BLACK FEMINISTS IN THE UNITED STATES AND LATIN AMERICA
CROSSTLISTED COURSE: AFST 3390, HIST 3391, WS 3390, LABS 4301

Instructor: Selfa A. Chew-Melendez PhD.
E-mail: sachewsmithart@utep.edu
Session: Summer I. June 6 – July 1.
Classroom: Online via Blackboard.
Virtual Office Hours: MWF 10:00 AM – 11:00 AM, or by appointment.
Office: LART 401.
Phone #: 747-8650

Course description and objectives.

This course is an examination of the experiences, activism, and intellectual production of women of African descent in the United States and Latin America in the context of historical social inequality. Distinct historical regional conditions, shaped in part by colonization processes, will emerge in our analysis of women of the African Diaspora. Textbook, articles, and films will assist us to understand the political, cultural, social, and economic strategies developed by Black women to challenge racism and other relations of power in specific regions of the American Continent. Keeping in mind that this is a vast topic, such readings will illustrate diversity in experiences as well as common roots of inequality experienced by Afrodescendants in the Americas. Our course will allow for a comparison of historical experiences and intellectual production across heterogeneous populations. Students will read assigned texts to understand core concepts and view-supporting materials for daily online assignments about key topics, and online discussions, with specific deadlines.

The objectives of this course are:

• To critically analyze the social, cultural, and political development of women in the African Diaspora.
• To examine the thought of Black feminists and the historical contexts in which they have developed their commitment to social change.
• To read historical texts and documents in order to use them as sources for clear, accurate, and informed discussion (in online discussions and in your written reports);
• To identify the relation of history with other disciplines;
• To learn in a cooperative environment the relationship and significance of historical persons, events, ideas, and concepts.
• To assess their own responsibilities as global citizens.

At the end of this course I would like my students to be able to:

• Read critically primary sources, and properly incorporate them into their research.
• Identify interlocking relations of power
• Evaluate past events and social processes as factors that shape our present.
• Develop strategies to improve independent study skills.
• Developing learning skills valued in graduate school.
• Become familiar with social science terminology.
Submission of assignments and participation in group discussions via Blackboard are compulsory to pass this course. The course website is divided by week folders. Click on the first week, and then on the folder labeled “June 6” to access the class forums, assignments and readings (video material included). Remember, you need to buy two textbooks immediately to start submitting your assignments. Also, review the other folders to familiarize yourself with the materials required to complete your class projects.

Texts required (my preference is e-book format, through Amazon because you can open it in any computer).

Bay, Mia, Griffin, Farah J., Jones, Martha S., Toward an Intellectual History of Black Women, The University of South Carolina Press, 2015. Don’t buy this book, it’s available through UTEP/Blackboard. You will find a link to each chapter with instructions from your person, in Blackboard, within the texts folders.


All other texts are accessible through our library electronic resources section (JSTOR or EBSCO)

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

Grading Policy:

- Journal Entries 50%
- Assessments 10%
- Blackboard forum participation 10%
- Final Paper - team 10%
- Oral history project - team 17%
- Chicago Style Format quiz 3%

Total 100%

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

Grade Scale

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90 – 100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80 – 89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 – 79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>69% and under</td>
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It is highly recommended to visit Blackboard on daily basis until the end of our course. You can find your grades, post messages, form discussion groups and be reminded of tests, assignments, events, etc.
Late work policy:

- This is not a self-paced course. All assignments must be posted through Blackboard on or before the assigned dates.

Students’ responsibilities

Your instructor will provide structure, content, guidance, and assessment. Most learning, however, will occur through students’ active participation in their own acquisition of knowledge.

- Students will submit journal entries and complete assessments on daily basis.
- Students will participate in daily class discussion forums.
- Students will complete all procedures required to drop the course when failing this course if they desire to obtain a “W.”
- Students will be responsible for obtaining a syllabus, access to Blackboard, acquiring the reading material and following the course schedule.
- Students will reach their professor when in doubt before datelines.
- Students will be active in their own learning process.
- Students are expected to show respect for the instructor and one another regardless of opinion, cultural values and other group differences. When students show disrespect, use demeaning adjectives, make malicious comments, and “ad hominem” arguments (made personally against an opponent, instead of against the opponent's argument), points will be deducted from assignment. If behavior is repeated, students may be dropped from the course.
- Students must notify instructor of behavior they consider disrespectful immediately, meeting with instructor to address corrective measures.
- Students will correct terminology and concepts that have been learned in other contexts but is not acceptable in academia, or in respectful social forums.
- Students will consider perspectives that are originated in disfranchised social sectors, recognizing that this course intents to provide the views and knowledge of communities largely excluded from mainstream narratives.
- Students will establish connections among all readings in this class, to increase their ability to examine Black feminism and the historical context producing it from non-Eurocentric perspectives.
- Communications with your peers and your professor must follow the protocol you will read at http://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor. Assignment points will be deducted when your messages do not follow the conventions listed in the site referenced. Assignments sent through UTEP e-mail will not be read or graded if sent without a proper polite message, with salutation, and the reason for sending the assignment through e-mail, if scheduled as a Blackboard remittance. Because accessibility reasons, all journal entries will be submitted as in-box text, not as attachments.
- All students should be supportive of a cooperative learning environment in the classrooms.

