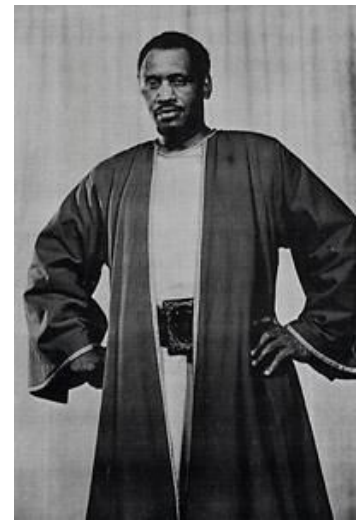


**RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF AFRICANA STUDIES AND
THE OFFICE OF RESIDENCE LIFE**

Byrne Seminar – Fall 2016

PAUL ROBESON AS A GLOBAL CITIZEN

(Milodoler Hall Room 010 – Tuesday – 6:10 to 7:30)



Dr. Edward Ramsamy

Dr. James Whitney III

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The life and legacy of the esteemed Rutgers alumnus Paul Robeson embodies the idea of “global citizenship.” A towering figure in the African American struggle for human dignity and democratic rights, he connected this struggle with those of other peoples around the world, who were also fighting for political rights, cultural recognition and economic justice. For example, among many other social justice movements that he embraced, Paul Robeson pioneered the global solidarity movement against racial segregation and white supremacy in South Africa and supported and marched with various British union movements in the United Kingdom who were struggling for better working conditions.

The aim of the proposed seminar is to introduce students to the life and legacy of Paul Robeson, especially with respect to how he tried to integrate “home” and “world” into his civil rights activism.

The seminar has a four-fold focus:

- (1) To explore Paul Robeson's formative years as a student at Rutgers and the challenges he faced as the only Black student in his graduating class;
- (2) To examine some of his artistic achievements as an actor on the stage and screen, especially his role in promoting African-American folk songs on the concert stages of the world;
- (3) To study his efforts to connect anti-fascism, anti-racism and anti-imperialism together; and
- (4) To examine his controversial associations with communist movements and the former Soviet Union.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

The assigned readings and other resources for the class are available on sakai.

Participate in class discussions, activities and programs

Engage with the reading material

Presentation and Written Assignment:

Final Assignment

For the final assignment for the Byrne Seminar, you are grouped into pairs of two:

- 1) Pick either a song; excerpt of a play, movie, or famous speech; or moment in the life of Paul Robeson and develop a short skit/presentation around it. You should give the audience a brief introduction to the selection you are performing and then perform the skit. You have an allotted time limit of 5 minutes for your presentation.

In preparing for the presentation, develop a way of reading/reciting the piece that sounds natural to you. Feel the words and try to convey that feeling to the class. Pay particular attention to how your selection incorporates rhythm and imagery. All kinds of improvisations are possible and strongly encouraged. Your aim is to deliver the selection as *dynamically* as possible.

You may employ elements of music, dance, drama, visual effects, etc, that you feel will enhance your presentation. Whether you read or recite, you must make sure that you are audible and that you enunciate clearly. Show off your talents!

A premium will be placed on a **well-delivered presentation**; please make an effort to avoid simply reading from a script, and rather, strive to be creative – for instance, you may incorporate other art forms or styles of expression into your presentation.

- 2) Write a three page paper (double spaced, 12 point font, 1 inch margins) on the background to your presentation. You should offer an analysis of the significance of the skit and how it connects to Robeson's broader artistic

and/or political work. The paper is due in class on December 1.

LECTURE SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

Sept 6: Introduction and Overview

Sept 13: Early Life and Influences

Paul Robeson (1958) *Here I Stand (Prologue)*, Boston: Beacon Press, pp. 6-27

Sept 20: The Rutgers Years

Martin Duberman (1989) *Paul Robeson: A Biography* (Chapter 2: The Rutgers Years), New York: Random House, pp. 19-30.

Sept 27: Student Success Workshop

Ms. Kiyanna Stewart
Assistant Director, Paul Robeson Cultural Center

Oct 4: The Artist as a Citizen

Jeffrey Stewart (1998) "Artist as a Citizen: A Brief History." in Jeffrey C. Stewart (ed.), *Paul Robeson: Artist and Citizen*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, pp. 12 – 16

Martin Duberman (1989) *Paul Robeson: A Biography* (Chapter 5: The Harlem Renaissance and the Spirituals), New York: Random House, pp. 68-86. .

Oct 11: Accomplishments in the Screen, Stage and Concert Hall

Doris Evans McGinty and Wayne Shirley (1998) "Paul, Robeson, Musician", in Jeffrey C. Stewart (ed.), *Paul Robeson: Artist and Citizen*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, pp.105 – 122

Martin Duberman (1998) "Robeson and Othello," in Jeffrey C. Stewart (ed.), *Paul Robeson: Artist and Citizen*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, pp.. 123-133

Oct 18: Engagement with Africa

Edward Ramsamy (2016) “The International Community and Transformations in South Africa: From Protests to Engagement”, in Sandra M. Tomlinson-Clarke and Darren L. Clarke (eds.), *Social Justice and Transformative Learning*, New York: Routledge, pp. 24-39.

Paul Robeson, selected speeches and statements on Africa

Oct 25 Student Success Workshop

Ms. Kiyanna Stewart
Assistant Director, Paul Robeson Cultural Center

Nov 1: Emerging Internationalism/Radicalism

Gerald Horne (1998) “Comrades and Friends: The Personal/Political World of Paul Robeson”, in Jeffrey C. Stewart (ed.), *Paul Robeson: Artist and Citizen*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, pp.

Nov 8: Paul Robeson and his Controversial Association with the Soviet Union

David Levering Lewis (1999) “Paul Robeson and the USSR”, in Leonard L. Bethel (ed.), *Africana: An Introduction and Study*, Dubuque: Kendall Hunt, pp. 322-331.

Nov 15: Legacy

John Hope Franklin (1998) “Paul Robeson, Icon for the Twenty-First Century”, in Jeffrey C. Stewart (ed.), *Paul Robeson: Artist and Citizen*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, pp.291-300.

Paul Robeson Jr. on the Life and Legacy of his Famous Father (Interviewed by Kavitha Ramsamy & Edward Ramsamy)

Nov 22: Preparations for Presentations

Nov 29: Final Preparations: Paul Robeson Cultural Center

Dec 6: Focus Group Meeting