

# College for Seniors Spring 2018

## Theme Term on *Race in Black and White*

### MONDAY

#### **The '60s: A History of a Decade of Upheaval with Jim Lenburg**

The decade of the '60s began with optimism when the country elected JFK; it ended with Americans more divided than any time since the Civil War. African-Americans, other minorities and women demanded equal rights and an end to second class citizenship. The Johnson administration gave us more social legislation since the New Deal but it also Americanized the Vietnam War and divided the country into hawks and doves. We will examine these and other issues during this time of social and political upheaval.



#### **African American Autobiography with Catherine Frank**

Autobiography has an important place in the canon of African American literature, as authors present in their own words what time, circumstance and history have made of them and reveal to readers "life within the veil" in a country where we struggle to come to terms with "the color line." From the earliest slave narratives to Barack Obama's *Dreams of My Father* and beyond, African American authors have constructed a sense of self, expressed their politics, and articulated their aesthetics in the form of life writing. We will survey 12 autobiographies from various historical periods by African American men and women, some well-known and some whom should be. The course will be mostly lecture, but discussion will be encouraged.

#### **The Female Body Enslaved: Beloved and The Handmaid's Tale with Brenda Bryant**

Toni Morrison and Margaret Atwood explore the emotional, psychological and physical consequences in societies where women are not allowed to control their own bodies and are not viewed as human beings but as uteruses for profit by privileged white men. The authors' fictional women characters risk everything to regain family, life and voice but pay a heavy personal price in seeking that freedom and recovering from sanctioned and sanctified rape. We will read Morrison's *Beloved* and Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* and discuss the effects of laws and religious practices on the lives of women. The two novels are disturbing and graphic in terms of physical and sexual violence. **Required texts:** *Beloved* by Toni Morrison, ISBN-13: 978-1400033416, *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood, ISBN-13: 978-0385490818. **Recommended text:** *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence—From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* by Judith Lewis Herman, ISBN-13: 978-0465061716.

#### **Black Comedy in America with Randy Robins**

Through lecture and audio and video media, we will trace the evolution of the African American experience in comedy from the era of slavery to the present day. We will explore the role of comedy that originated secretly in the fields and slave cabins in the south, through minstrel productions that were popular in the 19th century, and the massive appeal followed by the demise of the Amos and Andy franchise on radio and television in the 20th century. We will also meet the modern-day icons of Black comedy, among them Dick Gregory, Redd Foxx, Bill Cosby, Richard Pryor and Eddie Murphy, as well as a host of others into the present. Participants should be prepared for challenging, sometimes harsh topics and graphic language, and lots of laughter as we view and hear the best work of these comic giants.

#### **Jazz History: Black and White with Warren J. Gaughan**

We will both trace jazz history from its origins through cool jazz and focus on important black and white musicians—their contributions and their challenges in what was mostly a segregated society. We will examine the traits of each jazz style and highlight important musicians from each style and their contributions to the evolution of jazz. In addition we will explore how to listen to jazz and what to listen for in each style. If you like jazz, or want to know something about it, then this is your chance. No experience is necessary; just a willingness to explore a significant American contribution to the world of music.

## TUESDAY

### **A Change Is Gonna Come: The Civil Rights Movement and American Culture**

**with Carol Rogoff Hallstrom, Catherine Frank, Larry Griswold, Jim Lenburg, Joe Sasfy**

Is social change a cause or a result of the cultural climate in which it occurs? Did the music of Sam Cook and the literature of Ralph Ellison and the arrival of Jackie Robinson influence the rise of the civil rights movement? Did the rise of the civil rights movement lead to a revolution in the music, literature and sports of the time? Beginning with an historical perspective of the civil rights movement, we will examine each of these fields to explore our core question. See [olliasheville.com/courses](http://olliasheville.com/courses) for a description of each session.

### **Poetry in Black and White with Bill Petz**

Poetry takes us to the deep and sometimes vulnerable places of our lives, and it is in such places that those who write and those who read often meet, finding compassion and support. Each week, we will look at the life of a black poet and read his or her poetry. In response, we will write a poem, sharpen specific skills of poetry, and present our poems in the supportive environment of the next class. The exercise may invoke a better understanding of the lives of Black Americans. It may also inform us of the place of racism, white supremacy and white privilege in our culture and our lives. Poets of all experience levels are welcome.

