Black History from 1870 to 1954: Afro-Am 133

Instructor: Robert Williams

In this course, we will examine the Black struggle for liberation from the end of the Civil War up to the beginning of the Modern Civil Rights Movement.

Historians have constructed a narrative of this period that largely focuses on Black folks struggling to survive the horrors of Jim Crow. This system of segregation, which was designed to maintain white supremacy after the Civil War by socially alienating, culturally degrading, and economically exploiting Black people was underpinned with relentless, and often ritualistic, violence. While surviving this demand of Black people a great deal of energy, attention, and endurance; this period is also defined by their remarkable resiliency, indefatigable effort, and an indomitable will to not just survive, but to overcome white supremacy. Black folks built communities, organized political groups, ran literary and historical journals, and wrote, performed, and invented genres music as a part of an energetic and profound evolution of culture.

In this course will be to delve into an exciting history that demonstrates the power of human will to subvert and overcome even the most violent, and seemingly intractable, adversaries of peace and human fellowship.

Topic we will examine will include:

- The Rise and Collapse of Reconstruction
- Black Resistance to the Construction of Jim Crow as a Legal and Social Institution
- Spirituals, Work Songs, Ragtime, and the Evolution of American Popular Music
- The Growth and Evolution of Black Political Thought
- The Evolution of Black Religious Institutions

=================================