

Afropean: Notes from Black Europe

Meetings: Tuesdays, 9th Period, LIT 0119

Instructors: Lisa Booth and Amie Kreppel

Office hours: TBD

About the Course

In this award-winning book, Johnny Pitts examines the everyday life and lived experiences of black Europeans across 8 different European cities. Initially, he started the journey with the idea that *Afropean*, that is to be black and European, might serve to unite all black Europeans and provide a common identity. However, as his travels stretch from Brussels to Moscow, Paris to Lisbon, and numerous other places along the way, he comes to understand that the experience of being black and European varies greatly from country to country. The interviews and encounters with other black Europeans impress upon him the importance of not only the colonial past, but also the way that that past has been addressed for the construction of black identity in a European setting. His work bridges the gap between colonial history and the contemporary period by highlighting innumerable contributions, large and small, of black Europeans to European culture and society. His account both provides a glimpse of the experiences particular to black Europeans while at the same time expands our understanding of what it is to be European. Through a close reading of this text the course will examine certain historical occurrences that inform elements of Black life in Europe and will also address the ramifications of those historical occurrences on contemporary European society.

Course Materials

Core text: Pitts, Johnny, *Afropean: Notes from Black Europe*, Penguin Press, 2020

Other resources: See syllabus for additional assigned materials including articles, chapters and films. Links to assigned materials will be provided in Canvas.

Course Assignments

Attendance & Participation (15%): This class meets weekly and attendance at all meetings is required (see attendance policy below). Attendance alone, however, is not sufficient. Students are expected to participate in class discussions through both questions and contributions.

Brief Response Paper (15%): Students will submit one (1) short (~750 words) response paper in which they engage with that week's assigned materials and relate them to the broader issues of the course. This assignment will be discussed further in class.

Discussion Leader (15% each, 30% total): All students will be responsible for leading class discussion twice during the semester (either alone or with another student depending on enrollment). Discussion leaders will post discussion questions (2-3) for the class on Canvas by 5pm on the Sunday before class meets. These questions will serve as a tool to focus student thoughts and begin the in-class discussion for that week.

Student Presentations (40%): Students will be required to research an aspect or item of European culture, for instance music, food, photography, art, literature, etc., that is typically perceived as European but has been influenced by African, Caribbean, or another immigrant group discussed in *Afropean*. Students will then present this research to the class and be prepared to answer questions from the class in a Q & A immediately following the presentation. Presentations should be approximately 10 minutes long with 5 minutes for Q&A.

Attendance

Note that class attendance is required for this course. Because the course meets just once per week all unexcused absence after the first will result in points being deducted from your attendance/participation grade.

According to the Office of the University Registrar, “acceptable reasons for absence from class include illness, serious family emergencies, special curricular requirements (e.g., judging trips, field trips, and professional conferences), military obligation, severe weather conditions, religious holidays and participation in official university activities such as music performances, athletic competition or debate. Absences from class for court-imposed legal obligations (e.g., jury duty or subpoena) must be excused.”

For further information about the University of Florida’s attendance policy, please see the current [Undergraduate Catalogue](#)

Academic Honesty

Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will not be tolerated. Any student engaging in such activities will be dealt with in accordance with University policy. It is your responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism, and what the university policies are. If you have doubts, we please discuss with the professor immediately (after the infringement is too late). Please refer to the current Undergraduate Catalogue for more information on the [Student Honor code](#). Students who have questions about these policies, should contact the undergraduate advisement center for additional information.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that may affect your performance in this class, you should contact the [Dean of Students Office](#) and the [Disability Resource Center](#) (DRC) so that special arrangements can be made to accommodate you. It is your responsibility to do so at the beginning of the semester and to communicate directly with the professor during the first week of classes (or as soon as a DRC accommodation letter is issued).

Grading

Grading Scale (UF standard)

94% - 100% = A
90% - 93% = A-
87% - 89% = B+
84% - 86% = B
80% - 83% = B-
77% - 79% = C+
74% - 76% = C
70% - 73% = C-
67% - 69% = D+
64% - 66% = D
60% - 63% = D-
< 60% = F

COURSE SCHEDULE AND READINGS AND/OR VIEWINGS

The following is the course schedule and list of readings. This schedule is subject to change due to guest speaker availability or other unforeseen events. We will communicate any changes with as much advance notice as possible.

- 1/11 Introduction to class
- 1/18 **Introduction & Sheffield**
Reading: *Afropean*, pp. 1 - 30
- 1/25 **Black Britain: The Windrush Generation**
Readings: “The Jamaican 1970s and Its Influence on the Making of Black Britain,” *Small Axe*, Vol. 23, No. 1, March 2019 (No. 58), pp.134-149; **available on Canvas**
Royal Museums Greenwich account of the Windrush, including videos
<https://www.rmg.co.uk/stories/windrush-histories/story-of-windrush-ship>
Windrush Scandal & plight of Windrush immigrants
<https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-43782241>
- 2/1 **Black Paris & France**
Readings: *Afropean*, pp. 33 – 81
Video: Too Black to Be French
<https://ufl.kanopy.com/video/too-black-be-french>
- 2/8 **African Americans in Paris** (*Guest Speaker: Professor Sharon Austin*)
Video: *Meeting the Man – James Baldwin in Paris*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lvFrlPmVLg>
- 2/15 **Brussels and Amsterdam**
Readings: *Afropean*, pp. 85 – 164
- 2/22 **Black Lives Matter in Europe** (*Guest Speaker Jean Beaman - TBC*)
Readings: “Towards a Reading of Black Lives Matter in Europe,” *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Nov. 16, 2021, pp. 1 – 12; **available on Canvas**
- 3/1 **Berlin and Afro-Germans**
Readings: *Afropean*, pp. 85 – 164
Introduction to *Remapping Black Germany*, pp. 1 – 26; **available on Canvas**
Optional: Afro-Germans documentary
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcfPVj5qR1E>
- 3/5 – 3/12 **Spring Break**
- 3/15 **Stockholm**
Readings: *Afropean*, pp. 207 – 243

3/22 **Moscow – Black in the USSR**

Readings: *Afropean*, pp. 247 – 285

Selections from Langston Hughes, *I Wonder as I Wander*; available **on Canvas**

Video – *Black in the USSR*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZqR2KEd_hk&t=286s

3/29 **Marseille, Rome, & the French Riviera**

Readings: *Afropean*, pp. 285 – 335

Video: *Blaxploitalian – 100 Years of Blackness in Italian Cinema*

<https://vimeo.com/488197441>

Digital Exhibit on Baldwin's house

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/exhibitions/chez-baldwin>

4/5 **Lisbon**

Readings: *Afropean*, pp. 339 – 380

4/12 **Student Presentations**

4/19 **Student Presentations**