**African Migration to the United States**

The objective of this assignment is to collect some original data about African migration to the United States through observation or interviewing, which you will discuss in light of the broader research presented through the readings.

In this paper and presentation, you have two options:

1. You can interview an African immigrant.
2. You can go to an African immigrant establishment.

**Option 1: Interview of an African Immigrant**

**Data Collection: Interview an African immigrant**

You should approach someone who is an immigrant from a country in Africa South of the Sahara and ask for an interview about their immigration experience. By “immigrant,” I mean someone born and raised in an African country, who migrated to the United States as an adult.

You should tell the interviewee that his or her name will not be used in the paper (invite him or her to pick a pseudonym) and that you are doing the paper for a class on Africa. You will share the information with the professor and fellow class members. They should feel welcome to skip any question that makes them uncomfortable.

Arrange to conduct the interview in a place that is comfortable for both of you, such as a coffee shop or living room. Because we are interviewing human beings, unexpected things may happen: children may get sick, cars may not start, someone may have to work late. This means that you should schedule the interview as soon as possible, because your interview may need to be rescheduled. DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE TO DO THE INTERVIEW!

If the interviewee is willing to be recorded, you should record the conversation, so that you can concentrate on listening to what the interviewee is saying and asking follow-up questions. Otherwise, you will need to take notes on the interview, writing them up shortly thereafter so that you can recall as much as possible of what you missed. Your goal is to get the interviewee to talk about their immigration experience, so that you obtain rich and full answers. The interview should be about an hour long so that you are sure you get the information you need. The interview should feel like a conversation, naturally flowing, in which you are responding to what the interviewee says.

Although people do generally enjoy talking about themselves, the interviewee has done you a favor of giving you time. You want to return the favor, by being attentive and respectful, perhaps buying the person a cup of coffee or a beer, or sending a thank-you note afterwards, or whatever feels right for the relationship you have with this person.

Questions to ask:

* What brought you to the United States? (Be sure to be clear on what country they are from, the year that they came, and their age on arrival)
* Under what auspices did you come---family reunification, asylum/refugee, work or student visa? What was that process like for you?
* What was your educational and occupational background in your home country? What kinds of work or education did you pursue in the United States?
* How do you identify yourself in the United States? How are you identified by others? Do you feel African-American or Black or African?
* What community organizations or associations, including religious associations, do you belong to? Who are the main participants in these events?
* Do you remain connected to (your home country)? If yes, how do you do so? If not, what are your reasons for not doing so?
* Has coming to the United States meant changes in your gender role or marriage?
* What are your plans for the future? Do you plan to remain in the United States or return to (your home country)? What are your reasons?

**Analysis**

Once you have completed the interview, listen to the recording several times. What conclusions can you draw from it?

* Was your interviewee becoming integrated into the United States or remaining connected to his/her homeland? Does becoming integrated mean becoming African-American (the default Black identity) or does it mean creating a vibrant African identity in the United States through the recreation of home associations and religious communities? Is it possible to do both? What evidence are you using to make your interpretation? What readings does this interpretation agree or disagree with (support or undermine)? What sense do you make of any similarities or differences between the reading and your interviewee?
* Do the reasons for migration, route of entry, and educational and occupational profile match what is described in the scholarship on African migration in the United States? Note any differences and similarities. What evidence are you using to support that interpretation? What sense do you make of any similarities or differences between the reading and your interviewee?
* Is there anything else that strikes you as interesting from your visit? What do you think it means? What evidence are you using to support that interpretation? What readings does this interpretation agree or disagree with? What sense do you make of any similarities or differences between the reading and your interviewee?

**Paper**

Your paper will have five sections:

*Introduction*. In your introduction, present your main arguments (the answers to the questions in the analysis section above). You should also say why these arguments are important, giving some background information on African migration to the United States; this is one place to refer to the readings.

*Background information.* Provide a brief description of the interviewee and the interview situation. Reflect briefly on your own responses and reactions, evaluating how well the interview went from your perspective and what might have gone better.

