

Special Topics in Women's Studies: Black Feminism WMST 4250 (Fall 2006)

Instructor: Nichole M. Ray, M.Ed., Adult Education
Meeting Time: 11:00am - 12:15pm (T/R)
Building: Plant Sciences, Rm. 3203
Office Hours: By Appointment
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Course Description

In this class, we will examine the foundations, ideas, concerns and implications of Black feminism within the context of the United States. A major goal of this class is to foster dialogue and critical discussion about Black feminism as a site of theory and practice emphasizing social, political, and personal transformation.

We begin our journey with contemporary discussion on black feminism. Who are the major theorists/activists? What do they have to say regarding black feminism? What are significant, overarching tenets of Black feminism? Next, we examine the origins of this type of feminism to early notions of black womanhood during slavery and the post-slavery era. We will address questions surrounding the sexual stereotypes imposed upon black women, as well as their response to the sexual constraints, dangers, and vulnerabilities experienced during this time period. Following our historical discussion of black feminism, we move into current dialogue addressed by it, including, but not limited to: reproductive rights, poverty, single parenthood and family, "welfare reform", violence, intraracial conflict, HIV/AIDS and other health concerns, the politics of hair and skin complexion, and representations of black women in popular culture.

Required Readings

(All required books are available at Off Campus Bookstore and Baxter Street Bookstore. There are also several copies available at the UGA Bookstore on campus)

Beverly Guy-Sheftall. (1995). Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought. New York: The New Press.

bell hooks. (2004) We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity. New York: Routledge.

Audre Lorde (1984). Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches. Freedom, CA: Crossing Press.

Joy James (2002). Shadowboxing: Representations of Black Feminist Politics. New York: Palgrave.

Ntozake Shange. (1997). for colored girls who have considered suicide when the rainbow is enuf. New York: Macmillan.

Alice Walker (1982). The Color Purple. New York: Pocket Books.*Note: This is the reissue edition published in 1990.

**** Additional readings are posted on the **Library's Course Reserves (password is: feminist)** website and are noted as **(CR)** in the "Course Schedule" section of this syllabus.

There are **3** books on reserve at the library that are available for check out for approximately 3 hours. It is your responsibility to read/make copies of the chapters by the readings due date.

Additional readings may also be assigned throughout the course. Any portion of this syllabus may be changed at the Instructor's discretion.****

Class Policies, Procedures, Etc.

Class Format

The format for this course is largely discussion-based, including instructor lectures as well as small and large group activities and other media presentations.

WEBCT will be used for class activity discussion postings, handouts, and assignment rubrics, so please be sure to check it daily. It is important that you come to class prepared and ready to contribute to group discussion or any other class activity. **It is also expected that you remain in class throughout the duration of the entire class, as departing early or packing your things away early can cause disruptions.**

Attendance

You are allowed a total of 2 unexcused absences for the semester without penalty. Additional unexcused absences including being late to class by more than 10 minutes also will result in a 10 point deduction from your final grade for each absence. **All Excused Absences must be documented by the appropriate official and turned into me for review upon return to class.**

•A student who withdraws from a course prior to the midpoint withdrawal deadline of a term is assigned a grade of W or WF by the instructor. A student who withdraws after the midpoint withdrawal deadline of a term (date specified in the Schedule of Classes) is assigned a grade of WF, except when the student is doing satisfactory work and the withdrawal is recommended by the Vice President of Student Affairs because of health or emergency reasons.
(AS MANDATED BY THE OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS)

•Students who miss more than 4 classes will be withdrawn from the class and receive a WF.

•Job interviews, religious holidays, emergency family situations, and officially sanctioned college activities (athletics and competing academic duties) are considered permissible absences if the student shows official documentation to the instructor a class period in advance of the absence.

It is your responsibility to sign the attendance roster each day you attend class. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to contact your classmates regarding the material covered in class, any schedule changes, etc.

