

Evaluation Study of Online Course Offerings  
from the Department of African and Afro-American Studies  
at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

By  
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The primary goal of this research project was to evaluate use of online courses in meeting the program goals of the Department in African and Afro-American Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The Department's initial purpose in developing and teaching online courses was to enhance outreach efforts in general and more specifically to increase the Department's learning opportunities for nontraditional students. The research found that the majority of students enrolling in the online courses are traditional, on-campus students rather than the intended non-traditional audience due to an overflow of traditional students unable to enroll in the on-campus courses. The courses were found to be generally successful on several levels but not an acceptable alternative for traditional students. Suggestions were made for development of new online courses designed for the traditional student audience as well as restricting the audience for existing courses.

Headings:

Computer-assisted instruction

Instructional assessment

Online Courses

African and African American Studies

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## **Introduction**

Introduction to African Studies (AFRI 40) was offered as one of the first four courses taught via the web at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) through the Division of Continuing Studies' "Carolina Courses Online" initiative in the Spring 1997 semester. In 1999, the Department of African and Afro-American Studies (AFRI/AFAM) developed and offered its second on-line course, Introduction to the Black Experience (AFAM 40). Since then both courses have been offered regularly through Carolina Courses Online.

AFRI 40 and AFAM 40 are popular undergraduate courses at UNC-CH, both fulfilling undergraduate perspective requirements. The decision to offer the two courses online evolved from the Department's efforts to increase its outreach to non-traditional students. Only four students enrolled in the first session of AFRI 40, but both courses have had steady growth in enrollment since. However, more and more students enrolling in the courses are traditional, full-time students at UNC-CH who have been unsuccessful in their attempts to register for the on-campus courses, which have historically maintained long waiting lists.

## **Research Objectives**

The primary goal of this research project was to evaluate the Department's use of online courses in meeting its program goals. My research began with an examination of both the original and current program goals related to online course offerings, an

evaluation of the effectiveness of the current offerings in meeting those goals, and concluded with recommendations for changes in the current online offerings.

### **Research Methods**

#### *Observation by an Active Participant*

My research was informed by my prior experience working in the Department in African and Afro-American Studies (AFRI/AFAM) as well as my prior research efforts in the area of e-learning. I was employed in AFRI/AFAM from 1989 through 1995 as a secretary and from 1996 through 1997 as a graduate research and teaching assistant. During my graduate program at the School of Information and Library Science at UNC-CH, several of my research projects focused specifically on the AFRI/AFAM distance learning effort. I assisted the chair of the Department, Julius E. Nyang'oro, in the original development and instruction of AFRI 40 in 1996-97. In addition, I am a full-time employee of Expanets, a network solutions company, which utilizes e-learning not only for staff training and development but also for customer training. In the last several years, as I have juggled work, school, and family responsibilities, I have utilized various online learning experiences including graduate level courses at UNC-CH and North Carolina State University as well as work-related, training courses both online and on cd-rom.

#### *Literature Review*

I have participated in various listservs and conducted multiple literature searches related to the topic of online learning. I have also reviewed various documents in the Department of AFRI/AFAM, and in fact have assisted in the preparation of many Department documents such as annual reports, strategic planning proposals, and grant

applications. I have also examined relevant literature for information on evaluation strategies, particularly of online courses.

The public debate over the merits of Internet-based distance learning too often consists of high-pitched vitriol and hyperbole. Proponents ooze with blind adoration, declaring that online learning can resolve all the problems confronting traditional education. Opponents insist that courses taught on the net are incapable of living up to the standards of the traditional brick and mortar classroom. The study makes clear that distance learning can be quality learning. (The Institute for Higher Education Polity, April 2000)

Since my first involvement with online instruction, the debate in the academy over the effectiveness of online instruction as well as the merit of various evaluation strategies has ensued much as characterized in the above quote from the Forward of “Quality On the Line: Benchmarks for Success in Internet-Based Distance Education,” the result of a study sponsored by the National Education Association and Blackboard Inc. In the Spring of 1997 the UNC-CH LEARN listserv hosted a heated debate over the “Schutte” article which reported Jerald G. Schutte’s findings that students in his Social Statistics course performed better in the online than the traditional course (See Schutte, n.d. and Black, 1997.). A multitude of studies since then have resulted with suggested methods for evaluation of online instruction (See The Institute for Higher Education Polity, April 2000; Graham, et al, 2001.) as well as for the design of studies comparing effectiveness of online versus traditional classroom instruction (See Joy and Garcia, June 2000; Diaz, 2000; and Carnevale, August 25, 2000.).

In addition to consulting such studies, I also examined available case studies in the literature in exploring possible methods of conducting this evaluation study (See for example Bradshaw, July/August 1999; Picciano, March 1998; and Clanton, 2001.).

While evaluation of the online courses themselves was part of this study, the primary

focus was to answer whether these courses have been effective in meeting the department's program goals.

### *Course Evaluation*

Traditionally, student course evaluation has been a critical part of examining teaching effectiveness in the Department as well as for the University at large. In addition, senior faculty evaluate junior faculty and part-time instructors on a semi-annual basis. Historically, senior faculty, in particular the Chair of the department, has visited and observed the traditional classroom as part of junior faculty reviews. To evaluate the online courses, similar methods were used for this study, including course evaluation surveys and the opinions/impressions of other instructors about the classes.

In the traditional classroom, course evaluations are usually distributed on or near the last day of class and consequently high numbers of evaluations are completed and returned. The online course evaluation, on the other hand, is conducted via the web. A link to the evaluation is included in the course schedule. Students can access the evaluation at their convenience. The percentage of students completing the surveys has been significantly lower than the percentage of students completing surveys in the traditional classroom, varying from a low in available data of 32% responding in the Spring 2000 AFAM 40 course to a high of 70% responding in the Fall 2000 AFAM 40 (See Appendix 1.).

Student course evaluations collected by Carolina Courses Online were reviewed for information on teaching effectiveness. The evaluation surveys were made available to online students via the web and participation was anonymous. Responses to the Fall 1999 semester survey were provided for this project in a summary report which

included responses to all CCO courses for that semester. Responses for AFAM 40 and AFRI 40 were provided for Fall 2000, Spring 2000, and Spring 2001. Responses for AFAM 40 were provided for Summer 2001.

Carolina Course Online Evaluations for Fall 1999 through the Summer of 2001 consisted of 13 questions (See Appendix 2). The first 9 questions request a closed-ended response from answers “very negative”, “somewhat negative”, “neutral”, “somewhat positive” and “very positive”. In addition to these closed-ended questions, the evaluation provided a section for comments. The final four questions were open-ended.

Drawing from my previous research and online experience, I analyzed the course content of both the original courses and those offered today, looking specifically for any changes as various instructors have conducted the courses. This analysis consisted of comparing sample lesson web pages from the original design of AFRI 40 to lesson pages offered by the current instructors. I also compared levels of interaction in sample discussion forums in the current AFAM 40 class to those analyzed in a previous research project focused on communication patterns in the discussion forums of AFAM 40 and AFRI 40 taught by another instructor.

#### *Surveys and Interviews of AFRI/AFAM Staff*

Surveys and interview invitations were also distributed to current AFRI/AFAM faculty and staff. The surveys were followed with more in-depth interviews with members of the Department’s faculty and staff. Interviews expanded on the questions in the survey and followed-up on certain themes noted in the survey responses. Surveys and interview invitations were distributed by email to all 13 members of the faculty and



all eight part-time teaching staff (See Appendix 5 and 6). Surveys contained nine open-ended questions exploring the faculty's teaching background, exposure to e-learning, and their attitudes regarding use of online instruction to meet the department's goals in the area's of outreach and teaching effectiveness. Surveys were distributed by email and participants were given the option of replying by email or faxing their response. Anonymity was promised and responses were copied randomly into a Microsoft Word document prior to the email responses being deleted. One response was received via fax and two responses were delivered to the Department secretary, and I collected those responses in person. These paper-copy responses did not contain identification information, but I typed responses into the same Microsoft Word document as the email responses and discarded the paper copies. I later used "cut" and "paste" functions to transfer responses to a Microsoft Excel spread sheet for easier sorting and analysis. Four full-time faculty members and four part-time instructors responded to the survey.

Similarly, four faculty members and four part-time instructors agreed to be interviewed. In addition, Administrative Assistant Deborah Crowder was interviewed. Interviews varied in length from 30 to 60 minutes. Participants were given the option to keep their responses confidential and three participants interviewed requested such anonymity. In all interviews, I used paper and pencil to record interview responses. I then transcribed my notes into a Microsoft Word document for easier analysis, using "cut" and "paste" functions to organize responses into varying themes.

## **Data Analysis**

### *Background of AFRI/AFAM*

UNC created a formal program in African Studies with the 1969 establishment of the Curriculum in African and Afro-American Studies. Historically, African and Afro-American Studies were administered as one unit and the two fields have worked towards integrating their curricula. The unit received Department status in 1997. The Department in African and Afro-American Studies is administered through the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Currently the Curriculum offers two B.A. degrees, in African Studies and in Afro-American Studies.

The Curriculum has experienced tremendous growth in the last twenty years, both in enrollment and in the number of majors graduating from the Department. Most faculty and teaching staff have a long history working with the Department. Survey answers to the question “How long have you worked in the Department?” averaged ten years. The teaching staff and numbers of courses taught have more than doubled since 1980.

About 3000 students enrolled in the Department’s courses year last year. All of the unit’s courses fulfill the College’s multicultural diversity perspective requirement. In addition, many course offerings fulfill the non-western historical perspective and pre-1850 western historical perspective requirements at both the General College and Arts & Sciences level, making the introductory courses in particular quite popular (College of Arts and Sciences, n.d.) The Department also offers minors in African and in Afro-American Studies as well as honors courses in both concentrations. As an interdisciplinary program, the Department encourages students in other UNC programs

to consider either African or Afro-American Studies as a second major. “The double major in African or Afro-American Studies is an appropriate complement to virtually any field of endeavor,” concludes the department’s web page description of information on the majors (AFRI/AFAM, n.d.).

The curriculum’s popularity is evidenced by enrollment trends. All introductory courses repeatedly have extended waitlists. During a November 8, 2001, Debby Crowder demonstrated using the university electronic registration system that all introductory courses scheduled for the Spring 2002 semester were full—prior to the beginning of the sophomore registration period.

Permanent, full-time faculty in the Department teach four courses each academic year, including at least one introductory course. Those faculty with joint appointments have reduced teaching requirements for the Department due to their teaching responsibilities in other units. Faculty on the African Studies side of the Department are Julius Nyang'oro (Professor and Chair), Roberta Ann Dunbar (Associate Professor), Michael Lambert (Assistant Professor), and Eunice Sahle (Assistant Professor). Bereket Selassie (Professor) also has a joint appointment with the department and the Law School. Catharine Newbury has a joint position with Political Science. On the Afro-American Studies side are Perry Hall (Associate Professor), Kenneth Janken (Associate Professor), Valerie Johnson, (Assistant Professor), and Michael West, (Assistant Professor). Gerald Horne (Professor) has a joint position with Communication Studies and History; Reginald Hildebrand (Associate Professor) has a joint position with History; and Karla Slocum (Assistant Professor) has a joint position with Anthropology.

Many of the introductory course sections (AFRI 40, AFAM 40 and AFAM 41) and topics courses (AFAM 65, AFRI 60 and AFRI/AFAM 174) are taught by part-time and/or temporary staff. Visiting Assistant Professor Charlene Register has been with the Curriculum in various capacities since her post-doctorate fellowship fifteen years ago. Lecturers Barbara Anderson and Robert Porter have also taught introductory courses in the Curriculum for nearly fifteen years. In addition to teaching traditional courses for the Department, Anderson has taught AFAM 40 online three times and Porter teaches AFAM 40 in the traditional classroom at night for the Division of Continuing Studies. In the Fall 2001 semester, other temporary staff includes Timothy McMillan, who has taught the online AFRI 40 and AFAM 40 since his permanent return to the university in the Fall 1997 semester; Arturo Velasquez, who taught AFRI 40 online in the Spring 2001 semester; and Dale McKinley, who is currently teaching AFRI 40 for the first time. Other part-time instructors include Robin Vander and Alphonse Mutima.

