

Undergraduate Course Syllabus: History 300:
In Search of Memory: African American Neighborhoods and Communities in
Virginia

Professor: Wendi N. Manuel-Scott

History and Art History Department/African American Studies

Email: wmanuels@gmu.edu

Office: Robinson B, Room 437A

Phone: 703.993.1201

Office hours: M 3-4:15 p.m. and T and R 12:00 p.m. to 1:15 p.m. & by appt

Syllabus Caveat: This syllabus is a document-in- process. Therefore, if you miss a class, it is your responsibility to keep abreast of changes.

“Stories can save us. Stories can bind us, can break us upon, can make us human to each other. But there’s also the politics of storytelling. Who decides which stories are told, and which are buried?” –Valerie Kaur

Our goal is to examine historical and contemporary issues that shape the social and political fabric of African American neighborhoods and communities in Virginia. In this course, we will do this by listening to the voices and perspectives of people who have lived, experienced, and “made” this history firsthand. We will focus on the history of African American communities in Virginia from slavery, through the end of Reconstruction and to the contemporary era, focusing especially on the decades of legal segregation. We will critically assess, through oral history, readings, archival documents, and documentary films how major forces of social change—Jim Crow laws, migration, the Civil Rights Movement, urban renewal, etc.—have affected the struggle for dignity and rights in African American neighborhoods and communities. This course seeks to challenge college students to think about the relationships between community and history, and between past and present and between “race” and “place.”

No matter what you already know about African American history and culture, or contemporary race relations, “In Search of Memory” will greatly expand your intellectual horizons. This seminar will encourage students to develop a number of important skills. It combines assigned readings with intensive primary-source research but it is also an exercise in storytelling. African American Communities asks you to interpret your findings and translate your conclusions into a well-research final paper. Class sessions will include a combination of seminar lectures, reading discussions, research, and individual/group work sessions.

This course fulfills in part the Writing Intensive requirement in the history major. To successfully complete this course all students must submit an original 25-page

research paper. The research report will be completed through a draft/feedback/revision process. The first draft will be due November 19; I will provide commentary on the draft, and the revised draft will be due on December 7. This class is also identified as a Students as Scholars Scholarly Inquiry course, where students learn about the process of scholarly inquiry through studying previous scholarship, engaging in archival research, and analyses of historical documents.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to attend all meetings of the course. This course is structured to reward students who come to class, complete their reading, participate in discussions, and stay on top of their assignments. Each student will help lead a discussion and everyone is expected to participate. To do this effectively you need to have read and thought about the assigned reading before class. In class, be prepared to ask questions and think critically about the material. If you are uncomfortable speaking in front of the group or have trouble contributing to the discussion, please talk to me after class and explain your situation. All assigned readings must be brought to class meetings.

Civility: Students are expected to use good manners in class. Basic requirements include an alert and attentive presence; participation verbally and mentally; and a positive attitude to everyone in the class. Dozing off in class, laying your head down on your desk for a rest, whispering, text messaging and/or leaving a cell phone on, and chewing and snapping gum are simply unacceptable behaviors. Working on homework for another class is not acceptable, and you may be asked to leave the class if caught. I will make an effort to be punctual and expect all students to do the same. If this policy is not acceptable to you, please drop this course for another.

Course Policies

Class absences: Students are expected to attend all meetings of the course, both lecture and assigned discussion section. In the event that you must miss class, you are responsible for the contents of the lecture or discussion. Furthermore, if you miss class on the day of quiz, you will not be permitted to make it up without prior arrangement with the instructor.

Email: Electronic mail is a valuable tool. I will, from time to time, send emails to the class, and I am happy to respond to your email messages provided you bear in mind the following points. In academic and professional settings, all emails should have a descriptive subject line (“Question about History 300 assignment”), begin with a respectful salutation (“Prof. Manuel-Scott”), and conform to Standard English with proper punctuation and capitalization. Do not use instant message abbreviations. All correspondence should take place via your GMU email

account. If you have not activated your GMU email account, go to <https://mail.gmu.edu/>, and select “activate account.”

Cellular Telephones: During class all cellular telephones must be switched completely off or set to silent (not vibrate) mode. Students are not to compose, read, or respond to text messages. If you are an emergency responder (such as an EMT) and must receive pages, you must notify the instructor within the first week of the course.

Laptop Computers: Students who wish to use laptop computer for note-taking are welcome to do so in compliance with the following rules. 1) All internet connections, audio, and video components are switched off. 2) As a courtesy to other students, computers that make noise when switched on should be powered up before entering the class room. 3) All class notes must be emailed to professor by 7:30pm Monday evening. Students who use laptops for purposes other than taking notes (i.e., email, instant messaging, internet browsing) will be asked to leave.

Submission of Work and Late Work

All written work is due at the beginning of class in hard copy on the day indicated on the syllabus. All written assignments should be typed, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins and in a 12-point font. Your name should be on the paper, and all pages should be stapled and numbered. You must submit your work in hard copy only; no email attachments accepted. Please retain electronic copies of your work, and in some instances, your instructor may ask for an electronic copy of your paper in order to use it as an example in teaching (good!) or to submit to a plagiarism detection site like Turnitin.com (bad!).

