African and African Diaspora Studies
Department

AFR 317D/WGS 301
Introduction to Black Women’s Studies

Spring 2016
MWF 1-2pm
Location: BUR 224

Instructor: Professor Gross
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512-471-4126
Office GWB 3.110
Office Hours: Wednesday 2-3pm

Course Description
This course examines black womanhood in America. Although grounded in history, we will use a broad range of materials and read across decades and disciplines to incorporate the voices and experiences of everyday black women as well as famous figures. Whenever possible we will use films and documentaries to round out our understanding of black women in popular culture and literature as well as in social movements and politics.

Course Objectives
Students will gain a solid foundation in the history of black women in the United States from contact to present. At the same time, students will learn to read and think critically about race, gender, and sexuality as it occurs in the lives of black women as well as in the scholarship about them.

Required Texts

Grading

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<tr>
<td>Critical Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Exams</td>
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<td>Final Paper</td>
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Grading Rubric

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On examinations and quizzes, you will be responsible for content from lectures as well as from the reading. Lectures will highlight material covered in the readings, but will also discuss material that is not duplicated in the course readings. Therefore, in order to have a chance at doing well in this course, you must attend ALL lectures ON TIME and
complete ALL of the reading assignments. If you miss a lecture, I will not provide you with lecture notes. No lecture notes or materials may be published in any form or distributed via the Internet. You may not record my lectures.

Course Policies

Statement on Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities who require special accommodations need to get a letter that documents the disability from the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students (471-6259 voice or 471-4641 TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing). This letter should be presented to the instructor in each course at the beginning of the semester and accommodations needed should be discussed at that time. Five business days before an exam the student should remind the instructor of any testing accommodations that will be needed. See the following website for more information: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/providing.php

Statement on Electronic Communication
In this course e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class work and announcements. We will also use Online—a Web-based course management system with password-protected access at http://courses.utexas.edu—to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to give you online surveys. You can find support in using Online at the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., so plan accordingly. I will not respond to emails that ask about information that has been covered in the syllabus, a handout, or otherwise communicated in class.

Policy on Late or Missed Assignments/Examinations
No late assignments will be accepted. Any assignment not turned in during class on the day it is due will receive a zero. Make-up in-class assignments, quizzes and/or examinations will only be given with a documented reason for absence. If the Professor determines that the excuse given for missing class is not valid or verifiable, the student will receive a zero (0) for the examination.

*Note: Make-up examinations and/or quizzes will not be given to accommodate your travel plans or non-emergency family events, etc. Please plan accordingly.

Statement on Religious Holidays
Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss an examination, work assignment, or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence. It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin that you must notify each of your instructors at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day.

University of Texas Honor Code
The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. As such, scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated in any form. Any student who violates the University's rules on scholastic dishonesty is subject to
disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. For further information visit the Student Judicial Services website: www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)
If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual’s behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal

Emergency Evacuation Policy
Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building. If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless you’re given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

Use of Electronic Devices
You are permitted to use a laptop computer or tablet (i.e. iPad) only if you are using it to take notes or engage in activity pertinent to the course. If you are caught using a computer to get access Facebook, Twitter, or any other non-academic related activity, I will ban the use of such devices in the lecture hall/classroom.

Class Etiquette/ Code of Conduct:
Please make sure that all cellular phones and beepers/pagers are turned off while you are in class so as not to disturb others.

You will be expelled from the lecture hall/classroom:
• if your phone rings during the lecture
• if you disturb others by holding a conversation while the professor is speaking
• if you send text messages or play games on a handheld device
• if you read any materials not pertaining to this class.

Lateness disrupts the classroom environment. Chronic lateness (3 or more times) will result in the loss of 10% of your participation grade. More than 3 unexcused absences will result in a zero participation grade. **Sleeping in class counts as an absence.**

Respect the classroom environment.
Week 1
Wednesday, January 20, 2016  (Introduction and Overview)

Friday, January 22  (African American Women's History - Background)

What are the central issues and omissions that Mitchell is calling attention to?

Week 2
Monday, January 25  (Old and New Worlds Collide)
A Shining Thread of Hope, Ch.1, “A New and Alien World.”
Black Women in America, pp. 10-14

How does enslavement take root in America? Does it have unique consequences for black women?

Wednesday, January 27  (Slavery's Impact on Black Femininity)
Daina Berry, Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe, Ch 1, “I Had to Work Hard, Plow, and Go and Split Wood Jus' Like a Man’: Skill, Gender, and Productivity in Agricultural Settings.” (Online)

How was skill and unskilled defined with respect black women fieldworkers?

Friday, January 29  (Slavery, Femininity, and Labor)
Daina Berry, Swing the Sickle for the Harvest is Ripe, Ch.2, “Privileges and Pain of Nonagricultural Labor.” (Online)

Be prepared to compare and contrast enslaved black women's labor.