*Support of your argument*. Then, one by one, go through your arguments and support them with quotes from the recording. Here, you should also indicate whether your observations agree or disagree with the readings in this section of the course, and why you think they do so (is the situation similar or different? Newer or older immigrants? Etc)

*Conclusion*. Here you should re-state your arguments, using different words.

*Supplemental material*. You should turn in your recording and notes attached to the back of your paper.

**Presentation**

Your presentation should be 10-15 minutes long, and follow the format of your paper, in presenting your arguments, a brief background to the establishment, and the data used to support your arguments. Your presentation can be accompanied by a powerpoint presentation, or handouts. You may use your recording, but do not use visual images of the person.

As with your other presentations, preparing ahead of time is very useful. Jot some notes about things you want to be sure you say, or print a copy of your paper, highlighting what you will say in your presentation (your paper will be longer than your presentation). Talk through your presentation before giving it. Time yourself. (10 minutes is about 5 pages, double-spaced).

The second paper is worth 10% and the presentation is worth 10%. Both are due on Wednesday, **May 13th, 2:45-5:45pm**. We will use the final exam time for your presentation and conclusions on the basis of your data collection.

Your grade for both the presentation and the paper will be determined by:

* Your use of the readings (failure to use the readings will result in a failing grade)
* The depth of your analysis and its use of evidence to support its arguments
* The degree of organization and clarity of the points articulated

**Option 2: An African Immigrant Business**

**Data Collection: A Visit to an African Immigrant Establishment**

You should go to an establishment owned or staffed by Africans. You might sit down to a wonderful meal, or have your hair braided. You might buy some fish or vegetables or a Nollywood video or music from an African store. Perhaps you might go to an religious service (Christian, Muslim, or traditional religion—be sure the congregation is *mainly* African). What you buy does not have to be expensive, but the act of shopping and purchasing will give you an excuse to hang around the place a little longer and interact with someone. You can be clueless, and use your cluelessness to your advantage: What is this? Which one is best? Feel free to say that you were sent by your professor to write a paper about an African enterprise; perhaps you might even get lucky enough to snag an interview with the owner or an employee. Of course, be friendly without being annoying or disrupting the activities of the business.

As you visit the establishment, you should take a notebook in which to jot down short notes to yourself. Immediately on your return home or to a space where you can write, you should write a fuller description of the place and its surroundings, providing concrete details of interactions, people, and the space itself. Those details should be descriptive, not evaluative ("nice" or "well-dressed"). Your grade will be dependent on the details you provide in substantiating your answers to the questions below as well as the connections you make to the materials presented in class.

Take notes on:

* Describe the surrounding block, thinking specifically about the following questions: Residential or retail environment? Dilapidated or shops/houses that are in good condition? What is the ethnicity and social class of those on the street? Is this a neighborhood of mainly immigrants, one in which African-Americans predominate, or some other kind of neighborhood? Go to the 2010 census of the zip code (http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml/) where the establishment is located and note the racial and ethnic makeup of the zip code. You will want to print out this page for the paper. Does the census support your own observations, or are there differences?
* Provide a description of the establishment itself, describing physical surroundings, customers, and employees (in terms of gender, ethnicity, and anything else that makes sense to comment on). Is the establishment prominent on the street or hidden (Maguire and Murphy 2012)? What is the meaning of it being prominent or hidden in terms of Africans’ feeling of belonging in the United States and/or ability to express their identity?
* Does the business seem to be doing well or is it struggling? What makes you say so? (Be sure to account for the time of day in your assessment.)
* What signs do you see that lead you to believe that the establishment is set up for Africans or for Americans (whether African-Americans, Latino Americans or white Americans) (Babou 2013, Clark 2009)? Are the patrons mainly African or not? How much does the establishment serve as a place for Africans to connect to one another or to Africa (e.g., flyers for community meetings, posters for Western Union (money transfer agencies) or travel agencies, international phone cards) (Okome 2012)?
* Note any gendered issues you observe (Babou 2013): for example, who is working in the place? Who is the clientele? Are children present in the establishment (a sign that mothers or fathers are there)?
* What is being sold in the establishment? Are they mainly African things, African and Caribbean, or a whole range of items, some of which are associated with Africa and some of which are not?
* How is Africa portrayed within the establishment? What image of Africa is being portrayed here through pictures, music, or other items?
* Pick up any brochures or flyers (material culture) that are available for the taking and include them as an appendix to your paper. You should refer to any attachments that you provide to your paper (photos, drawings, brochures) within the body of your paper. If you take photos, ask before you do so, to respect people’s privacy.