Assignments

NO LATE WORK IS ACCEPTED. Please ensure that all assignments are turned in on time, at the beginning of class. ALL PAPERS SHOULD BE SUBMITTED AS HARD COPIES UNLESS SPECIFIED OTHERWISE. Missed in-class presentations cannot be made up later in the semester. It is your responsibility to inform the instructor of any situations that can possibly affect your performance and participation in this course.

Questions or Concerns with Grades

It is your responsibility to keep track of your grades and the quality of your participation. If you have questions concerning your grades, contact me via email and we can arrange a meeting. **I DO NOT DISCUSS GRADES WITH STUDENTS AFTER CLASS. A MEETING MUST BE ARRANGED.**

Make-Up Work

I do not offer make-up work. Quizzes, tests, presentations or any other missed assignments cannot be

made up.

Extra Credit

I do not offer extra credit for this course.

Contacting Instructor

Please feel free to contact me via email at wmst4250fall06@gmail.com . I check my email at least 2x per weekday, so if you email me at 2pm, for example, then expect a response sometime that evening. If you need to meet with me, please see me after class to schedule a block of time. I usually meet with students at Jittery Joe's in the SLC or the Main Library Common Area.

Academic Honesty

Please visit UGA's website at: http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/culture_honesty.htm. It is expected that all students will abide the UGA academic honesty policies.

Persons with Disabilities

If there are students with disability or other special needs, please contact Disability Services at 542-8719 and be certain to meet with me.

Please take time to visit the UGA Student Affairs website for additional student policies, etc.: <http://www.uga.edu/campuslife/handbook/regulations.html>

Course Assignments

4 unannounced quizzes (20 points each)	80	
In Class Midterm	100	Sept. 28
In-Class Final Exam	100	Dec. 12
Black Feminism Research Paper	100	
Abstract		Sept. 26
8-10 page research paper		Dec. 5
Final Paper Presentation		Nov. 30 & Dec. 5
Discussion Facilitations	20	
2 Critical Response Papers (25 points each)	50	Sept. 14 & Oct. 31
Class Participation	50	
Total Possible Points	500	

All assignments will be graded on a 0-100% scale. This number will be multiplied by the total points possible for each item to determine the weighted score. All scores will be rounded to two significant figures for the purposes of assigning a letter grade. An example is shown below:

Participation	70%	times 50 possible pts equals	35	points
Critical Response #1	85%	times 25 possible pts equals	21.25	points

Grading Scale (based on the new +/- system required by the University as of Spring 2006)

500 - 475	A
474 - 450	A-
449 - 425	B+
424 - 400	B
399 - 375	B-
375 - 350	C+

349 - 325	C
324 - 300	C-
299 - 250	D
< 250	F

Participation

THIS CLASS IS LARGELY A DISCUSSION-BASED COURSE. Although there will be some lecture, this course requires that all students actively participate. Participation points will be allotted based on your overall participation in small and large group discussions and other class activities. You will also be required to post comments on WEBCT at certain points throughout the semester. Participation is worth 50 points and is evaluated as follows:

- Excellent = Proactive participation through leading, originating, informing, as well as asking questions that are thought provoking and indicate that you have read the material and reflected upon the readings and discussions. Participation does not mean dominating the discussion, making comments merely to make comments, or taking up class time with personal issues. [50-40points]
- Satisfactory = Reactive participation with supportive, follow-up contributions that are relevant and of value, but rely on the leadership and study of others. Active participation in group activities. [39-30]
- Minimally acceptable = Passive participation including being present, awake, alert, attentive, but not actively involved. While you may be learning, you are not contributing to other's learning nor are you assisting in producing discussions that engage others. [29-20]
- Unsatisfactory = Uninvolved, including being absent, late, leaving early, present but not attentive, sleeping, asking questions that indicate you have not been keeping up with readings and making irrelevant and unsubstantial contributions to the discussions. [19 and below]

Quizzes

A total of 4 short, unannounced quizzes will be administered throughout the semester. Each quiz will be worth 20 points and can cover material from readings, class discussions, media presentations, guest lecturers and class activities.

