

**South Africa and United States: Race, Rights, Resistance and  
Transnational Movements in Comparative History**

**Spring 2021 HIST 565 & 615: \*\*First Mandatory Meeting\*\*1/26/2021**

**Tuesday 7:20-10:00 PM, DL, Zoom Class**

**Dr. Benedict Carton, Department of History  
Zoom office hours by email appointment: bcarton1@gmu.edu**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course explores the comparative histories of South Africa and the United States. From the 1700s to 1800s, a growing number of indigenous and immigrant groups in South Africa and the United States resisted settler rule, as legacies of slavery increasingly differentiated the individual rights and cultural expressions of “European” and “non-European” populations. With widening global networks in the twentieth century, the identities of indigenous, settler, and immigrant peoples continued to evolve. At this time, transnational movements such as Ethiopianism, Garveyism, and other Black freedom struggles brought the two societies closer together in far-reaching protests against legalized racism. Indeed, more and more South Africans and Americans increasingly recognized what they had in common: white supremacy. By the 1940s, the South Africa state had come to embrace apartheid while the US government edged away from segregation. Our seminar focuses on scholarship that examines these intersecting and divergent paths. Along the way, we consider whether national comparisons deepen or distort our historical understandings of South Africa and the United States.

**ZOOM SEMINAR EXPECTATIONS**

- 1. Zoom session invites will be sent to you by email and uploaded to our course Blackboard page.**
- 2. Please do not arrive late to Zoom seminar. Or, please do your best to attend Zoom sessions in a timely (and present) way. Thank you.**
- 3. You are required to finish the assigned weekly texts before participating in the Zoom seminar.**
- 4. You are strongly urged to share your informed ideas and observations during Zoom discussions.**
- 5. When emailing your professor, please include the heading, “SA-US Seminar.”**

## **REQUIRED READINGS TO PURCHASE ONLINE**

The seminar readings include works of historical analysis and synthesis. Several journal articles will be uploaded to our Blackboard course page; one required monograph, authored by Nicholas Grant, can be downloaded (for free) using JSTOR (GMU Libraries). **The following books should be purchased as soon as possible from online vendors. Please click on these blue-highlighted sites or choose your favorite book seller. Time is of the essence.**

