

Black Women in the United States

Course Number: 21:014:305
Mondays and Thursdays, 1:00-2:20PM
Conklin Hall, Room 424
Fall 2017

Jarrettia Adams, Instructor
Email: jarrettia.adams@rutgers.edu
Office Hours: 11:00-12:30pm Mon. and Thurs.
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, with a particular focus on black women as intellectuals and activists
- 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 fictional and nonfictional works to chronologically illuminate the major themes in black women's history and contemporary issues.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Discussion Board: (Due every Sunday by 6pm) Each week you are required to post to the discussion board a direct response to the readings for that week and an additional response

to one of your classmates. Responses must be at least 250-350 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.

Your response to the readings should address 3 items: (1) Something you did not know or had a question about, (2) something you disagreed with or would otherwise challenge, and (3) 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 inform your response. Although this is informal, please be attentive to spelling, grammar, and usage. **In addition, you are responsible for providing at least one of your colleagues with a short, insightful and friendly response to one of their blog posts.**

Course requirements also include: short quizzes based on the readings. Additionally, there will also be a midterm and final exam, and a final project presentation based on the course material, which you will complete as a member of a team and employing diverse media (digital, written, oral presentations, etc.) of your choice. All of this will be described in greater detail and guidance will be provided as the semester progresses.

GRADING:

Quizzes 15%

Discussion Board: 15%

Midterm Exam: 25%

Final Exam: 25%

Final Project/Presentation 20%

POLICIES

Academic Integrity: All students are required to sign the Rutgers Honor Code Pledge. The pledge is as follows: **On my honor, I have neither received nor given any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment).** The pledge will appear for your signature on all quizzes, exams and assignments.

Students with Disabilities:

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' 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 the Office of Disability Services in the Paul Robeson Campus Center, in suite 219, by phone at [973-353-5375](tel:973-353-5375) or by email at odsnewark@newark.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 do my best to 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 (but please buy the actual books if you can, *see below*) 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*, edited by Nellie McKay (New York: Norton, 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).

Rankine, Claudia. *Citizen: An American Lyric*. (Graywolf Press, 2014)

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. *Please purchase the books*, rather than online or digital versions. Cheaper, used copies of most of these books are available from a variety of sources. Even if you insist on using digital texts, you should definitely buy the Rankine book. It contains artwork and other material that will probably not be available in the digital version. Again, *please buy the books*. 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. Note: Films will be on reserve at Dana Library. You may watch them at the library; they are NON-circulating. These films are also available through a variety of online sources.

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

Week	Reading Assignment
1	Thurs. 9/7 - Introductions
2	Slavery
	Mon. 9/11 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 2. Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>
2	Thurs. 9/14 Required Reading: 1. Hine, Prologue to Chapter 3 2. Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> 3. Sojourner Truth: "Ain't I a Woman," http://www.blackpast.org/1851-sojourner-truth-arnt-i-woman 4. Harriet Beecher Stowe: "Sojourner Truth, The Libyan Sibyl," http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1863/04/sojourner-truth-the-libyan-sibyl/308775/
3	Slavery
	Mon. 9/18 Required Reading: 1. Hine, Chap. 5 2. Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (cont.)
	Thurs. 9/21 Required Reading: 1. Harriet Jacobs, <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> (cont.)
4	Black Women's Political and Economic Participation Post-Emancipation
	Mon. 9/25 Required Reading: 1. Hine, Chap. 6 2. Royster, <i>Southern Horrors and Other Writings</i> (Introduction, pp. 1-41) 3. Constitutional Amendments, 13-15 (Reconstruction-era amendments): http://www.blackpast.org/?q=primary/reconstruction-amendment

	<p>Thurs. 9/28</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Royster, <i>Southern Horrors and Other Writings</i> (pp. 47-101; and pp. 132-137)
5	<p style="text-align: center;">“Lifting As We Climb”</p> <p>Mon. 10/2</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. Hine & Thompson, <i>A Shining Thread of Hope</i>, Chap. 8 3. Larsen, <i>Quicksand</i>, pp. 1-46 <p>Optional:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Frances Ellen Watkins Harper (selected poetry)
	<p>Thurs. 10/5</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Brooks Higginbotham, Evelyn, “The Politics of Respectability” (1993) 2. Hine & Thompson, <i>A Shining Thread of Hope</i>, Chap. 9 3. Larsen, <i>Quicksand</i>, pp. 47-93 <p>Optional:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. “Wrestling with Respectability in the Age of #BlackLivesMatter: A Dialogue,” http://www.forharriet.com/2015/10/wrestling-with-respectability-in-age-of.html#axzz4XqyzciUW
	<p style="text-align: center;">The Great War, Great Migration, and Harlem Renaissance</p>
6	<p>Mon. 10/9</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Larsen, <i>Quicksand</i>, pp. 94-135 2. Hine, Chapter 10
	<p>Thurs. 10/12</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hazel Carby: “Policing the Black Women’s Body in an Urban Context” 2. Ella Baker & Marvel Cooke: “The Bronx Slave Market” 3. Tera Hunter, “Domination & Resistance”
7	<p style="text-align: center;">Harlem Renaissance, Depression & W.W.II</p>
	<p>Mon. 10/16</p> <p>MIDTERM EXAM</p>

