

## **Black Women in the United States**

Course Number: 21:014:305:17487

Jarrettia Adams, Instructor

Tuesday and Thursday, 4:00-5:20pm

Conklin Hall, Room 424

Spring 2018



*1-Weems, Echoes For Marian (2014)*

### ***Contact information:***

Email: [jarrettia.adams@rutgers.edu](mailto:jarrettia.adams@rutgers.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:00-3:30pm or by appointment

Office: 326 Conklin Hall

## **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 the role of black women in contemporary popular 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 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

*Weekly Annotations:* (Due every Monday by 6:00pm) Every reading assignment must have its own set of annotations to be posted in the discussion board for that week by the Monday before the readings are due. Each annotation should be from 250-350 words in length and must include 3 items: 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 week's reading as it relates to definitions of black womanhood (broadly conceived). As a best practice, it would be wise to take notes as you read and use these to create your annotations. Although this is informal, please be attentive to spelling, grammar, and usage. You will receive an *A* each week if you perform this task completely and submit it on time; a *C* if it is incomplete; and an *F* if you do not complete it or it is not posted on Blackboard on time.

*Discussion Board:* (Due every Thursday by 11:59pm) Each week a discussion question based on the week's readings and class discussion will be posted to that week's discussion board. You are required to post to the discussion board either as a direct response to the question or as a response to one of your classmates. Responses must be at least 250 words (or about two paragraphs). Think of this as the virtual version of classroom discussion and a chance to further engage with me and with your peers.

*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.

## GRADING:

Annotations: 15%  
 Discussion Board: 15%  
 Midterm Exam: 25%  
 Presentation: 20%  
 Final Exam: 25%

## POLICIES

*Academic Integrity* All assignments submitted for this class must be your own original work. Information derived from other sources – whether or not you quote it directly – must be cited appropriately. All instances of plagiarism and cheating will be investigated fully, in accordance with the Rutgers Policy of Academic Integrity (<http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu>).

*Accommodations* Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>. If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form>. For more information please contact Kate Torres at (973) 353-5375 or in the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219 or by contacting [odsnewark@rutgers.edu](mailto:odsnewark@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."

Each unexcused absence beyond three will reduce your FINAL GRADE in the course by 5%. **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.

*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* (Dover, 2001).

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).

Royster, Jacqueline Jones, ed., *Southern Horrors and Other Writings: The Anti- Lynching Campaign of Ida B. Wells, 1892-1900* (Boston: Bedford Books, 1997).

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. However, please buy or rent hard copies of the books, if you can. We will be doing close reading of these texts and having the actual book at hand will facilitate our study of these materials together as a class.

We will consider visual and other media in class as well. Required films will be accessible through links I will provide on Blackboard.

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

Week	Reading Assignment
1	<p>Tues. 1/16 – Introductions</p> <p>Handouts: Phillis Wheatley</p>
	<p>Thurs. 1/18</p> <p>Watching: 1. Melissa Harris-Perry (previously Laceywell) Debate with Gloria Steinem: <a href="http://www.democracynow.org/2008/1/14/race_and_gender_in_presidential_politics">http://www.democracynow.org/2008/1/14/race_and_gender_in_presidential_politics</a></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. 1/23</p> <p>1. Sojourner Truth: “Ain’t I a Woman,” <a href="http://www.blackpast.org/1851-sojourner-truth-arnt-i-woman">http://www.blackpast.org/1851-sojourner-truth-arnt-i-woman</a> 2. Harriet Beecher Stowe: “Sojourner Truth, The Libyan Sibyl,” <a href="http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1863/04/sojourner-truth-the-libyan-sibyl/308775/">http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1863/04/sojourner-truth-the-libyan-sibyl/308775/</a></p>
<p>Thurs. 1/25</p> <p>Required Reading: 1. Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>, pp. note-65</p>	3
Slavery	
<p>Tues. 1/30</p> <p>Required Reading: 1. Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (cont.), pp. 65-113</p>	
<p>Thurs. 2/1</p> <p>Required Reading: 1. Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (cont.), pp. 113-end</p>	

4	Black Women's Political and Economic Participation Post-Emancipation
	Tues. 2/6 Required Reading: 1. Royster, <i>Southern Horrors and Other Writings</i> (Introduction, pp. 1-41) 2. Constitutional Amendments, 13-15 (Reconstruction-era amendments): <a href="http://www.blackpast.org/?q=primary/reconstruction-amendment">http://www.blackpast.org/?q=primary/reconstruction-amendment</a>
	Thurs. 2/8 I MUST CANCEL THIS CLASS. PLEASE CONTINUE WITH THE READINGS. I WILL POST AN ASSIGNMENT (ANNOTATION) ON TUESDAY (2/6) IN PLACE OF THE CLASS.  Required Reading: 1. Royster, <i>Southern Horrors and Other Writings</i> (pp. 47-101; and pp. 132-137)
5	"Lifting As We Climb" / Politics of Respectability
	Tues. 2/13 Required Reading: 1. Mary Church Terrell, "The Progress of Colored Women" (1904), <a href="http://www.blackpast.org/1904-mary-church-terrell-progress-colored-women">http://www.blackpast.org/1904-mary-church-terrell-progress-colored-women</a> 2. Selected readings from <i>Let Nobody Turn Us Around: An African American Anthology</i> and <i>Double Take: A Revisionist Harlem Renaissance Anthology</i>
	Thurs. 2/15 - IMPORTANT! PLEASE NOTE: class meets at Jazz Institute - Dana Library, 4 <sup>th</sup> Floor. (Listening assignment for this meeting will be posted on Blackboard)
6	The Great War, Great Migration, and Harlem Renaissance
	Tues. 2/20 <b>PRESENTATION PROPOSALS DUE</b> Required Reading: Larsen, <i>Quicksand</i>
	Thurs. 2/22 Required Reading: Larsen, <i>Quicksand</i> (cont.)
7	Depression & W.W.II
	Tues. 2/27 Required Reading: 1. Larsen, <i>Quicksand</i> (cont.)

