Black Women in the United States
Course Number: WGS 21:988:389 (Sec 1)
Cross-listed: African American and African Studies 21:014:305:H5 (Sec 1)
Jarrettia Adams, Instructor
ONLINE COURSE
Summer 2021

Contact information:
Email: jarrettia.adams@rutgers.edu
Office Hours: By appointment (Online via Zoom)

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is a broad, chronological survey of Black women in the United States from slavery to the present. It explores common themes such as feminism, sexuality and reproductive rights, everyday forms of resistance, political activism, and identity. The course begins with enslaved women, continues onto black women’s social roles and activism during reconstruction, the Depression, the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements, and finishes with an examination of the roles of Black women in contemporary
This course incorporates both fiction and nonfiction works to illuminate the major themes in black women's history.

IMPORTANT: This is a completely online course which means there are no required meetings for students. In addition to office hours, I am willing to hold an occasional class via Zoom if students would find that helpful. I also am planning to hold a few Movie Nights for interested students, but your participation is not required and will not affect your grade. Your grade is comprised of responses to discussion questions, quizzes, papers, etc. I will provide a number of short videos each week to provide historical background and other information you may find helpful, which you will be expected to watch and on which you should take notes.

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 and written response papers
- To develop a broad understanding of the various issues facing black women throughout U.S. 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

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance/Participation: This course is an asynchronous, online course which will be run using the CANVAS platform. Canvas provides me with stats regarding how each student is utilizing the course materials. These stats along with your timely submission of coursework will form the basis of your grade for Attendance/Participation.

Discussion Board: Discussion Board is a space available for your contributions or comments. Generally, I will ask you to post on a particular topic with one original post of your own and with responses to at least 2 other class members. During week 1, plan to post either a written or video introduction of yourself for the class. Additionally, I will probably ask you to respond to a brief survey (including questions re syllabus) as well.

Response Papers: There will be four (4) 2-3 page response papers required for the assigned books (not the articles). I will provide you with a rubric for how to organize your responses.
Quizzes: Quizzes, based on the readings (including articles) due for a particular week, will be given at irregular intervals. I will drop the lowest quiz score for the purpose of the final grade.

**Final Multimedia Project or Research Paper:** Students will have a choice of producing a multimedia project with associated written documentation or writing a short research paper (length to be decided). Either choice will require you produce a one-page proposal and a one-page bibliography ahead of and in addition to the final project or paper. I will provide you with more detailed information about each choice, as well as a rubric during the first week of class.

**Grading:**

Attendance/Participation: 15%
Discussion Board: 20%
Response Papers: 20%
Quizzes: 20% (lowest grade will be dropped)
Final Multimedia Project or Paper: 25%

**Grading Scale:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>90 - 100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>87 - 89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>80 - 86</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>77 - 79</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>70 - 76</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>60 - 69</td>
<td>D</td>
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<tr>
<td>59 or less</td>
<td>F</td>
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**POLICIES**

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

**For Individuals with Disabilities:** The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion.
This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS at (973)353-5375 or via email at ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

*For Individuals who are Pregnant:* The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. Students may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973) 353-1906 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

*For Absence Verification:* The Office of the Dean of Students can provide assistance for absences related to religious observance, emergency or unavoidable conflict (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency, etc.). Students should refer to University Policy 10.2.7 for information about expectations and responsibilities. The Office of the Dean of Students can be contacted by calling (973) 353-5063 or emailing deanofstudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

*For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries:* The Office of the Dean of Students can assist students who are experiencing a temporary condition or injury (e.g., broken or sprained limbs, concussions, or recovery from surgery). Students experiencing a temporary condition or injury should submit a request using the following link: https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu.

*For English as a Second Language (ESL):* The Program in American Language Studies (PALS) can support students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a Second Language (ESL) and can be reached by emailing PALS@newark.rutgers.edu to discuss potential supports.

*For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment:* The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance can assist students who are experiencing any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking. Students can report an incident to the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance by calling (973) 353-1906 or emailing TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. Incidents may also be reported by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. For more information, students should refer to the University’s Student Policy Prohibiting Sexual Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, Stalking and Related Misconduct located at http://compliance.rutgers.edu/title-ix/about-title-ix/title-ix-policies/.

*For support related to interpersonal violence:* The Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance can provide any student with confidential support. The office is a confidential resource and does not have an obligation to report information to the University’s Title IX Coordinator. Students can contact the office by calling (973) 353-1918 or emailing run.vpva@rutgers.edu. There is also a confidential text-based line available to students; students can text (973) 339-0734 for support.
For Crisis and Concerns: The Campus Awareness Response and Education (CARE) Team works with students in crisis to develop a support plan to address personal situations that might impact their academic performance. Students, faculty and staff may contact the CARE Team by using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNCARE or emailing careteam@rutgers.edu.