The administrative/support staff in the Curriculum consists of the Curriculum chair and two secretary positions. Debby Crowder has worked for the Curriculum for more than 20 years. Her position was reclassified in April 1996 from Secretary IV to Administrative Secretary II. The second secretarial position is currently held by Travis Gore who joined the staff in August 2001.

### *Program Goals*

“...African and Afro American Studies seeks to extend knowledge about Africans and African Americans to the broader community....Our ultimate mission is to produce scholars/citizens who are equipped to critically, actively and effectively engage the issues confronting Africa and African America.”  
(AFAM/AFAM, n.d.)

Instructors interviewed in African and Afro-American Studies who responded directly to questions regarding the Department's teaching effectiveness and outreach goals spoke to the "character-building" aspect of a university education reflected in the department's mission statement. This aspect of education was also the basis for the overwhelming criticism found in responses to the use of online instruction in meeting the unit's basic teaching goals. Most faculty and staff, including those who have experienced online instruction, felt the online courses currently offered by the department were inappropriate for the traditional student.

Chair of the Department Dr. Julius Nyang'oro spoke specifically of the broader goal of the College of Arts & Sciences to "graduate students who are well-versed in life, able to survive beyond their years in college, and to prepare these students to move on to the next stage in life where they can be functional citizens of the country, and of the world." Nyang'oro explained that the various perspective requirements set up by the College to meet this larger goal resulted in most UNC-CH students taking at least one course in the Department prior to graduation. More specifically, he addressed the Department's teaching goals in the areas of education about Africa and African Americans. "In my department, the principle concentration of the curriculum is the role of Africa and the African American world and their contribution to the uniqueness and the existence of this society," he said. Dr. Nyang'oro explained the significance of Africa and African America in historical terms and in terms of globalization, stressing that much confusion exists about both. "Our role is to provide the critical tools to understand without claiming more than is there, to provide ways in which in terms of

globalization African Americans in particular and Americans in general can engage Africa in ways that are beneficial, as opposed to discovery of a 'mythical Africa' which doesn't exist," he said.

One part-time instructor described this character-building aspect of traditional university instruction as critical to the department's teaching mission. "Part of why you come to the university at that point in life is for the maturing experience, for exposure to ideas, exposure to people, you wouldn't otherwise come into contact with. Part of what we are supposed to be doing is all the idealistic stuff. I believe that so strongly," she said.

In terms of outreach, the Department's goals are similar to its basic teaching goals, the primary difference being in the targeted audience. Again Dr. Nyang'oro saw the department's goals as a part of the larger university mission. "The mission of the university is to serve the people of NC," he said. Faculty from both the African and Afro-American Studies sides of the department mentioned efforts to assist school teachers, especially in North Carolina. Part-time instructor Barbara Anderson especially was credited by both Dr. Nyang'oro and another senior faculty member for her work with school teachers, leading workshops, assisting with curriculum development, and proposing an on-campus outreach office in her April 5, 2001 "Outreach Program Proposal" to the African Studies Committee.

Outreach activities of African Studies professionals at UNC vary from individual faculty who speak to local secondary school classes to consultants for constitution-building in Eritrea. Due in part to the interdisciplinary nature of the department, outreach interests and goals are highly diversified among department

members, and much activity takes place on an individual basis or in conjunction with other units on campus such as the School of Education or University Center for International Studies (UCIS) (AFRI/AFAM, various annual reports). Consequently, outreach activities are neither coordinated or tracked in a manner that makes identifying department goals straightforward. Anderson's proposal notes that "in order to be competitive in a Title VI grant proposal, our department will need to show that it is already committed to Outreach. If we are going to submit a proposal in the next couple of years, we need to begin now developing an outreach program with UNC institutional support." In the Department's 1996 application for Title VI support, the same issue of coordination was addressed: "Outreach efforts will be coordinated and improved through efficient dissemination and organization of resources," the proposal stated. The 1996 application was turned down in large part, according to committee feedback, because outreach activity was too small.

#### *Challenges Facing the Department in Teaching and Outreach*

By far the number one challenge mentioned facing the department in terms of teaching and outreach was lack of financial resources. The perceived need for additional resources is not new and not unique to the Department. The combination of state budget cuts and increased enrollment at UNC-CH have brought issues of class-size and faculty course-load all over campus to the headlines (see, for example, Haul, August 24, 2001; Misson, September 24, 2001; University Gazette, Nov. 7, 2001). Several faculty members indicated that budget restraints resulted in faculty teaching larger-than-ideal courses.

“Within the general context of the college, proportionally, I would argue that we have had our share of resources reduced and at the same time in the last year had to deal with an extra 400 new freshman,” Dr. Nyang’oro said. “Classes will continue to get bigger, there will be fewer sections available, because of limited faculty available.” Department faculty overwhelmingly indicated that teaching effectiveness depended on smaller classes. Given the historic demand for the department’s courses, such strategy produces a conflict between the number of students served and the quality of the instruction.

In addition to student-teacher ratio, faculty commented that increased class size detracts from other important faculty activities including research, publication and outreach, which in turn influence teaching effectiveness. “There’s no formal sabbatical policy at this university,” Dr. Nyang’oro explained. “The closest thing is research and study leave, available once every six years or so.” Until last year, the department received only one research and study leave per year. With 10 faculty members, such leave was available only once every 10 years, Dr. Nyang’oro pointed out. Last year the Department was awarded a second such leave. “But still it’s minimal compared to other institutions,” he noted. “The opportunity to rejuvenate, research and write is needed for promotion. We have to publish; the university’s reputation is built on that scholarship.” Dr. Bereket Selassie’s comments were similar. “Faculty feel so constrained with teaching. They don’t have time for research, writing, which effects promotion chances,” Selassie said. “The majority of the faculty are associate professors. Only two, myself and the chair, are senior professors. With a lighter teaching load, they [other faculty members] could produce more writing,” he explained.



While demand for courses is easily documented, this study did not include a quantitative analysis of budget and enrollment figures in the department. Dr. Timothy McMillan pointed out, however, that class size has decreased since he first started working for the department as a teaching assistant fifteen years ago. McMillan assisted in introductory level courses of 200 students or more. Five years ago, all senior faculty taught one “large” course per year of 120 students (Buttram, 1996). Today, “large” courses enroll at most 80 students and the department currently employs no teaching assistants. “We are using long-standing part-time instructors instead of T.A.s,” said Administrative Assistant Deborah Crowder. She also noted there were not as many graduate students on campus looking for teaching assistant positions as there used to be, and the current part-time instructors started as teaching assistants.

Another part-time instructor, Visiting Assistant Professor Dale McKinley, also suggested challenges other than those of resources for teaching effectiveness in the department. “Other than Debby, there has been no opportunity for me to talk with anyone else in the department about my own teaching experiences and share ideas/suggestions,” he noted. McKinley also started working with the Department as a teaching assistant during his graduate study at UNC-CH. Unlike McMillan who has had on-going teaching assignments with the Department in the last 16 years, including summer school appointments during his tenure as Associate Professor in the Departments of Anthropology and Ethnic Studies at Humbolt State University in California from September 1990 to July 1997, McKinley’s last teaching appointment with the Department was in Spring 1992, and he thus has more of an “outsider’s” perspective. “Teaching is not a static exercise but must relate to real and ongoing

things happening outside the academy,” McKinley said. “It would appear as though the demands of grant-getting, other research etc., have simply become the dominant focus of faculty.”

McKinley’s observations apply to outreach efforts as well. In discussing the challenges facing the department’s outreach efforts, many faculty members suggested the need for a more organized and unified approach to outreach. As previously mentioned, current activities are broad and scattered and often involve partnering with other organizations both on campus and beyond. Dr. Nyang’oro again discussed the inhibiting influence of resources on outreach activities. “Faculty have access to six or seven hundred dollars per year for travel to conferences. This allows for one or two conferences per year, barely covering expenses,” he noted. Resources for traveling throughout the state to assist in workshops, secondary school visits, etc. are not available. On a higher level, the department has unsuccessfully sought funding for an organized approach to outreach, both from a university budget perspective as well as outside funding sources, for many years. In many ways, these efforts have been sporadic and lacking in a consistent long-term approach. For example, the Title VI application in 1996 emphasized the department’s efforts to utilize the internet and the world wide web to increase outreach activities. Anderson’s 2001 report did not mention such efforts at all. Interviews with various staff, including those who have taught online, revealed that few members of the department realized that the online courses in African and Afro-American studies were originally developed with the goal of increasing outreach.

*Online Instruction in the Department*

As previously mentioned, the first AFRI 40 online course was developed and offered in the Spring 1997 semester in conjunction with efforts to increase outreach efforts, in particular in terms of the number of non-traditional students reached by the department, in order to strengthen the Title VI application for a National Center for Undergraduate Study of Africa and African Languages at UNC-CH. This particular Department interest coincided with a university initiative to increase the use of innovative technology in instruction on campus. Then UNC-CH Chancellor Paul Hooker allocated \$1 million in the Fall 1996 semester from the academic enhancement funds provided by the North Carolina General Assembly to enhance instructional technology at UNC-CH (Chancellor's Awards, 1997). In the Spring 1997 semester, the UNC Graduate School awarded \$1,000 technology supplements to about 100 graduate teaching assistants (Graduate School, n.d.). The Continuing Studies department launched Carolina Courses Online in the Spring 1997, offering in addition to AFRI 40, HIST 19, *The World Since 1945*; PHYS 24, *General Physics*; and PLAN 46, *Introduction to Urbanism and Planning*. Nyang'oro recalls not only support for the department's online courses, but a sense that the university was being pushed to enter the online arena. He explained that other universities had already started offering online courses and that the fear was that more North Carolina students would be lured to out-of-state universities. "If exclusive universities can do it, we as a public university should be fighting to be ahead of the pack," he said.

While a senior faculty member, indeed the chair of the department, had a hands-on role in the development and first offering of online instruction at UNC-CH,

involvement since that time has been exclusively from part-time instructors. Dr.

Timothy McMillan returned to North Carolina in the Fall of 1997 and taught the AFRI 40 course through the Spring 2000 semester. In addition he developed the AFAM 40 course and taught AFAM 40 in the Fall 1999, Spring 2000, and Spring 2001 semesters. In total 167 students have completed Dr. McMillan's course. Barbara Anderson taught AFAM 40 in the Fall 2000 and Summer 2001 semesters and is currently teaching the course in the Fall 2001 semester. Arturo Velasquez taught AFRI 40 in the Fall 2000 and Spring 2001 semesters. Finally, Dale McKinley is teaching AFRI 40 for the first time in the Fall 2001 semester.

Enrollment in the first AFRI 40 Online class was small, but all four students who started the class fit the non-traditional student description targeted. All were full-time employees, three were off-campus, and the one on-campus student was a university employee. In the Fall 1997 semester, the Division of Continuing Studies started utilizing separate section numbers for the course to distinguish between students enrolled full-time in a degree-seeking program at the University (Section 990) and those not enrolled (Section 991). While Section 991 is therefore seen as containing the "non-traditional" student audience, students on leave from the university as well as those academically ineligible are also included in this section.

Enrollment in the online courses is primarily administered and controlled by the Division of Continuing Studies, though the Division permits instructors to determine the maximum number of students enrolled. Initially, Section 990 is limited to a maximum of 10 students, generally half or less of the average class size. During the final days of the registration period, if non-traditional students have not filled the

available spaces in Section 991, then Section 990 is opened to additional traditional students.