### **Best of the Blues with Jann Nance**

We will listen to blues music and learn about the origin of blues music and its influence on other genres. Our exploration will include some of the most important blues musicians, both male & female, such as Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, B.B. King, Bessie Smith, Alberta Hunter and Nina Simone.

### **Morrison's Home and Melville's Problem with Bill Moore**

We will pursue challenges of inter-racial empathy and the artistic means of gaining empathy, as we read two short narratives: Toni Morrison's *Home*, in her attempt to re-create the experiences of a male Korean War veteran, and Herman Melville's *Benito Cereno*, a pre-Civil-War fictionalization of an extreme event at the height of the intercontinental slave trade. The two subtle writers set before us unique challenges of language, attitude and empathy that the range of racial attitudes among Melville's readers (1855-2017) can only suggest. Class time discussions may help us enrich our reading or re-reading experiences and also clarify the knowledge and angles and limits each of us brings. **Required Reading:** *Home* by Toni Morrison, ISBN-13: 978-0307740915; *Benito Cereno* by Herman Melville, ISBN-13: 978-1536864175, free online edition available.

### **African American Cinema, 1915-1946 with Chip Kaufmann**

At the same time that Thomas Edison and D.W. Griffith were creating and expanding the movies in America, there was a thriving alternative cinema made for African Americans. These so called "Race" movies not only entertained Black audiences but dealt with the many social issues of the day concerning them. We will view several of these very rare films including the controversial movies of pioneer African American filmmaker Oscar Micheaux.

### **Black Athletes: Successes and Struggles in a White Nation with Larry Griswold**

Built around the films of Ross Greenburg, the master documentary maker, this class will include six documentaries shown over seven sessions. The first one will start with successes of black athletes soon after the Civil War and what followed to exclude them. The remaining documentaries will tell stories from the 1930s to the 1970s about individuals struggling for equal rights in boxing, pro football, baseball, the Olympics and college football.

## WEDNESDAY

### **Black Music Goes Mainstream, 1940-1990: Cover Recordings as Catalysts with Lee Cooper**

We will explore musical interchanges related to hit songs performed by black and white recording artists between 1940 and 1990. Among the motivations for cover recording that will be examined are commercial competition, repertoire expansion, performing styles, artistic salutes, and musical arrangements. Music by Ray Charles, The Beatles, Fats Domino, Elvis Presley and The Platters will be utilized.

### **A Short History of African American Art with Professor Eva Bares**

In this primarily lecture course, we will explore the history of African American art, focusing on the historic evolution reflected in the work of trained fine artists and artists who are assigned “outsider” status. Our goal is to gain an understanding of diasporic artistic practices, paying particular attention to the inextricability of Black Atlantic history, memory, race, place and postcolonial issues in the formation of African-American visual culture. Required readings (four chapters from the textbook) and optional articles juxtapose arguments by historians, anthropologists, theorists and art historians in an attempt to grasp the diversity of approaches surrounding arts of the African diaspora. Review details of the course and readings at [olliasheville.com/courses](http://olliasheville.com/courses). **Required text:** *African-American Art (Oxford History of Art)* by Sharon F. Patton, ISBN-13: 978-0192842138.

### **August Wilson: Master Playwright with Dan Damerville**

We will read four of August Wilson’s plays that won major drama awards: *Two Trains Running*, *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*, *The Piano Lesson* and *Fences*. Through reading, video and small-group and class discussion, participants will gain a deeper appreciation of Wilson’s life and work, his place within the American theater canon and, especially, how he has given voice to the struggles and triumphs of African-Americans. **Required texts:** Plays by August Wilson: *The Piano Lesson*, ISBN-13: 978-0452265349; *Fences*, ISBN-13: 978-045226401; *Two Trains Running*, ISBN-13: 978-0452269293; *Ma Rainey’s Black Bottom*, ISBN-13: 978-0452261136. Participants should read Act I of *The Piano Lesson* before the first class.

### **Out of Africa: Contemporary Immigrant Literature with Jay Jacoby**

While we may be familiar with the harrowing experiences of individuals brought from Africa to America against their will, many of us are unacquainted with what recent African immigrants to America have encountered. After a brief review of the lives of Africans in America before the 20th century, we’ll explore how contemporary African immigrants have recorded their experiences in fiction and nonfiction. Participants can choose from among several books by writers from Nigeria, Ethiopia, Cameroon, and Zimbabwe. See [olliasheville.com/courses](http://olliasheville.com/courses) for list of books.

