

AAS 310
BLACK WOMEN IN THE AMERICAS
Spring 2016

Professor:

Place:

Day/Time:

Office/ Office hours:

Course Description: This course presents an interdisciplinary body of scholarship on the social, political, economic, cultural and historical contexts of Black women's lives in the United States and across the Americas, with a particular focus on Black women's roles in the development of democratic ideas. We will also focus on the relationship between representations and realities of Black women. One of the central questions we will ask is who constitutes as a black woman? Considering the experiences of mixed-race African American women, Black women in Latin America and the Caribbean, and queer Black women will allow us to consider the ways that race, gender, sexuality and nation operate.

Course Objectives:

1. To examine the history, development and significance of Black Women's Studies as a discipline that evolved from the intersection of grassroots activism, "womanist" knowledge and the quest for human rights in a democracy.
2. To examine the terms "Feminist Theory", "Black Feminist Theory" and "Womanist Theory" as conceptual frameworks for knowledge production about Black women's lives.
3. To examine "intersectionality" as a critical factor in Black women's lived experiences in America.
4. To critically analyze stereotypes and images of Black womanhood and the ideologies surrounding these images and to explore the social, political and policy implications of these images.
5. To introduce students to an interdisciplinary body of feminist research, critical essays, prose, fiction, poetry and films by and about Black American women.

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will define the term "feminism" and critically analyze the complex relationship between diverse "feminisms," including mainstream feminism and Black feminism.
2. Students will apply the concept of "intersectionality" to its relevance to Black women's lived experiences in the Americas.
3. Students will articulate the origins and socio-political implications of specific images and stereotypes surrounding Black womanhood, including contested images in popular culture, as well as visual representations used to resist and redefine stereotypes.
4. Students will synthesize the impact of race, gender, class and sexuality on social movements in U.S., Caribbean and Latin American histories.

Required Texts:

1. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* by Audre Lorde
2. *Transcending Blackness: From the New Millennium Mulatta to the Exceptional Multiracial* by Ralina L. Joseph
3. *Still Brave: The Evolution of Black Women's Studies*. Edited by James, Foster, Guy-Sheftall
4. *The Farming of Bones* by Edwidge Danticat

These books are located at the UNLV Bookstore. You can also find them at online bookstores. You need to have the books by the first week of class.

Additional readings will be assigned from research journals or other sources. These readings will be posted on WebCampus/Blackboard. Also, see **Selected Bibliography** for additional enrichment on topics studied in class.

Weekly Schedule:

*Subject to change as needed by instructor

Week	Date	Topic	Assignments/Deadlines
1		Introduction to Black Women in the Americas	Read Syllabus Buy books
2		Black Feminist Thought	Black Feminist Thought: preface, chapter 1, 4, 10, 11 Define/Identify controlling images, Intersectionality
3		Poetry is not a Luxury: Black Women and re-defining knowledge	Sister Outsider: chapters starting on page 36,40,45, 53, 60
4		Sister Outsider cont'd	Sister Outsider: chapters starting on page 66, 110, 114, 124, 134, 176)
5		Still Brave: Black Woman's Studies	<i>Still Brave</i> , (3-22, 31-46,157-171)
6		Still Brave: Health and Body	Read: <i>Still Brave</i> (192-214,268-282, 361-2)
7		Still Brave: Moving Ahead	Read: <i>Still Brave</i> (372-82,413-430, 435-440)
8		Mixed-race representations	Transcending Blackness: 1 st third
9		Mixed-race representations	Transcending Blackness: 2 nd third

10		Mixed-race representations	Transcending Blackness
11		Black woman writers	<i>The Farming of Bones</i>
12		Black woman writers	<i>The Farming of Bones</i>
13		Black woman Writers	<i>The Farming of Bones</i>
14		The future...	Hong, Grace, "The Future of Our Worlds: Black Feminism and the Politics of Knowledge in the University under Globalization"
15		Wrap-up and Presentations	Presentation/Wrap up

Assignments. 100 total points

3 Reading Responses: (5 each= 15)

To familiarize you with the conventions of academic writing, you are required to address the following questions in the following format: (a) indicate the text's thesis and sub-argument. In other words, what is the author's main argument and what evidence is used to support the argument; (b) what basic assumptions underlie and enable the author's argument. What spoken and unspoken questions does the author address; (c) indicate author(s)' audience or audiences— who is being addressed? 2 pages.

Note: The conventions of academic reading and writing require the skill of "reading between the lines." Thus, simple dismissal of authors' arguments will not serve anyone well. Note where the authors' argument is faulty and how it might be strengthened. Also, feel free to examine the authors' writing for the ways they make a successful argument. Pay attention to this and learn from their success.

