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# A Proposal for Afro-Hispanic Peoples and Culture as General Studies Course in African Universities

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**Abstract:** After centuries of denial, suppression and marginalization, the contributions of Afro-Hispanics/Latinos to the arts, culture, and the Spanish spoken in the Americas is gradually gaining recognition as Afro-descendants pursue their quest for visibility and space in Spanish America. Hand in hand with this development is the young generation of Afro-Latinos who, are proud to identify with the black race. Ironically, the young African student has very little knowledge of the presence and actual situation of Afro-descendants in Spanish-speaking America. This is because many African universities still follow the old colonial system which excludes knowledge of the presence and cultures of the once enslaved Africans in the Spanish speaking world. Thus, while Afro-descendants are fighting for visibility and recognition in Spanish America, they remain almost invisible in the African continent. The aim of this paper is to propose a curriculum, Afro-Hispanic Peoples and Culture, as a general studies course in African universities. Such a curriculum would create in Africa the much-needed visibility and contributions of Afro-descendants in Spanish-speaking America, and also foster collaborative works between young African academics and their counterparts in the Americas.

**Keywords:** Afro-Hispanic peoples and culture; general studies; Afro-Hispanic visibility; mestizaje; African Universities

## 1. Introduction

Every history that is taught likely evokes the bias of the dominant group (Rochin 2016, p. 2). Hand in hand with this reality goes the saying that if you do not tell your history no one else will, or if they do, they most probably will tell it their own way. This surmises the situation of Afro-descendants in the Spanish-speaking world, because even introductory Spanish textbooks and literary anthologies continue to overlook both the contemporary African presence in Latin America and the role Africans have played in the history of the Spanish speaking peoples. Meanwhile, to exclude information on Afro-Hispanics misrepresents the history and the contemporary reality of Latin America (Alley 1994, pp. 3–4). The presence of the descendants of those Africans sold into slavery centuries ago, and who today are found in all the regions of Spanish America, is missing in the curricula of most African universities because the history books still continue with the method of past colonial thought on the transatlantic slave trade and its abolition, excluding the post-slavery period. Consequently, many African university undergraduates have only a superficial knowledge of why blacks are found in the Caribbean Islands and the Southern states of the United States of America; attributing this mainly to the sugar plantations of the colonial period. The other Spanish-speaking regions of Mexico, Central America, the Andean and Southern Cone regions are not known to have black populations because the history books contain no information of their presence in these regions. Interestingly, Afro-Hispanics become visible to Africans when they appear as football players in Spanish American teams in international events. As they soon disappear after the games, they are also

quickly forgotten all over again. It thus appears that the Afro-Hispanic has to fight against invisibility in Spanish speaking America and in the continent of their forebears. To redress this omission, a general studies course at the university level on Afro-Hispanic Peoples and Culture should showcase the presence, diversity of this group, and their contributions to Spanish American society with a view to creating a permanent link with young contemporary Africa. Before going into the subject matter, it is necessary to clarify some concepts as they are used in this paper. The terms Hispanic and Latino are subject to different interpretations. According to Refugio Rochin (Rochin 2016, p. 6), Hispanics and Latinos tend to differ for political and personal reasons, especially with regard to the degree of their Spanish roots in matters of identity. Therefore, while “Latino” includes Portuguese-speaking Brazilians and Indians who speak Spanish as a second language, Hispanic on the other hand, excludes Brazilians, English and the French speaking nations of Latin America (“ibid., p. 4”). For Gina Thésée and Paul R. Carr (Thésée and Carr 2012), the label, Afro-descendant, is an emergent category which relates to a spatial cultural configuration and has nothing to do with skin colour (when applied in the sense used by the UN). But Smeralda (2011) is more specific in linking the concept of Afro-descendant to a type of kinship, membership, and a recognition of origin. This paper uses the term “Hispanic”, and “Afro-Hispanic” to refer to the group in focus, i.e., those descendants of Africans shipped to the Americas in the course of the triangular slave trade, and who are presently found in Spanish speaking America. The designation Afro-descendant is used interchangeably with Afro-Hispanic in the sense of Smeralda (2011), but excludes the African diaspora. This paper looks into the issue as follows: the next section is a brief summary of Afro-Hispanic peoples in Spanish speaking America hand in hand with the concept of mestizaje as an invisibility factor. The subsequent sub sections look into the consequences of this ideology as well as the effort at creating visibility of Afro-descendants through curriculum inclusion. Section 3 presents the course, Nigerian Peoples and Culture, and the modules as it obtains in the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). Section 4 presents a model proposal for the course, Afro-Hispanic Peoples and Culture. Section 5 forms the conclusion.

