

**AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES PROGRAM
BLACK WOMEN IN HISTORY
FALL 2015**

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Class time: Th 6:00 – 8:50 PM
Classroom: CCSB 1.0202

SYLLABUS

This course is an exploration into the history of African American women. How African American women are centered in Black communities, their movement toward “Womanism/Feminism”, and the many novel issues they face in seeking self-fulfillment will be the major topics covered. We will begin in Africa and end with Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tomet founders of the movement “Black Lives Matters.” We will draw essentially on the precept of Alice Walker that “womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender.” Intersectionality as a concept for critical thinking and analysis also will guide our discussions and reading of literature on the experiences and history of African American women. Anna J. Cooper will be essential to our discourse in this regard. She, drawing on antecedent African American women, initiated the conceptual framework for future Black women to explore their lives more critically within and outside of the boundaries of the African American community and critical calls to sisterhood during the embryonic stages of 20th century white feminism.

In this seminar course, we will read, review, and discuss the salient essays and writings by and about African American women. Each week, students will lead our discussion on the assigned readings for the class period, and at the end of the course a presentation and paper will be expected in which primary, secondary, and tertiary data and information will be used in the synthesis. Such paper will be presented in the Student Conference on Gender, Race, and Violence to be held in the last weekend of our Fall term.

The textbooks for the class are:

Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Words of Fire

Quintard Taylor, Shirley Ann Wilson Moore. African American Women Confront the West.

Dorothy Sterling and Mary Helen Washington, We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century

Attendance:

Regular attendance is crucial in a discussion-centered course such as this. Each student is allowed 1 absence without penalty; each subsequent absence will lower the final grade by 10%. More than THREE absences will automatically result in a failing grade. Two times late will be equivalent to one absence. If you leave the classroom for a period longer than 10 minutes, your attendance points will also decrease. Students can make up for up to two classes when presenting an extra section. Unauthorized use of cell phones or computers will result in deductions from your attendance and participation points. You must consult your Blackboard records to make sure I have accurate attendance records. You have only 36 hours to inform me of any mistake in your attendance record. Quizzes and team work cannot be made up when you are absent.

Office appointments: Please, e-mail me or call me to cancel your appointment if you are not able to meet with me. If you miss an appointment participation points will be deducted from your final grade.

Class discussions. They are designed to encourage the class to express opinions, observations, share experiences, and ask questions. We should use this time to clarify understanding of concepts encountered in course materials.

Accessibility resources. A variety of services are available to students who need special accommodation to succeed and enjoy this class. Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented medical needs. Please notify CASS, Union Building, First Floor, so I can receive instructions from that office. Here is the link to their website <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/>.

Group activities will be arranged periodically to allow students to become acquainted with other class members and their ideas. They also provide opportunities for students to see the application of the principles introduced in course materials. The frequency and quality of the group activities largely depends on the cooperation of group members.

Grades will be determined by students’ performance in the following areas:

Grading Policy:

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|--------------------------|-----|
| • Conference Paper | 25% |
| • Presentations | 10% |
| • Journals | 55% |
| • Participation in class | 10% |

Final grades will be based on the total number of weighted points earned in the course.

Grade Scale

A = 90 – 100%

B = 80 – 89%

C = 70 -79%

F = 69 and under

It is highly recommended to visit Blackboard periodically. You can find your grades, post messages, form discussion groups and be reminded of tests, assignments, events, etc.

Late work policy:

- **All assignments are due on or before the assigned dates.**
- **There will be no make ups for class participation or quizzes in class.**
- **Papers placed underneath the instructor's office door or in her box won't be accepted if they are late.**

It is important that you understand the reasons why you receive the grade you do. I encourage students to discuss the graded papers, quizzes or exams with me, but such conversation can only take place 24-hours after students receive their graded paper or quizzes.