In Class Midterm and In Class Final

The Mid-Term examination will cover material from the beginning of the course up to the midpoint. The Final examination will cover material from the mid-point to the end of the course. Both will include information from lectures, discussion, film(s), and guest speakers. The format is long essay. Use of class notes, books, or articles is NOT allowed during the examination. Both are worth 100 points each.

Individual Discussion Facilitation

You are to make a 15 minute individual, presentation, including a summary, analysis, critique, and facilitate discussion questions on 1 assigned reading. During our second class meeting, I will pass around a sign up sheet for the presentations. We will begin on the second full week of class. Please visit the "Assignments" section of WEBCT for detailed instructions and grading rubric. Worth 20 points.

Critical Response Papers

The critical response papers will allow me to see how you are thinking about our readings and discussions. One week prior to each paper due date, I will post a question for you to reflect upon and answer

by the given due date. The papers should integrate information from our readings (can include direct citations), discussions, presentations, etc along with your own thoughts about the topic at hand. Each paper should be 4-5 pages in length, double-spaced with regular font and a cover page. Please see the WEBCT "Assignments" section for detailed grading/assignment rubric. These papers are worth 25 points each.

Black Feminism Research Project

This is an opportunity for you to engage in research on a topic of your choice that we have discussed this semester (ex. Black feminists in the 1960's; Black Women and HIV/AIDS; The activism of Ida B. Wells; Black Women and the Body). You are to write a brief abstract proposal, and a 8-10 page research paper on the topic and present your paper to the class at the end of the semester. I will provide you with more information on WEBCT as the semester continues.

*****Course Schedule*****

I. Introduction: Who We Are and Why We're Here

Aug. 17 (R) Review of Syllabus
Class Introductions

II. Black Feminism and Womanism: Establishing a Theoretical Framework

Aug. 22 (T) Readings: Guy-Sheftall, pp. 1-22; (**Words of Fire**)
Walker, Definition of "Womanism" (**Handout**);
Collins, "What is in name?: Womanism, Black Feminism and Beyond" (**CR**)

Aug. 24 (R) Readings: Guy-Sheftall, pp. 253-272(**Words of Fire**)
James, Chs. 1 and 4 (**Shadowboxing**)

Aug. 29 (T) Readings: Guy-Sheftall, pp. 283-318 (**Words of Fire**)
Collins, "Learning From the Outsider Within" (**CR**)

Aug. 31 (R) Readings: (**ALL CR**) - Springer, "Third Wave Black Feminism?"
Radford-Hill, "Keepin' it Real"
Guy-Sheftall, "Response from a Second Waver"

III. Black Feminism in Historical Context

Sept. 5 (T) **"Who Made This Arrangement?": Understanding Our Rightful Place With/In History**

Film : John Henrik Clarke: *A Great and Mighty Walk*
Film Discussion

Sept. 7 (R) **In Defense of Our Race and Sex...**
Readings: Guy-Sheftall, pp. 23-68 (**Words of Fire**)
James, Ch. 3

Sept. 12 (T) **Defining Black Womanhood: Sexual Mythologies, Identity, Image and Roles**
Readings: Guy-Sheftall, pp. 77-94 (**Words of Fire**)
Collins, "Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images" (**CR**)

Sept. 14 (R) Readings: Collins, "The Past is Ever Present: Recognizing the New Racism" (CR)
James, Ch. 6 (Shadowboxing)
*****Critical Response Paper #1 Due*****

Sept. 19 (T) **Black Feminism in the Movement Years - 1960's and 1970's**

Readings: Guy-Sheftall, p. 143-148 (Words of Fire)
James, Ch. 5 (Shadowboxing)

Sept. 21 (R) Reading: Guy-Sheftall, p. 185-198 and p. 219-240 (Words of Fire)
Midterm Review, Q&A

Sept. 26 (T) Film: A Place of Rage
Film Discussion

*****Turn in 1 paragraph Research Paper Abstract*****

Sept. 28 (R) ***Midterm***

IV. Contemporary Black Feminism: Issues & Responses

Oct. 3 (T) **Black Women, Family, Work, and Motherhood**

Collins, "Black Women and Motherhood" (CR)
Childbearing Among Unwed African American Women (CR)
Lorde, pp. 72-30 (Sister Outsider)

