

GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES (333)
BLACK FEMINISMS

SPRING 2018
TU, TH 9:30 – 10:45
STERLING 2301

Professor Keisha Lindsay
Room 3311-Sterling Hall
263-2763
knlindsay@wisc.edu

- Credit Hours: 3 via Traditional Carnegie Definition
- Course Level: Advanced
- Course Prerequisite: Sophomore standing, a Gen&WS course, an AfroAmer course, or consent of instructor
- Course Breadth: Letters & Sciences (LAS) and Either Humanities or Social Science (Z)
- Instructional Mode: Face to Face
- Learn@UW/Canvas URL:
<https://uwmad.courses.wisconsin.edu/d2l/le/content/4017564/Home>

Office Hours:
T 1:15 pm – 2:15 pm
TH 8:25 am – 9:25 am

Course Description and Learning 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, and the criminal justice system. The particular questions we will analyze include but are not limited to the following. How do we recognize effective black leadership when we see it? What is the relationship between racism, gender based 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.

This is a **writing-intensive course**, which means that we will employ various writing activities that are closely integrated with course readings. Written work will include two one-page "reflection" papers; a formal five-page mid-term essay (which is revised); and a formal seven-page final essay (which is revised). Each writing assignment requires increasingly complex and sophisticated analysis of course material. Each student will also have the opportunity to work with the Writing Fellows assigned to the course. Two key principles inform the Writing Fellows Program. The first is that all writers, no matter how accomplished, can improve their writing by sharing work-in-progress and making revisions based on constructive criticism; the second is that collaboration among student peers is an especially effective mode of learning. The Writing Fellows assigned to the course will review your draft mid-term essay and draft final essay.

Course Readings:

The following required text is available at A Room of One's Own Bookstore, 315 W. Gorham.
Tel: 608-257-7888.

Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought (ed. Beverly Guy-Sheftall) (WOF) ISBN-10: 1565842561; ISBN-13: 978-1565842564 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

Course Requirements:

1. Attending class and participating in class discussion (10%)

You must sign the sign-in sheet at the beginning of every class. **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 the course.

2. Reflection Papers (15%)

You will submit a total of **two** papers throughout the semester. I will draw on your reflection papers to facilitate class discussion. Each paper must address **at least two of the readings assigned on a specific date.** Use papers to comment on anything that you find contradictory, controversial, confusing or otherwise noteworthy in of the assigned readings for a given class session. Your papers may seek clarification of particular terms or ideas; they may challenge the author(s)' presumptions; they may interrogate the implications of the author(s)' claims; or they may attempt to relate assigned readings to materials beyond the course. **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. Each paper must be **between 250 to 275 words** long.

We will use Learn@UW for reflection papers. You can access Learn@UW from the University of Wisconsin's home page. Please **cut and paste** your papers directly into the relevant text box (no attachments). Reflection papers are due at **noon via learn@uw** on the day **before** class. **You must be present in class to solicit responses to and receive credit for your reflection paper. If you are absent you must write an additional reflection paper (and be present in class to discuss it) in order to receive "make up" credit.**

3. Mid-Term Essay (35%)

A draft of your five-page mid-term essay is **due on FEBRUARY 23 AT 2:00 PM.** I will drop your final mid-term essay grade by one full letter grade if you fail to submit a draft mid-term essay. A revised copy of your mid-term essay (hard copy only) is **due in my office on MARCH 9 AT 2:00 PM.**

4. Final Essay (40%)

A draft of your seven page final essay is **due on APRIL 16 AT 1:00 PM.** I will drop your final essay grade by one full letter grade if you fail to submit a draft final essay. A revised copy of your final essay (hard copy only) is **due in my office on MAY 8 AT 9:00 AM.**

Classroom Conduct: Cell phones, texting, laptops, 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.

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

Statement Grade Related Questions and Appeals: I will only discuss questions about grades during office hours or by appointment - not over email or before/after class. If you would like to challenge your grade, please wait 24 hours after receiving the grade before contacting me. If you have questions about a grade, please speak to me first. If the question is not resolved, speak with the Chair, Aili Tripp, who 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 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: The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student’s educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Section One: Roadmaps

Introduction - The Why and How of Black Feminist Theory?

January 23:

Meet and Greet/Syllabus Review

Video Clip: Demetria Frazier – “A Moment in Her Story”

January 25:

bell hooks. “Theory as Liberatory Practice”

Barbara Christian. “Race for Theory”

Equality and Justice for All?