Week 3
Monday, February 1  (The Legacy of Two Stereotypes)

What is a stereotype and what kind of power does it have?

Wednesday, February 3  (Black Women’s forms of resistance)
A Shining Thread of Hope, Ch. 3, “Survival and Other Forms of Resistance.”
Black Women in America, pp. 27-42, 47-52 & 54-65

What are the varied forms of black women’s resistance?

Friday, February 5  Research Day
Week 4
Monday, February 8  
(Civil War's Bloody Eruption)
*A Shining Thread of Hope*, Ch. 5, “The War for Freedom.”

What roles do black women play in the battle for freedom?

Wednesday, February 10  
(Reconstruction, Jim Crow and Wage Labor)
*A Shining Thread of Hope*, Ch. 6, “Free Women and the Search for Freedom.”
*Black Women in America*, pp. 94-114 & pp.173-190

What challenges did freedwomen and their families face in the South?

Friday, February 12  
(The North No Oasis)
Kali Nicole Gross, *Colored Amazons*, Ch.2, “Service Savors of Slavery.” (Online)

What are the challenges that black women faced moving north?

Week 5
Monday, February 15  
Exam #1

Wednesday, February 17  
(Jim Crow: Black Leisure and Health)
Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom*, Chapters 7-8 (Online)

Why did white employers and the black middle-class have concerns about how young black domestics spent their non-working hours?

Friday, February 19  
Research Day

Week 6
Monday, February 22  
(Black Beauty and Female Entrepreneurship)
Tiffany Gill, *Beauty Shop Politics*, Ch. 1, “Beauty Pioneers: Racial Uplift and Gender in the Creation of a Black Business Community.” (Online)
Anna Julia Cooper, “The Status of Woman in America” (WOF) pp. 43-49

What was at issue among black female activists in debates over the appropriate strategies for black progress?

Wednesday, February 24  
(Ida B. Wells’ Anti-Lynching Crusade)
Ida B. Wells, “Lynch Law in America,” (1900) (WOF)

Was lynching the only issue that angered Wells?
What was lynching and how did Wells explain the practice?

Friday, February 26  
(Ida B. Wells’ Anti-Lynching Crusade Cont.)
Darlene Clark Hine, “Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West: Preliminary Thoughts on the Culture of Dissemblance.” (WOF)
*Black Women in America*, pp. 194-211
What was the culture of dissemblance and why did black women believe that it would protect them from rape, the threat of rape, and the negative images regarding their sexuality?


**Week 7**

**Monday, February 29**  
*(Black Women, Crime and Violence)*

*Colored Amazons*, Ch. 3, “Tricking the Tricks.” (Online)

*Black Women in America*, pp. 150-161

*Are black female criminals dissembling as Darlene Clark Hine suggests?*

**Wednesday, March 1**  
*(Pushing Back Against Racist Tides)*

Talitha LeFlouria, “‘The Hand that Rocks the Cradle Cuts Cordwood’: Exploring Black Women’s Lives and Labor in Georgia’s Convict Camps, 1865–1917.” (Online)

*How did convict leasing impact back womanhood?*

**Friday, March 3**  
*(Defending Their Name)*

*A Shining Thread of Hope*, Ch. 8, “No Mountain Too High”

Alice Dunbar-Nelson, “The Negro Woman and the Ballot.” (WOF)

*Does racial progress depend more on men to play patriarchal roles or on women to overcome sexual and racial oppression?*

**Week 8**

**Monday, March 7**  
*(Great Migration)*

*A Shining Thread of Hope*, Ch. 9, “They Carried Their Freedom Bags.”

*What did migration offer southern blacks?*

**Wednesday, March 9**  
*(Morality and Sexuality in the 1920s)*

Cheryl D. Hicks, “‘In Danger of Becoming Morally Depraved’: Single Black Women, Working-Class Black Families, and New York State’s Wayward Minor Law, 1917–1928.” (Online)

*Describe the intersection between young women’s sexuality, poverty, and the law.*

**Friday, March 10**  
*Research Day*

**Week 9**

**Spring Break**  
*March 14 –March 18*

**Week 10**

**Monday, March 21**  
*(Black Women and the Blues)*


*What can a focus on female blues singers tell us about sexual politics?*
Wednesday, March 23  
(The Great Depression)  
*A Shining Thread of Hope*, Ch. 10, “The Great Depression.”  
*Black Women in America*, pp. 252-269

How does the Depression influence the lives of black people generally and black women in particular?

How did some black women respond to New Deal politics?

Friday, March 25  
(Gender, Sports, and Respectability)  
Rita Liberti, “We Were Like Ladies, We Just Played Basketball Like Boys”: African American Womanhood and Competitive Basketball at Bennett College, 1928-1942 *Journal of Sport History* Vol. 26, Number 3 (Fall 1999): 567-584. (Online)

How did class and ideas about femininity influence how black colleges and universities discontinued women’s basketball?

