

WST/CES 435, SECTION 1
AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN IN U.S. SOCIETY
Spring 2014, T/Th 9:10 – 10:25am, Todd Hall Room 413

Professor: Dr. Jenifer Barclay
Office: WILS 112-A
Office Hours: T/Th 1:30-2:30pm or by appointment
Office Phone: (509) 335-7973
Email: jenifer.barclay@wsu.edu

“What if such women as are here described should rise among our sable race? And it is not impossible; for it is not the color of the skin that makes the man or the woman, but the principle formed within the soul.”

~Maria Stewart, 1833

“What the colored girl craves, above all things, is to be respected and believed in.”

~Fannie Barrier Williams, 1905

“I have all the guns and all the money. I can withstand challenge from without and from within. Am I right, Comrade?”

~Elaine Brown, 1974

As the above quotes make clear, African American women were not passive witnesses to or silent victims of the numerous events that characterize the long sweep of the nation’s past but, rather, they were active participants in them. From the era of racial slavery – that legally existed until 1865 – through the disturbing and oftentimes deadly “nadir” or low point of black life in the U.S. that spanned from the aftermath of the Civil War to the early twentieth century, African American women resisted and fought deep injustices. Their tireless work to secure equal social, economic, and political conditions for their families and communities took many forms and continued into the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. Historians and other scholars, however, long overlooked or minimized black women’s involvement in these dramatic events, focusing instead on more visible and recognizable male figures like the iconic Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X. This last point illuminates what some African American women scholars pointed out long ago: the widespread perception that “all the women are white [and] all the blacks are men.” The interconnected matrix of race and gender in which black women are located, in other words, has all too often rendered them invisible in American life and society.

African American women’s experiences and autobiographical writings, however, bear witness to their actions and agency throughout the nation’s past. They also illuminate two intertwined categories of identity that have shaped the lives of *all* Americans: race and gender. The goal of this course is to examine foundational moments in American history and key issues in contemporary times through the lives, experiences, struggles, and words of African American women to grapple with the dynamic between these aspects of social identity and consider in depth the specific ways in which black women have negotiated and produced them. Students are expected to confront the complex intersection between gender and racial identity and, by semester’s end, recognize their constructed and relational nature *vis-à-vis* other core aspects of identity such as class, sexuality, ethnicity and national identity.

NOTE: *This syllabus and the course schedule below are subject to change based on necessary adjustments made by the professor; your continued enrollment in the course signifies your acceptance of the terms of the syllabus.*

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course will: (1.) Introduce students to the complex, intertwined forces of race, gender, class, and sexuality at play in the lived experiences of African American women throughout American history and into the present day. (2.) Introduce students to the major historiographical and theoretical issues that undergird African American women's history. (3.) Challenge students to recognize and articulate their understanding of the complexities of these intersecting, socially-constructed categories in African American women's day-to-day lives. (4.) Encourage students to critically analyze the relationship between contemporary social justice issues and the matrix of race, gender, class and sexuality in black women's lives and contemporary social justice issues.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance/Participation: In order to succeed in this class students must be present and prepared (all assigned readings completed as specified on the course schedule). Students can miss TWO classes without penalty (it is NOT necessary to contact your professor about these first three absences if you cannot come). Each absence beyond the two allowances will result in an approximately 4% deduction from your attendance score.

STUDENTS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ENSURING THAT THEY LEGIBLY WRITE THEIR OWN NAME ON THE SIGN-IN SHEET EACH CLASS PERIOD. NO ONE WILL BE "ADDED" TO THE SIGN-IN SHEET AFTER THE CLASS PERIOD IS OVER. IF STUDENTS ARE DISCOVERED ADDING FRIEND(S)' NAMES TO THE LIST THEY AND THEIR FRIEND(S) WILL RECEIVE A ZERO ATTENDANCE SCORE FOR THE COURSE.

Tardiness: Please ensure that you are on time to class. If you cannot avoid being late on occasion, please enter the room quietly and avoid distracting classmates or interrupting lecture to the best of your ability. Habitual tardiness will be penalized.

