

Minutes of the meeting of Black Studies Curriculum Committee

November 17, 1969. 4:00 - 5:30 p.m., Trotter C-215

Members present: Frank Pierson, Charles Gilbert, Harrison Wright  
Jon Van Til, Bob Mitchell, Kathryn Morgan,  
John Shackford, Aundrea White

We began discussing what courses various departments will offer next semester in Black Studies, or related to Black Studies. Economics: Mr. Anderson will offer a course in "The Black Worker in American Society (Economics 74). The course will deal with conventional labor economics, and also with larger problems related to the subject matter--employment, career and sociological problems. Mr. Anderson wants to limit the class to about 12-14 students, and hopes it will be of particular interest to black students. This raises the problem of how to limit enrollment. The usual pattern is to allow all students to enroll at registration and then limit the class either by chance or according to some principle (eg. seniors, majors, prerequisites, special expertise, etc.). Mr. Wright said that white students should take this kind of course as well as black students. Also, we should not use non-academic standards in selecting students for a class. Mr. Mitchell said that black students have a special expertise in this field. Mr. Wright said that if a teacher is hired on the understanding that he will teach mostly black students, we would have to go along with the agreement.

Philosophy: Is there enough interest for another "Black Philosophy" course sponsored by Mr. Bennett? None is planned at the present time, but if there is interest it could be offered. Aundrea was asked to check with SASS.

Political Science: Mr. Gilbert's course in "Problems in Political Government" is the Political Science course most closely related to Black Studies. However, Mr. Gilbert has little or no time this semester to prepare new materials, and therefore doubts that the course could count for Black Studies. He will know more definitely by early January and will report again at that time.

English: Copies were handed out of a letter from George Becker, Chairman of the English Department, to SASS, listing six possible teachers that seem to be available to teach a course in "Black Literature" next semester. The sooner discussion between SASS and the department begins, the better--preferably before Thanksgiving. Mr. Shackford will find out more information about these candidates and their relative availability so that preliminary discussion can be conducted with either Mr. Becker or Mr. Shackford. If SASS can suggest other possible candidates, please do so as soon as possible. Mr. Gilbert suggested that if no one is available to teach a whole semester course, some other kind of course might be arranged--eg. a sponsor from the English Department, but with visiting lecturers throughout the semester. Black and non-black perspectives would be presented in this way. Mr.

Wright said that it might be better to get black perspective straight before trying to mix it with other perspectives.

Mr. Shackford's plans for his course in "Twentieth Century American Fiction" have changed since the meeting. He now plans to include Richard Wright's Native Son and Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man. The other writers studied will be: Dreiser, Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Faulkner. Though not a course in Black Studies, black perspective(s) are very welcome--on all of the writers. A separate discussion group for interested black students will be arranged if some would like to meet separately (see note appended to minutes for further details).

Mr. Pierson wondered how well we are reaching the black students with information about courses that will be offered. Aundrea said there are reports to SASS from every committee meeting, but it would be helpful to have fuller descriptions of the courses.

The next topic of discussion was the nature of the Black Studies Director or Coordinator. Mr. Gilbert said that both he and President Cross think the job should be combined with an academic position, not with an administrative position (such as counseling). There is the possibility that the three colleges could make a joint appointment, but it seems more and more likely that Swarthmore would get the short end of the deal.

The main point of debate was the relationship of the Director to the departmental structure of the College. Mr. Gilbert said that a Director would be much happier here if he is a member of a department. Mr. Wright added that if he teaches courses, they must fit into the departmental offering on equal terms with the other courses. Aundrea White objected: do we have to wait for an opening in a department in order to fill the Directorship? Might not this disqualify someone who would be very fit for the post (eg. Mr. Gwaltney)? Couldn't other arrangements be made? For example, he could head the program here and teach a course at another institution. Or perhaps his department would accept his courses as a gift, an additional offering, as long as his salary does not come from departmental funds. Mr. Gilbert added another possibility in regard to a candidate in Religion: estimating that the Directorship will take about one third of his time, the Religion Department here could use another third, and the Religion Department at Haverford could use the last third. Haverford would withdraw from the agreement if the Directorship took up more than one third of his time. Another possibility is a course sponsored by several departments, like "India" last year. It does not count towards a major, but does count towards graduation. This might be very suitable for many Black Studies courses, including an introductory course if one is every organized. Also, Linguistics courses seem to be offered under an indefinite departmental status. Interdepartmental courses avoid the problem of finding an in a particular department.