	<p>Thurs. 3/1</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ella Baker &amp; Marvel Cooke: "The Bronx Slave Market"</li> <li>2. Ella Baker: "We Need Group-Centered Leadership"</li> </ol> <p>Film:</p> <p><i>Imitation of Life</i> (1934)</p>
8	<b>Black Women &amp; the Movement</b>
	<p>Tues. 3/6</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Moody, <i>Coming of Age in Mississippi</i></li> </ol>
	<p>Thurs. 3/8</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>MIDTERM EXAM</b></p>
9	<b>SPRING RECESS!!!</b>
10	<b>Black Women, Black Power</b>
	<p>Tues. 3/20</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Moody, <i>Coming of Age in Mississippi</i></li> <li>2. Watch : Fannie Lou Hamer, speech to the credentials committee and the Democratic National Convention (1964): <a href="https://youtu.be/8zLN1dh-S5s">https://youtu.be/8zLN1dh-S5s</a> (audio)</li> </ol> <p><a href="http://www.infoplease.com/t/hist/hamer-dnc1964/">http://www.infoplease.com/t/hist/hamer-dnc1964/</a> (text)</p>
	<p>Thurs. 3/22</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Angela Davis, "Joanne Little: The Dialectics of Rape"</li> <li>2. Angela Davis, <i>Women Race and Class</i> (Chapter 12)</li> <li>3. Kathleen Cleaver, "Women, Power, and Revolution"</li> </ol>
11	<b>Black Women &amp; Feminism I</b>
	<p>Tues. 3/27</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Toni Cade Bambara, <i>The Black Woman</i> (selections)</li> <li>2. Barbara Ransby, "Fear of a Black Feminist Planet"</li> </ol>

	<p>Thurs. 3/29</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Audre Lorde, –The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House(1984): <a href="http://lists.econ.utah.edu/pipermail/margins-to-centre/2006-March/000794.html">http://lists.econ.utah.edu/pipermail/margins-to-centre/2006-March/000794.html</a></li> <li>2. Audre Lorde, “The Uses of the Erotic” (1984): <a href="http://www.metahistory.org/guidelines/EroticUses.php">http://www.metahistory.org/guidelines/EroticUses.php</a></li> </ol>
	<b>Black Women &amp; Feminism II</b>
12	<p>Tues. 4/3</p> <p>Film: <i>Chisholm '72: Unbought &amp; Unbossed</i></p>
	<p>Thurs. 4/5</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>The Combahee Collective River Statement</i></li> <li>2. Selected essays, poetry, etc. of Black Arts Movement</li> </ol>
	<b>Black Women &amp; Black Popular Culture</b>
13	<p>Tues. 4/10 - <b>Jazz Institute In-class Presentation</b></p> <p>Film: <i>What Happened, Miss Simone?</i> (2015)</p>
	<p>Thurs. 4/12</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mireille Miller-Young, “Hip-Hop Honeys and Da Hustlaz: Black Sexualities in the New Hip-Hop Pornography”</li> <li>2. Noah Berlatsky, “Laverne Cox Gets Naked, Exposes Radical Feminist Exclusionism”</li> </ol> <p>Viewing: Selected visual artists: Kara Walker, Mickalene Thomas, others</p>
	<b>The 1980s and Beyond</b>
14	<p>Tues. 4/17 <b>PRESENTATIONS</b></p> <p>Required Reading/Viewing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Anita Hill, “The Smear This Time”</li> <li>2. Beyoncé – “Formation”</li> </ol>

	<p>Thurs. 4/19</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRESENTATIONS</b></p> <p>Watch:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Patrisse Cullors (#Black Lives Matter) "This Shit Works" (YouTube)</li> </ol> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Elaine Brown on #Black Lives Matter</li> <li>2. Barbara Ransby, "#BlackLivesMatter is Democracy in Action," <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/21/opinion/sunday/black-lives-matter-leadership.html?_r=0">https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/21/opinion/sunday/black-lives-matter-leadership.html?_r=0</a></li> <li>3. Alicia Garza, "A Herstory of the Black Lives Matter Movement"</li> </ol>
	<b>#BLM! And Other Hashtags</b>
15	<p>Tues. 4/24</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PRESENTATIONS</b></p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. "Wrestling with Respectability in the Age of #BlackLivesMatter: A Dialogue," <a href="http://www.forharriet.com/2015/10/wrestling-with-respectability-in-ageof.html#axzz4XqyzciUW">http://www.forharriet.com/2015/10/wrestling-with-respectability-in-ageof.html#axzz4XqyzciUW</a></li> <li>2. I'Nasah Crockett, "'Raving Amazons': Antiblackness and Misogynoir in Social Media"</li> <li>3. Sarah J. Jackson, et al., "#GirlsLikeUs: Trans Advocacy and Community Building Online"</li> </ol>
	<p>Thurs. 4/26</p> <p>Summary &amp; Review</p>
	READING DAYS - 5/1 & 5/2/2018
	FINAL EXAM: Wednesday, May 9, 3:00-6:00pm