Enrollment increased dramatically in the Fall 1999 semester when tuition for the online courses decreased (See Appendix 7). The average student enrollment for traditional, on-campus students jumped from 5.6 for the Fall 1997 to Spring 1999 time period to 20.5 for the Fall 1999 to Spring 2001 periods. AFAM 40 was immediately popular with a total of 23 students registered in the Fall 1999 semester. Average enrollment in AFAM 40 has also reflected nearly twice as many nontraditional students however, averaging 18.2 students in Section 990 and only 10 in Section 991.

In terms of course content, AFRI 40 has changed very little in the online format since Dr. Nyang'oro first offered the course, though McKinley indicated he plans to make changes to the course outline for the Spring 2002 semester. The course consists of 13 modules, designed to last one week each. Prior to the online course development, a traditional correspondence course manual was designed for AFRI 40 according to the Division of Continuing Studies guidelines. Each lesson contained objectives, reading assignments, a discussion section (designed to replace traditional classroom lectures), self-help exercises, and a written assignment. To convert the course to an online offering, Dr. Nyang'oro and I agreed to remove the written discussion section and convert the "written assignments" to discussion forum topics. In addition, supplementary electronic resources were referenced and on-line testing was developed. The course requirements include discussion forum participation, an on-line map quiz, midterm exam and final exam, and a research paper to be submitted either by email or as a web page (See Appendix 8 and 9 for AFRI 40 course requirements.).

The AFAM 40 course developed by McMillan and modified somewhat by Anderson follows the same basic format with 13 lesson modules, reading assignments, a discussion forum, and similar course requirements (See Appendix 10 and 11). In terms of content, the interdisciplinary approach of the department is reflected in the differences seen between McMillan's and Anderson's courses. McMillan is an Anthropologist and Anderson is an Historian. Different approaches to teaching AFAM 40 in the traditional classroom are also present in the Department's course offerings, with individuals teaching the same class having distinct syllabi, while AFRI 40 courses are more consistent.

In the Spring 2000 semester, Dr. McMillan simultaneously instructed AFAM 40 and AFRI 40. He commented at the time that the discussion forum in AFAM 40 was much more interesting and interactive. His observations spurred me to investigate the differences between communication patterns in the two classes in a research project (Buttram, 2000). Final analysis revealed almost twice as much participation in the AFAM 40 discussion forums (See Appendix 12). In both courses, the first lesson contained the most initial postings and the most replies. The level of the instructor's participation roughly paralleled class participation. In other words, Dr. McMillan's number of postings tended to rise and fall along with student postings from lesson to lesson.

His postings in both courses often urged participation, or concluded by encouraging additional comments and asking for students' thoughts on various subjects. Dr. McMillan's participation was greater in AFAM 40 (average 23.57 postings per lesson) than in AFRI 40 (average 15.43 postings per lesson). In both

classes, however, his participation fluctuated roughly in conjunction with student participation; in other words, as more students posted to the discussion forum, Dr. McMillan replied more.

Dr. Anderson's AFAM 40 varies somewhat from Dr. McMillan's course in that she requires three specific postings per week: one response to the discussion questions, one post to raise a question, and one response to another student's question. In addition, while Anderson communicates directly with individual students using email and with the class as a whole using a listserv, she does not participate as much as McMillan directly in the discussion forum. Participation by students in the Fall 2001 semester is significantly higher than in McMillan's course in terms of the number of postings (See Appendix 13.).

#### *Evaluation of the Online Courses*

Overall, the online course offerings in African and Afro-American Studies received positive feedback from students completing the online course evaluations, with the exception of evaluations for AFRI 40 taught in the Fall 2000 and Spring 2001 semesters.\* For most courses taught, "somewhat positive" and "very positive" responses to the quantitative questions outweighed negative responses. Comments were similarly positive (See Appendix 14 for examples). Responses to the open-ended question "Q11: What were the most negative [aspects of the course]?" often contained remarks such as "There honestly was not any aspect that I did not like" and "None really." Of the 81 responses to "Q12: On the whole, do you feel that instruction via the

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\* The Department and the Division are in agreement that the instructor for these semesters will not be asked to teach the online version of the course. It should be noted that no evidence was discovered that the Department discussed the results of this course with the instructor and this study did not explore the reasons for student dissatisfaction with the course beyond analysis of the course evaluations.

World Wide Web is a viable alternative to traditional classroom instruction? Why or Why not?", 63 were unequivocally "yes" responses, 6 were "no", and 12 were ambivalent or qualified replies, such as "I do for certain classes" and "Its ok...need more participation from the professor." (See Appendix 15.).

The most popular responses to "Q10: What were the most positive aspects of taking this course via the World Wide Web" referred the convenience and flexibility of the course format. "I was able to take a class that I needed for a perspective in Arts and Sciences College that conflicted with my schedule. This internet class gave me the opportunity," wrote one student. "I liked working at my own pace, and the requirements were mostly reasonable for me, as I work 2 jobs," wrote another. A second common response to this question referred to the discussion forum and the ability to interact with other students. One student wrote:

There was forced participation in class. Since you were expected to participate in discussion forum, everyone added to the discussion. In a traditional class, you could very easily go through the entire semester without actually offering your own insight. People who may be shy in a regular class can perhaps express themselves more easily.

Others noted they found it easier to interact with both students and the instructor than it would be in a face-to-face environment.

Another popular response was the opportunity to learn more about the internet and technology in general. Other responses were "access to other sources of info," "interesting, pertinent material," "instructor involvement," and "different learning tools."

Many of the responses to "Q11: What were the most negative?" were related to the Q10 answers. Those who found the discussion forum negative noted "It was



oftentimes a pain to not be able to discuss things with classmates...waiting for a response to a posting takes away from a "discussion" and "The interaction wasn't as speedy as I thought it would be". Others felt the discussion forum was not a sufficient replacement for face-to-face interaction.

The next most popular response to this question related to motivation and procrastination. "This class would not be good for students with little motivation due to the fact that it is all up to you to do your work," wrote one student. Other noted it was "easy to procrastinate" and "difficult to remember assignments."

Many of the negative comments were instructor related, primarily that not enough feedback was received from the instructor. These responses were predominantly from AFRI 40 taught in the Fall 2000 and Spring 2001 semesters. Other instructor related comments included "no notes from the teacher" and "didn't know what the teacher was looking for". Other responses said grading was too harsh, that test times should be longer, technical difficulties were experienced, and lack of response from the Friday Center.

Surveys and interviews with faculty members echoed some of the students' responses in terms of positive and negative aspects of the online courses. In general, all of the instructors who have taught online in the department reported positive experiences with successful courses in terms of final grades and student participation in the discussion forum. Of those faculty surveyed and interviewed who had not taught online, most reported positive impressions of the courses offered online by the Department, although four surveys returned had "don't know" responses to the question

“How well do you think online courses are being utilized to meet the Department’s teaching and outreach goals?”

Again course participation and interaction were primary issues for teaching staff, noted as both positive and negative aspects of online instruction. Both Dr. Nyang’oro and Dr. McMillan felt course participation was greater in the online course than in their traditional classrooms. “For students actively engaged in the course, there is more faculty/student interaction than in my traditional AFAM 40,” McMillan said. “About half are active; half tend to be minimalists.” Dr. Nyang’oro noted in his traditional AFRI 40 class that only 3 or 4 students were truly active in class discussions. One other instructor also found participation levels higher in the online course while another said participation seemed about the same in the online course compared to the traditional classroom.

In terms of negative impressions, both those who have instructed the online courses and those who have not felt that the lack of personal, face-to-face interaction was the biggest drawback to online instruction. This related specifically to many instructors’ feeling that online instruction was not appropriate for traditional students due to the department’s perceived “socialization” and “mentoring” goals in terms of teaching effectiveness. “There’s no replacement for human contact. That [the online course] it’s impersonal is the part I don’t enjoy,” explained McKinley.

While some students noted the lack of face-to-face interaction might encourage more people to participate, at least one instructor found that factor in some ways a disadvantage rather than an advantage. This instructor further explained that some online participants posted rude and inappropriate comments in the discussion forum

which was more difficult to control than in the traditional classroom. “The anonymity doesn’t exist in a live classroom,” she said. “If you say it in a live classroom, you have to live with the consequences.”

Both groups of instructors interviewed and surveyed noted the advantages of the online course in terms convenience and flexibility for meeting the needs of students who were unable to attend traditional university courses (See Appendix 16.). “Adult learners, online learning is great for them. They don’t need the motivation and character development [the traditional student requires]”, explained one instructor. Others agreed that online courses were ideal for reaching nontraditional students. “Outreach is where I think online instruction would be helpful at higher levels, in trying to attract students not on campus but interested either in basic courses or working towards a masters,” said one faculty member. Another faculty member saw online instruction as a possible method of delivering core courses for graduate students, noting that teachers in eastern North Carolina, for example, would be a primary audience for a masters degree in African and/or Afro-American Studies.

One instructor suggested that the online courses are already helping in terms of outreach by simply contributing to name recognition. “People are talking about it, asking about it,” he explained. “I’m not sure how that benefits the department in terms of educational mission, but it is definitely getting the word out.”

In addition to finding the online courses as inappropriate for traditional, on-campus students, two instructors mentioned that academically ineligible students are permitted by Continuing Studies to use online classes to try to re-establish their

eligibility. “It’s crazy,” said one instructor. “They are not self-motivated, that’s why they are ineligible to being with.”

Two instructors mentioned concern that online courses would appear to be easier than traditional courses. One noticed a large percentage of students in one of his class who were enrolled in the Business School and felt that they might be trying to avoid the amount of reading and writing required in the traditional course. “I think by word of mouth they might have heard the online class was not as demanding,” he said. Another instructor pointed out that the course participation is actually easier to monitor, however. “I can actually see “attendance” better online,” he said. “In this particular class, it’s not an issue of trying to avoid doing the work,” he added, explaining that “class participation” is a significant portion of the final grade.

Several instructors who have participated in the online courses also mentioned a concern over the increased ability to cheat, or perhaps the *perceived* increased ability to cheat. As Dr. McMillan explained, Continuing Studies provides class rolls which include home addresses to the instructors. McMillan has experienced courses with small clusters of students living in the same dorm. “Psychologically, it’s hard for me to think they are not all sitting around working together,” he said, though he also admitted that the same scenario could occur with assignments from a traditional classroom. Another instructor also mentioned concerns about the honor code in his interview. “There is no possible way to know the textbook isn’t open while students are taking the test,” he said. “So an inherent distrust of students is built in [with online instruction], though I must say none of the students seemed to have cheated,” he added.

A major disadvantage for instructors involved in online teaching is perceived to be the increased time involvement required for this teaching method. During the first offering of AFRI 40, even with only four students, Dr. Nyang'oro found the interaction with students very time-consuming. "I spent a lot of time dealing with issues, academic and not, outside issues of non-traditional students," he said. Nyang'oro noted he had not offered the course online again due to the time involved. Other senior faculty who indicated they had no immediate plans to develop online courses or to teach online also mentioned time constraints. "The sheer tediousness of the time is the biggest barrier; It is not realistic to think about looking at or responding to 80 students' work online," one senior faculty member said. One online instructor said "It's definitely teaching another class. You can't add it to someone's course load."

Similarly, several faculty said they felt they lacked the technical expertise to become involved in online instruction. In addition to the time commitment, Dr. Nyang'oro also mentioned my technical assistance as influential in his decision to teach AFRI 40 Online the first time. Another faculty member described it as his "technology intimidation." "Personally, I would find it frustrating with the learning curve," he said.