Cellphones, Laptops, and other Electronic Devices: Please ensure that cellphones are turned off or silenced before the start of class. Students do not have permission to use their phones, computers or other devices to surf the internet, check Facebook or other forms of social media, etc. during class time. Laptops may be used IF students are typing notes. If students are discovered using their laptops for other, non-essential purposes, the professor reserves the right to ask them to no longer use them in class.

**ALSO PLEASE NOTE: No student, under any circumstances, can videotape or otherwise record Dr. Barclay or her lectures and any other class content without her express written permission.

Late work: Written work and other assignments (with the exception of the final paper) may be turned in for up to two weeks after the due date with the following stipulations: if it is submitted in the first week after the due date it will be docked 25%; if submitted during the second week after the due date, it will be docked 50%.

Submitting assignments via email: Emailed work will ONLY be accepted in extreme cases and if the student secures permission from the professor in advance. In all other instances, it is the student's responsibility to turn in a hard copy of their work when it is due.

***PLEASE NOTE: Students should retain all written work that the professor grades and returns to them in the event that their final grade for the course is contested in any way.

Plagiarism: According to WSU's Student Standards of Conduct, plagiarism is defined as "Presenting the information, ideas, or phrasing of another person as the student's own work without proper acknowledgment of the source. This includes submitting a commercially prepared paper or research project or submitting for academic credit any work done by someone else. The term 'plagiarism' includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or academic materials" (<http://conduct.wsu.edu/policies/standards-of-conduct/>)

PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED AND IMMEDIATE ACTION WILL BE TAKEN AGAINST STUDENTS WHO CHOSE TO PLAGIARIZE. THIS CAN RESULT IN FAILURE OF THE ASSIGNMENT OR, IF THE PROBLEM PERSISTS, FAILURE OF THE ENTIRE COURSE. DO YOUR OWN WORK!

Students with Disabilities: Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. If you have a disability and need accommodations to fully participate in this class, please either visit or call the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509-335-3417) to schedule an appointment with an Access Advisor. All accommodations MUST be approved through the Access Center.

ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION:

ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION	10%
READING RESPONSE PAPERS (4 TOTAL)	40%
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (DUE MARCH 6)	20%
FINAL RESEARCH PAPER (DUE MAY 1)	30%
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	100%

Due Dates:

FEBRUARY 6	Research Prospectus
FEBRUARY 26	Reaction Paper One
MARCH 4	Reaction Paper Two
MARCH 6	Annotated Bibliography
APRIL 1	Reaction Paper Three
APRIL 8	Reaction Paper Four
MAY 1	Final Research Paper

Grading Scale

93-100 A	83-85 B	73-75 C	60-65 D
90-92 A-	80-82 B-	70-72 C-	0-59 F
86-89 B+	76-79 C+	66-69 D+	

COURSE TEXTS

Required:

Melton McLauren, *Celia: A Slave* (1999)

Nella Larsen, *Quicksand* and *Passing* (1986, McDowell intro)
James West, “They Say”: *Ida B. Wells and the Construction of Race* (2007)
Ann Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (1992)
Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power* ((1993)

Recommended:

Beverly Guy-Sheftall, ed. *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought*

SCHEDULE

WEEK ONE

INTRODUCTION

T JAN 14 – Review syllabus, course expectations, introductions

Th JAN 16 – Overview of major concepts and ideas

Reading: Evelyn Higginbotham, “African American Women’s History and the Metalanguage of Race” (1992)

WEEK TWO

SLAVERY AND GENDER

T JAN 21 The Gendered Dimensions of American Slavery

Reading: Jennifer Morgan, “‘Some Could Suckle Over Their Shoulder’: Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology” in *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (2004), pp. 12-9

****Recommended Event: Wednesday, January 22, 7pm – CUB Senior Ball Room
Diane Nash, “From Jail in Jackson to the Distinguished American Award:
My Life as an Activist” ****

Th JAN 23 The Gendered Dimensions of American Slavery, cont.

