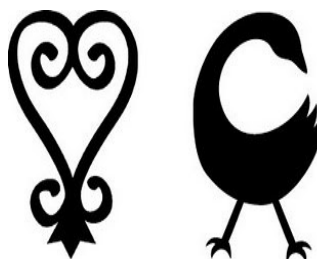


# Let's Get In Formation... Constructing African American Identity

**Valerie Thomas XIDS Spring 2017 MW 5:30-6:50 Calloway 205**  
**Required Text: Power Points, Samples and Articles will be provided on CourseDen**

## Course Description

This course seeks to address the varied ways in which African American culture is seen symbolically through art, music and contemporary critical literature. African American culture is pervasive and its imprint can be appreciated as a consistent part of American History. The course seeks to focus on the ways in which the culture was constructed and has evolved into what it currently represents.



**Office: Pafford #304**  
**Office Hours: T/TH**  
**4:45– 5:30 & after class**  
**(by Appointment)**  
**Email:**  
**vthomas@westga.edu**  
**Website:**  
**Westga.edu/~vthomas**

### Special points of interest:

- Attendance Policy
- Scheduled Meetings
- Online Responsibilities
- Course Schedule
- Study Partner

## Course Expectations

- \*To introduce students to the relationship between African American culture and American culture as a whole.
- \*To develop critical thinking skills, thoughtful communication and creative expression that will allow students to see the intellectual connections between the various disciplinary fields.
- \* To develop an awareness of diverse people, cultures and ideas. The course will encourage students to engage in interdisciplinary learning.
- \* To develop connections between interdisciplinary students and their own positions in terms of contemporary challenges facing individuals, communities and society.

### Important Dates

Add Drop Period– 1/7-1/11	2
Classes Begin—1/7	2
MLK Day Observed– 1/16	2
Spring Break- 3/20-3/25	3
Last Day of Classes– 5/1	4
Final Exams Begin– 5/3	5
Final Grades Due—5/15	6

## Classroom Environment

**Revision Policy:** The revision process is an important one, and essential to the writing process. There will be opportunities for revisions.

**Paper Format:** All out-of-class essays should be submitted according to MLA format. Please see the UWC website for additional information.

**Penalties for Late Work:** Students are responsible for finding out due dates in reference to missed work; if a student is absent on the day out-of-class work is due or if a student does not turn in the work on the assigned due date, five points will be deducted from the overall grade of the assignment for each class period the work is late. If a student finds it necessary to miss class on a day work is due, the material should be emailed to me the day work is due and submitted in person on the next class period in order to avoid any penalty. **\*\*Note:** Once an assignment is more than two weeks late, that assignment will not be accepted.

## Absence and Late Policy

**Attendance Requirements:** For courses that meet twice a week, a student is allowed three absences. Upon the fourth absence, the student has the potential to fail and receive an "F" as the final course grade. Be aware that no distinction exists between excused and unexcused absences. If the student is notified that he/she will fail the course due to excessive absences, the student can continue to attend class meetings as long as he/she is not disruptive. If disruption occurs, the student will be reported to the Office of Student Affairs and Enrollment Management (department of Judicial Affairs). **\*\*Note: Tardies will also be counted as part of the attendance requirements. Two tardies will equal one absence.\*\***



## Online Class Component

There will be an online class component in this course. As a class we will have class discussions on CourseDen. This is an essential portion of the course because and it affords me the opportunity to appreciate your understanding of the content.



## Reading

## Academic Support

Through course lectures, readings and discussions, students will obtain a greater understanding of the social construct of Black America by answering questions like:

- How has African American art, literature and music evolved?
- How have various periods affected the changes in art, literature and music?

The role of the Writing Center is to offer consultation in which tutors question, respond to, offer choices, and encourage revision in student essays. Tutors do not evaluate or prescribe solutions to problematic areas of student essays, and tutors are specifically trained to avoid appropriating the student's work. For more information, visit the Writing Center: [www.westga.edu/writing](http://www.westga.edu/writing)  
**Writer's Resource Page:** [Writer's Archive](#)

## Plagiarism and Excessive Collaboration Policy

The Department of English and Philosophy defines plagiarism as taking personal credit for the words and ideas of others as they are presented in electronic, print, and verbal sources. The Department expects that students will accurately credit sources in all assignments. An equally dishonest practice is fabricating sources or facts; it is another form of misrepresenting the truth. Plagiarism is grounds for failing the course. (See also, Excessive Collaboration) The University Policies for handling Academic Dishonesty are found in the following documents: The Faculty Handbook, sections 207 and 208.0401 (<http://www.westga.edu/~vpaa/handrev/>); Student Undergraduate Catalog, "Academic Honor Code": (<http://www.westga.edu/undergrad/1762.htm>)

Students should demonstrate the ability to produce independent writing (writing without collaborative assistance of peers, writing tutors, or professionals in the field) that shows an acceptable level of competence. Although classroom activities and out-of-class assignments may highlight collaborative learning and collaborative research, excessive collaboration (collaboration that results in the loss of a student's voice/style and original claims to course related work) is considered another form of academic dishonesty and therefore will not be permitted.