Presentation of Social Issue: (10)

As you familiarize yourself with issues facing Black women and the concerns of Black feminist scholarship, it becomes necessary to spend time researching particular issues to enhance our collective understanding. You will choose an issue of your choice to research in-depth and present to the class (you will turn in a 2-3 page report, please bring handouts for your classmates). Issues include, but are not limited to health, motherhood, poverty, violence, prisons, media, sexuality, and education. Choose an area outside of your research specialty. You will sign up for this at the beginning of the semester.

Lead Discussion of reading (5 points)

At the beginning of the semester you will choose one class session to co-facilitate a discussion of the readings. This will help you practice your analysis of scholarly readings in a supportive setting and see how the class is interpreting the readings. You will provide a very brief overview of the readings, a list of key concepts and discussion questions to pose to your classmates. Since

we are interested in the relationship between the representation and material, you will bring in examples of the representational to facilitate our discussion. This can include video, music, articles, additional readings, activity, etc., The format of the conversation/discussion is up to you. Again, because women of color scholarship includes non-Western ways of learning and knowing, you are encouraged to do the same and explore creative means. Email discussion questions to me by noon the day before you are scheduled to lead the discussion.

Final Project/Paper (due last day of class): 40 points

The final class project is designed to help you synthesize what you encountered in the class in a way that is productive and meaningful for you. In that spirit, you have 2 options to demonstrate your understanding of and ability to apply the class material to scholarship:

1. Paying attention to the ways that radical Black feminist scholars are continually engaged with communities and committed to public pedagogy, you will design (ideally, execute if at all possible) a public scholarship project. We will participate in an event along these lines during the 2nd week of class. The sky is the limit here, so if there is something you have always wanted to do, this is the time to do it. You may complete a funding proposal (to actually submit to an organization, department or agency), complete the project itself or submit a well-researched, executable project proposal. The project must address the concerns of this class. Ideally your project will contribute to your own scholarship. The WOCC at UW emerged out of a similar class assignment from Angela Ginorio and Michelle Habell-Pallan. We will speak with current member of the WOCC at UW about their approaches to community-engaged scholarship.
2. Write a research paper that pays attention to the concerns of this class (5-7 pages). We can discuss your topic one on one. Again, choose something that will contribute to your own work-do not write a paper for the sake of writing a paper.

*Respecting that there are different approaches to scholarship and different disciplines present in this class—you are asked to do work that fits your work and voice. A 1-2 page proposal of your paper/project will be due before spring break.

In Class Activities (unannounced): 30 points

Read more about topics covered in class:

Selected Bibliography

Black Women's Studies

Bambara, Toni Cade. (Ed.). (1970). *The Black Woman: An Anthology*. NY: Mentor.

Hine, Darlene (1994) *Hine Sight: Black Women and the Re-Construction of American History*. Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press

Hull, Gloria, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith, eds. (1982) *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But Some of Us are Brave: Black Women's Studies*. NY: Feminist Press.

Lerner, Gerda (Editor). (1972) *Black Women in White America: A Documentary History*. NY: Pantheon.

Smith, Barbara. (Ed.). (1983). *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*. New York: Kitchen Table Press.

Walker, Alice. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*. NY: Harcourt, Brace Jovanovich.

Black Feminist Theory

Collins, Patricia Hill (1990). *Black Feminist Thought*. NY: Routledge.

Davis, Angela. (1983). *Women Race & Class*. NY: Vintage Books.

Golden, Marita and Susan Shreve (1995). *Skin Deep*. NY: Doubleday.

hooks, bell (1981). *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. Boston: South End Press.

James, Joy and T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, eds. (2001) *The Black feminist Reader*. Malden MA: Blackwell Publishers.

James, Stanlie and Abena Busia. (1993) *Theorizing Black Feminisms*. NY: Routledge.

Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider*. NY: The Crossing Press.

Mullings, Leith. (1997) *On Our Own Terms: Race, Class, and Gender in the Lives of African American Women*. Routledge Press.

Walker, Rebecca, editor (1995). *To Be Real: Telling the Truth and Changing the Face of Feminism*. NY: Anchor Books.

Images and Ideologies

Craig, Maxine L. (2002). *Ain't I A Beauty Queen? Black Women, Beauty and the Politics of Race*. NY: Oxford University Press.

Davis, Angela (1998). *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*. NY: Pantheon Books.

Manring, M.M. (1998). *Slave in a box: The Strange Career of Aunt Jemima*. Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia.

Pough, Gwendolyn (2004). *Check It While I Wreck It, Black Womanhood, Hip-Hop Culture and the Public Sphere*. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Religion, Faith and Spirituality

Frederick, Marla F. (2003). *Between Sundays: Black Women and Everyday Struggles of Faith*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Willis, Jan (2001). *Dreaming Me: An African American Spiritual Journey*. NY: Riverhead Books.