## 2. Afro-Hispanics and Mestizaje Ideology

According to Nicole-Marie Cotton and Anthony R. Jerry (Cotton and Jerry 2013), the invisibility of African descendants in map-making and environmental discourse has its roots in the historical colonial period. To this period also belongs the concept of mestizaje, whereby the ambiguity in its interpretation played a crucial role in de-emphasizing blackness and indigeneity.

Although Edward Telles and Denia García (Telles and García 2013) trace the roots of mestizaje in America to the 19th century, Paloma Fernández Sánchez (Fernández Sánchez 2015, p. 48) finds the early use of the concept in census records of Alexander von Humboldt. The census figures as by Humboldt evidence the presence of “... poquísimos negros, los mestizos...” (Humboldt as ctd. in “ibid. p. 48”) in Mexico as at 1570. However, Gonzalo Aguirre Beltrán (Aguirre Beltrán 1972) disproved the number of blacks (6100 as recorded in the census) based on further research which chronicles how because of widespread miscegenation in Mexico during that period, a mixed population emerged. Therefore, a system of castes to classify the people according to the proportion of white, indigenous and black was implemented; with blackness further categorised into mini and subgroups. The resultant effect was the further dissemination of blackness. For example, even though the mulatto, (mixture between the white and black) was considered below the white, the caste ranked higher in the society than the black. Consequently, official census documents only captured a small population of blacks because many denied their blackness to avoid social stigmatization. This, as explained by Fernández Sánchez shows that mestizaje, either consciously or unconsciously was already being used (far back then) as a whitening and exclusive strategy in Mexican society (“ibid., p. 49”).

The independence of many regions in Spanish America gave impulse for the Latin American identity discourse at the beginning of the 19th century. Championed by Simón de Bolívar, the idea was that the true Latin American identity was to evolve from the existing mestizo structure in the regions, in stark contrast with Spain. According to Fernández Sánchez, this idea was further expanded

in the second half of the 19th century by José Martí in his proclaimed work, *Our America* in which he ideologised mestizaje as a progressive action and the mestizo as the guarantee of Latin American autonomy (“*ibid.*, p. 49”).

Early in the 20th century, mestizaje emerged as the foundation of Latin American nationhood (Stepan 1991; Telles 2004) or as was the case in some regions, as nation-building projects (Telles and García 2013, p. 133). That this ideologised form took root in almost all post-colonial Spanish America was due to the presence of mixed-race categories and the large number of people who identified themselves as such. Simultaneously, different nations in Latin America adapted this ideology to suit their individual societies, differing in terms of the extent to which whitening was exalted and blackness and indigenusness were included or how blacks in particular, were excluded. For example, all the Andean countries generally stressed racial fusion with indigenous people while ignoring blacks (Miller 2004; Paschel 2010). In the Dominican Republic, ideas of mestizaje exalted Hispanic and indigenous heritages, but degenerated into anti-Haitian and anti-black phobias in spite of the predominance of the country’s African ancestry (Torres-Saillant 1998; Candelario 2007; Duany 2006). In post-revolutionary Mexico, elites aimed at the elimination of racial distinctions and claimed mixture as the basis of the Mexican population and identity (Fernández Sánchez 2015, p. 50) or, in the words of Juan de Castro, as a unitary nation from a heterogeneous population (De Castro 2002). On the other hand, and in the same Mexico, the thought generated in *The Cosmic Race* as conceived by Vasconcelos actually diminished the black presence in Mexico.

The fact that mestizaje as a concept is also ambiguous explains why it did degenerate to racism when it adopted nationalistic ideology that marginalised blackness and indigenusness while valuing whiteness (Wade 2005, p. 240). For instance, some so-called white nations of the Southern Cone such as Argentina, Uruguay, and to some extent Chile Telles and García 2013, p. 134) and Costa Rica (Andrews 2004; Telles and Flores 2013) denied having black populations. In Argentina in particular, whiteness was promoted in complete denial of the presence of Afro-Argentines (Martínez-Echazábal 1998; Frigerio 2008 although research by (Lanzua 1967; Andrews 1989; Lewis 1996; Liboreiro 1999; Schavelzon 2003; Solomianski 2003) and others prove otherwise. Even Mexico as opined by Pamela Fernández Sánchez (Fernández Sánchez 2015, p. 50) portrays whiteness as active and developed, while black is described in negative terms in José Vasconcelo’s mestizaje ideology of *The Cosmic Race*.