Reading: Melton McLauren, *Celia: A Slave* (1999)

WEEK THREE

ANTEBELLUM GENDER IDEOLOGIES AND RACIAL MYTHS

T JAN 28

Reading: Barbara Weld, “The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860”
Deborah Grey White, “Jezebel and Mammy: The Mythology of Female Slavery” in *Ar’n’t I A Women: Female Slaves in the Plantation South*

****Recommended Event: Wednesday, January 29, 7pm – CUB Senior Ball Room
Michael Eric Dyson, “Dr. King for the 21st Century” ****

Th JAN 30 Women’s Abolitionism

WEEK FOUR

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND EMANCIPATION

T FEB 4 Emancipation
Reading: Susan Mann, "Slavery, Sharecropping and Sexual Inequality"

Th FEB 6 Women's Rights, Suffrage and Race
Reading: Mamie Locke, "From Three Fifths to Zero"
****ONE PAGE RESEARCH PROSPECTUS DUE IN CLASS****

WEEK FIVE

THE CLUBWOMEN'S MOVEMENT

T FEB 11 Women and Social Work in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries
Reading: Linda Gordon, "Black and White Visions of Welfare: Women's Welfare Activism, 1890-1945"

Th FEB 13 The Politics of Respectability
Reading: Stephanie Shaw, "Black Clubwomen and the Creation of the NACW"

WEEK SIX

THE NADIR

T FEB 18 The Sexual Politics of Extralegal Racial Violence in the Early 20th Century
Reading: West, *"They Say": Ida B. Wells and the Construction of Race*

Th FEB 20 Discussion of West
Reading: West, *"They Say": Ida B. Wells and the Construction of Race*

WEEK SEVEN

BLACK WOMEN, THE 'NEW NEGRO,' AND THE 'NEW WOMAN'

T FEB 25 Women and the Harlem Renaissance
****REACTION PAPER ONE DUE IN CLASS****

Th FEB 27 Continued...
Reading: Nella Larsen, *Passing*

WEEK EIGHT

THE GREAT DEPRESSION AND WWII DECADES

T MAR 4
Reading: Darlene Clark Hine, "The Housewives' League of Detroit: Black Women and Economic Nationalism" (1993)
****REACTION PAPER TWO DUE IN CLASS****

Th MAR 6
Reading: Darlene Clark Hine, "Mabel K. Staupers and the Integration of Black Women Nurses into the Armed Forces During WWII" (1982)
****ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE IN CLASS****

WEEK NINE

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF JOSEPHINE BAKER:
TRANSITIONAL, TRANSNATIONAL FIGURE

- T MAR 11 In-class viewing “The Josephine Baker Story”
Th MAR 13 In-class viewing “The Josephine Baker Story”

SPRING BREAK! MARCH 17 – 21
****Read *Coming of Age in Mississippi*****

WEEK TEN

GENDER AND CIVIL RIGHTS

- T MAR 25 Women Bridge Leaders
Reading: *Coming of Age in Mississippi*
Th MAR 27 Continued...
Reading: *Coming of Age in Mississippi*

WEEK ELEVEN

BLACK WOMEN AND BLACK POWER

- T APR 1
Reading: Begin Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power*
****REACTION PAPER THREE DUE IN CLASS****
Th APR 3
Reading: Discussion Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power*

WEEK TWELVE

RACE AND SECOND WAVE FEMINISM

- T APR 8 Tensions in the Civil Rights Movement
****REACTION PAPER FOUR DUE IN CLASS****
Th APR 10 White Feminists’ “Colorblindness”

WEEK THIRTEEN

BLACK FEMINISM AND BACKLASH

- T APR 15 A New Path and a New Feminism
Reading: Kimberly Springer, “Black Feminists Respond to Black Power Masculinism,” in Peniel Joseph, ed., *The Black Power Movement: Rethinking the Civil Rights-Black Power Era* (2006), pp. 105-118.
Th APR 17 Black Women and Conservative Politics: The Myth of the Welfare Queen

WEEK FOURTEEN

RACE, GENDER, POLITICS, AND POWER – PART I

T APR 22 Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, Workplace Harassment, and National Politics

Th APR 24 In-class discussion

Reading: Following Selections from Geneva Smitherman, ed., *African American Women Speak Out on Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas* (1995):
“Statement of Anita F. Hill to the Senate Judiciary”
“Statement of Clarence Thomas to the Senate Judiciary”
Darlene Clark Hine, “For Pleasure, Profit, and Power: The Sexual Exploitation of Black Women”
Angela Davis, “Clarence Thomas as Lynching Victim: Reflections on Anita Hill’s Role in the Thomas Confirmation Hearings”

WEEK FIFTEEN

RACE, GENDER, POLITICS, AND POWER, PART II

T APR 29 The Continued Saga of the Politics of Respectability and Black Womanhood

Th MAY 1

Reading: Farah Jasmin Griffin, “At Last...?: Michelle Obama, Beyoncé, Race and History” in *Daedalus – Race in the Age of Obama*, 140:1 (Winter 2011): 131-141.

****FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE IN CLASS MAY 1****

APPENDIX

RESEARCH PROSPECTUS – DUE IN CLASS FEBRUARY 6

Students are required to submit a 1-2 page, single spaced prospectus that summarizes the topic they intend to research for the final paper. This prospectus must include:

- (1.) A clearly defined topic
- (2.) Specific research questions (ie. questions that are framed around ideas and themes such as: What do you hope to learn about in researching this topic? What is the potential of this topic for understanding African American women's experiences? How does the topic you chose reflect the conundrum of African American women falling outside both African American history and Women's/Gender history?)
- (3.) A sample of 2-3 SCHOLARLY sources you encountered in your preliminary research.

REACTION PAPERS (4)

Students are required to write a total of four short essays on *Passing* (1986), *"They Say": Ida B. Wells and the Construction of Race* (2007), *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (1992), and *A Taste of Power* (1993). These essays MUST:

- (1.) Provide a BRIEF overview of the book.
- (2.) Clearly identify and articulate the major argument(s) or narrative of the text being analyzed.
- (3.) Explain how the text informs, challenges, and/or expands your understanding of the particularities of African American women's experiences, using specific examples and details.
- (4.) Make connections between the text and other course materials (lectures, other readings, documentaries, etc.)

Essays must be a MINIMUM 4 pages (no more than 5 pages) in length, typed (in 12-point font), double-spaced with standard 1" margins. They must also be free of grammatical errors/typos and use proper citation techniques specific to your discipline (if this is unknown, please use parenthetical references similar to MLA-style – consult the Purdue Online Writing Lab for examples <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/> or raise your concerns with your professor in class so that this technique can be briefly reviewed).

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY – DUE IN CLASS MARCH 6

Students must submit an annotated bibliography containing a MINIMUM of ten scholarly sources. These should include books, articles, and studies published by reputable presses but may also contain a minimum of two internet sources. Web materials, however, MUST be produced and maintained by reputable organizations/institutions (ie., .edu and .gov sites or others such as those administered by PBS or state/local historical societies). Each source should be properly formatted as a bibliographical reference and include a 7-10 sentence, single-spaced paragraph that identifies the main argument of the source and includes specific details about its content.

RESEARCH PAPER – DUE IN CLASS MAY 1

Students must produce a 12-15 page formal research paper that examines an historical or contemporary aspect of African American women's experience in the U.S. These papers can deal with any era, figure, or topic of your choosing but must situate African American women at the center of analysis, speak to black women's standpoint, and convey the full range of complexities that undergird black women's lives in terms of their position at the intersection of race, gender, and class.

Papers must:

- Be 12-15 pages in length NOT COUNTING TITLE PAGE AND WORKS CITED/BIBLIOGRAPHY.
- Be clearly organized with an introduction and thesis statement; a well-organized and clearly thought-out body with properly cited primary and secondary materials to support your argument; and a clear conclusion that re-iterates the main themes/ideas of the paper and suggests the relevance and/or legacy of the topic researched.
- Include **AT LEAST FOUR** actual primary documents that provide evidence for your argument (original materials produced in the past that include published written or visual sources like newspaper/magazine articles, political tracts and manifestos, courtroom testimony, photographs or posters, poetry, art, or autobiographies as well as private materials like letters and diary/journal entries).
- Include 7-10 notable pieces of scholarship (books or articles written by trained scholars and published by reputable presses – the most readily identifiable are university presses).
- Include clear, properly formatted citation throughout (APA, MLA, or Chicago Style).
- Include a title page and works cited/bibliography.
- In order to avoid some of the most common practices that detract from students' writing, please review the following online aid: <http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/word-choice/>