For Stress, Worry, or Concerns about Well-being: The Counseling Center has confidential therapists available to support students. Students should reach out to the Counseling Center to schedule an appointment: counseling@newark.rutgers.edu or (973) 353-5805. If you are not quite ready to make an appointment with a therapist but are interested in self-help, check out TAO at Rutgers-Newark for an easy, web-based approach to self-care and support: https://tinyurl.com/RUN-TAO.

For emergencies, call 911 or contact Rutgers University Police Department (RUPD) by calling (973) 353-5111.

Attendance Under ordinary circumstances, students are expected to make every effort to attend class regularly. Again, Canvas provides me with stats regarding how and for how long each student is utilizing the course materials. These stats along with your timely submission of coursework will form the basis of your grade for Attendance/Participation.

Per the University’s Course Attendance policy (10.2.7), students are responsible for communicating with their instructors regarding absences. Under the extraordinary conditions we currently find ourselves dealing with, if circumstances arise that threaten to interfere with or prevent your completion of course work, please contact me ASAP. We must all strive to be flexible, understanding, and compassionate during these times, but I cannot be of assistance or refer you to services that may be of help if I do not know what is happening.

Communication Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions related to the class. I strongly urge everyone to make plans to meet with me online at least once during the semester. Email me for an office hours appointment and give me several meeting time options. I will do my best to respond to all emails within 24 hours. Please plan ahead if you have a question related to a paper, exam or other matter with a required deadline.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

The Writing Center
The Writing Center (http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter), located in Room 126 of Conklin Hall, offers writing tutoring and writing workshops to all undergraduate students currently enrolled in classes on the Rutgers-Newark campus. Their tutors work to help students become more independent readers and writers capable of responding well to the demands of writing within the university. Please inform your students that The Writing Center is available to them free of charge and encourage them to take advantage of their services to strengthen their reading, writing, and research skills.
This class requires a knowledge of the Canvas learning platform. I also assume you have created a Zoom account through Rutgers.

**If you require technical assistance, these are sites for help:**

- Link to RU-N “Technology LaunchPad”: [https://runit.rutgers.edu/technology-launch-pad/](https://runit.rutgers.edu/technology-launch-pad/)
- Contact information for OIT-Newark Help Desk: [https://runit.rutgers.edu/hd/](https://runit.rutgers.edu/hd/)

**ASSIGNMENTS**

The books for this course are listed below. Additional readings or visual materials marked with an asterisk (*) for this course will be available on Canvas.


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.
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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| 1    | For week beginning Monday, July 12:  
|      | **Required Reading:**  
|      | 1. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass: An American Slave* (1845): intro by Angela Davis and chapter 10*  
|      | 2. WATCH: the first 15 minutes of Ava DuVernay’s “13th” (2016). Feel free to watch the entire documentary if you have the time. It is available on Netflix. I will provide a video excerpt or link to the documentary.  
|      | 3. Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (get a start on reading this. It may take you a bit to get used to the writing style.)  
|      | [https://www.docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/jacobs.html](https://www.docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/jacobs.html) |

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| 2    | For week beginning Monday, July 19  
|      | **Required Reading:**  
|      | [https://www.docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/jacobs.html](https://www.docsouth.unc.edu/fpn/jacobs/jacobs.html) |
Emancipation/Post-Reconstruction/

For week beginning Monday, July 26

**Required Reading:**


3. Cooper, Anna Julia, “Womanhood a vital element in the regeneration and progress of a race, “ (excerpt) in *A Voice from the South* (1892)

| 4 | Migration/War/Renaissance/Depression |
For week beginning Monday, August 2

Required Reading:
1. Larsen, *Quicksand*

2. Mary Church Terrell, “The Progress of Colored Women” (1904), 

3. Elise Johnson McDougald, “The Task of Negro Womanhood”*


5. Handouts: Misc. Blues lyrics*

5 Long Civil Rights Movement
For week beginning Monday, August 9

**Required Reading:**
2. Ella Baker: “We Need Group-Centered Leadership”*
3. Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi*
   Watch: A 10 minute documentary providing more historical context is at [https://youtu.be/RfBb3tKXf0](https://youtu.be/RfBb3tKXf0)

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**Black Power/Black Feminisms I**

For week beginning Monday, August 16

**Required Reading:**
1. The Combahee Collective River Statement (1977)  
   ([http://historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/cleaverwomenpowerrev.html](http://historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/cleaverwomenpowerrev.html))
6. Watch:  
   41st Marion T. Wright Lecture:  
   (What the talks delivered by Cara Page and Alicia Garza at 1:34:18 to 2:13:02).  
   You can watch the conversation that follows and/or the entire conference if you wish, but the approximately 45 minute segment above is the minimum you should watch.