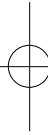
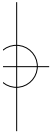


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# **AFRICANA STUDIES**

A SURVEY OF AFRICA  
AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA





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A SURVEY OF AFRICA  
AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

SECOND EDITION

EDITED BY  
MARIO AZEVEDO



CAROLINA ACADEMIC PRESS  
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Mario Azevedo



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# Introduction

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Mario Azevedo

This textbook was designed to respond to the present student generation's needs and questions regarding the nature of the disciplines that constitute the African, African-American, and Afro-Caribbean Studies programs, once generically designated as Black Studies. The editor's objective is, first, to make readily available the basic content of these broad fields and discuss their methodologies and themes in an introductory textbook that is comprehensive in its analysis of the experiences, contributions, and aspirations of the peoples of Africa and the scattered African diaspora. The editor's goal has been to provide this material on a reading level that is appropriate to American college freshmen and sophomores. Second, unlike the few textbooks available on the subject at the moment, the present work takes into account, in a single volume, the practical needs of those programs, departments, institutes, or centers that either combine into one unit or split into the fields of African, African-American, or Pan-African Studies. In short, this introductory volume attempts to address and represent fairly and adequately the experience and contributions of blacks in Africa, the Americas, and other parts of the world, from the earliest times to the present, and provide a balanced view of the function of the disciplines and the perspectives of those scholars who have labored arduously to make them what they are today and who, by and large, determine their future course.

With these premises in mind, each chapter begins with an introductory statement and a list of the crucial concepts or terms pertinent to the topic, followed by a discussion of the content, as well as the theoretical framework or the controversial interpretations (if any) that have dominated the theme(s) covered, a succinct summary of the chapter, and some study questions to help the student grasp the thrust of the material and to generate class discussion. A short reference list, which may be consulted to get a fuller understanding of the topic and fulfill research interests, concludes each chapter.

The contributors are experienced and respected scholars in the fields of African, African-American, and Diaspora Studies, and provide, therefore, a perspective and content that are both relevant and accurate, consonant with the "state of the art" in their own disciplines. Others have been teachers of an introductory course for one or all three fields. The accrued advantage is that, as "toilers in the trenches and frontlines," these contributors are not academics teaching in a platonic world but are classroom educators who, well aware of the needs and the levels of understanding of their students, have made the chapters readable and the content concise and realistic in relation to the common coverage time frame (usually one or two semesters or quarters), rejecting academic dogmatism, single

points of view, and tendencies of exclusiveness that have often marred similar academic undertakings.

For years, the editor and many of his colleagues in African-American, African, and Pan-African Studies have relied on one or two texts, for lack of better ones. Many of us, to be sure, have tolerated numerous shortcomings in most of the present introductory level textbooks. In general, these texts, without indexes, tend to be ideological, a pitfall the present textbook attempts to avoid or at least minimize. Since we are dealing with young minds, easily impressionable, we prefer a textbook that exposes the students not to a pontificating, dogmatic point of view, but to a variety of perspectives. Moreover, as the textbooks we have used so far focus primarily on the African-American experience and leave the African and the Caribbean diaspora Africans in the “tracks of the slave trade,” instructors find themselves constantly photocopying or adding supplementary reading materials in order to cover more comprehensively the aggregate experience of all peoples of African descent. Similar shortcomings apply to most textbooks on Africa which we have attempted to use in the past: they focus on Africa and fall short on the diaspora.

Although this work provides a discussion of the basic content, methodologies, and issues in Africana Studies, we realize that some chapters are more relevant than others to specific programs; that a few chapters are more complex in focus and style than most; and that, for some programs, adequate coverage may require two semesters or two quarters rather than one semester or one quarter. Whatever the circumstances, however, the role played by the instructor will be extremely crucial toward the successful use of the textbook. In fact, on certain occasions, only the instructor’s specific guidance will allow students to discern what is important, as they attempt to fulfill the course requirements and satisfy any further interests they might develop during the course of the academic year.

Finally, we believe that, unless a superficial coverage of topics is tolerated (which goes against our training and academic standards), a multi-authored volume, in principle, has a better chance of doing justice to the totality of the black experience by combining the knowledge of many. Let it also be said that, to conform with new trends in the fields of African and African Diaspora Studies, the textbook explicitly avoids terms and expressions which elicit negative connotations, such as tribe (for ethnic group, society, or people), paganism, animism, and heathenism (for African traditional religion), brideprice (for bridewealth), huts (for homes or houses), negro (for African-American), pygmy (for BaMbuti, Twa), bushman (for Khoi, San), and natives, a term particularly preferred by the British colonial administrators (for Africans). The textbook is not only concerned with providing accurate information to students but also to sensitize (and not indoctrinate) them about the feelings of the people whose culture they are learning.

Insofar as the organization is concerned, the volume is divided into five parts, each with several chapters. Part I focuses on the disciplines that have given us our knowledge of the cultures and experiences of peoples of African descent. Part II traces the evolution and history of the black race and Part III deals with the status of black people and their relationships with each other and the rest of the world, at present, while outlining the challenges the black community is expected to face in the future. Part IV, on the one hand, looks at the specific contributions of black people in a wide array of areas. Part V, on the other, delves into some of the most significant aspects of the social life and values of the black communities scattered

across the continents. Part VI, the appendix, provides a chronology of important events in the history of black people and a list of selected periodicals and references that should become part of the student's repertoire of knowledge.

In conclusion, *Africana Studies: A Survey of Africa and The African Diaspora, 2nd Edition* literally introduces students of all racial and ethnic backgrounds to a multidisciplinary as well as an interdisciplinary study of the fields of African and African Diaspora Studies. It focuses on the interaction of cultures, particularly of black people, in the shaping of past and contemporary societies and on the methodologies and key interdisciplinary issues, themes, and problems, all of which provide legitimacy to the two academic fields. Ours is not, as it were, just a textbook on slavery, on colonialism, on racism and discrimination, or on the suffering and hardships of peoples of African origin and descent, or simply on their contributionist record. *Africana Studies* goes beyond that, as it probes into the two related fields and focuses on both the individual and aggregate experiences of black people, not in a vacuum or in isolation, but within the context of the cultural crisscrossing between peoples of African descent and the rest of humankind, across time and space. *Africana Studies* is, therefore, a saga of both the pains and joys (and aspirations) of black people the world over and an exposé of the key to their future, not as a separate and monolithic group but as a dynamic, ever changing part of the world community, yet, with a uniqueness and a heritage worth preserving.