Students' responsibilities

- Students will complete all procedures required to drop the course if they desire to obtain a "W."
- Students will be active in their own learning process, obtain knowledge on their own, and share their knowledge with their peers and teacher.
- Students are expected to read assigned material prior to class. They should be prepared to answer questions related to material in the text and may be called on to do so. Students should also be prepared to ask questions about issues of interest or for clarifications of concepts during class.
- Students are expected to show respect for the instructor, guests and one another regardless of opinion, cultural values and other group differences.
- Communications with your peers and your professor must follow the protocol you will read at <http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor> Participation points will be deducted when your messages do not follow the conventions listed in the site referenced.
- When requested to meet with your professor in her office, you must schedule a meeting or meet her during office hours during the next 36 hours. Failing to meet with her in this case will result in a deduction of your participation points.
- Students should give one another equal opportunity to express opinions, experiences and ideas.
- All students should be supportive of a cooperative learning environment in the classrooms.
- Students are encouraged to attend all sessions, arrive on time, and remain in attendance until each session is formally ended. When a test is scheduled, students will not be allowed to leave the classroom before finishing the test, with the exception of documented medical problems. A significant proportion of the learning process originates from interaction with others and in the give-and-take discussions relevant to readings. Because our class represents a system of learning, your presence or absence affects and enables the learning process of every other class member.
- Students will not use cell phones or other electronic devices during our class sessions unless we are in our research period and used only for that purpose. In cases of emergency, students must notify the instructor of the need to answer a call and will be allowed to exit the classroom for a brief period of time to take the call.
- **Your classmates and your syllabus will be a good source to inquire on what you missed in class when absent.**

Participation (10%)

Your professor as well as the other members of your team will grade your participation. Evaluation will be based on punctuality, attendance, preparedness, number and quality of interventions, willingness to take notes for yourself and for your team, and collaboration with your team and the rest of the class to attain our learning goals. When you are absent you are missing information and making it more difficult for you to do well in the class and your participation points decrease. I believe that all of us need to contribute to the educational growth of the whole group. These are some of the basic points regarding participation followed by a basic description of participation points.

Follow these rules for an enjoyable class:

1. **Listen actively** -- respect others when they are talking.
2. Avoid pin-pong conversations or verbal duels.

3. Other students will be waiting for their **turn** to speak and we will respect the order.
4. Once you have intervened, allow the next student to express her/his opinion, even if that opinion is not directly related to your intervention.
5. Practice **timely attendance**.
6. Do not be afraid to **challenge respectfully one another** by asking questions, but refrain from personal attacks -- focus on ideas.
7. **Participate to the fullest of your ability** -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
8. **The goal is not to agree** -- it is about hearing and exploring divergent perspectives.
9. **Some students** may have problems when trying to speak loud. I will try my best to repeat their statements and will not ask them to raise their voice. I have learned that we have more participation when we do not demand a loud voice as a requisite to express opinions or share information.

Conference Paper (25%):

You will participate in a panel of three students presenting within the series "Race, Authority and Violence in the 21st century." Every class, we will devote time to work on your paper. Students will bring information on primary, secondary or tertiary sources to report on; and the other members of your panel will function as editors of your text as it develops. The final paper will consist of 12 - 15 pages, but your presentation will be reduced to 7 – 10 pages so it can fit the 15 -20 minute length to present a paper in a conference. Keep in mind the topic of our class. Due date to submit first draft October 29, at least 10 pages.

Presentations (10%):

Students will present at least once during the term, using multimedia technology. Graduate students will report on the articles they read weekly and will bring to class a newspaper article dealing with issues that affect Black women in the United States. Students will submit a lesson plan one week before their presentation, providing information on the media used, questions explored, activities, and objectives. A power point presentation must be submitted and uploaded in Blackboard at least 24 hours before the class takes place.

Journal (55%):

This section of the course includes two entries per week through your Blackboard journals section. You will submit a summary of each article or chapter scheduled to read. Each summary will have a minimum extension of one paragraph, eight sentences, and will include a brief explanation of who the author is (in two sentences). Each entry will also include a one-paragraph critical comment on the readings assigned for class. This exercise will prepare you for our discussions in class. Occasionally, I will submit a list of questions to answer in lieu of your summary. Journals carry the largest weight of your grade; therefore, I students should take great care and pride when writing them. Expectations are:

1. A clear thesis and logical organization.
2. Write concisely.
3. Avoid passive constructions such as "it was," and "it has been." Tell who is doing the thing you describe.
4. Quotations must be used sparingly.
5. Strive for gender-neutral phrasing.
6. Use carefully the term "race." Remember, race is a social construction.
7. Incorporate new terms learned but use your own words, demonstrate that you understood the text.

Graduate Students Coursework:

Graduate students will submit a final paper with an extension of 18 -20 pages (versus 12– 15 pages submitted by undergraduate students). It consists of an exploration of a topic using at least three of the readings listed in our course, plus their selection of five journal articles or monographs not included in our reading list. If a History major, graduate students will use primary sources to write the final paper.