Another benefit of online instruction mentioned included the increased ability for students to be able to share resources. Dr. McMillan noted that when students referenced outside web sites in the discussion forum, other students were more likely to actually follow up and review the resource than they would be in a traditional classroom. Another instructor mentioned that teaching online helped him to explore the way he teaches in the traditional classroom.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations for Change**

The current need for higher education opportunities among adult learners is apparent in the commonly heard phrase “lifelong learning.” Older students, such as myself, who work full-time jobs and juggle family and community obligations with on-going education, need flexibility in scheduling. Continuing studies divisions and various business corporations are marketing online learning in response to that need.

The new jobs being created by our service oriented economy are requiring higher skill levels, increased flexibility and an increased ability to deal with change. ....Students will not need to travel to a distant classroom or arrange their schedules to allow them to be connected via technology with other students and the instructor. Rather, in the twenty-first century, students will access necessary or desired information from a Distance Learning system when they need it, where they need it, and in a form convenient to them (Chute, et al.)

Online instruction is being utilized by prominent universities throughout the world to reach the non-traditional student, and the Department in African and Afro-American Studies has made an impressive initial step to participate in this new innovation. While the Department Chair’s hands-on involvement in online instruction has not resumed since the initial offering of AFRI 40 Online, his support has not wavered. “Hooker was right that society has changed so much that it’s not practical for people to take time for traditional university study,” he said. Nyang’oro further explained:

The idea that university was somewhere for people to physically go and study for a time evolved over time, and online education will also evolve.... I believe that as a public university we have a responsibility and an obligation to try to meet the demands of the people of NC. If it means for people who want to attend university in a non-traditional way, then the university should provide a way for them to do it.

The initial goal of increasing outreach to nontraditional students has been overshadowed by the unintended overflow of waitlisted traditional students into the

online classes. Identifying other options for serving the traditional students and restricting the current offerings to their originally intended audience may address several of the concerns expressed by students and faculty in this study.

First, current faculty in the department need further training regarding the use of and issues surrounding online course offerings. Senior and permanent faculty are by their own admission largely unaware of the problems experienced in the Department's courses and of the broader issues prevalent in current literature regarding design and evaluation of online courses. In addition to the relative unawareness regarding online instruction, responses to the interviews and surveys have revealed a need to strategically address teaching and outreach goals as a unit, and to regularly evaluate courses in terms of instructor evaluations and course content evaluation.

As Dr. Nyang'oro pointed out, the department does not "have to be hooked on only one version of online course. Even though I'm not as tech-savvy as others, I can envision different types of electronic instruction that meet different demands, demands of traditional students on campus, traditional students off campus, and non-traditional students off-campus," he said.

In my own experience, I enrolled in a research methods course online in the Spring 2000 semester at North Carolina State University. The course covered basic information in an objective and automated manner, with on-campus midterm and final exams. I described this course to several professors in the Department of African and Afro-American Studies, and suggested many of the concerns Department instructors as well as students had expressed in this study were either not present or did not affect the success of the course.

I noted that traditionally Research Methods is a very small, interactive, graduate-level course. In the online course, one professor taught over 200 students per semester without the assistance of a T.A. All testing was objective and all grading was automated. I felt the online course was a very satisfying experience in which I learned the information needed and at the same time overcame the scheduling difficulties that had previously prevented me from taking the course. While many might prefer the more interactive, face-to-face format, I felt confident in my ability to learn the material in the more self-directed format. I noted that NCSU offers the course in the traditional format as well, and that the introductory web pages for the online course explicitly described the differences in the two courses and recommend that students seeking more instructor and peer involvement in the learning process pursue the online classes. I also pointed out that the on-campus exams limited one's ability to cheat in the course.

Reaction to the use of such a course format for the Department's introductory courses was mixed. "I don't think online courses will help with meeting enrollment needs. I think our waitlists are students looking for the traditional college experience," said one professor. Dr. McMillan also sensed that the traditional students currently enrolling in the online courses would prefer to enroll in the traditional course. He has noticed that his online courses do not start to fill up until after all of the traditional courses have closed.

Another instructor opposed the idea of an objective, basic facts course design for the introductory courses on the basis of the university's writing requirements. "While one can give knowledge of basic stuff without it, I think it's imperative to be sure in an introductory class that students can write," he said.



While such objections have merit, it is obvious that at least as a last resort, some students are turning to the current online offerings. The dependency on the discussion forum to replace the interaction found in the traditional classroom in the current online course design makes these courses inappropriate for large class sizes, however, and in the current format, the number of overflow students served from the traditional course waitlists is relatively small. As an alternative, introductory courses such as AFRI 40, AFAM 40 and AFAM 41 could be redesigned to cover a core of “basic” information standard among instructors. While many in the department deem socialization and face-to-face interaction necessary, such a curriculum of basic information could be delivered in an electronic format very distinct from the format currently being utilized to reach the nontraditional student. Without the presence of the discussion forum and writing assignments, the size of these introductory courses could be increased dramatically. With objective exams and automated grading, an instructor of an online course for traditional students could reach a much larger audience, thus freeing scarce teaching resources for smaller upper-level courses, or for supervising recitations for the larger introductory course where the writing and socialization aspects of education could be addressed.

Regardless of whether the Department chooses to utilize the online classroom to supplement its offerings to the traditional student, the current online courses should be restricted to their intended audience, the non-traditional student. Department leaders should collaborate with the Division of Continuing Studies to re-evaluate registration policies. Additional research including more extensive surveys of both traditional and

nontraditional students should be conducted to further explore the possibility of utilizing online courses to fulfill the department's teaching and outreach missions.

“Quality On the Line: Benchmarks for Success in Internet-Based Distance Education” identified three benchmarks in the area of Evaluation and Assessment which were determined to be “essential or imperative to ensure quality in Internet-based distance education.” (p. 23). Those benchmarks were:

- The program's educational effectiveness and teaching/learning process is assessed through an evaluation process that uses several methods and applies specific standards
- Data on enrollment, costs, and successful/innovative uses of technology are used to evaluate program effectiveness
- Intended learning outcomes are reviewed regularly to ensure clarity, utility, and appropriateness (p. 26)

While this study found that the department does utilize student course evaluations and maintains enrollment data in relation to online instruction, each of these benchmarks need strengthening with the program's evaluation methods. Evaluation of the success of such efforts is an ongoing process, especially as online instruction continues to be an innovative and somewhat controversial endeavor, and the department needs to re-evaluate its approach to strategic planning and program evaluation.

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**Appendix 1: Percentage of Students in Carolina Courses Online Who Submitted Course Evaluations**

Course, Semester	Total Number of Students Taught	Total Number of Course Evaluations Returned	Percentage
AFAM 40, Spring 2000	27	9	33
AFRI 40, Spring 2000	27	9	33
AFAM 40, Fall 2000	20	14	70
AFRI 40, Fall 2000	22	11	50
AFAM 40, Spring 2001	31	10	32
AFRI 40, Spring 2001	23	11	48
AFAM 40, Summer 2001	18	8	44

**Appendix 2: Carolina Course Online Student Evaluation Form**

The Friday Center for Continuing Education would very much appreciate your help in evaluating this method of instruction. Your perspectives and comments will be valuable to us as we seek to strengthen courses offered online in the future. Your evaluation is important to us whether or not you completed the course. If you took more than one course this semester, please submit a separate evaluation for each course. Thank you for participating in this program and for completing this brief questionnaire.

Course in which you were enrolled:

Please rate your experience with the following aspects of the course, using a scale from very negative to very positive. Your additional comments are welcome. Once you have completed the evaluation, click on "submit" at the bottom of the page. Please submit your responses as soon as possible.

---

**Q 1 : Your use of the computer and the World Wide Web (access, convenience, technical considerations):**

- very negative
- somewhat negative
- neutral
- somewhat positive
- very positive

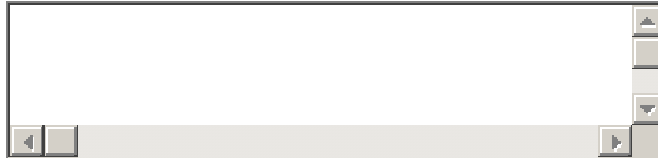
**Comments:**

---

**Q 2 : Administration of the course (including information you received, the registration process, and assistance from The Friday Center for Continuing Education):**

- very negative
- somewhat negative

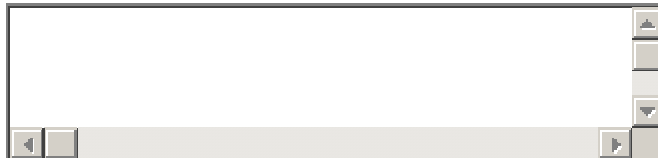
- neutral
- somewhat positive
- very positive

**Comments:**

---

**Q 3 : Use of the World Wide Web as a means of presenting the content of this course:**

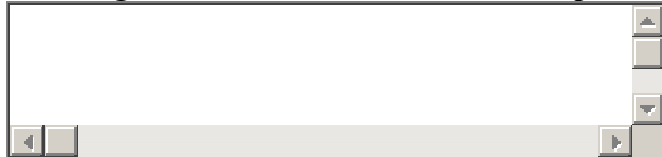
- very negative
- somewhat negative
- neutral
- somewhat positive
- very positive

**Comments:**

---

**Q 4 : Helpfulness of instructional tools and assessment methods (such as readings, discussion forums, projects, tests):**

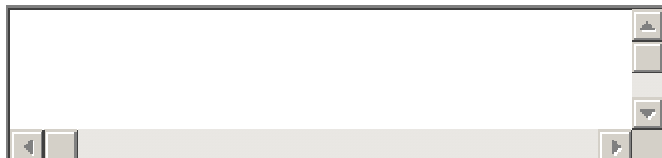
- very negative
- somewhat negative
- neutral
- somewhat positive
- very positive

**How might these tools and methods be improved?**An empty text input field with a light gray background and a thin black border. It features a vertical scrollbar on the right side and a horizontal scrollbar at the bottom, both with standard arrow and track icons.

---

**Q 5 : Quality of the instruction you received:**

- very negative
- somewhat negative
- neutral
- somewhat positive
- very positive

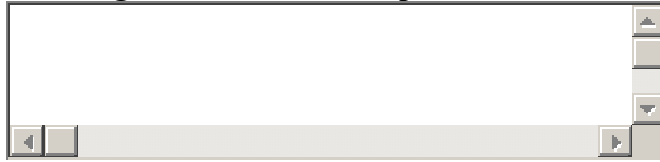
**Comments:**An empty text input field with a light gray background and a thin black border. It features a vertical scrollbar on the right side and a horizontal scrollbar at the bottom, both with standard arrow and track icons.