- 1) **Iris Berger**, *South Africa in World History* (Oxford University Press, 2009): [https://www.abebooks.com/South-Africa-World-History-Berger-Iris/30796707003/bd?cm\\_mmc=ggl-US\\_Shopp\\_Trade\\_-naa\\_-naa&gclid=EA1aIQobChMI77ayr9Kg7gIVNebjBx27mgzzEAQYASABEgKOOvD\\_BwE](https://www.abebooks.com/South-Africa-World-History-Berger-Iris/30796707003/bd?cm_mmc=ggl-US_Shopp_Trade_-naa_-naa&gclid=EA1aIQobChMI77ayr9Kg7gIVNebjBx27mgzzEAQYASABEgKOOvD_BwE) and <https://www.amazon.com/South-Africa-World-History-Oxford/dp/019533793X>
- 2) **Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela**, *A Human Being Died That Night: A South African Woman Confronts Apartheid* (Mariner Books, 2004): [https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/SearchResults?cm\\_sp=plpafe\\_-all\\_-soft&an=gobodo-madikizela%20pumla&bi=s&sortby=17&tn=human%20being%20died%20night](https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/SearchResults?cm_sp=plpafe_-all_-soft&an=gobodo-madikizela%20pumla&bi=s&sortby=17&tn=human%20being%20died%20night) and <https://www.amazon.com/Human-Being-Died-That-Night/dp/0618446591>
- 3) **Anne Moody**, *Coming of Age in Mississippi: The Classic Autobiography of Growing Up Poor and Black in the Rural South* (Delta, 2004): [https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/SearchResults?isbn=9780440314882&n=100121503&cm\\_sp=mbc\\_-ISBN\\_-used](https://www.abebooks.com/servlet/SearchResults?isbn=9780440314882&n=100121503&cm_sp=mbc_-ISBN_-used) and [https://www.amazon.com/Coming-Mississippi-Moody-1-Feb-2004-Paperback/dp/B012HTQH8A/ref=tmm\\_pap\\_swatch\\_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=](https://www.amazon.com/Coming-Mississippi-Moody-1-Feb-2004-Paperback/dp/B012HTQH8A/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=)
- 4) **George M. Fredrickson**, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study of American and South African History* (Oxford University Press, 1982): <https://www.abebooks.com/book-search/title/white-supremacy-a-comparative-study-in-american-and-south-african-history/> and <https://www.amazon.com/White-Supremacy-Comparative-American-African/dp/0195030427>
- 5) **Zine Magubane**, *Bringing the Empire Home: Race, Class, and Gender in Britain and Colonial South Africa* (University of Chicago Press, 2003): <https://www.amazon.com/Bringing-Empire-Home-Britain-Colonial/dp/0226501779>
- 6) **Chinua Thelwell**, *Exporting Jim Crow: Blackface Minstrelsy in South Africa and Beyond* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2020): [https://www.amazon.com/Exporting-Jim-Crow-Blackface-Minstrelsy/dp/1625345178/ref=tmm\\_pap\\_swatch\\_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=](https://www.amazon.com/Exporting-Jim-Crow-Blackface-Minstrelsy/dp/1625345178/ref=tmm_pap_swatch_0?encoding=UTF8&qid=&sr=) and <https://www.umasspress.com/9781625345172/exporting-jim-crow/>
- 7) **James Campbell**, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South* (University of North Carolina Press, 1998); <https://www.amazon.com/Songs-Zion-African-Methodist-Episcopal/dp/0807847119>
- 8) **Robert Vinson**, *The Americans Are Coming! Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa* (Ohio University Press, 2012); <https://www.amazon.com/Americans-Are-Coming-Liberation-Segregationist/dp/0821419862>
- 9) **Nicholas Grant**, *Winning Our Freedoms Together: African Americans & Apartheid, 1945-1960* (University of North Carolina Press, 2017). This monograph can be downloaded from JSTOR (GMU Libraries) and purchased here: <https://www.amazon.com/Winning-Our-Freedoms-Together-Americans/dp/1469635283> and <https://uncpress.org/book/9781469635286/winning-our-freedoms-together/>
- 10) These required essays and articles have been uploaded to the Blackboard course page: **Natasha Erlank**, "Gender and Masculinity in South African Nationalist Discourse, 1912-1950," *Feminist Studies* 29, 3, (2003), pp. 653-671; **Nomboniso Gasa**, "Feminisms, Motherisms, Patriarchies and Women's Voices in the 1950s," in N. Gasa ed. *Women in South African History: They Remove Boulders and Cross Rivers* (Cape Town, 2007), pp. 207-231; **Gerald Horne**, "U.S. Foreign Policy and the General Crisis of 'White Supremacy,'" *Diplomatic History* 23, 3 (1999), pp. 437-461.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Class participation is worth **15%** of your overall grade. **If you have poor class participation**—due largely to absences from our Zoom sessions—**your final grade will be reduced considerably**. For example, if your average mark on papers is an A- and you have poor class participation, your final course grade will drop to a B or B-.

You are obliged to write two brief essays at the start of the semester. These one-page, double-spaced papers are due 2 Feb. and 9 Feb at 7:20 PM. This assignment will focus on a reading or readings and interrelated questions that I will pose to you. Each essay is worth **7.5%**; these short assignments amount to **15%** of your total grade. If you are thoughtful, pithy and coherent, and you consider one (historiographical) debate and support your main idea with several textual quotes, you will earn every point. I want you to earn every point, so please budget enough time to craft excellent short essays.

You are also going to write two 5-page book-review essays. You will need to select books to review from sections II-V. Each review essay is worth **20%** of your overall grade. **You must complete a draft of your review essay and email it to [bcarton1@gmu.edu](mailto:bcarton1@gmu.edu) no later than 4:00 PM on the Tuesday that it is due.** Please email the final copy of the essay by 7:20 PM (that same Tuesday). Your “draft” essays will inform our weekly discussions. At the end of our second Zoom session, I will ask you to choose the books you wish to review. Several “anonymous” examples of book reviews from previous seminars have been uploaded to our Blackboard course page. Please read these essays carefully, paying special attention to the introduction and unfolding analysis, integrated textual quotes, footnote citations, and other dimensions of scholarship.

