

Africana Studies

Africana Studies

A Survey of Africa and the African Diaspora

Fourth Edition

Edited by
Mario Azevedo

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R. Hunt Davis, Jr., is Professor Emeritus of History and African Studies, former Interim Director of International Studies and Programs, and former Director of the Center for African Studies at the University of Florida. He was Editor of the *African Studies Review*, 1980–1988, and Editor-in-Chief of the *African Studies Quarterly*, 2008–2018, and he served as the Coordinator of the University of Florida-Cornell University project that published *Global Research on the Environmental and Agricultural Nexus for the 21st Century* (1995). He holds a B.A. in History from Grinnell College and an M.A. and Ph.D. in History from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. His publications include *Bantu Education and the Education of Africans in South Africa* (1972), *Apartheid Unravels* (1991), *Mandela, Tambo, and the African National Congress* (1991), which he co-edited with Sheridan Johns, and numerous chapters in edited books, journal articles, and reviews. He is the editor and senior author of the last two volumes and of the revised first three volumes of the five-volume *Encyclopedia of African History and Culture* (2005). He was a Senior Fulbright Scholar and Visiting Professor of History at the University of Cape Town in 1999.

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I am extremely pleased that, after years of careful thought, methodical planning, and close consultation with colleagues and friends, the fourth revised edition of *African Studies* is finally here. First and foremost, I wish to thank and congratulate all contributors, original and new, who dedicated their time, energy, and talent, to the completion of this unique volume and its timely submission to the publisher. I appreciate the encouragement I received from Dr. Gwendolyn S. Prater at the conception of the project and the support from Dr. Hunt Davis, Jr., Dr. Marsha Jean Darling, and Dr. Luis Serapiao for suggestions as how to proceed with the original work. I still acknowledge as well my former colleagues at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Dr. Gregory Davis and Dr. Tanure Ojaide, who, like me, taught the "Introduction to Afro-American and African Studies" course. They were an important source of inspiration for me.

I would also like to acknowledge the role my own students played in the "Introduction to Afro-American and African Studies" course. I used them to classroom-test the suitability of the textbook by providing them with bound copies of the manuscript as reading materials. Dr. Gregory Davis adopted the same strategy during the Fall 1992 semester. The subsequent response of both classes and others in the Africana Studies Department convinced me that this was a sound and critical undertaking, one that was perhaps long overdue.

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Mario J. Azevedo

Introduction

This textbook was designed to respond to the present and future student generation's needs and questions regarding the nature of the disciplines that constitute the African, African American, Afro-Caribbean, and Afro-Latin-American 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 undergraduate and graduate students. Second, unlike the few textbooks available on the subject at the moment, the present fourth edition of *Africana Studies* takes into account, in a single volume, the practical needs of those programs, departments, institutes, or centers that either combine into one unit or separately deal with the fields of African, African American, Caribbean, and 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 the fields academically sound and respected as they are today, and who, by and large, continue to determine their future place in the academy.

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 and the controversial interpretations (if any) that have dominated the theme(s) covered, a succinct summary of the chapter, and study questions to help the student grasp the focus and relevance of the content to generate class discussion. Each chapter concludes with a short reference list of books and articles, which may be consulted to get a fuller understanding of the topic, while capturing student research interests.

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 is 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 front-lines," these contributors are not academics teaching in a platonic world but are class-

room educators who, well aware of the needs and the level 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 texts. Many of us, to be sure, have tolerated numerous shortcomings in most of the present introductory level textbooks. In general, these texts, without an index, 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 many of the textbooks we have used in the past focus primarily on the African American experience and often 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 we have attempted to adopt for the African past and future: 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 for 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 scholars. 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 when referring to Africans. This volume 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 six 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 state 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. While Part IV looks at the specific contributions of black people in a wide array of areas, Part V 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, the fourth edition of *Africana Studies: A Survey of Africa and the African Diaspora* 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, discipline-specific canons, 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 contribution record. *Africana Studies* goes beyond that, as it probes into all 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, with a uniqueness and a heritage worth studying and preserving.