All students are responsible for knowing and adhering to the deadlines for course assignments. Late work will be penalized. The only exceptions to this will be when you have explicit, advanced permission from your instructor. If you anticipate a problem in completing or submitting your work on time, you must contact the instructor in a timely manner. If you do not hear back from your instructor, you should assume that your work is due on the original date. Regardless of whether or not you have been granted an extension, you must contact your instructor for how to submit late work.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism: This class and all of your work as an undergraduate are governed by GMU’s Honor Code: “Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.” Plagiarism is presenting another person’s words, ideas, or sequence of arguments as your own without attribution. We will discuss what constitutes plagiarism and how to cite sources properly in this

course. If at any point, however, you have a question about this, please ask. If you are tempted to plagiarize or find yourself using material from the Internet or any other source and trying to pass it off as your own, stop working on the assignment and contact the instructor. It is better to submit work late than to break the Honor Code. It is my duty to report all violations of the Honor Code, and I take this duty quite seriously. When I report cases of plagiarism to the Honor Committee, I recommend that the penalty be failure for the course or suspension from George Mason. Such drastic outcomes are avoided through proper citations and good communication with your instructor. To read more about the Honor Code, the Honor Committee, and its procedures, see go to <http://honorcode.gmu.edu>.

Disabilities, Academic Accommodations and Religious Observances: If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office. Students who must miss class for religious observances must notify the instructor of their absence.

Late adds: If you join the course late you must meet with the instructor as soon as possible. You will not be permitted to submit assignments that you have missed without special arrangement with the instructor. With permission, such assignments must be received within five days of joining the course.

Final disclaimer: This syllabus is subject to revision as the semester proceeds. Announcements will be made at our class meetings or via GMU email accounts and students are responsible for being aware of any changes.

GRADING:

In this course you will be graded in four major areas:

15% Class participation (includes in-class and online discussion/participation)

15% Response papers

30% Research proposal, first draft, rough draft, peer critique, and oral presentations

40% Final Research Paper

Required Readings:

Walsh, Lorena. *From Calabar to Carter's Grove: The history of a Virginia Slave Community*.

Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. *The Craft of Research*. 3rd edition.

Both books are available in the campus bookstore.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

I. Weekly Response Papers

The first five weeks of the semester students must submit a weekly response paper. The **goal** of the assignment is for students to communicate in short writing exercises (**Nor more than 3 typed and double-spaced pages**) what you learned that week about the history of African Americans neighborhoods and communities in Virginia and about how historians research this topic. All students should read *The Craft of Research* (pp84-100) prior to reading all articles. Based on *The Craft of Research*, response papers should try to identify and discuss points of “creative disagreement.” Students must also address the authors' main arguments and the sources the authors use to support their arguments.

Citation Style: All papers must employ the Chicago Manual of Style. This means that papers must use footnotes and not the author-date or Modern Language Association

(MLA) style. One of the required texts for the class is Kate L. Turabian's condensed version of the Chicago Manual of Style. For more information, see “University of Chicago Style: Citing Internet Sources” website detailing the Chicago style.

II. Place and Race Assignments

To help students identify a research topic, students will explore three “places” that are historically significant to black neighborhoods/ communities in Virginia. The “place” may be a building or a street. Before class, students must post an image (with description) on HistoryPin (<http://www.historypin.com/>). Students must be prepared to discuss the “place” and three relevant contextual facts.

III. Final Research Paper

A. Objective:

One of the major assignments for this course is a 25-page research paper on African American neighborhoods and communities in Virginia. The specific topic of the paper is up to you. You can focus on any aspect of African American neighborhoods and/or communities in Virginia that interests you, but I would warn everyone to be as *narrow* as possible in your focus.

B. Research Proposal:

The first stage of this project is the research proposal. This is a very important component of the process. The proposal will allow me to assist you in designing a productive project. Your proposal should address four major issues: 1) What is your topic and why did you choose it? 2) How do you plan to research the topic? Are there enough primary and secondary sources available to you to finish the project? Which specific collections do you need to consult? What archives

or libraries do you need to visit/request documents? 3) What specific primary and secondary sources are available on your topic? Additionally, in this part of the proposal, I would like to see a preliminary bibliography on your project. In other words, provide a list of books, articles, and web sites that may assist you with your project. 5) You must also provide a brief historiography. The entire proposal should be approximately seven typed, double-spaced pages.

Individual Research Phase

You are responsible for researching and writing an original history paper. Each week that you are not in class, you are still responsible for assignments. You will also schedule an individual conference with me to discuss your project. During the weeks that class does not meet, I will be in my office holding extended office hours for students that need assistance.

Final Drafts and Peer Review

To facilitate your best performance on your research project, you will submit a draft of your paper/project that will be critiqued by your peers. In that class, you will exchange **two** copies (2 copies for your peers and 1 copy for your professor) of your draft.