You should consider the following basic guidelines when writing a book review: A) What is the principal argument of the book and/or article(s)? B) Do the primary and secondary sources support the principal argument? C) How does the scholarship build on previous ideas and debates? D) Are certain interpretations singled out for criticism? E) Are these criticisms fair? F) What is the most effective line of argument (and why is it effective)? G) Does the book ignore crucial perspectives that undermine its findings?

Finally, you are required to write a 20-page final paper; it is worth **30%** of your course grade. Due **9 May 2020 at 8:00 PM**, this final paper will critically assess **at least 5 assigned books, which you may select from sections II-V (you may also integrate analyses of one or two scholarly articles, as well)**. You will be given a choice of final paper questions in April. **FINAL PAPERS WILL BE PENALIZED ½ A GRADE POINT FOR EACH DAY LATE. Please note that this grading penalty applies to every day of the week.**

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

GMU is an Honor Code university. Please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic integrity is taken seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? When you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on any aspect of someone else's work, you will give full credit in the proper (academically accepted) form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and open debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of our class will be conducted with civility and respect for different ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

## **GMU EMAIL ACCOUNTS**

The university requires that students communicate with the professor through GMU email. Thus, students must use their Mason electronic address to receive key information, including important messages to the class.

## **OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES**

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Services. All academic accommodations must be arranged through DS: <https://ds.gmu.edu/>

## **IMPORTANT CAMPUS RESOURCES**

WRITING CENTER: <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES: <https://library.gmu.edu/>

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES: (703) 993-2380 and <https://caps.gmu.edu/>

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

The University Catalog, <https://catalog.gmu.edu/>, is the central resource for GMU policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in academic affairs. Other policies are available at <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

## **SPRING 2021 SEMESTER SCHEDULE**

**Week 1, Jan. 26: Mandatory Zoom session and seminar introduction.** We will discuss an article in this virtual class. Please be prepared to share your thoughts about this required reading (emailed to you, as well): C. Lowe, T. Brimah, P-A. Marsh, W. Minter & M. Muyangwa, "Talking about Tribe: Moving from Stereotypes to Analysis," [http://africanactivist.msu.edu/document\\_metadata.php?objectid=32-130-153D](http://africanactivist.msu.edu/document_metadata.php?objectid=32-130-153D) and/or [https://projects.kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/210-808-1340/Background\\_Paper\\_010\\_opt.pdf](https://projects.kora.matrix.msu.edu/files/210-808-1340/Background_Paper_010_opt.pdf)

### **SECTION I: South Africa in Global, Subjective, and American Perspectives**

**Week 2, Feb. 2: South Africa in Global Perspective, with Special Reference to American People, Events, and Processes.**

Week 2 we discuss Iris Berger, *South Africa in World History* (Oxford University Press, 2009). **\*\*The first one-page essay is due at the start of this class.\*\***

**Week 3, Feb. 9: Memory and Healing? South African Racial Reckonings and American Histories.**

Week 3 we discuss Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, *A Human Being Died That Night: A South African Woman Confronts Apartheid* (Mariner Books, 2004) and the *New York Times* interview with Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, 11 December 2020. To access this article, please go to the Blackboard course page. **\*\*The second one-page essay is due at the start of this class.\*\***

**Week 4, Feb. 16: "Two Trains Running"? American Racial Reckonings and South African Histories.**

Week 4 we discuss Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi: The Classic Autobiography of Growing Up Poor and Black in the Rural South* (Delta, 2004).

### **SECTION II: A Pioneering Work of Comparative Historical Scholarship**

**Week 5, Feb. 23: Part One: The Strange (Olde) Career of Jim Crow in South Africa and United States.**

Week 5 we discuss George Fredrickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study of American and South African History* (Oxford University Press, 1982), xi-135. Please also consult the "Chronology of Events," 283-287.