---

**Q 6 : Frequency and meaningfulness of communications with your instructor, such as responses to your questions about course materials or procedural matters:**

- very negative
- somewhat negative
- neutral
- somewhat positive
- very positive

**How might interaction be improved?**

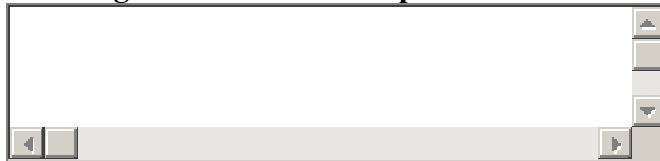


---

**Q 7 : Frequency and meaningfulness of interactions with other students in the course (if applicable):**

- very negative
- somewhat negative
- neutral
- somewhat positive
- very positive

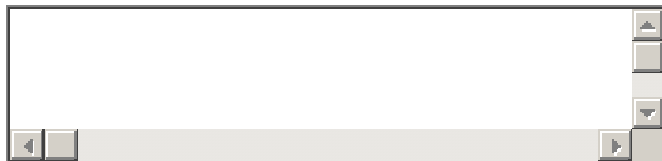
**How might interaction be improved?**



---

**Q 8 : Value of links to Internet resources:**

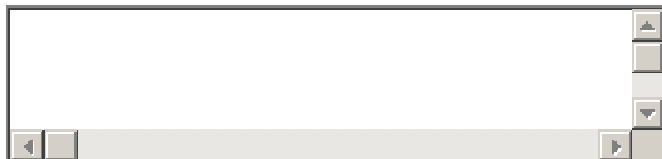
- very negative
- somewhat negative
- neutral
- somewhat positive
- very positive

**Comments:**

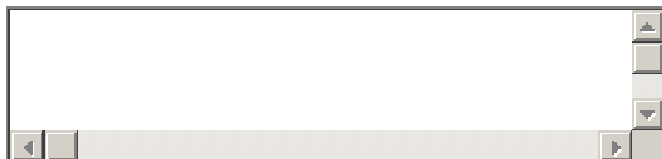
---

**Q 9 : Extent to which the course met your expectations:**

- very negative
- somewhat negative
- neutral
- somewhat positive
- very positive

**Comments:**

---

**Q 10 : What were the most positive aspects of taking this course via the World Wide Web?**

---

**Q 11 : What were the most negative?**

---

**Q 12 : On the whole, do you feel that instruction via the World Wide Web is a viable alternative to traditional classroom instruction? Why or why not?**

---

**Q 13 : What suggestions would you make for strengthening instruction via the Web in the future?**

---

Submit

**Appendix 3: Sample Lesson Pages from Original AFRI 40 Online Course  
AFRI 40 Online**

## **Lesson 3: January 20-24**

### ***Reconstructing Africa's Past: Methodology***

#### **Lesson Objectives**

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

- explain the interdisciplinary approach to studying Africa;
- describe the outline of African prehistory;
- discuss the disadvantages of oral tradition as a historical source.

#### **Required Reading**

- Martin and O'Meara, Chapter 3, pages 50-72; Chapter 4, pages 73-96
- Gordon and Gordon, Chapter 3, pages 23-52

#### **Assignment**

Complete the required reading and participate in the discussion forum.

#### **Discussion Forum Topic**

Studying Africa poses special methodological problems for the researcher. Discuss the problems and discuss the ways researchers have responded to such challenges. Use specific examples where appropriate.

[Go to Lesson 4](#)

[Return to AFRI 40 Course Outline](#)

[Return to AFRI 40 Home Page](#)

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*Last updated: Nov. 5, 1996*

*Created by: Dineane Buttram. Send comments to [buttn@ruby.ils.unc.edu](mailto:buttn@ruby.ils.unc.edu)*



## Appendix 4: Sample Lesson Pages from Current AFRI 40 Online Course

### *AFRI 40: Introduction to African Civilization*

#### Lesson 3: Reconstructing Africa's Past--a Methodology

September 3-9

Reminder: Take your Map Quiz on Sep 10-11.

<a href="#">Course Home Page</a>	<a href="#">Discussion Forum</a>	<a href="#">Instructor E-mail</a>
<a href="#">Lesson Objectives</a>	<a href="#">Required Reading</a>	<a href="#">Discussion Forum Assignment</a>
<a href="#">Map Quiz Information</a>		

### Lesson Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you should be able to:

explain the interdisciplinary approach to studying Africa  
 describe the outline of African prehistory  
 discuss the disadvantages of oral tradition as a historical source.

[\[top of page\]](#)

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### Required Reading

Martin and O'Meara, Chapter 3, pages 50-72; Chapter 4, pages 73-96  
 Gordon and Gordon, Chapter 3, pages 23-52

[\[top of page\]](#)

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### Discussion Forum Assignment

Studying Africa poses special methodological problems for the researcher. Discuss

the problems and discuss the ways researchers have responded to such challenges. Use specific examples where appropriate. Why have many people seen Africa as a Dark Continent in terms of history? How would you argue against this idea?

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## Map Quiz Information

Lesson 2 in many ways provided the reference points for the remaining lessons in this course. In your Martin and O'Meara text, Michael L. McNulty states, "[t]he ability to accurately identify and locate such a large number of countries is not particularly important in itself. However, the inability to do so often reflects a more profound ignorance of the important events and processes affecting contemporary Africa." When this course is offered in the traditional classroom, a "map quiz" is usually included within the first few weeks of instruction. The names and locations of countries, capitals, and major physical geographical features of the continent are basic facts critical to further discussion of Africa. Review the maps included in the readings for Lesson 2, and know the map covered in your [Map Quiz study guide](#). Your final exam will include a section similar to the map exercise in this lesson.

The map quiz will be available between noon **September 10** and noon **September 11 (these dates have been corrected)**. You must take the quiz during this time period. **You will be able to access the quiz by clicking on MAP QUIZ here (or on the Course Schedule).**

**Please note:** The quiz should take you approximately 30 minutes to complete. You should only log on to take the quiz once. Be sure you have uninterrupted time scheduled to complete the quiz. Also, remember this is a closed-book quiz, and you are participating under the honor code. If you have technical difficulties or are logged off by accident or prematurely, please e-mail the instructor.

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## Lesson 4

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Last modified:

Send comments and questions to [pubpro@unc.edu](mailto:pubpro@unc.edu)

**Appendix 5: Cover Letter and Survey Distributed to AFRI/AFAM Faculty and Staff**



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA

AT

CHAPEL HILL

School of Information and Library Science  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
CB# 3360, 212 Manning Hall  
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27599-3360

Student Research Project

Dear Faculty Member:

I am conducting a study to evaluate the use of online courses in the Department of African and Afro-American Studies at UNC-CH. This research is primarily for my thesis to complete my masters degree in Information Science at UNC-CH this fall. As an evaluation study, the primary goal of this study is to determine if the Department is effectively utilizing online instruction to meet its program goals and objectives. The results of this study will be made available to the department.

Below is a brief questionnaire that asks a variety of questions about your understanding of the Department's objectives and goals, specifically regarding teaching effectiveness and outreach. The purpose of this survey is to explore the various feelings and attitudes among faculty and teaching staff in the Department of African and Afro-American Studies regarding the use of online courses in the Department. The Department has offered AFRI 40 since the Spring of 1997 and added AFAM 40 in Fall 1997 through the UNC-CH Continuing Studies program, Carolina Courses Online. Originally these courses were developed to increase the Department's community outreach efforts but increasing numbers of traditional students have enrolled in the courses in the last several years. Responses to this survey will help guide the development of follow-up questions for more in-depth interviews with members of the faculty and staff. You will be invited to participate in an interview with the researcher in a separate communication.

I am asking you to look over the questionnaire and, if you choose to do so, complete the questionnaire and send it back to me. Your name will not be included in the analysis of responses to this survey. If you choose to reply by email, your responses will be copied to a plain text file, excluding your email address and any identifying

information, and your email will be immediately deleted. If you prefer, you may reply by fax to 919-570-5208. You do not need to include your name or any other identifying information if you reply by fax.

If you have any questions about the study, you may contact my faculty advisor (Dr. Paul Solomon at 962 8068), or me. In addition, you may contact the Chair of the UNC-CH Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board if you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant:

Dr. Barbara Davis Goldman  
CB# 4100, 201 Bynum Hall  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
Chapel Hill, NC 27599-4100  
(919) 962-7761  
email: aa-irb@unc.edu

I hope you will take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire and to return it to me as soon as possible. Your assistance in this project is greatly appreciated.

Dineane Buttram

What is your title in the Department (i.e, Professor, Assistant Professor, teaching assistant, etc.)

How long have you worked in the Department?

What introductory level courses do you teach/have you taught?

What courses, if any, have you taught using the online format through Carolina Course Online for the Department?

Please describe any other experience you have with the online classroom and/or other electronic learning environments.

Do you personally plan to develop or offer a course through online instruction, either through Carolina Courses Online or elsewhere, in the next year? In the next five years? If so please briefly describe the course(s) you plan to offer.

Please consider this excerpt from the Department's mission statement, while responding to the following questions.

...African and Afro American Studies seeks to extend knowledge about Africans and African Americans to the broader community...Our ultimate mission is to produce scholars/citizens who are equipped to critically, actively and effectively engage the issues confronting Africa and African America.

How well do you think online courses are being utilized to meet the Department's teaching and outreach goals?

What problems or challenges do you see related to the use of online courses by the Department?

Please describe the audience or audiences that you feel would most benefit from the use of online course instruction.

**Appendix 6: Letter of Invitation and Interview Guide Distributed to AFRI/AFAM  
Faculty and Staff**

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
AT  
CHAPEL HILL

School of Information and Library Science  
The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
CB# 3360, 212 Manning Hall  
Chapel Hill, N.C. 27599-3360

Student Research Project

Dineane Buttram  
Graduate Student  
INLS, UNC-CH  
1305 Ecola Valley Ct  
Wake Forest, NC 27587  
(919) 562 7546  
Email:  
[ndineane@aol.com](mailto:ndineane@aol.com)

Dear Faculty Member,

I am conducting a study to evaluate the use of online courses in the Department of African and Afro-American Studies at UNC-CH. This research is for my thesis to complete my masters degree in Information Science at UNC-CH this fall. As an evaluation study, the primary goal of this study is to determine if the Department is effectively utilizing online instruction to meet its program goals and objectives. The results of this study will be made available to the department.

I am writing to invite you to participate in an interview to discuss your understanding of the Department's objectives and goals, specifically regarding teaching effectiveness and outreach, and your experience and opinions regarding the Department's current online course offerings. The interview will last approximately 30 minutes and will follow up in more detail the survey questions you received for this study in a separate correspondence. If you wish, your responses in this interview will be confidential. Your responses will be recorded with a code number and after the study is finished the key that shows which code number goes with your name will be destroyed.

If you agree to participate in this study, please let me know as soon as possible via email or telephone (see below) so that we can schedule a time that is good for both of us. At the interview, I will ask that you sign a copy of this letter to indicate your consent—you should keep this copy for your records. In the meantime, please feel free

to contact me with any questions or concerns you have regarding the study and/or your participation.

**Summary:**

I understand this is a research study to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of online instruction in the Department of African and Afro-American Studies at UNC-CH. I agree to participate in an interview conducted by the researcher, Dineane Buttram, scheduled at our earliest mutual convenience.

*Please initial one of the following:*

\_\_\_\_ I request that my participation remain anonymous. I understand how the researcher intends to protect my privacy using a code number and key.

**Or**

\_\_\_\_ I do not request that my participation in this study remain anonymous. However, I reserve the right to change this request at anytime during the interview and understand that the researcher will not use my name in conjunction with my responses at my request.

I have had the chance to ask any questions I have about this study, and they have been answered for me. I have read the information in this consent form, and I agree to be in the study.

---

(Signature of Participant)

(date

)

You may contact the UNC-CH Academic Affairs Institutional Review Board at the following address or telephone number at any time during this study if you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant.

Dr. Barbara Davis Goldman  
 CB# 4100, 201 Bynum Hall  
 The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
 Chapel Hill, NC 27599-4100  
 (919) 962-7761  
 email: aa-irb@unc.edu

Thank you,

Dineane Buttram  
 Graduate Student  
 INLS, UNC-CH

## Interview Guide

(I'll start with by explaining my research objectives)

1. Background of Participant  
 name, job title, courses taught in the Department, other professional experience
2. Feelings regarding Departments goals/objectives  
 What successes do you see the department achieving in terms of teaching effectiveness and general community outreach?  
 What do you think are the Departments greatest challenges?  
 Describe the specific activities you have participated in to improve teaching effectiveness and outreach in the department
3. Experience/feelings regarding Online Instruction  
 What courses, if any, have you taught using the online format through Carolina Course Online for the Department?  
 Please describe any other experience you have with the online classroom and/or other electronic learning environments.  
 Do you personally plan to develop or offer a course through online instruction, either through Carolina Courses Online or elsewhere, in the next year?  
 In the next five years? If so please briefly describe the course(s) you plan to offer.  
 What is your general impression of the effectiveness of online instruction for traditional university level course material?  
 What are your greatest concerns regarding the use of online instruction in general?  
 What reservations, if any, do you have regarding your own participation in online instruction?
4. Effectiveness of AFRI/AFAM efforts in Online Instruction  
 If you have taught online courses,  
 Did you enjoy it? What were the advantages/disadvantages between online instruction and traditional classroom instruction? How did student performance compare between the two?  
 Do you want to continue to use this format for instruction in the future?  
 What other courses do you want to offer?  
 If you have not taught online course,  
 do you plan to in the future? Why or why not? What is your impression of the effectiveness of the courses that have been offered thus far? What kinds of feedback have you had, if any, from other instructors and/or students regarding the courses offered thus far?