Graduate students must design a lesson plan and teach a class, individually.

Schedule:

This schedule is for your mandatory readings mainly. Our readings are not following a strict chronological order in the treatment of topics. All texts in this schedule must be included in the submission of journals. Students must submit an entry per chapter or article. Students must bring a printed copy of each chapter or article to class as scheduled. Students must read the texts before their discussion in class. I will provide other texts through Blackboard or will give you hand-outs. Check your Blackboard Calendar for specific datelines.

Week 1 Introduction. Operational definitions of race and racism.

Week 2 September 3 *Words of Fire*, pp. 1 - 38

Read introductions to book and chapter, no need to submit summaries for those two texts.

- Maria Miller Stewart: Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality, the Sure Foundation on Which We must build, pp. 25 - 29
Lecture Delivered at the Franklin Hall, pp. 30 - 34
Sojourner Truth: Woman's Rights, pp. 35 - 37
When Woman Gests Her Rights Man Will Be Right, pp. 37 - 38

Week 3 September 10 *Words of Fire*, pp. 39 – 76

- Francis Ellen Watkins Harper: Woman's Political Future, pp. 39 - 42
Anna Julia Cooper: The Status of Woman in America, pp. 44 - 50
Julia A. J. Foote: Women in the Gospel, pp. 51 - 54
Gertrude Bustill Mossell: The Opposite Point of View, pp. 55 - 59
Read, no need to submit paragraph. A Lofty Study, pp. 60 - 62
Marty Church Terrell: The Progress of Colored Women, pp. 63 - 68
Ida Wells-Barnett: Lynch Law in America, pp. 70 – 76

"The World Was On Fire": Black Women Entertainers and Transnational Activism in the 1950s
Ruth Feldstein
OAH Magazine of History, Vol. 26, No. 4, The 1950s (October 2012), pp. 25-29

[Ida Wells: A Passion for Justice.](#)

Week 4 September 17 *Words of Fire*, pp. 77 – 100

- Introduction pp. 77 – 78 (no summary due)
Elise Johnson McDougald: The Struggle of Negro Women for Sex and Race Emancipation, pp. 80 - 84
Allice Dunbar Nelson: The Negro Woman and the Ballot, pp. 85 – 88
Amy Jacques Garvey: Biography by Ula Taylor, p. 89
Our Women Getting Into the Larger Life, pp. 91- 92
Women as Leaders, pp. 93-94
Saddie T. M. Alexander: Negro Women in our Economic Life, pp. 96 – 100

[“Reading, Writing, and Researching for History: A Guide for College Students,” Patrick Rael, Bowdoin College](#)

Presentation from *African American Women Confront the West*:
(No need to submit journal entry)

1. Moore and Taylor: The West of African American Women, 1600 – 2000, pp. 3 - 21
Glenda Riley: African American Women in Western History:
Past and Prospect, pp. 22 – 30
2. Dedra S. McDonald: Isabel de Olvera Arrives in New Mexico, p. 31
Toward a History of African Women on New Spain's..., pp. 32 - 54

Presentations from *We Are Your Sisters*:
(No need to submit journal entry)

3. Sections 1 – 4 Childhood, Work, Seduction, Courtship, pp. 1 - 30
4. Sections 5 – 6 Letters from Slave Women, Resistance, pp. 31 – 68
5. Section 7 Resettlement, pp. 69 – 84

[La Operación: Women and Sterilization in Puerto Rico](#)

[Angela Davis on Self-Defense](#)

Student reports on research progress.

Week 5 September 24 *Words of Fire*, pp. 101- 142

- Florynce “Flo” Kennedy: A Comparative Study, pp. 101 -106
Claudia Jones: As End to the Neglect of the Problems..., pp. 108 – 11
Lorraine Hansberry: Biography by Margaret B. Wilerson, pp. 125 – 128
Simone de Beauvoir and... , pp. 128 – 142
Review in class of: [T'Ain't Nobody's Bizness: Queer Blues Divas of the 1920s](#)

Presentations from *We Are Your Sisters*:
(No need to submit journal entry)

