
Lesson 04: The Divine Nine	Lesson
Lesson 05: Movers and Shakers	Lesson
Critical Thinking Questions	Submission
Cumulative Project 2: What Do I Want Learn More About?	Submission
Activity: Is an HBCU Right for Me?	Submission
Unit 7 Discussion 1	Discussion
Unit 7 Discussion 2	Discussion
Unit 7 Quiz	Multiple Choice

Unit 8: The Black American Experience Today

At the beginning of this two-part course, we asked you what you thought it meant to be Black in America. Now as we come to the end of our journey, we're asking you to reflect on this question again in a slightly different way: What does it mean to be Black in America today? In this unit, we'll delve into the complexities of modern-day Black American experiences. Throughout this journey, we'll explore the dynamic landscape of achievements from Black politicians and activists. We'll also deep dive into some of the persistent issues that the Black community faces, while becoming familiar with some regions in America that foster Black wealth-building and entrepreneurship.

What will you learn in this unit?

After studying this unit, you will be able to:

1. Describe the major achievements of contemporary Black Americans in the political sphere and how their contributions have shaped the American experience
2. Analyze factors that have led to the current wealth gap between Black and white Americans
3. Explore regions in the United States that are particularly favorable to Black wealth-building
4. Discuss contemporary Black American issues that have led to diverse points of view in public discourse

Unit 8 Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Lesson 01: Breaking Barriers	Lesson
Lesson 02: Analyzing the Wealth Gap	Lesson
Lesson 03: Building Black Wealth	Lesson
Lesson 04: On the Shoulders of Giants	Lesson
Critical Thinking Questions	Submission
Final Cumulative Project: How Does History Influence the Present?	Submission
Activity: What Did I Get from This Course?	Submission
Unit 8 Discussion 1	Discussion
Unit 8 Discussion 2	Discussion
Unit 8 Quiz	Multiple Choice

Final Exam

1. Review information acquired and mastered from this course up to this point.
2. Take a course exam based on material from the **second half** of the course (**Note:** You will be able to open this exam only one time.)

Final Exam Assignments	
Assignment	Type
Final Exam	Multiple Choice
Final Discussion	Discussion