These negative and unfavourable portrayals of blacks is also reflected in some literary works in Spanish America. Richard L. Jackson (Jackson 1975, p. 56) summarises *The Cosmic Race* by Vasconcelos as having erased by omission the ethnic African heritage of Mexican mestizaje while at the same time laying claims that blacks left only a minor legacy in Mexico which has either been integrated or disappeared through absorption into the mainstream European culture. Similarly, Paloma Fernández Sánchez (Fernández Sánchez 2015, p. 54) in her essay on mestizaje and the whitening discourse as portrayed in the comic strip, *Memín Pinguín*, sees the protagonist, Memín as representing blackness, not Mexican, a visitor, tourist and an outsider, whose presence being temporal, signifies that he will either go back to where he came from or eventually, disappear. She concludes that the images and discourse present in *Memín Pinguín* are a re-enactment of the whitening ideology of mestizaje as proposed by Vasconcelos in *The Cosmic Race* (“*ibid.* p. 56”). Even the mestizo, the result of mestizaje was regarded as the next stage to becoming part of the desired white in the society, because black people were less subject to glorification as national ancestors (Wade 2008, p. 181). This takes form in Carlangas and Ernestillo, two mestizo characters in *Memín Pinguín* that represent the present and future of Mexico. Thus, skin colour, especially black skin is enough reason for exclusion in spite of Spanish America’s claim to racial democracy (Dulitzky 2001, p. 4). Consequently it follows that, mestizaje as an ideology on the one hand extols the mixture between Europeans and indigenous peoples, but excludes the Afro-descendant (Wade 1997; Paschel 2010) as can also be viewed from its varying interpretations in different Latin American countries as well as in some literary works. For this reason, Sibylla Brodzinsky (Brodzinsky 2013) describes mestizaje as a superficial celebration of nation building.

Another aspect is the acclaimed minority status of Afro-Hispanics as justification for invisibility; in spite of the fact that a great deal of available demographic data is suspect, since many countries in Latin America fail to compile information concerning their black minorities (Alley 1994, p. 4). Irrespective of these and more efforts at negation of their presence, historical narratives (Andrews 2004; Rodríguez-Mangual 2004; Lipski 2005) reveal Afro-Hispanics as a diverse group constituted primarily of descendants of those African persons who were enslaved as a result of the slave trade that took place in the region for almost 400 years. Research also reveal that black influence cuts across the whole region: from religious practices and beliefs (Davis 1987; Deive 1992; Cabrera 1996; Torres-Saillant 1998, p. 3; Megenney 2000; Ayorinde 2004; Paullier 2011; Uchechukwu 2016, pp. 326–28), folktales (Aretz 1977; Wilson 1985; Pérez 2004; Fernández and Stanyek 2007), to their contributions to the linguistic enrichment of the Spanish spoken in these regions (Ortiz 1990; De Granda 1988; Megenney 1999; Lipski 1989, 1994, 1999, 2004, 2005, 2007, 2008, 2008). Even though Carmen Villegas Rogers (Villegas Rogers 2006, p. 563) states that much remains unwritten and is being downplayed by historians.

### *2.1. Consequences of Mestizaje on the Visibility of Afro-Hispanics*

The consequences of mestizaje ideology that excludes the Afro-Hispanic has far reaching negative effects on the identity, socio-economic opportunities and overall social status of this group, such as denial of collective land rights (Hooker 2005), discrimination based on racial identity (England and Anderson 1999; Andrews 2004; Wade 2008; Latorre 2012; Rochin 2016), occupational segregation (Gradín 2011), etc. On the issue of collective rights, for example, where the concept of indigenesness is specific solely to those pre-colonial peoples occupying their traditional lands since time immemorial (Morel 2006, p. 127), this automatically excludes the Afro-descendant (Hooker 2005, p. 289). Another example is the national identity question. In the words of a Honduran Minister of Culture (qtd in England and Anderson 1999, p. 5), the Garifuna is not entitled to ethnic rights if they claim ancestry to Africa or St. Vincent as these regions are not considered to be part of Honduran indo-Hispanic mestizaje national identity, a mixture of the indigenous with the European. What this implies is that the Afro-Honduran's sense of racial identity like the Afro-Dominican is imposed by its Eurocentric white environment (Torres-Saillant 1998, p. 9).