COURSE SCHEDULE

8/27 Race, Space and Memory

9/3 Labor Day Break

9/10 Making African American Communities in Colonial Virginia

*Lorena S. Walsh, *From Calabar to Carter's Grove: The history of a Virginia Slave Community*

9/17 Surviving and Thriving: African American Neighborhoods and Communities in Antebellum Virginia

* John T. O'Brien, "Factory, Church, and Community: Blacks in Antebellum Richmond" *Journal of Southern History* 44-4 (November 1978): 509-536

*Anthony E. Kaye, *Joining Places: Slave Neighborhoods in the Old South*, University of North Carolina Press, 2009 1-50 (will receive via email as PDF)

*Wayne Booth, *The Craft of Research*, 84-100.

Recommended:

*Kyle Ainsworth, "Beneath the Paternal Gaze: Threads of Community in Black Resistance" *Southern Quarterly*, Vol. 48, Issue 1 (Fall 2010) 46-70 @ America: History & Life Database

Place and Race Assignment #1 due

9/24 Community, Power, and Resistance in Jim Crow Virginia

*Michael Hucles, "[Many Voices, Similar Concerns: Traditional Methods of African-American Political Activity in Norfolk, Virginia, 1865-1875](#)" *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* Vol. 100, No. 4 (Oct., 1992) 543-566

*August Meier and Elliott Rudwick. "[Negro Boycotts of Segregated Streetcars in Virginia, 1904-1907](#)" *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 81 (October, 1973) 479-487

*Elsa Barkley Brown, "Womanist Consciousness: Maggie Lena Walker and the Independent Order of Saint Luke" *Signs* 14-3 (Spring 1989) 610-33.

*Elsa Barkley Brown, "[Constructing a Life and a Community: A Partial Story of Maggie Lena Walker](#)" *OAH Magazine of History*, Vol. 7, No. 4, African-American History (Summer, 1993) 28-31

*Books Miles Barnes, "[The Onancock Race Riot of 1907](#)" *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 92, No. 3 (Jul., 1984) 336-351

Place and Race Assignment #2 due

10/1 Civil Rights and Desegregation in Virginia

* "Why Massive Resistance." In *Massive Resistance: Southern Opposition to the Second Reconstruction*, edited by Clive Webb. (Oxford University Press, 2005). (will receive via email as PDF)

*Antonio T. Bly " [The Thunder during the Storm-School Desegregation in Norfolk, Virginia, 1957-1959: A Local History](#)" *The Journal of Negro Education*, Vol. 67, No. 2 (Spring, 1998) 106-114

*James McGrath Morris, "A Chink in the Armour: The Black-Led Struggle for School Desegregation in Arlington, Virginia, and the End of Massive Resistance" *Journal of Policy History*, Vol. 13, No. 3, (2001) 329-366 @ Project Muse

*Robin D. G. Kelley, "'We Are Not What We Seem': Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South" *The Journal of American History* , Vol. 80, No. 1 (Jun., 1993), 75-112

Recommended:

*Robert A. Pratt. [New Directions in Virginia's Civil Rights History](#) *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 104 (Winter 1996) 149-156

Place and Race Assignment #3 due

10/9 Mapping Black Neighborhoods and Communities

Visit GMU Library as a class

Read *The Craft of Research* pp 1-83. Please bring complete exercises 3.3.1-3.3.5 to class.

We will also discuss “Mapping the Terrain of Black Richmond” by Elsa Barkley Brown and Gregg Kimball The Brown/Kimball article is available online via a quick google search. Consider how the twin themes of space and race are important to understanding your chosen paper topic. Be prepared to discuss your refined research topic and the article.

10/15 Research Day-Class does not meet

By midnight, you must post three documents and a map/or image of a relevant “place” on our class blog. Please include a 300-word statement describing your preliminary research. Students are strongly encouraged to view and comment on the research of classmates. More details about this assignment will be provided.

10/22 Individual Meetings

Draft proposal due via e-mail by Thursday, October 18.

10/29 Mapping Black Neighborhoods and Communities

Revised Proposal Due and Oral presentation with Neighborhood/Community Map and Genealogy

11/5 Remembering Community: Oral history and Memory

Students must bring two “oral history” documents to class. Assignment details will be provided in advance.

11/12 Research Day-Class does not meet

By midnight, you must post three documents you have encountered in your research. One of the documents must pose a serious research problem. Please describe the problem and possible solutions. All class members must offer suggestions on how to proceed to three classmates via the class blog.

11/19 Making an Argument: Oral Presentation

Read *The Craft of Research* pp105-170. Your oral presentation should be based on page 131 and 140. Additional information will be provided. **(First Draft due)**

11/26 Writing/Revision Day-Class does not meet (Students are also encouraged to schedule individual meetings as well.)

12/3 Peer Review

Bring two copies of your rough draft to class.

12/7 Final paper due

Final Paper Due Friday, December 7 by 12 noon; NO late papers will be accepted for a grade.