To get an “A” in this course:

Complete all assignments on time.
Blackboard Journal Entries (50%):

Journal entries are the backbone of our course. They will be submitted by midnight, daily. Late submissions will carry 10% deduction per day. Journal entries consist of one summary per text (at least ten sentences per text or film analyzed, if that covers the main points and argument). In addition to the two or three summaries (depending on the number of texts and films), students will add one paragraph with comments about the texts.

Summaries are the "objective part of the journal entry." Comments are the "subjective" area in which you can critique, evaluate, or express other thoughts in relation to the material. Each journal entry must have footnotes and bibliography (Chicago style). Not sending your journal entries by the date line five times results automatically in an F.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and journal entries with patchwork (pasting sentences which are directly copied from the texts) will earn zero points. Journal entries must be coherent and demonstrate understanding of the text as a whole. Each journal entry must have footnotes and bibliography (Chicago style). Not sending your journal entries by the date line five times results automatically in an F.

Blackboard Assessments (10%):

Students will complete assessments (quizzes) through Blackboard by datelines determined in our schedule. Assessments submitted late carry a penalty of 10% per day, deducted at the end of the course. They will be based on the texts and films assigned for our course.

Chicago Style Format Assessment (3%)

It will evaluate the students’ ability to use the Chicago citation format, use to write papers in the field of History and other related areas. Such practice will help you develop a skill that can be transferred to other citation formats and academic disciplines. Last day for submission is June 30 but you can submit it starting June 27. There are multiple sites where you can find guidelines, including manuals edited by professional organizations, which you may find at UTEP library. A simple guide on this citation format is here [http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)

Blackboard forums (10%):

Forums are sites where the entire group meets for conversations on topics related to our readings. Read the instructions and prompt for each forum discussion before posting your reflection. In general, students will write a reflection on the relationship between the two areas studied in our course: the United States and Latin America, as described in the texts and films assigned for the class. After posting a reflection in at least 200 words, students will reply to a peer's text (preferably a post that has no previous replies so we can distribute the conversation) in at least 150 words.

"Good point" or "I agree" type answers will not earn points. All answers must integrate the knowledge acquired through our readings. Blackboard will alert you of replies to your posting. Read them so you can improve future journal entries and forum reflections. Make sure you follow the guidelines for discussions: they are basically a request to respect all opinions, use academic language, and keep in mind that ours is a scholarly forum, distant from facebook, tweeter and other media in scope and purpose. Late postings carry a 10% deduction per day, recorded at the end of the course. Failure to submit your posting on time five times will result in an F.

Oral history – team assignment (17%):

Your team will conduct an interview of an African American or Afro-Latina woman, preferably in your community to collect biographical information and to learn about her challenges, achievements and perspectives. You will research the history of the community of which your interviewee is a member before conducting the interview. You don’t need to be physically present in El Paso in any step to
complete this project, since interviews can be conducted by phone or skype, as long as they are recorded and consent forms are submitted with the original signature.

Consult the section “Oral History Project” in Blackboard for more instructions and guidelines. Evidence of full, timely, collaboration is necessary for each student to receive the team’s grade. All parts of this project must be submitted through the section “Steps to complete Oral History Project” in the “Oral History Project” folder. Only one student will submit the project on behalf of her/his team.

**Final paper –team assignment (10 %):**

Teams will submit a critical reflection paper due on the official final exam day, with an extension of at least 8 pages, double space, Times Roman 12. Graduate students will submit a final paper of 15 pages, individually. Submissions must take place through Blackboard. Essays will compare the experiences of Black feminists in the United States and Latin America. Papers will be graded based on formulation of an argument, data supporting the argument, citation formatting, and grammar. Papers will integrate assigned texts and video materials, citing at least five academic works from our reading list. Citations and bibliography must be formatted using Chicago style. Your final paper is mandatory to pass this class. Final papers will be processed by SafeAssign to make sure it is free of plagiarism. Evidence of full, timely, collaboration is necessary for each student to receive the team’s grade.

