

Ethnic Studies 101: Contemporary Issues in African American History and Culture
Riverside City College, Fall 2007

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Purpose of the Course:

Contemporary Issues in African American History and Culture is designed to be an anchor course for students in the Ujima Program. Each week, over four consecutive semesters, Ujima students will come together in an academic setting to discuss current issues affecting African Americans locally, nationally, and internationally. The students will gain an understanding of contemporary issues in light of their historical roots. Students will utilize these understandings by developing practical and responsible approaches to particular concerns and participate in community service and leadership as a result of the knowledge and insight gained in this course.

Student Responsibilities and Grading Criteria:

Students will be expected to attend each class meeting, actively participate in class discussions and activities, and will be responsible for weekly "reading responses" to the reading assignments. Students will be responsible for conducting a 5 minute presentation on the topic of their choice at the end of the semester.

Attendance/participation - 30%
Reading responses - 40%
Term Project - 30%

*Reading Responses: Write a one-two page typed double-spaced response to weekly assigned readings. These responses should not be summaries, but should express your thoughts, opinions, analyses of the material. They should be thoughtfully and clearly written. **The papers shall be submitted in class, beginning September 11**, through the last class meeting. The scoring will be 0 (no credit), 1 (not thoughtful, poorly written), 2 (adequate analysis, grammar and sentence structure; some syntax and interpretive problems), or 3 (clearly written Standard English: grammar, syntax, style; thoughtful and well-presented interpretation and consideration of themes).*

**Required Readings: Derrick Bell, *Faces at the Bottom of the Well*
*The Covenant with Black America***

Course Schedule:

- Sept. 4: *Who are we and why are we here?***
- Sept. 11: *Bell, ch. 2: “The Afrolantica Awakening”***
- Sept. 18 *Bell, ch. 3: “The Racial Preference Licensing Act”***
- Sept. 25: *Bell, ch. 4: “The Last Black Hero”***
- Oct. 2: *Bell, ch. 5: “Divining a Racial Realism Theory”***
- Oct. 9: *Bell, ch. 6: “The Rules of Racial Standing”***
- Oct. 16: *Bell, ch. 7: “A Law Professor’s Protest”***
- Oct. 23: *Bell, ch. 8: “Racism’s Secret Bonding”***
- Oct. 30: *Bell, ch. 9: “The Space Traders”***
- Nov. 6: *The Covenant, I - Healthcare; II - Public Education***
- Nov. 13: *The Covenant, III - Unequal Justice; IV - Policing***
- Nov. 20: *The Covenant, V - Affordable Neighborhoods; VI - Democracy***
- Nov. 27: *The Covenant, VII - Rural Roots; VIII - Good Jobs***
- Dec. 4: *The Covenant, IX - Environmental Justice; X - Digital Divide***
- Dec. 11: *Presentations***