

Black Women in the United States

Course Number: 21:014:305 Section: 01

Cross-listed: Topic Women's Studies: 21:988:369 Section: 02

Jarrettia Adams, Instructor

Tuesday and Thursday 11:30am-12:50pm

Conklin Hall, Room 238

Spring 2020



1-Faith Ringgold, 1997

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a broad survey of black women in the United States from slavery to the present. It explores common themes such as sexuality, feminism, reproductive rights, activism, and identity. The course begins with enslaved women, continues on to black women's activism during reconstruction, the Depression, Civil Rights, and Black Power, and finishes with an examination of the roles of black women in contemporary culture.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The course requirements are based upon our learning goals:

- To use primary sources to critically examine the complex history of black woman
- To understand how “womanhood” and “blackness” have been defined and redefined throughout American history
- To be exposed to various strategies of resistance employed by black women
- To develop analytical reading and writing skills through the critical examination of primary sources
- To develop a broad understanding of the various issues facing black women throughout history, including the roles of black women in family life, the workplace, politics, literary and artistic achievement, education, and the struggle for women's rights

This course incorporates both fiction and nonfiction works to chronologically illuminate the major themes in black women's history and contemporary issues.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

After-class surveys: (Due by 11:59pm the same day as the class for which it is assigned) You will be asked to complete a survey after most classes. Your answers will be recorded anonymously. You will be asked to provide short answers to 2 or 3 questions. Examples of the kind of subjects the questions will address are: Something you did not know or had a question about, something you disagreed with or would otherwise challenge, and the most important take away from the class as it relates to definitions of black womanhood (broadly conceived). As a best practice, it would be wise to take notes in class and use these to create your responses to the questions posted. Though I cannot tell who has written which response, I will be able to tell if you have completed the survey. You will receive credit for completion of surveys which will count towards 5% your final grade.

Blog Posts: Class blog is a space available for your contributions or comments. You are expected to post 10 items over the semester in order to receive the maximum number of points (10). The last day to post is May 4. You will receive points based on the actual number of posts you complete – up to, but not to exceed, 10 points.

Quizzes: Quizzes will be given at irregular intervals at the beginning of a class based on the readings due for that class. You can expect to have a quiz whenever we begin a new reading. However, if quiz scores indicate that reading is not happening, the number of quizzes may increase. I will drop the lowest quiz score for the purpose of the final grade.

Pecha-Kucha Presentations: Students will make oral presentations to the class in the closing weeks of the semester, working in teams of two. I will provide suggestions for

presentations and additional information as the semester progresses regarding the Pecha-Kucha format you will be using for your presentation.

Midterm & Final Exams: We will discuss these in greater detail as they come up.

GRADING:

After-class Surveys: 5%

Blog Posts: 10%

Quizzes: 15% (lowest grade will be dropped)

Midterm Exam: 25%

Pecha-Kucha Presentation: 20%

Final Exam: 25%

POLICIES

Academic Integrity: As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University's educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community.

The entire Academic Integrity Policy can be found here:

<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

Accommodations Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

- *Students with Disabilities:* Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact ODS, register, have an initial appointment, and provide documentation. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and documentation submitted) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided to the student. The student must give the LOA to each course instructor, followed by a discussion with the instructor. This should be completed as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS: (973) 353-5375 or ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

- *Religious Holiday Policy and Accommodations:* Students are advised to provide timely notification to instructors about necessary absences for religious observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule. The

Division of Student Affairs is available to verify absences for religious observance, as needed: (973) 353-5063 or DeanofStudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

- Counseling Services: Counseling Center Room 101, Blumenthal Hall, (973) 353-5805 or <http://counseling.newark.rutgers.edu/>.
- Students with Temporary Conditions/Injuries: Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury that is adversely affecting their ability to fully participate in their courses should submit a request for assistance at: <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.

- Students Who are Pregnant: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist students with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy: (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

- Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: Students experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, should know that help and support are available. To report an incident, contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance: (973) 353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. To submit an incident report: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. To speak with a staff member who is confidential and does NOT have a reporting responsibility, contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance: (973) 353-1918 or run.vpva@rutgers.edu.

Attendance Students are expected to make every effort to attend class regularly. For an absence to count as “excused,” students must submit acceptable written documentation of the reason for their absence. Excused absences are defined by the course catalog as: “illness requiring medical attention, curricular or extracurricular activities approved by the faculty, personal obligations claimed by the student and recognized as valid, recognized religious holidays, and severe inclement weather causing dangerous traveling conditions.”

Per the University’s Course Attendance policy (10.2.7), students are responsible for communicating with their instructors regarding absences. **Any student who misses eight or more sessions through any combination of excused and unexcused absences will not earn credit in this class.** Such students should withdraw to avoid getting an F.

Punctuality is important. Lateness is annoying and distracting. If you have a work or personal situation that makes it difficult for you to arrive on time, please let me know that asap. Parking, traffic, and transportation problems are no excuse for lateness. Allow yourself enough time to arrive before class begins.

Cell Phones Except in cases of emergency, cell phones must be turned completely off during class.

Communication Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions related to the class. I strongly urge everyone to take advantage of my office hours – or to make an appointment if

you are unable to come then. I will respond to all emails within 24 hours, so please plan ahead if you have a question related to a paper or exam.