	<p>Thurs. 10/19 Required Reading: 1. Moody, <i>Coming of Age in Mississippi</i>, Chap. 1-4 (pp. 1-59)</p> <p>Film: <i>Imitation of Life</i> (1934) & (1959) versions</p>
	Black Women & the Movement
8	<p>Mon. 10/23 Required Reading: 1. Moody, <i>Coming of Age in Mississippi</i>, Chap. 5-9 (pp. 60-123) 1. Hine, Chap. 11</p>
	<p>Thurs. 10/26 Required Reading: 1. Moody, <i>Coming of Age in Mississippi</i>, Chap. 10–13 (pp. 127-172) 2. Watch : Fannie Lou Hamer, speech to the credentials committee and the Democratic National Convention (1964): http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-RoVzAqhYk (audio) http://www.infoplease.com/t/hist/hamer-dnc1964/ (text)</p>
	Black Women, Black Power
9	<p>Mon. 10/30 Required Reading: 1. Moody, Chap. 14-17 (pp. 173-212) 2. Hine, Chap 12 & Epilogue</p> <p>Film: <i>Black Power Mixtape</i></p>
	<p>Thurs. 11/2 Required Reading: 1. Moody, Chap. 18-21 (pp. 235-280) 2. Angela Davis, “Joanne Little: The Dialectics of Rape” 3. Angela Davis, <i>Women Race and Class</i> (Chapter 12)</p>
	Black Women & Feminism I
10	<p>Mon. 11/6 Required Reading: 1. Moody, Chap. 22-30 (pp. 282-424) 2. Danielle McGuire, <i>At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance – a New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power</i> (Prologue and Chapter 1)</p>

	<p>Thurs. 11/9</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
	Sister Citizen
11	<p>Mon. 11/13</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rankine, <i>Citizen: An American Lyric</i>, Cover through p. 37. Read/study all the pages, including images. 2. Melissa Harris-Perry, <i>Sister Citizen</i> (excerpts)
	<p>Thurs. 11/16</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rankine, <i>Citizen</i>, pp. 41-79 2. Melissa Harris-Perry, <i>Sister Citizen</i> (excerpts) <p>Film: <i>Chisholm '72: Unbought & Unbossed</i>, https://youtu.be/Oz8d5PWe5c8</p>
	Black Women & Black Popular Culture
12	<p>Mon. 11/20</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rankine, pp. 82-135 2. Angela Davis, “Used to Be Your Sweet Mama”
	<p>Tues. 11/21 – NOTE DAY AND DATE (THANKSGIVING IS THURSDAY.)</p> <p>Required Reading:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rankine, pp. 139-end 2. Ruth Feldstein, “‘I Don’t Trust You Anymore’: Nina Simone, Culture, and Black Activism in the 1960s” <p>Film: <i>The Help</i> <i>What Happened, Miss Simone?</i> (2015)</p>

	Hip-Hop Honeys and other Mean Mothers
13	<p>Mon. 11/27 Required Reading: 1. Mireille Miller-Young, "Hip-Hop Honeys and Da Hustlaz: Black Sexualities in the New Hip-Hop Pornography" 2. Noah Berlatsky, "Laverne Cox Gets Naked, Exposes Radical Feminist Exclusionism" 3. Beyonce and Feminism (TBA)</p>
	<p>Thurs. 11/30 Presentations and Review</p>
	Redefining Black Womanhood in the 21st Century
14	<p>Mon. 12/4 Presentations and Review</p>
	<p>Thurs. 12/7 Presentations and Review</p>
	Say Her Name
15	<p>Monday 12/11 Watch: 1. Patrisse Cullors (#Black Lives Matter) "This Shit Works" (YouTube) 2. Elaine Brown on #Black Lives Matter</p>
	<p>Regular classes ends: December 13 Reading day: December 14</p>
	<p>FINAL EXAM: December 21, 3-6PM</p>