Oct. 5 (R) Readings: Newsome, "Reversal of Fortune: Explaining the Decline in Black Women's Earnings" (CR)
Chambers, selections from Having it All: Black Women and Success (This book is available on reserve at the library. Read Chapters 1, 3, 4)

<Visit the following website, print/read article for today:
<http://www.infoshop.org/texts/welfare.html>

Note: October 9 (Mon) is the midpoint withdrawal deadline

Oct. 10 (T) **Reproductive Freedom, Reproductive Rights**

Readings: Guy-Sheftall, pp. 389-395 (Words of Fire)
White, selections from Killing the Black Body (CR) This book is available on reserve at the library. Read Chapters 1, 3, 4

Oct. 12 (R) **Black Women's Health**

Class Activity: All students will bring in 1 article on an aspect of Black Women's Health for a small group activity. Areas of health will be assigned prior to this class meeting.

Oct. 17 (T) **Black Women HIV/AIDS, the Medical Establishment, and Health Activism**
Readings: Guy-Sheftall, pp. 433-449 (Words of Fire)
Lichenstein, "Domestic Violence, Sexual Ownership, and HIV Risk in the American

Deep South" (CR)
McNair, African American Women and AIDS (CR)

- Oct. 19 (R) **Black Women and Body Image**
Readings: (CR) Selections from Byrd, *Naked: Black Women Talk About Their Bodies*
- Oct. 24 (T) **Hip Hop and Feminism: Struggles over Identity and Image Revisited**
Guest Speaker: J. Sean Callahan, M.Ed. Doctoral Student, Educational Psychology, Gifted and Creative Education, UGA
Reading: Morgan, selections from When Chickenheads Come Home To Roost: A Hip Hop Feminist Breaks It Down (CR)
Additional Readings (TBA)
- Oct. 26 (R) **ENJOY FALL BREAK!!**
- Oct. 31 (T) **Black Women and Violence**
Readings: Guy-Sheftall, 397-404, 429-432 (**Words of Fire**)
hooks, ch. 4 (**We Real Cool**)
*****Critical Response Paper #2 Due*****
- Nov. 2 (R) **Black Women, Black Men: Intraracial Conflicts**
Reading: Shange, for colored girls (entire choreopoem)
- Nov. 7 (T) **Black Feminism on Masculinity**
Reading: Selections from hooks, We Real Cool (TBA)
- Nov. 9 (R) **Black Feminism on Creativity Through Spirituality**
Guest Speaker: Maria I. Winfield, MLA. Doctoral Candidate, Language and Literacy Education, UGA.
Readings (TBA)
- Nov. 14 (T) **Black Women and Men in Public Struggle: The Out/Rage Over The Color Purple**
Reading: Walker, The Color Purple entire book
Guy-Sheftall, pp. 537-547 (**Words of Fire**)
- Nov. 16 (R) **Sexuality, Feminism and the Politics of Audre Lorde**
Reading: Guy-Sheftall, pp. 241-251, 405-411;
Lorde, *Sister Outsider* Selections (TBA)
- Nov. 21 (T) continue with *Sister Outsider* selections
- !!!!!!Have a nice and safe holiday break!!!!!!**
- Nov. 28 (T) Final Exam Review (Please bring notes, textbooks, and questions for discussion)
Course Evaluations
- Nov. 30 (R) **The Status of Black Women in America: What's the 411?**

Begin Paper Presentations
- Dec. 5 (T) Continue with Paper Presentations

Course Wrap-Up

*****Black Feminist Research Paper Due Today*****

Final Examination: Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2006. (12:00p - 3:00p)

"I believe that this nation can only heal from the wounds of racism if we all begin to love blackness. And by that I don't mean that we love only that which is best within us, but that we're also able to love that which is faltering, which is wounded, which is contradictory, incomplete."

- bell hooks

** Note: The course schedule is largely based on the Black Feminism course originally designed by Dr. Chana Kai Lee. Many thanks to Drs. Lee and Johnson-Bailey for their advisement and assistance with this course development and facilitation.