Mr. Gilbert said that there are three reasons for connecting the Director with a department. First, the departments are the normal channel for hiring. Secondly, the Director should be

a part of a department. Third, it is a test of his professional competence. Kathryn Morgan objected: a man can be a competent professor and still not be suitable as Director of Black Studies. Two other qualifications seem to be necessary. First, he must have a clear conception of Black Studies and of its seriousness. Secondly, he must be committed to Black Studies. Departmental acceptance seems to be very secondary next to these two qualities. Also, we do not want to impose the Directorship on just any black teacher whether he wants it or not. Mr. Gilbert said that the Black Studies Committee will be one of the groups to interview candidates for Director of Black Studies.

We concluded by discussing Kathryn Morgan's plans for her course next semester (appended to the minutes). The course was planned in consultation with SASS. They began with Don Mizell's proposal and abstracted the ideas that would be tested in the course. What new things emerged from meeting with the students? They want more historical perspective than she had expected. Will this course be open intellectually to white students? Yes; it is a method that is applied to black materials--problems of historical research in folk sources. This method can be applied to other materials. White students will also be able to do direct field research, even if they face limitations in a ghetto that black students do not face. Would white students have to ask impertinent questions in interviews? Mrs. Morgan said that she would have to find informants for white students. And if a white student is not comfortable with a black informant, then there is plenty of valid library work that can be done. Mr. Pierson said that Mr. Anderson faced a similar problem. The labor market situation in Philadelphia is such that he would be fearful of taking Swarthmore students to do direct field research because of the resistance they would meet. This is one reason why he wants to keep the class small. Mrs. Morgan agreed; she would have to be selective where she took students. Newark would be impossible; but the Schomburg collection in Harlem would be perfectly alright. Also, there is a difference between going as a group and going individually. If students could not go somewhere, it might be possible to bring a guest to the classroom.

Are there going to be any "rap" sessions that Don Mizell's proposal discussed? Mrs. Morgan has taken the ideas that are relevant to her course. The class will not meet in a field; but when students attend a Father Divine service, or make interviews, or make the trip to Harlem, they will be there.

Announcements: Raymond Day, a black social scientist and director of the Committee of Urban Studies at Wooster College, will be here on Saturday, November 22, for lunch and a couple of hours after lunch to talk about the Wooster program which is involved in getting students into field work. Paul Wehr will be here for lunch on November 29th to discuss the Haverford community program, which is open to 4 or 5 Swarthmore students.

English 44: Twentieth Century American Fiction - Mr. Shackford

Reading list:

Dreiser: An American Tragedy

Wright: Native Son

Ellison: Invisible Man

Fitzgerald: The Great Gatsby  
stories and essays  
Tender is the Night

Hemingway: The Sun Also Rises  
For Whom the Bell Tolls

Faulkner: The Sound and the Fury  
As I Lay Dying  
Light in August  
Absalom, Absalom!

The course will meet on Tuesday and Thursday, 2:40 - 3: p.m.  
The class will be divided into discussion groups of about 7 or 8 students. These groups will meet independently each Tuesday at the scheduled class hour throughout the semester. The class will meet as a whole each Thursday for lecture and discussion.

Though not a course in Black Studies, black perspective(s) are very welcome--on all of the writers. If a group of black students wishes to meet as a separate discussion group, it can be set up. I would very much like to have a group of black students work out black perspectives on these writers as their basic effort for the course. A separate discussion group would be very appropriate for such a project.

These plans are still tentative. If you have any ideas or suggestions for the format or reading in the course, please let me know. I am also considering adding Baldwin's Go Tell It on the Mountain.

This course description is intended to inform students and others of the content and objectives, method, and evaluation of the course.

I. Goals

- A. To develop increasing capacity for focusing on academic material from the black man's point of reference. ( i.e. In this instance the major emphasis will be placed on the relevance of folk sources to the study of black history and culture.)
- B. To make the study of black folk history an exciting exploration of the past which has considerable relevance to the present and the future.
- C. To give students an opportunity to express their own ideas and expectations both orally and in writing. To encourage the development of creative-non-traditional methods of collecting and interpreting data.
- D. To expose students to the interdisciplinary nature of black folk history and the relevance of such history to other ethnic minorities in the United States and other parts of the world.
- E. To introduce the student to the sources for the study of folk history. Emphasis will be placed on the folklife studies approach with special attention to the ex-slave narrative genre as a unique source for folk history of Blacks in the United States.
- F. To encourage students to examine contemporary facts and events, personal experiences, life-styles, ideas, attitudes etc. of black folk and then try to determine the why of the matter.
- G. To call attention to value of recording history from the inside-out.