How do you feel about the use of online instruction as a tool for increasing the number of traditional students taught by the department? As a tool for increasing community outreach?

What other benefits do you see for the Department from the use of online instruction?

**Appendix 7: Average Enrollment by Section in AFRI 40 and AFAM 40  
Online Fall 1997 through Summer 2001**

<b>Time Period</b>	<b>Course</b>	<b>Section</b>	<b>Average Number of Students</b>
Fall 1997 - Spring 1999	AFRI 40	990	5.6
	AFRI 40	991	3.6
Fall 1999 - Spring 2001	AFRI 40	990	20.5
	AFRI 40	991	4.0
Fall 1999 -Summer 2001	AFAM 40	990	18.2
	AFAM 40	991	10.0

Section 990 is available to traditional students, enrolled in a degree-seeking program. Section 991 is available to non-traditional students, not currently enrolled in a degree-seeking program

**Appendix 8: Course Requirements for Original AFRI 40 Online (Spring 1997) AFRI 40 Online**

## Overview

African Studies 40, an introduction to the African continent, is intended to fulfill two primary purposes: to acquaint you with the African environment, its peoples, their culture, past, and contemporary society; and to develop an appreciation for African civilization--a civilization that has made a major contribution to American society.

### Required Texts

Three main texts are required for this course:

- *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, 2nd edition, edited by April A. Gordon and Donald L. Gordon
- *Africa*, 3rd edition, edited by Phyllis M. Martin and Patrick O'Meara
- *A Grain of Wheat* by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1967

### Course Requirements

- Readings/Discussion Forum (30 percent of final grade)
- Map Quiz (10 percent of final grade)
- Midterm Exam (20 percent of final grade)
- Research Paper (20 percent of final grade)
- Final Exam (20 percent of final grade)

### How to Enroll

To enroll in AFRI 40, go to the [Carolina Courses Online](#) general information page and follow the instructions.

**Appendix 9: Course Overview and Requirements for Current AFRI 40  
Online Fall 2001**

## ***AFRI 40: Introduction to African Civilization***

<a href="#">Course Home Page</a>	<a href="#">Discussion Forum</a>	<a href="#">Instructor E-mail</a>
<a href="#">Course Overview</a>	<a href="#">Required Texts</a>	<a href="#">Supplemental Material</a>
<a href="#">Course Requirements</a>	<a href="#">Course Schedule</a>	<a href="#">Online Library Resources</a>

### **Course Overview**

African Studies 40, an introduction to the African continent, is intended to fulfill two primary purposes: to acquaint you with the African continent, its peoples, cultures, and past, and contemporary societies; and to develop an appreciation for African civilizations--civilizations that have made a major contribution to American society.

The course is organized around thematic and topical units arranged in four sections. The introductory material in Section 1 discusses the perspectives used in the study of Africa and examines the physical layout of the continent. Section 2, Precolonial Africa, includes lessons on Africa's history, African languages, African social organization and economic life, and religion in Africa. Section 3 covers imperialism and colonial rule in Africa and concludes with decolonization and nationalism. Section 4 examines political, economic, and environmental issues in Africa since independence.

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### **Required Texts**

Three main texts are required for this course:

- *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, 2nd edition, edited by April A. Gordon and Donald L. Gordon (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 1996)
- *Africa*, 3rd edition, edited by Phyllis M. Martin and Patrick O'Meara (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995)
- *A Grain of Wheat* by Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (Heinemann, 1967)

The texts by Martin and O'Meara and Gordon and Gordon are standard texts for African studies. Both are edited collections written by leading scholars in African studies and offer multidisciplinary perspectives critical to the study of Africa. The novel, *A Grain of Wheat*, first copyrighted in 1967, discusses the Mau Mau conflict in Kenya in 1950s and is assigned here to provide an alternative way to examine issues of colonization and decolonization covered in this course.

Texts are available from the Higher Grounds bookstore at The Friday Center. You can order the [books online](#), or you can print out the [book order form](#) to fax or mail with payment for texts as indicated on the form.

In addition, you will find links to various Internet resources contained within the lessons.

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## Supplemental Material

In addition to the primary texts for this course, I encourage you to use various supplemental materials. Several films are referenced in the lessons, as are various articles and readings outside your primary texts. A [Supplemental Material Guide](#) is included in the course. All supplemental material is optional.

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## Course Requirements

### Readings/Discussion Forum/Short Essays (30 percent of final grade)

Each lesson has a start date and a finish date, spanning one week. You should complete your assigned readings for each lesson prior to the start date for that lesson. The discussion forum opens for each topic on the start date, and each lesson includes a few suggestions or opening questions for discussion. Once you have completed your assigned reading and are ready to enter the discussion forum, click on the "Discussion Forum" link at the top of any of the lesson pages. The discussion forum is simple to use. Click on "Post Message" to contribute to the discussion, or after reading messages already posted, click on "Post Follow-up." Please include the lesson number to which you are responding in the subject line of your messages. If you post follow-up messages rather than new messages, the subject line will be quoted from the message you are responding to. You may, however, edit the subject

line if you prefer.

Contributions to the discussion forum are not expected to be formally written documents, and as long as readers can understand your contributions, you will not be held accountable for typos! Your participation in the discussion forum is meant to simulate class participation in a traditional classroom. The quantity of messages you contribute will be less important than the quality, but everyone should contribute on a regular basis. If you have any questions regarding the use of the forum, do not hesitate to e-mail your instructor. Your participation in the forum will account for a large portion of your final grade!

There will be four short (250-word) essays that you will need to complete. These should be created using your word processing system (preferably Microsoft Word) and sent as an attachment to your discussion forum posting.

### **Map Quiz** (10 percent of final grade)

At the end of Lesson 3, you will be required to take a map quiz. This quiz will be administered online and will be governed by the honor code. This is a CLOSED BOOK quiz. You should complete the quiz in about 30 minutes. It is important to schedule uninterrupted time before you begin. If you have technical difficulties or if you are logged off by accident or prematurely, please e-mail the instructor. The [Map Quiz Study Guide](#) will help you review for the quiz.

### **Midterm Exam** (20 percent of final grade)

Your midterm exam will consist of ten identification terms and an essay. The midterm is a closed-book exam, and the honor code applies. You must e-mail the answers to your instructor by e-mail. A [Midterm Exam Study Guide](#) is included in this course.

### **Research Paper** (20 percent of final grade)

You must complete a 2,000-word paper on a country of your choice to be submitted by e-mail directly to the instructor (not through the discussion forum). See [Research Paper Guidelines](#) for more information.

### **Final Exam** (20 percent of final grade)

Like the midterm exam, your final exam will consist of identification and essay sections. The exam will be cumulative, with fifteen to twenty identification terms and two essays. The final is a closed-book exam, and the honor code applies. A [Final Exam Study Guide](#) is included in the course.

## Appendix 10: Course Requirements for Current AFAM 40 Online Fall 2001

### *AFAM 40: The Black Experience*

<a href="#">Course Home Page</a>	<a href="#">Discussion Forum</a>	<a href="#">Instructor's E-mail</a>
<a href="#">Course Overview</a>	<a href="#">Required Texts</a>	<a href="#">Supplemental Materials and Web Sites</a>
<a href="#">Course Requirements</a>	<a href="#">Course Schedule</a>	<a href="#">Honor Code</a>

### Course Overview

Welcome to AFAM 40, The Black Experience. The two primary objectives of this course are to provide:

- a clear understanding of the origins of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the subsequent development of African-American political thought, social and economic experience, and cultural expression.
- the opportunity to develop the critical-thinking skills necessary to understand our American past.

Students in the course are expected to draw upon material presented in the class in discussing issues of current and historical interest.

The course is designed to follow a historical chronology of events and trends experienced by Africans and African Americans during 1441-1861. During this period, slavery was a major social and cultural force throughout the New World, and thus it is the focus of this course. We will also discuss the significance of the category of "freeness" in relation to "Africaness." One of the most important issues we will explore is how slavery became associated with "blackness" in the Americas and how current definitions of race are still tied to this aspect of "western" history. Note well the use of quotation marks above--all of the terms in quotes are highly laden with multiple meanings, which we will discuss throughout the course. To provide one example, the category of "free" black in the United States had many meanings throughout American history, but it rarely, if ever, connoted the same type of "freedom" that was enjoyed by

many European Americans.

Many of the issues we will discuss are controversial both in terms of history and politics; please feel free to share your opinions in an open and nonconfrontational manner.

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## Required Texts

Three texts are required for this course:

- *The Slave Community*, 1979, revised and enlarged edition, by John Blassingame

The Blassingame book is a classic study of the cultures developed by enslaved people in Anglo-North America. He develops ideas of African survivals and New World innovations and provides a wealth of case material for you to analyze.

- *The African-American Odyssey* (Volume 1), 2000, by Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold

The Hine et al. text provides a concise historical overview of Africans and black Americans in America from 1619-1877. The chapter headings in this book provide an excellent historical synopsis of critical events in African-American history, and the review questions in each chapter will help you prepare for your exams.

- *The Classic Slave Narratives*, 1987, edited by Henry Louis Gates

The Gates work is a collection of four narratives written by enslaved people, thus providing an "insiders" perspective to the visceral experience of slavery. You will be required to read and respond to three of the narratives, but it would be valuable for you to read all four.

**You can order these texts from the Higher Grounds bookstore at The Friday Center either [online](#) or by using the [book order form](#).**

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## Supplemental Materials and Web Sites

There are thousands of excellent articles and books about the New World Black experience and a growing number of Web sites with links to primary source material as well as analyses. One site I would strongly recommend viewing is the *Africans in America* Web site from the PBS documentary of the same name. (If it is available in your area, it would be useful to watch the four-part series as well.) If there is a particular topic that fascinates you about Black American history, please contact me for further sources.

Here are some useful African-American history Web resources. This is just a start!

- [The African-American Odyssey](#) (Vol. 1), 2000, by Hine, Hine, and Harrold. This is a site corresponding to your textbook, with quizzes and links designed to supplement each chapter.
- The American Anthropological Association has formulated a [statement on race](#) that discusses the controversial history and (mis) use of the term.
- The full text (and analyses) of the [Declaration of Independence](#). Were all men really created equal in 1776?
- The full text (and various analyses) of the [Constitution of the United States](#). A close reading will let you see the debate about slavery (and, more generally, race) that is encoded in the three-fifths compromise. Also look at the [Bill of Rights](#) and [Amendments 11-27](#), which include the 13th Amendment that actually ended legal slavery in the United States (Amendments 14 and 15 are relevant to this course as well).
- The Library of Congress has mounted an excellent site on the [Amistad](#) case with many useful primary sources.
- An online, full-text version of [Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl](#) with many fascinating resources and images.
- An online, full-text site with many of the [works of Frederick Douglass](#).
- Yet more [slave narratives](#) have been collected by the WPA and archived by the University of Virginia.
- The text of the [Dred Scott v. Sanford](#) decision issued by the Supreme Court in 1857.
- A [speech by Abraham Lincoln](#) on the Dred Scott decision.
- The full text (and an analysis) of the [Emancipation Proclamation](#). This is useful when considering what really ended slavery in the United States.
- An excellent documentary overview of African-American life can be found at [African American Odyssey](#).
- A detailed analysis of the slave experience in the United States can be found in the [Africans in America](#) site.