## Disability Pledge

I pledge to do my best to work with the University to provide all students with equal access to my classes and materials, regardless of special needs, temporary or permanent disability, special needs related to pregnancy, etc. If you have any special learning needs, particularly (but not limited to) needs defined under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and require specific accommodations, please do not hesitate to make these known to me, either yourself or through Disability Services in 272 Parker Hall at 678-839-6428. Students with documented special needs may expect accommodation in relation to classroom accessibility, modification of testing, special test administration, etc. This is not only my personal commitment: it is your right, and it is the law. For more information, contact Disability Services.

## Disruptive Behavior

[The Student Conduct Code, section 3.00 \(Appendix A in the Student Handbook\)](#) prohibits disruptive behavior on campus, defined as “interfering with normal university sponsored activities, including, but not limited to, studying, teaching, research, university administration, disciplinary or public service activities, or fire, police or emergency services.” Reasonable examples of appropriate classroom behavior prohibit such actions as cell phone use, eating in class, talking while the instructor is talking, coming late or leaving early, sleeping, etc. Specific information on disruptive behavior in the classroom and how such behavior is addressed can be found by visiting the following: <http://www.westga.edu/vpsa/>

## Severe Weather Guidelines

### **Severe Weather Guidelines for Department of English and Philosophy:**

The University of West Georgia is committed to the personal safety of its students, faculty, and staff in the event of severe weather. University policy regarding severe weather and emergency closings is posted at [http://www.westga.edu/police/index\\_2277.php](http://www.westga.edu/police/index_2277.php) and official announcements about class and/or examination cancellations will be made only by the President and/or the Department of Public Relations. Although it is not possible to develop policy to address every weather-related emergency, these guidelines are intended to provide some general direction about such situations.

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# Week of January– May 2017

January Tuesday– Thursday	February Tuesday-Thursday	March Tuesday-Thursday	April Tuesday-Thursday	May Tuesday-Thursday
10/12 First Week of Classes	2	2	4/6 Paper Due!	2/4 Final Week of Class
17/19	7/9	7/9	11/13	9/11 Grades Due!! 5/15
24/26	14/16 Project #1 Due	14/16 Paper Due!	18/20	
31- Discussion Questions	21/23	21/23 Spring Break	25/27 Final Project Due!	
	28	28/30		

## Graded Assignments:

1. **Projects:** For module one, students will be expected to complete a project relating art to the readings and class discussions. The projects have been carefully designed to stimulate creativity and critical thinking about important aspects of African American Art. Due dates for the assignments are clearly marked on the syllabus.
2. **Class Presentations / Final Paper:** In each class session, we will focus on visual art, songs and literature that are representative of the topic under discussion for that day. These include some of the best known and most relevant for the genre or period. The final “take-home” essay, which will grow out of these presentations, asks you to find common threads among the content and the overall class topic.
3. **Class Discussion Questions:** Class discussion questions will be given throughout each module for student’s information and reference. Responses will be required and these questions will be submitted and graded.

**\*\*Please purchase a thumb drive to house all of the PowerPoints, presentations and discussion questions required in the course. \*\***

# Course Narrative

This course will unfold with a “narrative” of the construct of African American Culture through Art, Music and Literature .

Date	Tuesday	Thursday
January 10/12	Syllabus—Course Outline	Introduction: Let's Get Information: Constructing African American Identity (Outline Module by Module)
January 17/19	Understanding visual images –	Visual Images/ Article Discussion (African Art)- Project Discussion (Project Plan)
January 24/26	Visual Images / Middle Passage	Visual Images/ Slavery
January 31/2	Visual Images/ Reconstruction	Visual Images/ Harlem Renaissance
February 7/9	Visual Images/ Contemporary	Visual Images Wrap Up (Article Overview)
February 14/16	Project #1 (Oral Presentation)	Project #1– Continued
February 21/23	Negro Spirituals Discussion	Negro Spirituals (Listening Session)/ Discussion Questions Explored
February 28/2	Jazz / Blues Discussion	Jazz / Blues (Listening Session)/ Discussion Questions Explored
March 7/9	Inception of R&B Discussion	R&B Discussion (Listening Session)
March 14/16	Hip Hop/ Contemporary Hip Hop Discussion	Paper Due!
March 21/23	Spring Break (Classes Suspended)	Spring Break (Classes Suspended)
March 28/30	Literature of Contemporary Scholars	Literature Continued...
April 4/6	Classes Suspended/ English Department Event	Colson Whitehead Article—Paper #2 Due!
April 11/13	Memoirs of Contemporary Scholarship	Memoirs of Contemporary Scholarship
April 18/20	Discussion of Scholars and Connection to Modules 1&2	Discussion Questions
April 25/27	Final Project Discussion/ Discussion Question Overview	Final Project Due! Final project covers all modules
May 2/4	Final Week of Class-	
<b>Grade Scale: A+ /A/A- (98/95/92) B+ /B/B- (88/85/82) C+ /C/C- (78/75/72) D+ /D/D- (68/65/62) F (59 and &lt;)</b> <b>Assignments:</b> <b>Papers (2 @ 20%) Oral Presentation (20%) Module Discussion Questions (20%) Final Project (20%)</b>		

\*\*Assignments are listed on Coursed Den under the appropriate Module. \*\*