

GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES (333)
BLACK FEMINISMS

SPRING 2020
TU, TH 1:00 – 2:15 pm
STERLING 1331

Professor Keisha Lindsay
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-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
-Canvas URL:
<https://uwmad.courses.wisconsin.edu/d2l/le/content/4017564/Home>

Office Hours:

T 8:25 am – 9:25 am
TH 2:25 pm – 3:25 pm

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 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.

Course Readings:

The following anthology is available for purchase 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. The anthology 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, except for the first class when I will take attendance. **You are allowed two absences without explanation.** Any absences greater than this number will drop your total participation grade by one full letter grade regardless of the extent to which you participate in class discussions. If you miss more than half of all of the class meetings without the instructor's permission you will receive a failing grade for the course.

2. Reflection Papers (15%)

You will submit two reflection papers during the semester. Use reflection papers to comment on anything that you find contradictory, controversial, confusing or otherwise noteworthy in each 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 reflection 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 summaries of the assigned texts. Each paper must be between 250 to 275 words long.

We will use Canvas for reflection papers. You can access Canvas 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 Canvas on the **day before** class. You must be present in class to solicit responses to and receive credit for your reflection papers. 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%) - Your 5-6 page mid-term essay (hard copy only) is **due on MARCH 9 AT 1:00 PM.**

4. Final Essay (40%) - Your 7-8 page final essay (hard copy only) is **due on MAY 4 AT 1:00 PM.**

Classroom Conduct: Laptops and smartphones are allowed if and when they are used to access assigned readings and other class materials. Please do not use your laptops and smartphones to text or to browse the web. Our aim is to foster a non-distracting and intellectually productive learning environment. If you are found using the above devices in an unauthorized manner your class attendance will be "zeroed" for the day in question.

Email Communication - I aim to respond to student emails within a 24 hours, Mon- Fri.

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, 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) - By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison's community of scholars in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

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 (608-263-1992), 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 21:

-Meet and Greet/Syllabus Review

January 23:

-bell hooks. "Black Women Shaping Feminist Theory" (WOF)
-Brittney Cooper. "Love No Limit: Towards a Black Feminist Future (In Theory)"

Liberty, Equality, and Justice for All?

January 28:

-Pauli Murray. "The Liberation of Black Women" (WOF)
-Florence Kennedy. "A Comparative Study" (WOF)
-National Black Feminist Organization. "Statement of Purpose"
-Shirley Chisolm. "The Black Woman in Contemporary America" (Canvas – audio link)

January 30:

-Oprah Winfrey. "Golden Globes' Speech"

- Kristal Brent. "A Manifesto of Sorts for a Black Feminist Movement"
- Beyoncé. Lemonade (Canvas – video link)

Towards a Black Materialist Feminism

February 4:

- Claudia Jones. "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman" (WOF)
- Gloria Joseph. "Black Feminist Pedagogy and Schooling in White Capitalist America" (WOF)

February 6:

- Angela Davis. "Interview with Linda Lowe Angela Davis: Reflections on Race, Class, and Gender in the USA"
- Joy James. "Radicalizing Feminism"
- Eliza Grizwold. "The Hard-Left Candidate Taking on the Democratic Establishment in Southwestern Pennsylvania"

(Re)Reading Black Nationalisms

February 11:

- Panther Sisters. "Panther Sisters on Women's Liberation"
- Toni Cade Bambara. "On the Issue of Roles"
- Jamillah Karim. "Through Sunni Women's Eyes: Black Feminism and the Nation of Islam"

February 13:

- Frances White. "Africa on My Mind: Gender, Counter Discourse and African-American Nationalism" (WOF)
- Pauline Terrelonge. "Feminist Consciousness and Black Women" (WOF)
- In-class film: Still Revolutionaries

Black Feminism and/as Standpoint Theory

February 18:

- Patricia Hill Collins. "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought" (WOF)
- Anika Maaza Mann. "Race and Feminist Standpoint Theory"

February 20:

- 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

February 25:

- Alice Walker. "Alice Walker's Womanism"
- Helen (Charles). "The Language of Womanism: Rethinking Difference"

February 27:

- Jacquelyn Grant. "Black Theology and the Black Woman" (WOF)
- Monica Coleman. "Must I be a Womanist?"
- In-class Film: Why Womanism? A Womanist and a Black Feminist in Conversation

March 3:

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

March 5: MIDTERM ESSAY REVIEW

MIDTERM ESSAY DUE – MARCH 9 AT 1:00 PM

Intersectionality

March 10:

- Combahee River Collective. "The Combahee River Collective Statement" (WOF)
- Audre Lorde. "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" (WOF)
- Kimberlé Crenshaw. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex"

March 12:

- Wahneema Lubiano. "Black Ladies, Welfare Queens, and State Minstrels: Ideological War by Narrative Means"
- Dorothy E. Roberts. "Race, Gender, and Genetic Technologies: A New Reproductive Dystopia?"

March 24:

- Jennifer Nash. "Re-Thinking Intersectionality"
- 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

March 26:

- Jacklyn Huey and Michael J. Lynch. "The Image of Black Women in Criminology: Historical Stereotypes as Theoretical Foundation"
- Michele Goodwin. "Gender, Race, and Mental Illness: The Case of Wanda Jean Allen"

March 31:

- Kristen West Savali. "Black Women are Killed by Police Too"
- Andrea Ritchie. "Policing Motherhood"
- Angela Davis. "How Gender Structures the Prison System"

Education

April 2:

- Monique Morris. "Struggling to Survive"
- Monique Morris. "A Blues for Black Girls When the 'Attitude' is Enuf"

April 7: - **Guest Lecture – Professor Linn Posey Maddox**

- bell hooks. "Engaged Pedagogy"
- Elizabeth Higginbotham. "Designing an Inclusive Curriculum" (WOF)

Sexual, Gender, and Body Politics

April 9:

- Barbara Omolade. "Heart of Darkness" (WOF)
- Darlene Hine. "Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women" (WOF)
- Tarana Burke. "Me Too is a Movement, Not a Moment" (Canvas – audio link)

April 14:

- Cheryl Clarke. "Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance" (WOF)
- June Jordan. "A New Politics of Sexuality" (WOF)
- Cathy Cohen. "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?"

April 16:

- H. Fogg Davis. "Theorizing Black Lesbians within Black Feminism: A Critique of Same-Race Street Harassment"
- Barbara Smith. "Why I Left the Mainstream Queer Rights Movement"
- In-class Film: Same Difference

April 21:

- Julia Serano. "There Is No Perfect Word: A Transgender Glossary of Sorts"
- C. Riley Snorton. "A Nightmarish Silhouette: Racialization and The Long Exposure of Transition"
- Lavrene Cox. Guardian Interview
- Eisha Love: A Transwoman of Color in Chicago (Canvas – video link)

April 23:

- Kai Green and Marquis Bey. "Where Black Feminist Thought and Trans* Feminism Meet: A Conversation"
- Treva Ellison et al. "We Got Issues: Toward a Black Trans*/Studies"

April 28: FINAL ESSAY REVIEW

Leadership:

April 30

- Alicia Garza. "A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement"
- Cathy J. Cohen & Sarah J. Jackson. "Ask a Feminist: A Conversation with Cathy Cohen on Black Lives Matter, Feminism, and Contemporary Activism"

FINAL ESSAY DUE MAY 4 AT 1:00 PM