### **James Baldwin’s America: Essays and Documentaries with Rachel Stein**

We will read and discuss essays on black and white race relations by James Baldwin (1924-1987). The writer and activist’s reflections are as pertinent in our own era of movements such as Black Lives Matter and Alt Right white supremacists as they were when originally written more than 50 years ago. We will watch two documentaries on Baldwin’s life, work and activism and read *The Fire Next Time* and selected essays from *Notes of a Native Son*. **Prerequisite:** Commitment to read the required essays. **Required texts:** *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin, ISBN-13: 978-0679744726; *Notes of a Native Son* by James Baldwin, ISBN-13: 978-0807006238.

## THURSDAY

### **African American Protests in United States History with Gordon McKinney**

We will examine African American protests from the attempt to preserve African heritage to the Civil Rights movement and Black Nationalism initiatives. Among the topics covered will be resistance to enslavement, the Civil War, and attempts to secure citizenship rights. Among individuals who will be highlighted are Nat Turner, Harriet Tubman, Ida Wells, Carter Woodson, W. E. B. DuBois, Marcus Garvey, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mohammad Ali.

### **Hidden Biases of Good People with Susan Trammell and Raja Crumby**

Jodi Picoult's novel *Small Great Things* is based on a true story of an African American nurse, a white supremacist and the trial that resulted from charges of murder. We will use these characters to identify and discuss the challenging subjects of privilege, race, prejudice, compassion and justice. We will also examine some surprising statistics that reveal how many people—without awareness or conscious control—perpetuate discriminatory practices that are the result of hidden biases. And, we may surprise *ourselves* to discover these bias embedded in our good intentions. **Required text:** *Small Great Things* by Jodi Picoult, ISBN-13:978-0345544957. **Recommended texts:** *Dear White People* by Tim Wise, ISBN-13: 978-0872865211 and *Blind Spot: Hidden Biases of Good people* by Mahzarin Banaji and Anthony Greenwald, ISBN-13: 99978-03455528438.

### **Dialogue about Race: Black and White with Cindy Berryman-Fink and Michael Carter**

We will examine and discuss issues of race from both personal and societal perspectives through the use of videos and readings. Topics will include: prejudice, white privilege and disparities in health, wealth, education, housing and justice. We will examine cultural competency skills and personal contributions to racial healing.

### **American Opera: Breaking the Sound Barrier with Patricia Heuermann and Bill Heuermann**

We will focus on four individuals who confronted racial segregation and prejudice in the world of American music. In the first two session, we will listen to operas by two African American composers: *Treemonisha* by Scott Joplin and *Troubled Island* by William Grant Still. Both composers suffered deliberate indifference, prejudice and enormous difficulty in seeing their works performed but were ultimately successful. In session three and four, our attention shifts to two performers who are icons in both music and American culture. Paul Robeson—athlete, singer, actor, lawyer and political activist—raised his deep and powerful bass voice for social change as few others in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. When Marian Anderson, perhaps the most important African American singer of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, lifted her contralto voice at the Lincoln Memorial on Easter 1939 and later became the first African American to perform with the New York Metropolitan Opera in 1955, she opened the way for all black artists who followed.

### **Race in Stories of Old New Orleans with Doug Cooper**

At the end of the 19th century the Crescent City—with its *Vieux Carré*, volatile social history and racial complexity—was the setting, source and subject of some of America's best writing. We'll read and discuss a selection of short stories about the lives of New Orleans blacks and whites in a majority black population. The stories of the period are by Kate Chopin, George Washington Cable, Grace King and Alice-Dunbar Nelson. **Required text:** *Creole Life in Old New Orleans* by Doug Cooper. Order E-book or paperback: [www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com) (the short stories for the course are included in the text). Stories are also available on the web via the course outline at [olliasheville.com/courses](http://olliasheville.com/courses).

## **FRIDAY**

### **Piano-Based Jazz Appreciation with Michael Ruiz**

Enjoy the origins of jazz piano from its black roots to its universal appeal. Your instructor will perform original arrangements, improvisations and his own music to demonstrate the richness and originality of jazz. The course will focus on the contributions of Art Tatum, Oscar Peterson, Erroll Garner, Thelonious Monk, Dave Brubeck and Bill Evans, with live performances of their works.

