GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES (423)
BLACK FEMINISMS

Spring 2011
TU, TH 9:30AM - 10:45AM
3331 Sterling Hall

Professor Keisha Lindsay
Room 3311-Sterling Hall
263-2763
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Office Hours:
Office Hours  T - 10:45 -11:45
TH- 11:45 -12:45

Course Description and Objectives:
The aim of this course is to critically examine key issues, assumptions, and debates in contemporary, post civil rights black feminist thought. Section one of the course explores how black feminist theorists simultaneously embrace and complicate established feminist and anti-racist readings of race and gender oppression. We will pay particular attention to how black feminists make use of standpoint theory, black nationalism, black liberalism, liberal feminism, black Marxism, and materialist feminist thought. Section two of the course interrogates black feminist thinkers’ pioneering contributions to anti-racist and feminist thought. We will focus on black feminist understandings of intersectionality and womanism. The final section of the course examines how black feminist thinkers interrogate specific concepts including sexuality, leadership, crime and punishment, and popular culture. The particular questions we will analyze include but are not limited to the following. Is African American popular culture a source of black women’s oppression or liberation? How do we recognize effective black leadership when we see it? What is the relationship between racism, gender oppression, and homophobia in black women’s lives?

Each section of the course will: 1) help develop the analytical skills necessary to think critically about feminism, race, and gender; 2) pay particular attention to how black feminist theory shapes and is shaped by other hierarchies of power including sexuality and 3) draw on a range of texts and films to situate black feminist theory not only as an intellectual project but as a personal and an activist one. Our ultimate aim is to build the skills and background that will enable us to apply these ideas and approaches to our own intellectual and political projects.

Course Readings

This text is also on reserve at the Undergraduate Library, Helen C. White Building.

The course pack/reader is available at the L & S Social Science Copy Center, 6120 Social Science Building, 1180 Observatory Drive, Tel: 262-5396

We will use Learn@UW for reflection papers. You can access Learn@UW from the University of Wisconsin’s home page.

Course Requirements:
1. Attending class and participating in class discussion (15%)
You must sign the sign-in sheet at the beginning of every class, except for the first two classes when I will take attendance. **You are allowed 2 absences.** Any absences greater than this number will drop your participation grade by one full letter grade regardless of the extent to which you participate in class discussions when present. If you miss more than half of all of the class meetings without a satisfactory explanation you will receive a failing grade for course.

2. **Reflection Papers (25%)**
   You will submit a total of five (one page, typed, double spaced) reflection papers throughout the semester. I will draw on your reflection papers to facilitate class discussion. **Each paper must address at least one of the readings assigned on a specific date.** Use your reflection papers to comment on things that you find contradictory, controversial, confusing or otherwise noteworthy in the readings. **Please end each of your papers with two specific questions for class discussion.** Reflection papers are intended to keep you engaged with the readings. They should **not** be used to provide detailed summaries of the assigned texts.

   You will be assigned specific reflection paper due dates during our second class meeting. Reflection papers are **due at 6 pm via learn@uw** on the day **before** class. **You must be present on the days when your reflection papers are due in order to help lead class discussion.**

3. **Five Page Mid-Term Essay (25%) – ** **DUE MARCH 19TH AT 3PM IN MY OFFICE**

4. **Seven to Eight Page Final Essay (35%) – ** **DUE MAY 17TH AT 5PM IN MY OFFICE**

**Classroom Conduct:** Cell phones, texting, Ipods, laptops, PDAs, and their accompanying earpieces are NOT allowed during class in order to facilitate a non-distracting and intellectually productive learning environment. If you are found using any of these devices your attendance will be “zeroed” for the day in question. “Testing” is not a valid excuse for using any of the above devices during class.

**Email Communication:** I aim to respond to student emails within 24 hours of receipt, Monday to Friday.

**Statement on Grade Related Questions and Appeals:**
If you have questions about a grade, please speak to me first. If the question is not resolved, speak with the Chair, Jane Collins, or Associate Chair, Judith Houck. They will attempt to resolve the issue informally and inform you of the Appeals Procedures if no resolution is reached informally.

**I will only discuss questions about grades during office hours or by appointment - not over email or before/after class.**

Final grades will be determined according to the following official UW grading scale: A 93-100; AB 88-92; B 83-87; BC 78-82; C 70-77; D 60-69; F below 60.
Late Paper Policy: Papers and exams turned in late will be penalized by ten (10) percentage points for each 24-hour period after the due date.

Academic Misconduct (Plagiarism and Cheating): This class will strictly follow and enforce the university’s policies on academic misconduct. UWS 14.03 defines academic misconduct to include acts in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation. Examples include but are not limited to: a) cutting and pasting text from the web without quotation marks or proper citation; b) paraphrasing from the web or written texts without crediting the source; c) using notes in an exam when such use is not allowed and d) using another person’s ideas, words, or research and presenting it as one’s own.

Complete information on academic misconduct is at www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/academic_misconduct.html.

Writing Center: For additional help with papers, visit the Writing Center at any stage during the writing process. Stop by 6171 Helen C. White, call for an appointment (263-1992), or consult the Center's resources online at www.wisc.edu/writing/.

Accessibility: Please let me know if you require any alternative accommodations or if you have any accessibility concerns that may affect your performance in this course. The McBurney Resource Center (www.mcburney.wisc.edu), 1305 Linden Dr. 263-2741, TTY 263-6393, provides assistance and documentation regarding physical, learning, sensory, or psychological disabilities.