### *2.2. Creating Visibility through Curriculum Inclusion*

Citing efforts by (DeCosta 1973; Jackson 1978; Clark 1982; Alley 1994; Davis 1987; Kennedy 1987), Carmen Villegas Rogers (Villegas Rogers 2006) states that although convincing arguments for the inclusion of Afro-Latin themes in the Spanish curriculum have been advanced for more than three decades they continue to be absent in most textbooks and far from most Spanish teachers' lesson plans. David C. Alley (Alley 1994, p. 4) observed that too often American students of Spanish conceive the Hispanic world as uniform and monolithic, and black students in particular cannot relate to the material in the Spanish class because they find no connection with the content, and would wish for the inclusion of more African themes. The conclusion, however, is that inclusion of Afro-Hispanic themes in Spanish classes would benefit both white and black students alike in accommodating diversity while still maintaining unity ("ibid., p. 5").

More recent advancement in curriculum development and cross cultural studies/global studies, stress the importance of diversity and cultural understanding in a globalized world. To this end, the urge for inclusion of Africa's legacy and simultaneously Afro-Hispanics' contributions in the classroom is on the rise. Domitila De La Torre (De La Torre 2008) emphasizes the importance of African literature and music, Susan Watson (Watson 2013) advocates teaching Afro-Latin culture through film, and for Christopher L. Busey and Bárbara Cruz (Busey and Cruz 2015) Afro-Latin@s should be incorporated in the social studies curriculum. A proposal for teaching Afro-Hispanic culture as historical subjects is made by Rachel Sarah O'Toole (O'Toole 2013), and Marisa Massone and Manuel M. Muñiz (Massone and Muñiz 2017) advocate the inclusion of the study of slavery and Afro-descendants for teacher training.

These calls for a change from the Eurocentric bias in the curriculum which excludes the Afro-descendant is the onset of total elimination of the invisibility status of this group through education. Education in the form of curriculum inclusion of Afro-Hispanic peoples and culture as a general studies course will also conversely have the effect of rendering this group visible in the African continent.

### 3. Nigerian Peoples and Culture as a General Studies Course in Nigerian Universities

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic nation state with socio-cultural differences between its component ethnic groups, all of which manifests itself in differences in language, diet, dress and types of social system (Salawu and Hassan 2010, p. 28). In such a diverse setting, it is conceivable that tensions rise between the different peoples every now and then; making some sections in the society to vilify ethnicity as the scapegoat of all vices associated with the Nigerian body politic (Edewor et al. 2014, p. 70). Hence, at the university level, all students in Nigerian universities take the general studies course, Nigerian Peoples and Culture. This is a one semester, 2-credit units course which has to take this form of general studies because general studies encompasses a general knowledge of the world around us, from history, literature, politics, etc., with the aim of exposing students to a form of liberal education through which they develop and expand their awareness of their social, cultural and natural environments. The addition of this programme to the specialized courses being taken by the students, is to prepare them as graduates who go out better prepared to function in society. Every student therefore, must successfully conclude this mandatory course before graduation. This is imperative in Nigeria’s multi-ethnic setting where knowledge of the country’s diverse ethnic groups, their history, and culture can only foster unity and understanding. The course is divided into three modules (Figure 1 below):

<b>Module 1</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Unit 1 The Peoples of Southern Nigeria and their Culture in Pre-Colonial Times Part I .....	1 - 12
Unit 2 The Peoples of Southern Nigeria and their Culture in Pre-Colonial Times Part II .....	13 - 17
Unit 3 The Peoples of Northern Nigeria and their Culture in Pre-Colonial Times Part I .....	18 - 24
Unit 4 The Peoples of Northern Nigeria and their Culture in Pre-Colonial Times Part II .....	25 - 30
Unit 5 The Dynamics of The Evolution of Nigeria as a Political Unit .....	31 - 38
<b>Module 2</b> .....	<b>39</b>
Unit 1 The Culture Area of the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria .....	39 - 43
Unit 2 The Culture Area of the Rain Forest Region of Nigeria .....	44 - 48
Unit 3 The Culture Area of the Guinea Savanna Region of Nigeria .....	49 - 53
Unit 4 The Culture Area the Sudan Savanna Region of Nigeria .....	54 - 59
<b>Module 3</b> .....	<b>60</b>
Unit 1 A Historical Analysis of Economy and National Development in Nigeria .....	60 - 67
Unit 2 A Historical Analysis of Religion and National Development in Nigeria .....	68 - 74
Unit 3 A Historical Analysis of Moral Rights of Citizens in Nigeria .....	75 - 81
Unit 4 A Historical Analysis of Social Justice and Development in Nigeria .....	82 - 87
Unit 5 A Historical Analysis of Social Justice and National Development in Nigeria .....	88 - 92