Health and Well-being

Villarosa, Linda, editor (1994). *Body and Soul: The Black Women's guide to Physical Health and Emotional Well-Being*. NY: HarperCollins.

Wyatt, Gail E. (1997). *Stolen Women: Reclaiming Our Sexuality, Taking Back Our Lives*. NY: John Wiley and Sons.

Activism

Cash, Floris Barnett (2001). *African American Women and Social Action: The Clubwomen and Volunteerism from Jim Crow to the New Deal, 1896-1936*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Neverdon-Morton, Cynthia (1989). *Afro-American Women of the South and the Advancement of the Race, 1895-1925*. Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press.

White, Deborah Gray (1999). *Too Heavy A Load: Black Women in Defense of Themselves 1894-1994*. NY: W.W. Norton & Co.

Yee, Shirley. (1992). *Black Women Abolitionists A Study in Activism, 1828-1860*. Knoxville: The Univ. of Tennessee Press.

Work and Economic Issues

Amott, T. & Matthaei, J. (1991). *Race Gender and Work*. Boston: South End Press.

Hunter, Tera (1997). *To 'Joy My Freedom*. Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press

Jones, J. (1985). *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow*. NY: Vintage.

Slavery

Child, L. Maria (Ed.). (1973). *Linda Brent: Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. NY: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.

Gutman, H. (1976). *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925*. NY: Pantheon.

White, Deborah Gray (1985). *Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South*. NY: Norton & Co.

Biography

Chisholm, Shirley (1970). *Unbought and Unbossed*. NY: Avon Books.

Gill, LaVerne (1997). *African-American Women In Congress*. NJ: Rutgers.

Grant, Joanne (1998) *Ella Baker: Freedom Bound*. NY: Wiley & Sons.

Lemert, Charles and Esme Bhan (1998). *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper*. NY: Rowman & Littlefield, Inc.

Lorde, Audre. *Zami*. Freedom, Calif: The Crossing Press.

Mills, Kay (1994). *This Little Light of Mine: The Life of Fannie Lou Hamer*. NY: Plume.

Painter, Nell Irvin *Sojourner Truth A Life A Symbol*. NY: Norton.

Richardson, Marilyn, editor (1987). *Maria Stewart, America's First Black Woman Political Writer*. Bloomington: Indiana U. Press.

Scanlon, Jennifer, editor. (1999) *Significant Contemporary Feminists*. Connecticut: Greenwood Press.

Sterling, Dorothy (1979) *Black Foremothers: Three Lives*. Old Westbury, NY: The Feminist Press.

Warren, Wini (1999). *Black Women Scientists in the United States*. IN: Indiana Univ. Press.

**SELECTED SOCIAL SCIENCE JOURNALS
FOR ARTICLES RELEVANT TO BLACK WOMEN'S STUDIES
All located in USF library –Tampa 2nd Floor**

Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies
Feminist Studies
Women's Studies
Psychology of Women Quarterly
Sage: A Scholarly Journal on Black Women
SIGNS
Women's Studies International Forum
Women's Studies Quarterly
Women and Therapy
Gender and History
Gender and Society
Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism

SELECTED WEBSITES –check these out!
www.somethingwithin.com (very interesting!)
www.arc.org (Applied Research Center)
www.umbc.edu/cwit/
www.childrensdefense.org/
www.blackwomenshealth.org
<http://www.madamcjwalker.com/>
www.nyhistory.com/harriettubman/life.htm

<http://www.library.ucsb.edu/subjects/blackfeminism/>

Academic Misconduct— Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV's function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <https://www.unlv.edu/studentconduct/student-conduct>.

Copyright—The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves with and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)— **Disability Resource Center (DRC)**—The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you. If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

Religious Holidays Policy— Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor **within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses**, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit: <http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

Transparency in Learning and Teaching—The University encourages application of the transparency method of constructing assignments for student success. Please see these two links for further information:

<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/teachingandlearning>

<https://www.unlv.edu/provost/transparency>

Incomplete Grades—The grade of I—Incomplete—can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student’s control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving “I” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

Tutoring and Coaching—The **Academic Success Center (ASC)** provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/asc> or call [702-895-3177](tel:702-895-3177). The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of the SSC (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TEB second floor.

UNLV Writing Center—One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The student’s Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>.

Rebelmail—By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students’ Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV’s official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students’ e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always @unlv.nevada.edu. **Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.**

Final Examinations—The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at: <http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars>.

Library statement:

Students may consult with a librarian on research needs. For this class, the Subject Librarian is (https://www.library.unlv.edu/contact/librarians_by_subject). UNLV Libraries provides resources to support students’ access to information. Discovery, access, and use of information are vital skills for academic work and for successful post-college life. Access library resources and ask questions at <https://www.library.unlv.edu/>.