## Online Library Resources

Students enrolled in Carolina Courses Online can access online library resources from the UNC Library System by linking to [Library Services for Distance Education Students](#). This site includes information on using general online reference works as well as accessing e-reserves.

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## Course Requirements

### Readings/Discussion Forum (20% of final grade)

It is critically important that you complete the readings **before** the start of the lesson. The online discussion forum allows you to work at your own pace (within reason) and at the hours you choose; however, it also means that there is no one watching over you, so you must take responsibility for completing all work by the time it is due. The readings are at the center of the course, and the discussion forum is the way for you to share your ideas about these readings with your classmates and your instructor. You will only achieve the full experience of this course by actively participating in the forum.

To get full credit for the discussion forum part of the course, you must specifically address one of the issues presented for discussion, and you must accomplish this task in a timely fashion--in the week it is assigned. It is not helpful to respond to topics that are weeks old, so late postings will not be accepted. I expect you to interact with your fellow students; respond to at least one classmate's posting every week--read their postings, respond to them, and get a dialogue going. Specifically, each week you should:

1. post a response to a discussion question by Wednesday
2. respond to a classmate's posting by Friday
3. follow up on a thread by Monday.

In other words, to be successful in this part of the course, you must make three different types of responses in the discussion forum each week. The discussion forum is one of the most exciting things about taking a Web-based course, so use it to its fullest potential.

Your discussion forum postings will not be graded based on spelling and grammar (within reason), so feel free to write informally and often. Remember, however, that these postings will be read by everyone in the

class, so please keep them clean and respectful.

**Midterm exam** (25% of final grade)

You are bound by UNC's [Honor Code](#) when taking the exam. This is an open-book exam--notes, books, and Web sites are allowed; however, you may **not** consult with others during the exam. All work generated for the exam must be your own. The format of the exam will be four short-answer (identification) questions and two essay questions. The [Midterm Exam Study Guide](#) will help you study for the exam.

- The instructor will e-mail the midterm exam to you as a Word attachment.
- Please schedule your time well; you will have **two hours** to take the exam from the time you first open the e-mail message.
- E-mail your answers to your instructor as a Word attachment.
- Make sure you are able to open and attach Word documents--if not, [e-mail your instructor](#).

**Slave narrative essays** (30% of final grade)

You must write three 500-word essays (approximately two pages each) discussing three of the assigned slave narratives from the Gates textbook. The [Slave Narrative Essays](#) page provides the instructions for writing this paper. Remember that the [Honor Code](#) applies to this assignment; thus the work must be your own and proper citations are required. Buying and selling papers is a violation of the Honor Code.

**Final exam** (25% of final grade)

The format and requirements for the final exam are the same as for the midterm. The exam will e-mailed to you. E-mail your answers to your instructor as a Word attachment within **two hours** of the time you first open the e-mail message. The [Final Exam Study Guide](#) will help you study for the exam.

## Appendix 11: Course Overview and Requirements for Previous AFAM 40 Online (Spring 2000)

### *AFAM 40: The Black Experience*

<a href="#">Course Home Page</a>	<a href="#">Discussion Forum</a>	<a href="#">Instructor's E-mail</a>
<a href="#">Course Overview</a>	<a href="#">Required Texts</a>	<a href="#">Supplemental Materials and Web Sites</a>
<a href="#">Course Requirements</a>	<a href="#">Schedule</a>	<a href="#">Honor Code</a>

## Course Overview

Welcome to AFAM 40, The Black Experience. This course has two primary objectives:

- to provide a clear understanding of the origins of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and the impact of this trade on Africa, Europe, and (Native) America
- to apply this understanding to contemporary American society to examine the roots of our cultural diversity.

Students in the course are expected to draw upon material presented in the class in discussing issues of current and historical interest.

The course is divided into four sections:

- **Section 1: Background to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade** explores the cultures of Africa, Europe, and the Americas prior to the trans-Atlantic slave trade and how they came to be linked through economics, politics, and military action.
- **Section 2: The Origins and Development of American Slavery, 1619-1820**, explores the history of race in the Anglo-American colonies, from Jamestown to the brink of the Civil War.
- **Section 3: African-American Cultures** discusses the cultures that were created in response to conditions of slavery and freedom in the United States.
- **Section 4: The End of Slavery** examines the factors that brought legal slavery to an end in the United States and the legacies of

these systems on our societies.

In the time period 1441-1887, slavery was a major social and cultural force throughout the New World, and thus it is the focus of this course. We will also discuss the significance of the category of "freeness" in relation to "Africaness." One of the most important issues we will explore is how slavery became associated with "blackness" in the Americas and how current definitions of race are still tied to this aspect of "western" history. Note well the use of quotation marks above--all of the terms in quotes are highly laden with multiple meanings, which we will discuss throughout the course. To provide one example, the category of "free" black in the United States had many meanings throughout American history, but it rarely, if ever, connoted the same type of "freedom" that was enjoyed by many European Americans.

Many of the issues we will discuss are controversial both in terms of history and politics; please feel free to share your opinions in an open and nonconfrontational manner.

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## Required Texts

Three texts are required for this course:

- *The Slave Community*, 1979, revised and enlarged edition, by John Blassingame

The Blassingame book is the classic study of the cultures developed by enslaved people in Anglo-North America. He develops ideas of African survivals and New World innovations and provides a wealth of case material for you to analyze.

- *The African-American Odyssey* (Volume 1), 2000, by Darlene Clark Hine, William C. Hine, and Stanley Harrold

The Hine et al. book provides a concise historical overview of Africans and black Americans in America from 1619-1877. The chapter headings in this book provide an excellent historical synopsis of critical events in African-American history, and the review questions in each chapter will help you prepare for your

exams.

- *The Classic Slave Narratives*, 1987, edited by Henry Louis Gates

The Gates work is a collection of four narratives written by enslaved people, thus providing an "insiders" perspective to the visceral experience of slavery. You will be required to read and respond to two of the narratives, but it would be valuable for you to read all four.

**You can order these texts from the Higher Grounds bookstore at The Friday Center either [online](#) or by using the [book order form](#).**

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## Supplemental Materials and Web Sites

There are thousands of excellent articles and books about the New World Black experience and a growing number of Web sites with links to primary source material as well as analyses. One site I would strongly recommend viewing is *The Africans in America* Web site from the PBS documentary of the same name. (If it is available in your area, it would be useful to watch the four-part series as well.) If there is a particular topic that fascinates you about Black American history, please contact me for further sources.

Here are some useful African-American history Web resources. This is just a start!

- The American Anthropological Association has formulated a [policy on race](#) that discusses the controversial history and (mis) use of the term.
- The full text (and analyses) of the [Declaration of Independence](#). Were all men really created equal in 1776?
- The full text (and various analyses) of the [Constitution of the United States](#). A close reading will let you see the debate about slavery (and, more generally, race) that is encoded in the three-fifths compromise. Also look at the [Bill of Rights](#) and [Amendments 11-27](#), which include the 13th Amendment that actually ended legal slavery in the United States (Amendments 14 and 15 are relevant to this course as well).

- The Library of Congress has mounted an excellent site on the [Amistad](#) case with many useful primary sources.
- An online, full-text version of [Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl](#) with many fascinating resources and images.
- An online, full-text site with many of the [works of Frederick Douglass](#).
- Yet more [slave narratives](#) have been collected by the WPA and archived by the University of Virginia.
- The text of the [Dred Scott v. Sanford](#) decision issued by the Supreme Court in 1857.
- A [speech by Abraham Lincoln](#) on the Dred Scott decision.
- The full text (and an analysis) of the [Emancipation Proclamation](#). This is useful when considering what really ended slavery in the United States.
- An excellent documentary overview of African-American life can be found at [African American Odyssey](#).
- A detailed analysis of the slave experience in the United States can be found in the [Africans in America](#) site.

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## Course Requirements

### Readings/Discussion Forum (20% of final grade)

It is critically important that you complete the readings **before** the start of the lesson. The online Discussion Forum allows you to work at your own pace (within reason) and at the hours you choose; however, it also means that there is no one watching over you, so you must take responsibility for completing all work by the time it is due. Note that the reading assignments become heavier near the end of the semester--use your Break to good advantage. The readings are at the center of the course, and the Discussion Forum is the way for you to share your ideas about these readings with your classmates and your instructor. You will only achieve the full experience of this course by actively participating in the Forum. To get full credit for the Forum part of the course, you must specifically address the issues presented for discussion, and you must accomplish this task in a timely fashion--in the week it is assigned. It is not helpful to respond to topics that are weeks old, so late postings will not be accepted. I expect you to interact with your fellow students; respond to **at least one** classmate's posting every week. Read their postings, respond to them, and get a dialogue

going. The Discussion Forum is one of the most exciting things about taking a Web-based course, so use it to its fullest potential.

Your Discussion Forum postings will not be graded based on spelling and grammar (within reason), so feel free to write informally and often. Remember, however, that these postings will be read by everyone in the class, so please keep them clean and respectful.

**Short essays** (10% of final grade)

From time to time a short (200-word) essay topic will be e-mailed to you. There will be three of these and you must complete two of them. The essay questions will ask you to respond critically to some point in the readings and will be due one week from the time you receive it. An example of a possible essay topic is: Why has Africa often been referred to as a "Dark Continent"? How would you respond to this designation?

**Midterm exam** (25% of final grade)

You are bound by UNC's [Honor Code](#) when taking the exam: No notes, books, or Web sites are allowed. You may not consult with others about the content of the exam either before or during the exam. The format of the exam will be six short-answer (identification) questions and two essay questions. The [Midterm Exam Study Guide](#) will help you study for the exam.

- The instructor will e-mail the midterm exam to you as a Word attachment by **noon February 27**.
- Please schedule your time well; you will have **90 minutes** to take the exam from the time you first open the e-mail message.
- E-mail your answers to your instructor as a Word attachment.
- All answers are **due by noon February 28**.
- Make sure you are able to open and attach Word documents--if not, [e-mail your instructor](#).

**Slave narrative paper** (20% of final grade)

You must write a 1,500-word paper (approximately six pages) comparing two of the assigned slave narratives from the Gates textbook. The [Slave Narrative Paper](#) page provides the instructions for writing this paper. Remember that the [Honor Code](#) applies to this assignment; thus the work must be your own and proper citations are required. Buying and selling papers is a violation of the Honor Code.