Figure 1. (GST 201-Nigerian Peoples and Culture 2008, p. iii).

### *Nigerian Peoples and Culture: Course Modules*

The Modules 1, 2 and 3 in Figure 1 (above) are taken from the National Open University of Nigeria, (NOUN) General Studies course, [GST 201-Nigerian Peoples and Culture \(2008\)](#).

Module 1 is divided into five (5) units. In unit 1, students are given an overview of Nigerian peoples found in the southern part of the country and their cultures during pre-colonial times. Unit 2 focuses on those ethnic groups found in the northern regions and their cultures in pre-colonial Nigeria. It can be observed that units 1 and 2 make up the first part (Part I) of the curriculum; while units 3 and 4 make up Part II. Unit 5 concludes Module 1 with a historical account of the evolution of Nigeria as a country through the different stages of its development under British colonial rule. The outline of Module 2 shows its division into 4 units. Each Unit handles a different zone and the cultures of the peoples therein. Module 3 has five (5) units. Each unit gives a historical background of developments in the national economy, religion, social justice and rights of citizens in Nigeria.

The long term goal of this course is to create awareness that diversity in ethnicity and culture is an invaluable tool for cultural understanding and fostering unity in the country. The same goal can be employed as the *raison d'être* for the introduction of the course Afro-Hispanic Peoples and Culture in African universities: to foster cultural understanding, but more especially to break the invisibility of this group in Africa.

#### **4. Afro-Hispanic Peoples and Culture: Proposed Course Topics**

The aim of the course, Afro-Hispanic Peoples and Culture is to bring the peoples and cultures of Afro-descendants in Spanish America closer to the African continent. The overall goal is to create awareness of the presence of Afro-Hispanics in the different regions of the Americas and encourage academic collaboration between young Africans and their Afro-Hispanic counterparts. As this is a proposal modelled after the course, Nigerian Peoples and Cultures, students will take the course in one semester, and earn 2 credit units. The basis of this model is the homogeneity in diversity in the Nigerian setting as well as in Spanish America. This curriculum for African universities should be adapted to the situation in Spanish-speaking America. The topics to be covered are as follows:

##### Topics

1. The Americas before the Arrival of the Spanish;
2. Afro-Hispanics in Colonial Spanish America;
3. Afro-Hispanics in Post-colonial Spanish America;
4. Afro-Hispanic Peoples in North America;
5. Afro-Hispanic Peoples in Central America;
6. Afro-Hispanic Peoples in the Caribbean;
7. Afro-Hispanic Peoples in the Andean regions;
8. Afro-Hispanic Peoples in the Southern Cone;
9. Afro-Hispanic Contributions in Spanish America.

The topics are subject to modifications as this is a proposal. Nevertheless, it is a proposal that intends to address the gap in the history books still in use, which convey the story on slavery and its abolition without mentioning the cultural mixtures between Africans and Europeans or Africans and the indigenous peoples in Spanish-speaking America. The topics are therefore, broad outlines that should be elaborated and expanded upon in the course descriptions. For example, topic 1 necessitates that students acquire some mapping skills by identifying the Spanish-speaking world and geographical characteristics of the North, Central, Andean, and Southern Cone regions just like (De La Torre 2008, p. 21.) pointed out for Hispanic students learning about Africa. For topics 2 and 3, the *Spanish Conquistadors map* and the map of the most important *Empires of the Americas* available at [Spanish411.net](#) gives an overview of the Spanish conquistadors and the conquered regions. Recommended texts that highlight the black presence in Spanish America include Mathew Restall's *Black Conquistadors: Armed*

*Africans in Early Spanish America* (Restall 2000), and Hensel Silke's *Africans in Spanish America: Slavery, Freedoms and Identities in the Colonial Era* (Hensel 2007).