**Analysis**

Once you have written a description of the place, analyze what you have seen. Specifically:

* Based on your observation, do you think the Africans you have observed are becoming integrated into the United States or remaining connected to their homelands? Is it possible to do both? What evidence are you using to make your interpretation? What readings does this interpretation agree or disagree with (support or undermine)? What sense do you make of any similarities or differences between the reading and your establishment?
* Based on your observation, are Africans becoming African-American (the default Black identity in the United States) or are they remaining distinct from other Blacks in the United States (whether African-American or Caribbean)? What evidence are you using to support that interpretation? What readings does this interpretation agree or disagree with? What sense do you make of any similarities or differences between the readings and your establishment?
* Is there anything else that strikes you as interesting from your visit? What do you think it means? What evidence are you using to support that interpretation? What readings does this interpretation agree or disagree with? What sense do you make of any similarities or differences between the reading and your establishment?

**Paper**

Your paper will have five sections:

*Introduction*. In your introduction, present your main arguments (the answers to the questions in the analysis section above). You should also say why these arguments are important, giving some background information on African migration to the United States.

*Background information.* Provide a detailed description of the establishment and neighborhood. Reflect briefly on your experience visiting the establishment, including your own level of comfort. What went well during the visit, and what might have gone better?

*Support of your argument*. Then, one by one, go through your arguments and support them with the details and items you observed or collected, whether census information, observations, or material culture collected. Here, you should also indicate whether your observations agree or disagree with the readings in this section of the course, and why you think they do so (is the situation similar or different? Newer or older immigrants? Etc)

*Conclusion*. Here you should re-state your arguments, using different words.

*Appendices.* Here is where you should put census data and any other supplemental information. The supplemental information can be put in a large manila envelope, rubber band, or plastic presentation case or whatever will hold together the kind of material culture you collected.

**Presentation**

Your presentation should be 10-15 minutes long, and follow the format of your paper, in presenting your arguments, a brief background to the establishment, and the data used to support your arguments. Your presentation can be accompanied by a powerpoint presentation, or handouts.

As with your other presentations, preparing ahead of time is very useful. Jot some notes about things you want to be sure you say, or print a copy of your paper, highlighting what you will say in your presentation (your paper will be longer than your presentation). Talk through your presentation before giving it. Time yourself. (10 minutes is about 5 pages, double-spaced).

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**African Establishments I am aware of**

There are others near the establishments below, on 63rd-68th Street on Woodland Avenue, or around 45th Streets and Baltimore Avenue, and you might walk around and see what you find. You also might be able to find others through your own social networks. I know that there are many more African businesses in central and north Jersey, so if you happen to head in that direction before May 13th, feel free to visit one there.

Kaffa Crossing Café and Restaurant (Ethiopian)  
4423 Chestnut St., Philadelphia PA 19104  
(215) 386-0504   
<http://www.kaffacrossing.com/>

Kilimandjaro Restaurant (Senegalese)

4317 Chestnut St, Philadelphia, PA 19104

Phone: (215) 387-1970

Le Mandinque Restaurant (Guinea?)

1. Woodland Ave Philadelphia, PA 19142   
   (215) 726-0543

Abyssinia Restaurant (Ethiopia)  
229 S 45th St Philadelphia PA, 19104   
215-387-2424

http://www.abyssiniarestaurantpa.com/

Nigerian African Food Market

4517 Baltimore Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19143

Phone**:** (215) 386-0108

Valentino’s African Food Store (Ghana?)

4520 Baltimore Avenue, Philadelphia PA 19143

(215) 386-1176

Maggie’s African Market

1112 Sunset Rd, Burlington NJ 08016

(609) 386-5749