

Seminar on Angela Davis

Professor John Drabinski

Tuesday-Thursday, 10:11:20 @ Barrett 102



Professor John Drabinski | jdrabinski@amherst.edu
MW office hours, 10:30-11:30 at **Cooper House 104**

The aim of this course is simple: explore the meaning and significance of Angela Davis' work for thinking through issues of race, nation, class, gender, carceral culture, and transnational solidarity.

Davis emerged as a cultural and political phenomenon at the peak of the Black Power and the Black Panther movements. Her life and work has long been set between theorizing the histories of race, racism, class, and gender and political organizing and public intellectual work. We will examine all of these aspects by reading her work from its beginning and up through contemporary commentary on incarceration, Palestine, and related issues. The centerpiece of this course will be her study of African-American music in its Black feminist iteration, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*.

Out of this course will emerge an understanding of the complexities of theorizing the crossroads of race, gender, class, and nation, as well as the power of critical thought for transforming our political imagination.



Evaluation

Attendance is mandatory in this course. Two absences are permitted, but upon your third missed class your final grade will fall by 1/3 for each subsequent absence. But you should attend because we learn from each other and benefit from a vibrant intellectual community. To that end, participation is also mandatory and constitutes **20%** of your final grade.

Two essays will be assigned, each counting **20%** of your final grade.

Two short exams will be given through Moodle, each is **10%** of grade.

The remaining **20%** will come from a series of assignments posted to the course blog: collective notes, reflections on outside sources, and critical conversation.

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3 September

Intro 2 course

5 September

"Lecture on Liberation," PDF

10 September

Autobiography, Chs. 1-3

12 September

 (add/drop ends)

Autobiography, Chs. 4-5

17 September

Autobiography, Ch. 6

19 September

"Afro Images," PDF

24 September

Discussion of *Black Power Mixtape*

26 September

"Black Nationalism: The Sixties and the Nineties," PDF

01 October

"The Legacy of Slavery" and "Racism in the Woman Suffrage Movement," in *WRC*

03 October

"The Meaning of Emancipation" and "Education and Liberation," in *WRC*

08 October

"Rape, Racism, the the Myth of the Black Rapist," *WRC*

10 October

"Racism, Birth Control, and Reproductive Rights," *WRC*

15 October

 (fall break)

17 October

"Approaching Obsolescence of Housework," *WRC*

22 October

"Let Us All Rise Together" and "Facing Our Common Fate," in *WCP*

24 October

"We Do Not Consent" and "Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired," in *WCP*

29 October

"Slaying the Dream," in *WCP*

31 October

"I Used to be Your Sweet Mama," *Blues Legacies*

05 November

"Here Come My Train," *Blues Legacies*

07 November

"Blame it on the Blues," *Blues Legacies*

12 November

"Preaching the Blues," *Blues Legacies*

14 November

"Up in Harlem," *Blues Legacies*

19 November

"When a Woman Loves a Man," *Blues Legacies*

21 November

"Strange Fruit," *Blues Legacies*

26 November

 (thxgiv)

28 November

 (thxgiv)

03 December

Are Prisons Obsolete?

05 December

Freedom is a Constant Struggle

10 December

Freedom is a Constant Struggle