The pursuit of these goals will take place in a fairly freewheeling atmosphere which, nevertheless, will fall within the scope of the course aims so that students are not completely at loose ends. While the ultimate decision rests with the instructor, each student will be encouraged to select a term project geared to his own area of interest. All projects must be completed within a given time span.

While some of the course will be based on reading, assigned readings will be minimal. Instead, each student will be encouraged to develop a bibliography around his term project. Emphasis will be placed on the student's ability to do independent research. Since students are not expected to be familiar

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with folk sources, each student will be provided with a list of such sources at the beginning of the semester. (Students will be encouraged to use secondary sources only insofar as they supplement primary sources. Original sources will be stressed. (i.e. collecting from live informants, original documents and personal records etc.)

There will be no written examinations. Students will be evaluated on the basis of class participation, the quality of the term project, its presentation and the final paper. The student, in conjunction with the instructor, will evaluate his own work. The instructor is responsible for the final grade. The course will be graded in accordance with college regulations.

Lecture I- Introduction- Distribution of course outline and source lists. Exchange of expectations, course requirements. The black perspective and the intellectual experience. The relevance of folk sources for insights into the black perspective. Definition of terms. Ethnohistory, Oral Traditional History, Folk History. Differences and similarities. The functions of folk history in contemporary cultures, Africa and the United States.

Lecture II- Methodology- Collecting data for folk history. The interdisciplinary nature of black folk history. Problem statement and analysis. Types of projects. The library project, the field project. Time considerations and field work. Types of short term field projects. Suggested topics for independent research- Dialogue.

Lecture III- Methodology- Collecting In The Black Community. Selection of informant/informants. The use of community resources. The establishment and maintenance of rapport. The camera as a research tool. The use of the tape recorder. The cultural difference factor. - Dialogue.

Lecture IV- Methodology- The folklife studies approach to the study of black folk history. Selected sources: personal, civil and church records, newspapers, biography and autobiography, reminiscences, legends and historical testimony. Iconographic Sources. Prints, drawings, illustrations, photographs. The Interview Approach: the questionnaire. -Dialogue.

Lecture V- Sources- The Significance of the Ex-Slave Narrative As A Source For Black Folk History In the United States. Dialogue.

Class Meeting VI- Field Trip. The Schomburg Collection Of Black Literature And History. Harlem, New York. Possible exploration of other areas of the Harlem community.

✓ Class Meeting-VII- Dialogue and summation of previous lectures.

Class Meeting-VIII- Student Presentation.-Dialogue

(The next section of the course will be devoted to the exploration and presentation of data by students on special topics.)

Required Reading: The Black Perspective- Africa.

Du Bois, W.E.B. Africa And The World.  
Chapter II "The White Masters Of The World "  
Chapter III "The Rape Of Africa "  
Chapter VII "Atlantis"

Handsberry, Leo. "African Studies," Phylon V (Spring, 1944), 62-67.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Material Culture of Ancient Nigeria,"  
JNH, VI (July, 1921), 261-295.

The Black Perspective- Slavery-United States

Douglass, Frederick. Narrative Of The Life Of Frederick Douglass,  
An American Slave, Written By Himself, Boston, 1845.

Lewis, Roscoe (ed.) The Negro In Virginia. Chapter's I through  
XI.

Butcher, Margaret J. The Negro In American Culture.  
Chapter II "The Negro In American Culture."  
Chapter III "The Early Folk Gifts, Music, Dance, Folklore."

The Black Perspective- Establishing And Maintaining An  
Historical Tradition.

Wesley, Charles H. Neglected History. "The Treatment Of The  
Negro-American in the Study and Teaching of United  
States History "

The Black Perspective- Black Folklife As Reflected in  
Literature. (Any two)

Baldwin, James. Go Tell It On The Mountain.  
Brown, Claude. Manchild In The Promised Land.  
Jones, LeRoi. Home: Social Essays.  
Blues People.  
X, Malcolm. Autobiography

Additional books available if these have been  
read.

Required Reading: (Any one)

Black Folk Movements

Garvey, Amy Jacques (ed) Philosophy and Opinions Of  
Marcus Garvey.

Fausett, Arthur H. Black Gods Of The Metropolis.