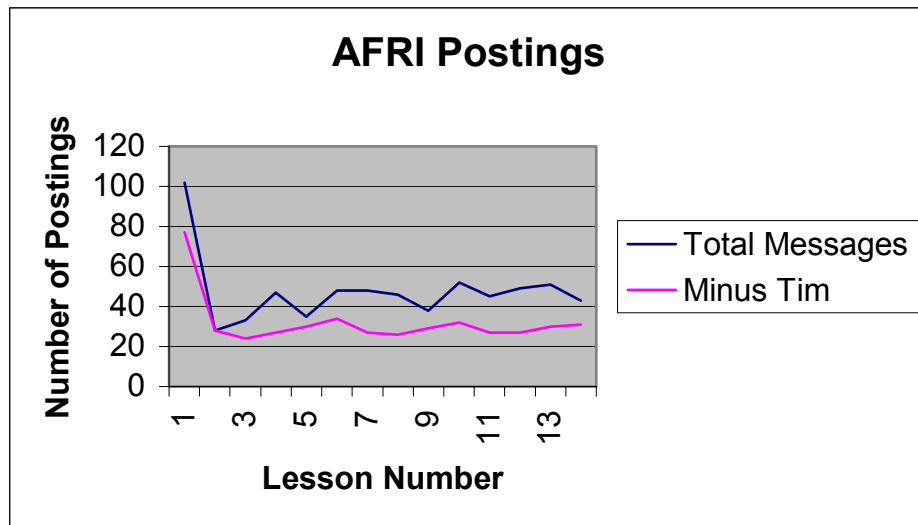
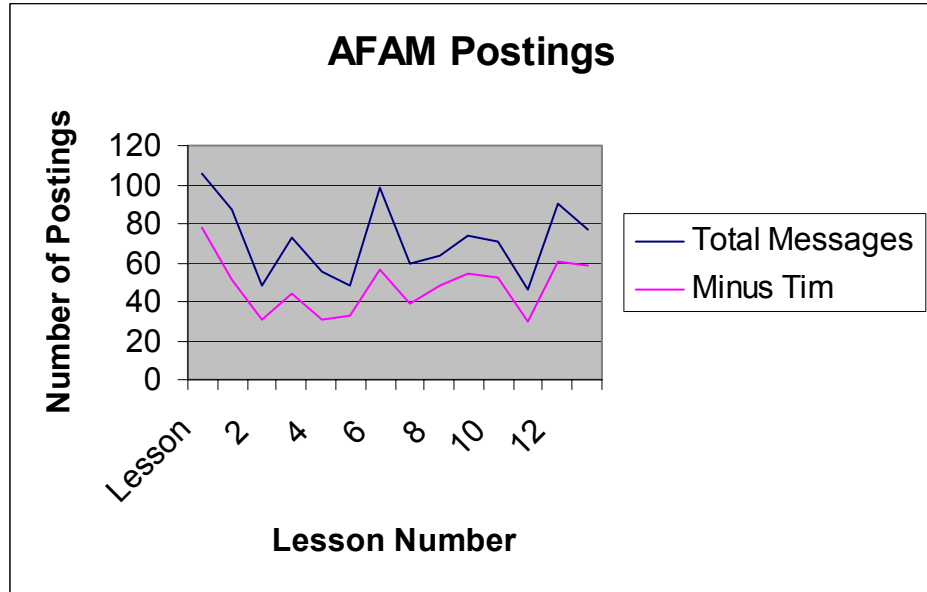


**Final exam** (25% of final grade)

The format and requirements for the final exam are the same as for the midterm, except that the final exam will be open notes and open book and will require you to analyze one of the topics we've brought up in the forum in detail. The [Honor Code](#) still applies, and you will not be allowed to consult with your classmates in completing the exam. The [Final Exam Study Guide](#) will help you study for the exam.

- The exam will e-mailed to you by **noon May 7**.
- E-mail your answers to your instructor as a Word attachment within 90 minutes of the time you first open the e-mail message.
- All answers are **due by noon May 8**.

**Appendix 12: AFAM and AFRI Postings in Online Discussion Forums Spring 2000**



**Appendix 13: AFAM Postings in Online Discussion Forums For Selected Lessons Fall 2001**

	Student Postings	Instructor Postings
Lesson 1	94	1
Lesson 2	173	1
Lesson 3	69	2
Lesson 4	66	4

### Appendix 14: Sample Carolina Course Online Final Student Evaluations

Quantitative Responses to Questions 5 and 9

Q5: Quality of the Instruction You Received:

Course, Semester	1 very negative	2 somewhat negative	3 neutral	4 somewhat positive	5 very positive	Total Responses
AFAM 40, Spring 2000		2		1	6	9
AFRI 40, Spring 2000				2	6	8
AFAM 40, Fall 2000			4	6	4	14
AFRI 40, Fall 2000	5	1	3	1	1	11
AFAM 40, Spring 2001				2	8	10
AFRI 40, Spring 2001	7	2	1	1		11
AFAM 40, Summer 2001					8	8
Totals	12	5	8	13	33	71

Q9: Your mastery of course content:

Course, Semester	1 very negative	2 somewhat negative	3 neutral	4 somewhat positive	5 very positive	Total Responses
AFAM 40, Spring 2000			3	2	4	9
AFRI 40, Spring 2000		1	2	6		9
AFAM 40, Fall 2000		2		7	5	14
AFRI 40, Fall 2000		1	2	5	3	11
AFAM 40, Spring 2001			1	8	1	10
AFRI 40, Spring 2001	2	5		2	2	11
AFAM 40, Summer 2001				1	7	8
Totals	2	9	8	31	22	72

## Qualitative Responses to Questions 5 and 9

## Q5: Quality of the Instruction You Received, Comments

AFAM 40, Spring 2000	**I found the tests to be harder than a normal class because I really had no notes to study with. I had to go back and find everything in the book.
AFRI 40, Spring 2000	none
AFAM 40, Fall 2000	**Our professor got all grades back to us quickly **Our instructor was very fair and helpful **For the most part, I taught myself, which became extremely boring. I received no explanation about the topics presented, and feel I missed out on this part. **There was some good feedback but it was not consistent. **[Prof's name] was very professional and very very helpful
AFRI 40, Fall 2000	**Did not receive any feedback **I did not feel we had much input from the professor on what he really wanted us to know and get out of the material **We received only 3 messages/comments from the professor during the entire semester (perhaps 4 if you count his welcome note). I had expected (Based upon conversations with another student who had had a very good experience with courses online) that there would be feedback and/or input from the professor--we received none **The instructor for this class was the worst I have had in my 3 years at UNC. He did not respond to emails, did not give us our grades (I received on grade all semester and that was over a month after we took the quiz). He was never available for any help or questions. I seriously feel that he put absolutely no time into overseeing this course.
AFAM 40, Spring 2001	[Instructor's name] is an excellent instructor. He was on the cutting edge of the issues and has a broad background to help me with subjects that interest me. **I have taken many classes on line. [Instructor's name] is the best!!! He is very responsive and active in the discussions. **[Instructor's name] participated in every forum!
AFRI 40, Spring 2001	**I felt that our professor was very negligent. He never sent me (or anyone else in our class) a single bit of feedback. He never even sent us a grade for any of the work we did. When I tried to email him he never responded until one time when he sent back an extremely rude email that still didn't answer my question. Several other students have had similar experiences, both this semester and last semester. I feel that [instructor's name] is an extremely incompetent and uncaring instructor and I feel that he is wasting my tuition as a student, my fees to the Friday Center, and my taxes as a citizen of North Carolina. I strongly urge you to replace him; he did not teach a single thing in this class **There was almost no instruction provided from the instructor. Only received one response to many emails. **I did not receive any instruction or feedback from the professor. **The instructor never responded to any of my emails. **I don't feel that I've learned anything. **Instruction was terrible. No feedback was ever given during the entire course. Attempts to contact the instructor were futile. **It is the last week and we have yet to hear from our professor. I have emailed him, no response and I have not received a single grade on anything I have done throughout the class.

AFAM 40, Summer 2001	**The material was pretty straightforward , and the books we were assigned to read and write papers on complemented the lessons we were learning. **Excellent professor--always contributed to discussions and was quick to respond to personal emails. **Professor [name] was great!! I would definitely recommend her!
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## Q9: Your mastery of course content, Comments

Course, Semester	
AFAM 40, Spring 2000	none
AFRI 40, Spring 2000	none
AFAM 40, Fall 2000	**Like I said earlier I believe that I learned the material more in depth due to the set up of the class.**I do not feel this class explained the material well, nor do I feel that I was pushed to learn as much as I could. **I think the web discussion allows people to participate who would typically not participate in a classroom setting. **Since I don't like history all that much, and yet I was interested in the material the whole time from its presentation to me, very nice
AFRI 40, Fall 2000	**Same as a regular class, actually encourages more reading to be able to post. **I will be the first to admit that I did not put forth all of the effort I should have so I take some of the responsibility for my lack of "mastery of course content." However, I will say again that I fully expected something from the instructor--it is very difficult to believe you are part of a class when even the professor does not care enough to take part.
AFAM 40, Spring 2001	**Perfect **[Instructor's name] helped to make the course. His involvement makes the difference.
AFRI 40, Spring 2001	**The setup and content of this course was fine, but the lack of participation from the instructor hurt. I was not given feedback or grades regarding my assignments, quizzes, and midterms. I have no idea how well I did in this class or what grade might be. **Hardly learned anything. Extremely discouraged that I never received any feedback on anything I wrote. **I am disappointed about the professor and am unsure about how grades are going to be determined for this class. It is almost over and I haven't received a single grade.
AFAM 40, Summer 2001	none

**Appendix 15: Sample Responses from Carolina Course Online Final Student Evaluations: Responses to Questions 12**

Q12: On the whole, do you feel that instruction via the World Wide Web is a viable alternative to traditional classroom instruction? Why or Why not?				
Course, Semester	Yes	No	Ambivalent or Qualified	Total
AFAM 40, Fall 1999	9	1		
AFRI 40, Fall 1999	8			1
AFAM 40, Spring 2000	8	1		
AFRI 40, Spring 2000	6			1
AFAM 40, Fall 2000	6	2		3
AFRI 40, Fall 2000	5			2
AFAM 40, Spring 2001	8			1
AFRI 40, Spring 2001	6	2		3
AFAM 40, Summer 2001	7			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>12</b>
				<b>81</b>

- Replies judged "ambivalent or qualified":
- Don't know.
- Its ok...need more participation from instructor
- It is if the student is willing to participate and do all of the work
- It is for those students who do not need hands on learning
- It is in situations such as history or sociology classes. I would not want to take a math class over the web.
- I think that [www.instruction](#) is viable as a supplement for classes not required of one's major. I also think the format's use varies from subject to subject. I'm not sure that an online organic chemistry course would be as effective as an online introductory African geographic course.
- In some ways...I think the interaction with the students is better but the specifics of what is supposed to be learned is not as good as in a classroom.
- I don't really have a preference
- For some people it probably works great, and it offers a new way to learn. It just will not work for everyone.
- I do for certain classes. I have noticed that BIO50 is going to be offered online next semester, and honestly, am curious to see how students will fair with that class. Straightforward classes such as AFAM40 and SOCI22 contain subject matter that can be researched and understood with reading and contact over email with the instructor. I don't see how classes such as genetics

and math could be offered online when these subject matters are more applied, and in my opinion, require much more hands on assistance. Some people may say that online classes take away the closeness of a classroom. This depends on the circumstance. Although I will never "know" the students in my online classes, neither will I "know" them in a formal classroom setting. Although in a classroom I may know what they look like, I might never know what or how they feel about certain issues—as I would from the discussion forums in online classes. All in all, online classes have their advantages and disadvantages, all depending on the nature of the specific course.



**Appendix 16: AFRI/AFAM Faculty responses to Survey  
Question 9**

Please describe the audience or audiences that you feel would most benefit from the use of online course instruction.

- I haven't given this one much thought. Immediately, shut-ins come to mind, as do older students or students with heavy family or other responsibilities who find it difficult to get to a campus.
- People in isolated areas, those far from UNC who want a UNC course, those whose work schedules do not permit attending a traditional class, and UNC undergraduates who cannot get a desired course any other way because traditional classes are full.
- As mentioned above-- highly motivated learners, off-campus students (I don't think it is very appropriate for students who are also in "real time" classes), older students, and people who need to use the knowledge in their work (also makes them motivated)
- As previously mentioned, I think that the most appropriate audiences are first-second year students taking introductory courses (or those from different age brackets doing the same). Additionally, I think it best to disallow students who are already on campus to take online courses.
- I really have to confess that I have not given much thought to online instruction
- Those physically challenged, working parents (especially) who need more flexible course scheduling, stay-at-home parents especially come to mind; students needing 1 or 2 courses to graduate and self-directed students
- I think online courses are very well suited for adult learners who have limited time for classroom experience and who tend to be more self-motivated than traditional students. Adult learners typically do not need "character instruction," which I think is a duty for faculty of traditional, late-adolescent students. Obviously online courses are also great for students who do not have physical access to the university because of physical handicaps, location, etc.
- working students with family responsibilities