**Follow these rules for an enjoyable class:**

1. Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions but refrain from personal attacks -- focus on ideas. Labeling an idea as “silly,” stupid,” “ridiculous,” or applying it to imaginary situations in an attempt to elicit the same derogatory labeling to other persons’ ideas, counts as a personal attack.
2. Participate to the fullest of your ability -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
3. Remember that this is an intensive course and work every day as fast as possible.
4. The goal is not to agree -- it is about considering and exploring divergent perspectives.
5. Submit your assignments on time, participate in our forums and complete your assessments before the dateline, following all instructions.
6. Work with your team in each step, know what each member is doing to complete your team projects. Ask where they are at daily, if necessary, and offer to assist them. Document your collaboration.

Plagiarism will not be tolerated and will be reported to the Dean of Students. Your journal entries and assignments must be your own. Always cite your sources (even if it is only one author) and use quotation marks if you are integrating a segment from the texts. Be conscious of patchwork plagiarism which is the process of selecting certain phrases from different parts of the text and add them to your journal entry or paper as if they were yours (that is an unacceptable practice in this class). Students must demonstrate a complete understanding of the text through original writing and extraction of the most important points. Should you need to obtain information on how to avoid plagiarism you may consult the following source [http://www.plagiarism.org/](http://www.plagiarism.org/) I recommend to use as often as possible SafeAssign (in Blackboard/Course tools) to verify that your text is free of plagiarism.

This syllabus is subject to modifications.

**Office Hours:** Stay in contact with your professor using the collaboration tool in Blackboard to chat with her during virtual office hours, or visit her office at LART 401. Read your forums and journal entries feedback and respond to them for continued personal conversations on your progress and areas to improve. Make sure you have all software needed in your computer to use the chat feature. If chat doesn’t work, contact your instructor by phone, or by e-mail (if during office hours, she will respond during the next minutes, unless she has other students waiting). All software related to UTEP sites for
online courses will be provided by UTEP, contact helpdesk/IT if you have any problem using any Blackboard feature.

**UTEP Library Room 300 (Technicians can assist you during person-to-person meetings.)**
Phone: 915.747.4357 (HELP)
Email: Helpdesk@Utep.Edu

**Information on how to use Blackboard:**

**Schedule:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Text or documentary assigned</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
<th>Special activities</th>
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*Blackness in the White Nation: A History of Afro-Uruguay,* presentation by professor George Reid Andrews. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3UtTJ3hJe44  
Read your syllabus | Blackboard forums (meeting your peers, and topic discussion), journal entry, and assessment. | Buy your two kindle books. Access the third through our UTEP library. |
Videos (one paragraph for both):  
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Journal/Publication Details</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Participation in team’s forum for team project. Select a name for your team. Discussion to propose the member of the community your team will interview.</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Afro-Argentinians:</td>
<td><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6536IZD1f90">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6536IZD1f90</a></td>
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<td>14-Jun</td>
<td>Moreno Vega, Marta.</td>
<td>“Afro-Boricua: Nuyorican de Pura Cepa” in <em>Women Warriors of the Afro-Latino Diaspora</em>.</td>
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<td>Documentary: <em>I am Somebody</em> [electronic resource] / the American Foundation on Nonviolence. Access UTEP library. <a href="http://encore.utep.edu/iii/encore/record/C__Rb2981792">http://encore.utep.edu/iii/encore/record/C__Rb2981792</a></td>
<td>Blackboard forum, journal entry, and assessment.</td>
<td>Submit by e-mail sachewsmithart@utep.edu0 your list with three names of persons your team proposes to interview. Receive approval.</td>
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<td>Interview for Oral History is conducted.</td>
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30-Jun | Say Her Name: Resisting Police Brutality against Black Women. Read the remaining sections.

Blackboard forum, journal entry, assessment and last day to submit Chicago Style Citation Format quiz.

Your team must make final paper corrections, if necessary.

July 1 | Submit team final paper through Blackboard by midnight.

No journal entry, forum or assessment.

(Final Exam day) Submit your team final paper with corrections. Only one member will submit.

### Recommended Readings:


Perkins, Maureen. "Thoroughly Modern Mulatta: Rethinking "Old World" Stereotypes in a "New World"