Laptops and Tablets Laptops and tablets are permitted in class for the purposes of accessing the readings and taking notes only. Using facebook/email/etc. during class time is a distraction for yourself and other students, and will result in loss of computer privileges for the duration of that class.

READING & VIEWING ASSIGNMENTS

The books for this course are listed below. Additional readings and visual materials for this course will be available on Blackboard or elsewhere online.

Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
<https://www.docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/jacobs.html>

Larsen, Nella (D. Mcdowell, ed.). *Quicksand and Passing* (NJ: Rutgers U Press, 1986).

Moody, Anne. *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (NY: Bantam Doubleday/Dell, 1968).

Wells, Ida B. "The Red Record" in Royster, Jacqueline Jones, ed., *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti-Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997), pp. 69-151. Also available online at
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14977/14977-h/14977-h.htm>

These books are available as print copies or as ebooks, and can be purchased at the campus bookstore or online. Cheaper, used copies of most of these books are available from a variety of sources. Of course, all of these books can be requested free of charge through Dana Library, but allow time for the library to secure the text for you. I will see about putting books on reserve for you as well.

We will consider music, visual and other media in class as well.

****Bring readings and notes with you to every class!

Week	Reading Assignment
1	<p>Tues. 1/21 – Introductions; “Hold My Mule”</p> <p>Readings: Phillis Wheatley, misc. poems (handouts)</p>
	<p>Thurs. 1/23</p> <p>Watching: 1. Melissa Harris-Perry (previously Laceywell) Debate with Gloria Steinem: http://www.democracynow.org/2008/1/14/race_and_gender_in_presidential_politics</p> <p>Required Reading: 1. Frederick Douglass, <i>Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave</i> (1845): intro by Angela Davis and chapter 10</p>
2	Slavery
	<p>Tues. 1/28</p> <p>1. Sojourner Truth: “Ain’t I a Woman,” http://www.blackpast.org/1851-sojourner-truth-arnt-i-woman 2. Harriet Beecher Stowe: “Sojourner Truth, The Libyan Sibyl,” http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1863/04/sojourner-truth-the-libyan-sibyl/308775/</p>
	<p>Thurs. 1/30</p> <p>Required Reading: 1. Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>, Title page through “Another Link to Life”</p>
3	Slavery
	<p>Tues. 2/4</p> <p>Required Reading: 1. Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (cont.), “Continued Persecutions” through “Aunt Nancy”</p>

	<p>Thurs. 2/6</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (cont.), "Preparations for Escape" to end.
	<p>Black Women's Political and Economic Participation Post-Emancipation</p>
4	<p>Tues. 2/11</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wells, Ida B. "The Red Record" in Royster, Jacqueline Jones, ed., <i>Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti- Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900</i> (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997), pp. 69-151. Also available online at http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14977/14977-h/14977-h.htm 2. Constitutional Amendments, 13-15 (Reconstruction-era amendments): http://www.blackpast.org/?q=primary/reconstruction-amendment
	<p>Thurs. 2/13</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wells, Ida B. "The Red Record" in Royster, Jacqueline Jones, ed., <i>Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti- Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900</i> (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997), pp. 69-151. Also available online at http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14977/14977-h/14977-h.htm
	<p>"Lifting As We Climb" / Politics of Respectability</p>
5	<p>Tues. 2/18</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mary Church Terrell, "The Progress of Colored Women" (1904), http://www.blackpast.org/1904-mary-church-terrell-progress-colored-women 2. Elise Johnson McDougald, "The Task of Negro Womanhood"
	<p>Thurs. 2/20 -</p> <p>Viewing/Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Episode Three, <i>Jazz</i> (Documentary series, Ken Burns, dir.) 2. Hurston, Zora Neale, "Characteristics of Negro Expression" 3. Handouts: Misc. Blues lyrics
6	<p>The Great War, Great Migration, and Harlem Renaissance</p>

	<p>Tues. 3/24</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Moody, <i>Coming of Age in Mississippi</i> 2. Watch : Fannie Lou Hamer, speech to the credentials committee and the Democratic National Convention (1964): https://youtu.be/8zLN1dh-S5s (audio) http://www.infoplease.com/t/hist/hamer-dnc1964/ (text)
	<p>Thurs. 3/26</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Angela Davis, "Used to Be Your Sweet Mama" 2. Erica Huggins, "Poems from Prison" 3. Angela Davis, "Trials of Political Prisoners Today"
	Black Women & Feminism I
11	<p>Tues. 3/31</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audre Lorde, "Poetry Is Not a Luxury" & "The Transformation of Silence Into Energy" 2. Audre Lorde, "A Litany for Survival" 3. Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins"
	<p>Thurs. 4/2</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House"(1984): http://lists.econ.utah.edu/pipermail/margins-to-centre/2006-March/000794.html 2. Audre Lorde, "The Uses of the Erotic" (1984): http://www.metahistory.org/guidelines/EroticUses.php
	Black Women & Feminism II
12	<p>Tues. 4/7</p> <p>Films:</p> <p><i>Chisholm '72: Unbought & Unbossed</i> (Last name: A-L)</p> <p><i>What Happened, Miss Simone?</i> (2015) (Last name: M-Z)</p>
	<p>Thurs. 4/9</p>

	Thurs. 4/30 Summary & Exam Review
	READING DAYS - 5/5 & 5/6/2020
	FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, May 12, 11:45-2:45pm (tentative)