

AML 4685: “But Some of Us Are Brave:” Black Women, Writing and Race

Instructor: Randi Gill-Sadler

Office Hours: T 5, W 5 and By Appointment

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Course Description: Taking its name from the groundbreaking collection *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave*, this course serves as a space to critically engage Black women’s literature and theory on race and processes of racialization in the United States and the Caribbean. The course highlights the ways that Black women have challenged dominant conceptualizations of race through critically reflecting on their lived experiences and rigorously interrogating seemingly “race-less” concepts like geography, mobility and humanity. Students will acquire a critical vocabulary around critical race theory and engage with Black female writers and intellectuals like Mary Prince, Zora Neale Hurston, Edwidge Danticat, Carole Boyce Davies, Hortense Spillers and Katherine McKittrick. To be successful in this course, students must demonstrate consistent critical thinking, a commitment to class discussion and coherent and clear writing.

Required Texts:

Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl by Harriet Jacobs

ISBN-10: 1481292110

The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave by Mary Prince

ISBN-10: 0486438635

The Farming of Bones by Edwidge Danticat

ISBN-10: 1616953497

Assata: An Autobiography by Assata Shakur

ISBN-10: 1783601787

All other texts will be available to you via e-learning. Please bring hard copies of each text to class on the day the texts are assigned.

Course Expectations

Communication

The best way to get in contact with me is via email. Please allow at least 24 hours for me to respond to any inquiries. You can also meet with me during office hours and by appointment.

Classroom Behavior

In-class participation and discussion are REQUIRED in this class. Thoughtful participation in class discussion and completion of ALL writing assignments are the best ways to ensure success in this class. Any disrespectful or disruptive behaviors will not be tolerated and will result in dismissal from class.

Attendance

Consistent attendance is required. You are allowed three unexcused absences in this class. After

that, each unexcused absence will result in a ten point deduction from your grade. If you have more than six unexcused absences, you will fail this course. Excused absences will not be counted against you, but only university sponsored events such as athletics, band, theater and religious holidays qualify as excused absences. All excused absences REQUIRE documentation. In the event of any absence, it is YOUR responsibility to find out any notes, assignments or syllabus changes you missed. Please contact one of your fellow students to find out what you missed in class. Additionally, being more than ten minutes late without proper notification will result in an unexcused absence.

Course Assignments

Race Definition Synthesis Paper

100 Points

In this assignment, students will synthesize two critical works and their own lived experiences to develop a working definition of race. Student will demonstrate their ability to engage with scholarly discussions and theorize from their own experiences. This assignment, exploratory in nature, is designed to provide a point of reference that students can refer back to as their definition of race changes throughout the semester. Paper must be at least 750 words.

Panel Presentation

150 Points

With a guiding question prepared by the instructor, students will prepare a panel paper that identifies the text's and/or author's significance to discussions and/or theorizations of race through literary analysis. Students will present their papers on panels of 4 or 5. The panel papers will be the catalyst for class discussion on the days they are given. Panel presentations must be at least 750 words.

In-Class Participation

150 Points

Students will be assessed on the quality of participation in class. Students will be required to submit written documentation of group and individual in-class work. Students who earn the most points will offer informed and relevant contributions to class discussions on a consistent basis.

Unit Response Papers

300 Points

At the end of units where students did not prepare a panel presentation, students will be required to submit a unit response paper worth 150 points, totaling to 300 points for all two responses. The response paper is an opportunity for students to work with and interrogate new terms introduced in the unit. Also, the response paper will allow students to synthesize a few of the works in the unit for a fuller understanding of Black women's writing on race. Response papers that earn the most points will cite multiple texts directly from the unit and offer thorough, clear and thoughtful reflection on the unit. Response papers must be at least 500 words.

Final Paper

300 Points

The final paper is a combination of an extended annotated bibliography and a personal reflection. Students will annotate three terms of their own choosing. Two of the terms must be from the critical terms list. The final term can be another entry from the critical terms list, or it can be a character, location or event from a literary text read in the course. Students must give definitions and/or summaries of all three terms and illustrate how they are in conversation with each other. For example, does a particular literary figure extend, disrupt or illustrate the critical terms or vice versa? Once the student has completed this portion of the final paper, the student must then reflect on how his/her definition of race, from the beginning of the semester, has been affected by reading Black women's writing. Successful final papers will be thorough, well-researched and demonstrate critical thinking and synthesis skills. Papers must be at least 1,500 words.