How was Bennett College different?

Week 11  
Monday, March 28  
(Civil Rights – North and South)  
*A Shining Thread of Hope*, Ch. 11, “Towards Freedom.”  
*Black Women in America*, pp. 300-302

Documentary: *Emmett Till, The Untold Story (Part 1)*

Wednesday, March 30  
(Civil Rights – Mamie Bradley)  
Ruth Feldstein, “I Wanted the Whole World to See”: Race Gender, and Constructions of Motherhood in the Death of Emmett Till.” (Online)

Why is it important to address the role of Mamie Till Bradley (Emmett Till’s mother)?

Documentary: *Emmett Till, The Untold Story (Part 2)*

Friday, April 1  
(Emmett Till-The Untold Story)

Week 12  
Monday, April 4  
(Civil Rights – Ella Baker and Dr. King)  

How would you characterize Ella Baker and Dr. King’s relationship as civil rights activists?

Wednesday, April 6  
(Civil Rights – Fannie Lou Hamer)  

Who was Fannie Lou Hamer and why would a former sharecropper be so significant to civil rights activism in Mississippi and the nation?
Documentary: *Four Little Girls* (Part 1)

**Friday, April 8**

*(Four Little Girls)*

Documentary: *Four Little Girls* (Part 2)

**Week 13**

**Monday, April 11**

*(Black Power and Female Radicalism)*

Collier-Thomas/Franklin, Chapters 11, "Black Women and Black Power." (Online)

*What types of problems did black women experience as members of the Black Panther Party?*

**Wednesday, April 13**

*(Black Women and the Panthers)*

Collier-Thomas/Franklin, Chapters 12, "Ironies of the Saint: Malcolm X, Black Women, and the Price of Protection."

*According to Griffin, why did so many black women revere Malcolm X?*

Documentary: *Free Angela Davis and All Political Prisoners* (Part 1)

**Friday, April 15,**

*(Black Power & Gendered Leadership)*

Collier-Thomas/Franklin, Ch. 13, "Gender Politics and Leadership in the Black Panther Party, 1966-71." (Online)

*Black Women in America*, pp. 585-609

*Documentary: Free Angela Davis and All Political Prisoners* (Part 2)

**Week 14**

**Monday, April 18**

*(Shirley Chisholm and National Politics)*

A Black Feminist Statement: Combahee River Collective (WOF)

*What were some of the difficulties that black feminist organizations faced?*

*Documentary: Chisholm 72* (In Class)

**Wednesday, April 20**

*(Free Joanne)*

Collier-Thomas/Franklin, Ch. 14, "Joanne is You and Joanne is Me": A Consideration of African American Women and the "Free Joan Little Movement, 1974-75." (Online)

*Why was the North Carolina trial of Joan Little so important to gender politics nation-wide?*

**Friday, April 22**

Research Day

**Week 15**

**Monday, April 25**

Exam #2

**Wednesday, April 27**

*(The Anita Hill)*


*What can the Anita Hill experience tell us about the history of violence against women and sexual harassment in particular?*
Friday, April 29  
(Sister Outsiders)
Cheryl Clarke, “Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance.” (WOF)
Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference.” (WOF)

Do you agree with Cheryl Clarke’s discussion and how is black lesbianism central to black female radicalism?

(Policing Black Women’s Sexual Expression)
Kimberly Springer, “Policing Black Women's Sexual Expression: The Case of Sarah Jones and Renee Cox” Genders Issue 54 (Summer 2011) (Online)

Are black women always already defined as sexual outcasts?

Week 16
Monday, May 2  
(Black Women & Hip Hop)

How does Pough deal with gender politics in the late twentieth century?
What is her concern about sexism generally but especially in Hip Hop?

Wednesday, May 4  
(Final Paper Clinic)

Friday, May 6  
(Final Paper Clinic)
Final Paper
Sample Figures

Activists/Freedom Fighters/Politicians
Phillis Wheatley
Cherry Turner
Harriet Tubman
Ida B. Wells-Barnett
Anna Julia Cooper
Ella Baker
Minnie Jocelyn Elders
Jo Ann Robinson
Rosa Parks
Assata Shakur
Barbara Jordan

Authors/Entertainers/Artist
Sissieretta Jones
Edmonia Lewis
Josephine Baker
Ma Rainey
Lena Horne
Lorraine Hansbery
Zora Neale Hurston
Kathleen Battle
Mahalia Jackson
Marian Anderson
Billie Holiday
Aretha Franklin
Toni Morrison

Inventors/Scientists/Educators
Mary McLeod Bethune
Bessie Coleman
Patricia Bath
Mae Jemison
Fannie Coppin
Madame C.J. Walker
Septima Clark
Marian Wright Edelman
Mary Jane Patterson