Newspapers; (Any five issues)

Negro World (If available)  
The Black Liberator  
Mojo (If available)  
The Black Panther  
Nite Life  
Muhammad Speaks  
Black Newark (if available)

I: Serial abbreviations

- AA American Anthropologist (1888-1898- 1899- )
- CFQ California Folklore Quarterly (1942-1946; succeeded by WF)
- Ethno. Ethnomusicology
- EH Ethnohistory
- JAF Journal Of American Folklore (1888-)
- JFI Journal Of The Folklore Institute (1964-)
- JNH Journal Of Negro History (1916-)
- NHB Negro History Bulletin (1937- )
- NQ Negro Quarterly (1942-1943)
- PAFS Publications of the American Folklore Society, Bibliographical and Special Series (1950-)
- P Phylon
- PFLF Publications of the Folklore Foundation, Vassar College
- PTFS Publications of the Texas Folklore Society (1916-)
- RR Record Research
- SFQ Southern Folklore Quarterly (1931-)
- SW Southern Workman (1872-1939)
- TFSB Tennessee Folklore Society Bulletin (1936-)
- WF Western Folklore (1946-)

Bibliographies, Discographies; Indices, Journals

Abstracts Of Folklore Studies (1963-)

Bascom, William "Folklore Research In Africa", JAF 77 (1964), 12-31.

Blues Research (occasional pub.) (discographies).

Blues Unlimited (monthly) (discographies and articles on blues people)

Check-list Of Recorded Songs In The English Language In The Archive Of American Folksong To July 1940. Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 1942.

Coffin, Tristram P. An Analytical Index To The JAF, cols. 1-67, 68, 69, 70. PAFS 7, 1958.

Davis, John P. The American Negro Reference Book, 1966.

Dictionary Catalogue Of The Schomburg Collection Of Negro Literature And History, Boston, 1962. (Available at reference- University of Pennsylvania.)

Dixon, Robert W.M. and Godrick John. Blues And Gospel Records: 1902-1942, Hatch End, Middlesex, England, 1963.

Downbeat (bi-weekly), Chicago.

Ethnohistory- (Vol-1-)

Epstein, Dena J. "Slave Music In The United States Before 1860, a Survey of Sources," Music Library Association Notes (1963), 195-211, 377-390.

Folk Music: A Catalog of Folk Songs, Ballads, Dances, Instrumental Pieces, And Folk Tales Of The United States And Latin America On Phonograph Records, Music Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 1964 (discography of LPs published by Archives of Folk Song).

Foster, Daman, S. "The Negro In Early American Songsters," Papers Of The Bibliographical Society Of America, 28, part 2. (1934), 132-163.

George, Zelma Watson A Guide To Negro Music: An Annotated Bibliography Of Negro Folk Music and Art Music, N.Y. University, diss., 1953.

Gillis, Frank and Merriam, Alan P. Ethnomusicology and Folk Music: An International Bibliography of Dissertations and Theses, Middletown, Conn., 1966.

- Godrich, John "Survey of pre-war Blues Artists Reissues on E.P. and L.P., 1950-1964," Blues Unlimited, Booklet 6; (April 1965)
- Gospel News Journal (Phila.)
- Haywood, Charles Bibliography of North American Folklore and Folksong, Vol 1. (New York, 1961) (Billed as a corrected edition of the 1951 original. It isn't- See section on "Negro".)
- Herzog, George "General Index; American Anthropologist, Current Anthropological Literature and Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association, 1929-1938," Menasha, Wisc., 1940. (AA 42)
- Jepsen, Jørgen Grunnet Jazz Records, 1942-1962, 4 vols., Copenhagen and Hulte, 1963-64.
- Lomax, Alan List of American Folk Songs On Commercial Records, Washington, D.C., 1940.
- Merriam, Alan P. "An Annotated Bibliography of African and African-Derived Music Since 1936," Africa 21 (1951), 319-329.
- \_\_\_\_\_, with the assistance of Robert J. Benford A Bibliography of Jazz, PAFS 4, 1954.
- Metfesses, Julius The Folk Music Of The Western Hemisphere: A List Of References In The New York Public Library, New York, 1925 (first issued under the same title in the Bulletin Of the New York Public Library, 28, 1928, 779-830 and 864-889.)
- Miller, Elizabeth W. The Negro In America: A Bibliography, Cambridge, Mass., 1966.
- The Negro: A Selected Bibliography. New York Public Library, N.Y., 1935.
- Record Research (Blues, jazz, discography)
- Reisner, Robert G. The Literature of Jazz: A Preliminary Bibliography, N.Y., 1954.
- Work, Monroe, Nathan Bibliography Of the Negro In Africa and America, New York, 1928.