Grading Scale

A 930-1000 C 730-769

A- 900-929 C- 700-729

B+ 870-899 D+ 670-699

B 830-869 D 630-669

B- 800-829 D- 600-629

C+ 770-799 E 0-599

Schedule

Unit 1: Defining Race and Racialization

8/24- Overview of Course Syllabus, Policies and Guidelines

8/26- Higginbotham "African American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race

8/28- Morrison "Black Matters" *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*
p.3-17

Wright *Becoming Black* p.27-32; p.54-65

8/31- Cliff *If I Could Write This in Fire, I Would*

9/2- Race Definition Synthesis Paper Peer Review

Unit 2: Race, Slavery and the Black Woman's Body

9/4- Prince *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave*

Race Definition Synthesis Paper DUE

9/7- LABOR DAY NO CLASS

9/9- Prince *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave*

9/11- Jacobs *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

9/14- Jacobs *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
9/16- Jacobs *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*
9/18- Spillers “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book”
Davis “Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves”
9/21- Panel Presentations
9/23-Panel Presentations
UNIT 2 RESPONSE PAPER DUE

Unit 3: Black Women, Space and Mobility

9/25- Hurston “How It Feels To Be Colored Me”
9/28- Marshall “To Da-Duh in Memoriam”
9/30- Danticat *Farming of Bones*
10/2- Danticat *Farming of Bones*
10/5- Danticat *Farming of Bones*
10/7- Davies “Introduction: Migratory Subjectivities” *Black Women, Writing and Identity*
McKittrick “The Last Place They Thought Of: Black Women’s Geographies” *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and Cartographies of Struggle*

10/9- Panel Presentations
10/12- Panel Presentations
UNIT 3 RESPONSE PAPER DUE

Unit 4: Race as Lived Experience: Black Women’s Autobiography

10/14- Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*
10/16- Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*
10/19- Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*
10/21- Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*
10/23- Lorde *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*
10/26- Lorde *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*
10/28- Braxton “Introduction” *Black Women Writing Autobiography: A Tradition Within a Tradition*
10/30- Curtis “Whose Tools? Audre Lorde’s Narrative Mastery in The Cancer Journals and *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*” *New Media in Black Women’s Autobiography: Intrepid Embodiment and Narrative Innovation*
11/2- Panel Presentations
11/4- Panel Presentations
UNIT 4 RESPONSE DUE
11/6- NO CLASS HOMECOMING

Unit 5: Foundation and Futures in Black Women's Theory

11/9- Hull, Scott and Smith "Introduction" *All the Women Are White,*

All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave, Black Women's Studies

11/11-NO CLASS VETERAN'S DAY

11/13- Crenshaw "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Anti-Racist Politics"

11/16- Hammonds "Black (W)holes and the Geometry of Black Female Sexuality"

11/18- Silvera, "Man Royals and Sodomites: Some Thoughts on the Invisibility of Afro-Caribbean Lesbians"

Cohen "Punks, Bulldaggers and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?"

11/20- Film: *Pariah*

11/23- Film: *Pariah*

11/25- NO CLASS THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

11/27-NO CLASS THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Unit 6: Challenging the Category of Human, Sylvia Wynter

11/30- Wynter "Beyond Miranda's Meanings: Un/ silencing the 'Demonic Ground of Caliban's Woman'"

12/2- Course Wrap- Up

12/4- Conference for Final Papers

12/7- Peer Review of Final Paper

12/9- FINAL DAY OF CLASS

FINAL PAPER DUE

Course Policies

Statement of Student Disability Services: The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. For more information, please see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/> (Links to an external site.)

Academic Honesty: All students are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, please see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows: Plagiarism: A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of a work of another. Plagiarism includes: (but is not limited to)

- a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
- b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

Please see: University of Florida Student Honor Code:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcode.php>

All acts of plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment. Every case is different, but plagiarism on an assignment could result in failure of the entire course. All work must be your own! Work from another class is not acceptable. Have integrity; be responsible, organized, and honest about your work. Do not claim ignorance. Be sure to talk to the instructor about any questions you may have with regard to plagiarism, academic honesty and proper citation methods.