Topics 4–8 require students to watch videos that show the presence of Afro-Hispanics in the different regions. YouTube videos are useful here, because they are authentic and therefore, serve as excellent materials that showcase the diverse peoples, telling their stories, experiences as well as efforts to retain their cultures in the different regions in Spanish America (Table 1):

**Table 1.** YouTube Videos of Afro-Hispanics in the Americas.

YouTube Videos	Websites
Afro-Argentino	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6536IZD1f90">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6536IZD1f90</a>
Afro-Colombiano	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XaPjcrxWE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4XaPjcrxWE</a>
Afro-Mexicano	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pjISf0M9XU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5pjISf0M9XU</a>
Afro-Boliviano	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANReMTWjRVU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ANReMTWjRVU</a>
Afro-Peruano	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gi6dsB3T1kk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gi6dsB3T1kk</a>
Afro-Ecuatoriano	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgesTzMCwnw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgesTzMCwnw</a>
Afro-Chileno	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02oZwkjkYEo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=02oZwkjkYEo</a>
Afro-Paraguayo	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teQ31xrINPk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=teQ31xrINPk</a>
Afro-Costarricense	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6NHWMNmjJk">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6NHWMNmjJk</a>
Afro-Guatemalteco	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZvohb31P_Q">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZvohb31P_Q</a>

Furthermore, *Black in Latin America*, a PBS documentary film series developed by Henry Louis Gates (2011) provides historical records of contemporary Black life in Latin America. Recommended is also George Reid Andrews's *Afro-Latin America, 1800–2000* (Andrews 2004).

In handling topic 9, similarities between African and Afro-Hispanic cultures should first be highlighted because otherwise dissimilarities leave negative impacts when they are first discussed (Tuttle et al. 1979, pp. 177–82). Also of relevance are the contributions of Afro-Hispanics to music, dance, literature, religion, cuisine, etc., in Spanish American society. Gomez, Michael *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora* (2005) can serve as reference text because it gives specific dates and places where the African diaspora began with valuable information on Afro-Hispanic contributions in Latin America. Also George Reid Andrews's *Afro-Latin America, 1800–2000* (2004) focuses on the struggles of Afro-descendants for inclusion, social equality, human rights, and citizenship. It is also important to emphasize that African contributions in Spanish America is not limited to food, dance, or literature alone. The enrichment of the Spanish spoken in Spanish America also has its roots in many African linguistic repertoire. A recommended reference text is John Lipski (2005), *A History of Afro-Hispanic Language: Five Centuries, Five Continents*. Further reference texts for the course include Ramsay and Tillis, *The Afro-Hispanic Reader and Anthology* (2018), and Ingrid Watson Miller, *Afro-Hispanic Literature: An Anthology of Hispanic Writers of African Ancestry* (1991).

Finally, the topics in the course, Afro-Hispanic Peoples and Culture incorporate the cultures of the different peoples of African ancestry in the course of the class. More especially, the cultural links that exist between Africa and the Afro-Hispanic world. The reference materials, videos, and books recommended are based on historical research and evidence, as well as current narratives by Afro-Hispanics themselves. The YouTube videos provide undeniable proof of the presence of Afro-descendants all over Spanish-speaking America; and create awareness of their immense contribution and legacy.

## 5. Conclusions

Looking forward, Kwame Dixon (Dixon 2006) rightly said that after centuries of invisibility, a powerful black cultural renaissance is flowering in the Americas, and the cultural, historical, and sociological relevance of Afro-Latin America is now the subject of vigorous examination. Not since the Human Rights Minority Report of 1995 has there been such attention given to peoples of African descent in the Americas. Moreover, with the UN International Decade for People of African Descent (2015–2024),

international agencies are working hand in hand with Afro-Hispanic non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to create visibility of Afro-descendants in Spanish America. Education in the form of inclusion of African and Afro-Hispanic themes is also creating visibility of Afro-descendants in Spanish-speaking America. This paper concludes that the proposed curriculum is important for correcting the invisibility of Afro-descendants in Africa, especially among the young generation and, if adopted, will not only serve as an effective tool for sustainable cultural exchange and academic collaboration between Afro-Hispanic peoples and Africans, it will also bring the whole of Spanish-speaking America an inch closer to Africa.

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