Section One: Roadmaps

Introduction
January 24:
Meet and Greet
Review Syllabus

The Why and How of Black Feminist Theory?
January 26:
bell hooks. “Theory as Liberatory Practice”
Barbara Christian. “Race for Theory”

January 31:
Sojourner Truth. “Woman’s Rights” & “When Woman Gets Her Rights Man will be Right” (WOF)
Barbara Smith. Some Home Truths on the Contemporary Black Feminist Movement (WOF)
Audre Lorde. “Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference” (WOF)

Equality and Justice for All?
February 2:
Ida B. Wells. “Lynch Law in America” (WOF)
Alice Dunbar Nelson. “The Negro Woman and the Ballot” (WOF)
Florence Kennedy. “A Comparative Study” (WOF)
Shirley Chisolm. “Facing the Abortion Question” (WOF)
Beverly Davis – “To Seize the Moment: A Retrospective on the National Black Feminist Organization”

February 7: Film – Unbought and Unbossed
February 9:
Eleanor Holmes Norton. “Notes of a Feminist Long Distance Runner”
Kristal Brent. “A Manifesto of Sorts for a Black Feminist Movement”
bell hooks. “Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression”

Towards a Black Materialist Feminism
February 14:
Claudia Jones. “An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman” (WOF)
Gloria Joseph. “The Incompatible Menage à Trois: Marxism, Feminism, and Racism”

February 16:
Angela Davis. “Rape, Racism and the Capitalist Setting”
Joy James. “Radicalizing Feminism”

Black Feminism and/as Standpoint Theory
February 21:
Barbara Smith. “Toward a Black Feminist Criticism”

February 23:
Hazel Carby. “Women's Era: Rethinking Black Feminist Theory”
Tracey Reynolds. “Re-Thinking a Black Feminist Standpoint”

(Re)Reading Black Nationalisms
February 28:
Amy Jacques Garvey. “Women as Leaders” (WOF)
“Panther Sisters on Women’s Liberation”
Toni Cade Bambara “On the Issue of Roles”
Assata Shakur “To My People” & “Open Letter”

March 1:
E. Frances White. “Africa on My Mind: Gender, Counter Discourse and African-American Nationalism” (WOF)
Pauline Terrelonge. “Feminist Consciousness and Black Women” (WOF)

March 6:
Film Clip. Still Revolutionaries
Patricia Hill Collins “Black Nationalist Interpretations of Black Women’s Community Work”

Section Two - Pioneering Schools of Black Feminist Thought

Womanisms
March 8:
Alice Walker. “Alice Walker’s Womanism”
Patricia Hill Collins. “What's in a Name: Womanism, Black Feminism, and Beyond”

March 13:
Jacquelyn Grant. “Black Theology and the Black Woman” (WOF)
Monica Coleman. “Must I be a Womanist?”
March 15: Mid-Term Exam Review

**MIDTERM ESSAY DUE – MARCH 19TH AT 3PM IN MY OFFICE**

March 20:
C. Hudson-Weems. “Africana Womanism”
Nikol G. Alexander-Floyd and Evelyn M. Simien. “Revisiting ‘What’s in a Name’: Exploring the Contours of Africana Womanist Thought”

**Intersectionality**
March 22:
“Anna Julia Cooper” (WOF)
Anna Julia Cooper. “Woman vs. the Indian”
Combahee River Collective. “The Combahee River Collective Statement” (WOF)
Kimberlé Crenshaw. “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex”

March 27:
Janice Yoder and Patricia Aniakudo. "Outside within the Firehouse: Subordination and Difference In the Social Interactions of African American Women Firefighters"

March 29:
Ange Marie Hancock. “Intersectionality as a Normative and Empirical Paradigm”
Kimberlé Crenshaw, Nira Yuval-Davis, and Michelle Fine. “A Conversation with Founding Scholars of Intersectionality”

**Section 3 – Specific Themes in Black Feminist Thought**

**Sexual and Body Politics**
April 10:
Film Clip. Silent Choices
Dorothy Roberts. “From Norplant to the Contraceptive Vaccine”

April 12:
Evelyn Hammonds. “Missing Persons” (WOF)
Darlene Hine. “Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women” (WOF)

April 17:
Susan Cavin. “An Interview with Audre Lorde”
Cheryl Clarke. “Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance” (WOF)
Hawley Fogg Davis. “Theorizing Black Lesbians within Black Feminism”

**Popular Culture**
April 19:
Barbara Ransby and Tracey Matthews. “Black Popular Culture and the Transcendence of Patriarchal Illusions” (WOF)
April 24:
Film Clip. Beyond Beats and Rhymes
Tricia Rose. “Bad Sistas”

Leadership
April 26:
bell hooks. “Black Women Intellectuals”
Patricia Hill Collins. “Rethinking Black Women’s Activism”

May 1:
Joy James. “Captive Theorists and Community Caretakers”
Carol Boyce Davis. “Condification”

Crime and Punishment
May 3:
Dorothy Roberts. “Punishing Drug Addicts Who Have Babies”
Michele Goodwin. "Gender, Race, and Mental illness: The Case of Wanda Jean Allen"

May 8:
Angela Davis – “The Prison Industrial Complex”
Kirsten Clarke. “Towards a Black Feminist Liberation Agenda”

May 10: Conclusion/Final Exam Review

FINAL ESSAY DUE – MAY 17TH AT 5PM IN MY OFFICE