**Week 6, Mar. 2: Part Two: The Strange (Modern) Career of Jim Crow in South Africa and United States.**

Week 6 we discuss George Fredrickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study of American and South African History* (Oxford University Press, 1982), 136-282.

**Week 7, Mar. 9: No new reading. Discussion: Perspective and Scholarship: Going from Comparative to Transnational History.**

## SECTION III: Moving (in)to the Nineteenth Century & Transnational Analyses

### **Week 8, Mar. 16: “Hottentot” South Africa and Anglo Empires: Postcolonial Analysis.**

Week 8 we discuss Zine Magubane, *Bringing the Empire Home: Race, Class, and Gender in Britain and Colonial South Africa* (University of Chicago Press, 2003).

### **Week 9, Mar. 23: “Blackface” South Africa and Anglo Empires: Minstrel Analysis.**

Week 8 we discuss Chinua Thelwell, *Exporting Jim Crow: Blackface Minstrelsy in South Africa and Beyond* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2020).

## SECTION IV: Toward the Twentieth & Gospels of Liberation

### **Week 10, Mar. 30: Part One: “Ethiopian” Revolution in the Atlantic World: African-American Redemptive Religion and Apostles of South African Liberation.**

Week 9 we discuss James Campbell, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (University of North Carolina Press, 1998), vi-179.

### **Week 11, Apr. 6: Part Two: “Ethiopian” Revolution in the Atlantic World: African-American Redemptive Religion and Apostles of South African Liberation.**

Week 10 we discuss James Campbell, *Songs of Zion: The African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 180-334; optional reading: Benedict Carton and Robert Vinson, “‘Ethiopia Shall Stretch’ from Africa to America: The Pan-African Crusade of Charles Morris,” in D. Hodgson and J. Byfield, eds. *Global Africa into the Twenty-first Century* (University of California Press, 2017), pp. 59-70. To access this article, please go to the Blackboard course page.

### **Week 12, Apr. 13: Enveloped in the Gospel of Garvey: Pan-Africanism and Black Nationalist Politics in the United States and South Africa.**

Week 12 we discuss Robert Vinson, *The Americans Are Coming! Dreams of African American Liberation in Segregationist South Africa* (Ohio University Press, 2012). Additional required reading (gender, race, and nationalism): Natasha Erlank, “Gender and Masculinity in South African Nationalist Discourse, 1912-1950,” *Feminist Studies* 29, 3, (2003), pp. 653-671. To access this article, please go to the Blackboard course page.

## SECTION V: Contemporary South Africa and America, Contemporary America and South Africa

### **Week 13, Apr. 20: Yesterday’s Color Lines and Freedom Crossings.**

Week 13 we discuss Nicholas Grant, *Winning Our Freedoms Together: African Americans & Apartheid, 1945-1960* (University of North Carolina Press, 2017). Please read \*one\* of these two additional required readings: (gender, race, and nationalism) Nomboniso Gasa, “Feminisms, Motherisms, Patriarchies and Women’s Voices in the 1950s,” in N. Gasa ed. *Women in South African History: They Remove Boulders and Cross Rivers* (Cape Town, 2007), pp. 207-231; (Cold War geopolitical racism) Gerald Horne, “U.S. Foreign Policy and the General Crisis of ‘White Supremacy,’” *Diplomatic History* 23, 3 (1999), pp. 437-461. To access these essays, please go to the Blackboard course page.

**Week 14, Apr. 27: Final Paper Preparation: Comparative and Transnational Histories of the United States and South Africa.**

\*\*\*\*\* Your final 20-page final paper saved in a MSWORD file (double-spaced with 12-point Times New Roman font) is due 9 May 2021 at 8:00 PM, Fairfax time. Your bibliography, should you elect to append one, is not counted in the 20-page requirement. Please email your paper (in an MSWORD attachment that I can open) to my GMU address:

[bcarton1@gmu.edu](mailto:bcarton1@gmu.edu) \*\*\*\*\*Please remember the “1” in [bcarton1@gmu.edu](mailto:bcarton1@gmu.edu)

**THANK YOU AND GOOD LUCK.**