6. Sections 8 - 9 First Freedom, Daughters, and, pp. 85 -118
7. Section 10 The Antislavery Ladies, pp. 119 - 149
8. Sections 11 Women With a Special Mission, pp. 150 - 179
9. Section 12 Teachers and Pupils, 180 - 212
10. Section 13 Black Women and the Impending Crisis, pp. 213- 234

Presentation from *African American Women Confront the West*:
(No need to submit journal entry)

11. Lynn M. Hudson: A Texas Slave’s Letter to Her Husband, 1862, p. 55
Mining a Mythic Past: The History of Mary Ellen Pleasant, pp. 56 – 70

Review of: “The Truth of ‘Black Lives Matter.’” New York Times. Editorial Board. September 3, 2015.
http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/04/opinion/the-truth-of-black-lives-matter.html?_r=0

Documentary: [What Happened, Miss Simone?](#)

Student reports on research progress.

Week 6 October 1 *Words of Fire*, pp. 143 – 185

- Frances Beale Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female, pp. 145 - 156
Mary Ann Weathers An Argument, pp. 158 – 162
Linda Le Rue The Black Movement and Women’s Liberation, pp. 164 - 174
Patricia Haden et. al. A Historical and Critical Essay..., pp. 177 – 184

Presentations from *We Are Your Sisters*:
(No need to submit journal entry)

12. Sections 14- 15 Slavery Chain, View from the North, pp. , 235 - 260
13. Section 16 The Schoolmarms , pp. 261 - 306
14. Sections 17- 19 New Beginnings, Slavery Made Us Tough, White Folks Still on Top, pp. 307 - 354

Presentation from *African American Women Confront the West*:
(No need to submit journal entry)

15. Chapter 5. Barbara Y Welke Rights of Passage, 1850 – 1870, pp. 73 -96

[Miriam Makeba – Mama Africa](#)

Student reports on research progress.

Week 7 October 8 *Words of Fire*, pp. 186 – 228

Pauli Murray	The Liberation of Black Women, pp. 185-198
Angela Davis	Reflections on the Black Woman's Role..., pp. 199 – 218
Michele Wallace	Anger in Isolation: A Black Feminist's..., pp. 220-228
Introduction	pp. 229-231 (no need to submit journal)
The Combahee River Collection	A Black Feminist Statement, pp. 231-240

Presentations from *We Are Your Sisters*:
(No need to submit journal entry)

16. Sections 20 -21 Washerwoman, Some Old Acquaintances, pp. 355 – 41
17. Section 22 Representative Women, pp .418 – 450
18. Epilogue: pp. 451 - 498

Presentation from *African American Women Confront the West*:
(No need to submit journal entry)

19. Chapter 6. Susan Bragg, etc. Sacramento Black Women, pp. 97 – 121

[Michelle Alexander: Locked out of the American Dream](#)

Student reports on research progress.

Week 8 October 15 *Words of Fire*, pp. 229 – 268

Introduction to Beyond the Margins	pp. 229-231
The Combahee River Collection	A Black Feminist Statement, pp. 231-240
Cheryl Clarke	Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance, pp. 242
Barbara Smith	Some Home Truths, pp. 253 – 268

Presentations from *African American Women Confront the West*:
(No need to submit journal entry)

20. Chapter 7. Peggy Riley, etc. Women of the Great Falls, pp 122 – 143
21. Chapter 8 Ronald G. Coleman “Is there No Blessing...”, pp. 144 – 164

Student reports on research progress.

[Assata Shakur: FBI lists her as a terrorist](#)
[The Eyes of the Rainbow](#)

Week 9 October 22 *Words of Fire*, pp. 269 – 292

bell hooks	Black Women..., pp. 269-282
Audre Lorde	Age, Race, Class, and Sex..., pp. 283-292
Submit journal entry also on	
Treva Lindsay	Race in the US: herstory

Conference rehearsal

Week 14 November 26 *Thanksgiving Day. Enjoy.*

Week 15 December 3 *Words of Fire, pp. 503 – 552*

E. Frances White	Africa on My Mind: Gender, Counterdiscourse..., pp. 503 – 524
Barbara Ransby and Tracye Matthews	Black Popular Culture and the Transcendence..., pp. 525 – 536
Alice Walker	In the Closet of the Soul, pp. 637 – 548
Johnnetta E. Cole	Epilogue, pp. 549 – 552

Submission of final paper and power point for Conference through Blackboard.

Student conference on December 5 in lieu of final exam.