### **Contemporary African-American Art and Artists with Kristi McMillan**

Through slides, videos, instructor overviews and assigned readings, we will discover African-American artists working today and explore themes treated in their work. In this discussion-based course, participants will actively participate in frank, sensitive and sometimes uncomfortable dialogues that will lead to deeper understanding of the artists' experiences and those of their own. As American artist Alex Grey said: "When artists give form to revelation, their art can advance, deepen and potentially transform the consciousness of their community."

## College for Seniors Hot Topics

### Theme Term on *Race in Black and White*

As part of the College for Seniors theme term on race and ongoing initiatives to create relevant and timely programming, we present a series of lectures and events to supplement the courses offered this spring. The lectures are free and open to everyone, and all are scheduled for the Manheimer Room.

#### **Housing and Race in Asheville**

Wednesday, May 2

11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Where we live has an impact on our quality of life, health, wealth and access to opportunity. Residential segregation creates and reinforces many of the racial disparities that continue to plague our community. Housing also serves as a tool to construct racial identity. We will explore these concepts using examples from Asheville's past and present.

**Andy Barnett** is the executive director for Asheville Area Habitat for Humanity. Over the last two decades, he has served rural and urban Habitat for Humanity affiliates motivated by the belief that a decent, affordable home in a vibrant neighborhood is the foundation for success.

#### **The Past Is Not Past:**

#### **The History and Legacy of Lynching in North Carolina, Part 1**

Tuesday, May 8

9 - 11 a.m.

We will examine the history of lynching in North Carolina, with an eye toward the United States and the South more broadly. Dr. Kotch will examine the history of lynching in America, the South and North Carolina, including analysis of the photographs taken at such events and case study descriptions, anti-lynching activism from the 1880s through the 1940s, and the relevance of the study of this history to current challenges. **Seth Kotch** is assistant professor of digital humanities in the Department of American Studies at the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill. He and Professor Elijah Gaddis direct The Red Record project — a web-based record of lynching in the South.

#### **A Game Called Salisbury:**

#### **The History and Legacy of Lynching in North Carolina, Part 2**

Tuesday, May 15

11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

**Susan Barringer Wells**, in her book *A Game Called Salisbury*, weaves century-old news reports and oral history into a family saga of tragic proportion. Her teenaged ancestor Addie Lyster discovered the gruesome scene of her family's murder. For the crime, Jack Dillingham, Nease Gillespie and teenager John Gillespie were taken from a jail cell to an oak tree in Salisbury, North Carolina, where they were lynched and mutilated. The heinous act spawned a children's game of ropes and make believe. What actually happened on the night of August 6, 1906, may have been the game's first folly. We will also consider the lasting legacy of lynching with special guest speaker **Dr. Dwight Mullen**, professor of political science at UNC Asheville.

## More Than a Month

OLLI's Inclusion Committee builds partnerships to offer culturally rich programs to address issues of race and inclusion locally and nationally. *More Than a Month* events are designed to provide meaningful ways to understand and respond to the issues of race that continue to divide us and to define our civic and political discourse. Events are open to everyone and held in the Manheimer room and most are free.

- **Friday, February 16, 2-5 p.m.** Bruce Mulkey, "I Am a Recovering Racist"
- **Friday, March 16, 1-2:30 p.m.** Michael Carter, "Beyond Privilege" workshop. Registration is required; call 828.251.6188.
- **Friday, April 6, 4:30-6 p.m.** A Screening of "Rosenwald" and a discussion of Rosenwald schools
- **Friday, May 4, 2-5 p.m.** "Beneath the Veneer," A documentary film about opportunity, success and inequality in the U.S.

## **Two Hood Hugger Tours**

During the Spring Term on Race in Black and White, College for Seniors plans two **Hood Huggers Tours, Fridays April 6 and 20, 1-3 p.m.** The past, present and future of African Americans in Asheville is a story of resilience. Learn this powerful story on a Hood Huggers International tour of Asheville's historically African American neighborhoods with artist and poet DeWayne Barton. A Hood Huggers tour is an intimate, interactive experience that will leave you looking at this mountain town with new eyes. For additional information, see <https://www.hoodhuggers.com/hood-tours>.

Hood Huggers Tours will be registered through the online registration system when registration opens, February 20, 10 a.m. Tours will be listed under EXCURSIONS; the fee is \$30 and you do not have to be an OLLI member to register. Space in each tour is limited to the first 9 people who register. If high interest generates a significant waiting list, additional tours can be considered.