

Themes in Ethnic Studies African American Biography

SOC 5150

The Indiana Academy for Science, Mathematics, and Humanities
Spring 2022, MWF 1:00

Dr. Sean A. Scott

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Wagoner 149, office hours, MWF 12:00-12:50, MW 2:00-4:30, or by appt.

Course Description: This course explores the lives of significant African Americans with an emphasis on introducing students to many lesser known or understudied individuals. Selecting subjects from the American Revolution to the Civil Rights era, the course focuses on men and women whose stories shed light on the broader political, social, religious, legal, and cultural issues that shaped American history. By examining these people, students will learn about many facets of the African American experience during this period—northern free blacks' struggles for a more inclusive society; slave resistance, violence, and flight from the South; the legal and social perils of the fugitive slave clause; African American contributions to abolitionism and the Civil War; new opportunities and political leadership during Reconstruction; the shortcomings of the postbellum social and political order; the Great Migration; the Civil Rights movements; and the ongoing struggle for equality.

Course Format: The course will employ a reading seminar format. I will provide a brief overview of a person's life and historical context and we will discuss assigned readings.

Attendance, Unexcused Absence Policy, and Classroom Etiquette: It is the policy of the Indiana Academy that any absence from class is unexcused, except for illness, death in the family, college or school-related activities, and extenuating circumstances. When a student is absent from a class, the instructor reports the student absence to the Faculty Attendance Coordinator in the Office of Academic Affairs. Unless the absence is excused by a school official, it is considered unexcused. The decision as to whether an absence is excused is not determined by the instructor.

You are expected to attend every class but are allowed one unexcused absence without penalty. Any homework assignments missed because of unexcused absences will not be made up for credit but will be given zeroes. An unexcused absence on the day of an exam or project will result in a 20% deduction for that assignment. Four or more unexcused absences will lead to academic and residential consequences beyond the scope of this class determined by the Office of Academic Affairs (i.e., residential groundings, parent/principal conference, and/or detention). Come to class alert, engaged, and prepared to learn. Attendance will be recorded in Powerschool a few minutes prior to class. If you are late to class, please see me afterwards to explain your tardiness and ensure that you are marked late rather than absent. Talking on cell phones, sending or receiving text messages, and tweeting will not be allowed. If you are found using Facebook or surfing the web inappropriately during class, which is generally quite noticeable to me, I can

enter this into Powerschool and it will go on your record as an unexcused absence. Be responsible so I don't have to be the bad internet cop!

Mask Policy: The Indiana Academy will follow [Ball State University's mask policy](#) (see Section IV). Based on current CDC guidance recommending the wearing of face masks for all people—regardless of vaccination status—in public indoor settings in communities where the rate of coronavirus transmission is high or substantial, all employees, students, and campus visitors are required to wear a mask while inside any University building. This requirement is effective on August 9, 2021. Fully vaccinated people are not required to wear masks outdoors. Individuals who are not fully vaccinated for COVID-19 are required to wear face masks while inside campus buildings and outside when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

If a student declines to wear a face mask as required, the student will be referred to the Director of Academic Affairs or the Director of Residential Affairs. If the situation occurs in a classroom or other academic setting, it is considered a classroom management issue, and the teacher will remind the student of the requirement and give the student a chance to comply with it prior to referring the matter to the Director of Academic Affairs or the Director of Residential Affairs. Wearing masks is crucial to preventing the spread of COVID-19 to others.

Academic Integrity: Academic integrity is foundational to achievement at the Academy and throughout your college life. Cheating on tests, plagiarism on papers, and all forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Please understand that severe penalties will arise for violating academic integrity and review the relevant policies outlined in the Academy Handbook.

Disability: Students with documented disabilities should notify me by the end of the first week of class, and I will make reasonable accommodation for you.

Excused Absences: In the event of a serious illness or family tragedy, please notify me as soon as possible. Appropriate documentation will be necessary to make up an exam.

Make-up Policy: Missed tests with an excused absence should be made up as quickly as possible after returning to class in order to keep from falling too far behind. Ideally, this will be done within 2 days of returning to class. Missed tests for an unexcused absence will be penalized two letter grades, which is an automatic 20% deduction. Late homework will be accepted if a student has been sick and is excused from class, but no late submissions will be accepted under normal circumstances.

Student Success: I want you to succeed in this course. Please see me during office hours to discuss any concerns or questions you have about the course or assignments. I am always happy to talk about specific readings, the study of history, or life in general. If I become concerned about your performance in this course, engagement in class, or overall well-being, I will speak with you first and then may refer you to the appropriate counselor within the Academy.

BSU Statement on Diversity: “Ball State University aspires to be a university that attracts and retains a diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil

discourse as expressed in our Beneficence Pledge and through university resources found at <http://cms.bsu.edu/campuslife/multiculturalcenter>.”

Required Texts:

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Selected primary and secondary sources posted on Canvas or accessible online.

Assignments:

Reading journal/questions: For homework students will record their thoughts and questions on assigned texts or answer reading prompts that I provide. Some days I will collect these, but other times they will be used to direct class discussion. I will post on Canvas dates when a response will be collected.

Discussion Participation: For a reading intensive course, our time will be most beneficial when everyone has read the assigned text carefully and come prepared to engage with it. With a small enrollment, it will be quite evident who has read and who has not. Everyone should have something to add to the conversation each day. However, I am more concerned with the quality of a student’s comments rather than the quantity of one’s contributions.

Exams: There will be two exams, one mid-term and one final. Exams will consist of a short objective section dealing with historical chronology, matching, or recognition of major persons or events; five or six short answer questions (generally answerable in a short paragraph each); and one longer essay synthesizing broader interpretive themes. Exams are not cumulative.

Leading class: Each student will have the opportunity to lead two class discussions. This will involve choosing the person to be studied that day, selecting texts to read, and leading the class. I will work with students to select texts and find supplementary readings to prepare for leading.

Grading:

Reading responses	40%
Participation	20%
Exams (2)	10% each
Leading class (2)	10% each

Students must take both exams and complete all major projects to pass the class. Grades will be figured according to the plus-minus scale copied below:

94-100% = A	“A” grades reflect the “wow” factor. This shows exceptional, extraordinary effort and rewards work of the highest excellence.
90-93% = A-	
88-89% = B+	
83-87% = B	“B” grades reflect the “very good” factor. This shows effort exceeding average and work that is high quality, but short of excellence.
80-82% = B-	
78-79% = C+	
73-77% = C	“C” grades reflect average work and satisfactory results.
70-72% = C-	
0-69% = D*	“D*” reflects unsatisfactory work.

Course Schedule and Readings:

Daily readings, questions, and topics will be posted on Canvas. Below are some of the people we will study, and others will be selected based on student interest.

American Revolution and Early Republic—John Marrant, Quock Walker, Jupiter Hammon, Hercules Posey, Benjamin Banneker, Richard Allen, Sally Hemings

Antebellum—Denmark Vesey, Nat Turner, Frederick Douglass, Solomon Northup, Shadrach Minkins, Anthony Burns, Harriet Jacobs, Sojourner Truth

Civil War and Reconstruction—Harriet Tubman, Charlotte Forten, Elizabeth Keckley, James Henry Gooding, Henry McNeal Turner, Hiram Revels

Postbellum—Ida B. Wells, Booker T. Washington, W.E.B. DuBois, Francis Grimké

Twentieth century—TBA