January 30:

Sojourner Truth. “When Woman Gets Her Rights Man will be Right” (WOF)

Ida B. Wells. “Lynch Law in America” (WOF)

Alice Dunbar Nelson. “The Negro Woman and the Ballot” (WOF)

Florence Kennedy. “A Comparative Study” (WOF)

February 6:

Pauli Murray. “The Liberation of Black Women” (WOF)

Beverly Davis. “To Seize the Moment: A Retrospective on the National Black Feminist Organization”

Kristal Brent. “A Manifesto of Sorts for a Black Feminist Movement”

Oprah Winfrey: Golden Globes’ Speech

February 1: In-class film: Unbought and Unbossed

Towards a Black Materialist Feminism

February 6:

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 8:

Angela Davis. “Rape, Racism and the Capitalist Setting”

Joy James. “Radicalizing Feminism”

(Re)Reading Black Nationalisms

February 13:

“Panther Sisters on Women’s Liberation”

Toni Cade Bambara. “On the Issue of Roles”

Pauline Terrelonge. “Feminist Consciousness and Black Women” (WOF)

February 15:

Frances White. “Africa on My Mind: Gender, Counter Discourse and African-American Nationalism” (WOF)

Patricia Hill Collins. “Black Nationalist Interpretations of Black Women’s Community Work”

In class film: Still Revolutionaries

February 20: *Writing Center Workshop*

Black Feminism and/as Standpoint Theory

February 22:

Patricia Hill Collins. “The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought” (WOF)

Barbara Smith. “Toward a Black Feminist Criticism”

DRAFT MIDTERM ESSAY DUE – FEBRUARY 23 AT 2:00 PM

February 27:

Hazel Carby. "'Women's Era': Rethinking Black Feminist Theory"

Tracey Reynolds. "Re-Thinking a Black Feminist Standpoint"

Section Two - Pioneering Schools of Black Feminist Thought

Womanisms

March 1:

Alice Walker. "Alice Walker's Womanism"

Helen (Charles). "The Language of Womanism: Rethinking Difference"

March 6:

Jacquelyn Grant. "Black Theology and the Black Woman" (WOF)

Monica Coleman. "Must I be a Womanist?"

March 8:

C. Hudson-Weems. "Africana Womanism"

Nikol Alexander-Floyd and Evelyn Simien. "Revisiting 'What's in a Name': Exploring the Contours of Africana Womanist Thought"

REVISED MIDTERM ESSAY DUE MARCH 9 AT 2:00 PM

Intersectionality

March 13:

Combahee River Collective. "The Combahee River Collective Statement" (WOF)

Kimberlé Crenshaw. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex"

March 15:

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

Dorothy E. Roberts. "Race, Gender, and Genetic Technologies: A New Reproductive Dystopia?"

March 20:

Ange Marie Hancock. "Intersectionality as a Normative and Empirical Paradigm"

Nikol Floyd-Alexander. "Disappearing Acts: Reclaiming Intersectionality in the Social Sciences in a Post-Black Feminist Era"

Section 3 – Specific Themes in Black Feminist Thought

Crime and Punishment

April 3:

Dorothy Roberts. "Punishing Drug Addicts Who Have Babies"

Michele Goodwin. "Gender, Race, and Mental Illness: The Case of Wanda Jean Allen"

April 5:

Andrea Ritchie. "Law Enforcement Violence Against Women of Color"

Kristen West Savali. "Black Women are Killed by Police, Too"

In-Class Film Clip: Fault Lines - The Lives of Black Women

Education

April 10:

Monique Morris. "Struggling to Survive"
Ruth Nicole Brown. "Tiara"

April 12:

Barbara Omolade. "A Black Feminist Pedagogy"
bell hooks. "Engaged Pedagogy"

DRAFT FINAL ESSAY DUE – APRIL 16 AT 1:00 PM

Sexual, Gender, and Body Politics

April 17:

Barbara Omolade. "Heart of Darkness" (WOF)
Darlene Hine. "Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women" (WOF)

April 19:

Susan Cavin. "An Interview with Audre Lorde"
Cheryl Clarke. "Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance" (WOF)
June Jordan. "A New Politics of Sexuality" (WOF)

April 24:

Heath Fogg-Davis. "Sex-Classification Policies as Transgender Discrimination: An Intersectional Critique"
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. "Clarifying"
Laverne Cox: A Response

Leadership

April 26:

bell hooks. "Black Women Intellectuals"
Patricia Hill Collins. "Rethinking Black Women's Activism"

April 27: *Final Essay Review*

May 1:

Joy James. "Captive Theorists and Community Caretakers"
Alicia Garza. "A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement"

May 3:

Course Evaluation/Review

REVISED FINAL ESSAY DUE THURSDAY, MAY 8 AT 9:00 AM