

Professor: Dayo Gore

Office Hours: Tues and Thurs 12:45-1:45 pm and by appointment

Office: Bartlett 261

Contact: dfgore@wost.umass.edu, 413.545.2433

Women's Studies 391M
African American Women and the U.S. Civil Rights/Black Power
Movements
Tuesday and Thursday, 2:30-3:45 pm, Bartlett 302
webct.oit.umass.edu

To die for the revolution is a one-shot deal; to live for the revolution means taking on the more difficult commitment of changing our day-to-day life patterns.

-Francis Beal, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female"

This course examines black women's participation in, and influence on, the long civil rights movement in the United States (including black power, feminism and transnational activism) from the 1930s to the 1980s. Centering black women's experiences as grassroots organizers and political leaders, the course explores significant events, organizations and political debates that helped to form and transform the black freedom struggle as well as the impact of these struggles on black women's daily lives and status in the United States. In addition, we will examine debates over leadership styles and political goals, the dynamics of class, sexuality, race, gender and region that shaped civil rights activism, and the cultural politics of the period. From this vantage point we will begin the process of exploring a range of issues that have plagued activists and theorists alike, including building solidarity, creating viable organizations, and developing strategies for long-term social change.

Required Readings:

Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin, editors, *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* (2001)

Anne Moody, *Coming of Age in Mississippi* (1968)

Assata Shakur, *Assata* (1987)

Additional Readings available on course website.

All required books are available at **Food For Thought Books** at 106 N. Pleasant St. *Sisters in the Struggle*, *Assata* and *Coming of Age in Mississippi* will also be available on reserve at the DuBois Library. Individual readings are posted on the course website at <https://webct.oit.umass.edu/>. Log on using your oit user name and password.

Assignments and Grades:

This is a very demanding course, but it also has the potential to be transformative. Given the focus and depth of this course active engagement in the class, including consistent class attendance and thorough completion of all readings and written assignments, is crucial. Reflecting this, 15% of your grade will be based on class participation including regular attendance, contributions to class discussions and participation in class activities such as breakout sessions. **More than 3 unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your grade.**

To encourage active engagement with the readings you will also be responsible for completing five (5) 2 pg. response papers. These response papers are an opportunity for you to examine one or two ideas emerging from the week's readings and should demonstrate that you understand and have an analysis of the assigned readings. The papers **should not** summarize the readings but rather pull out key points and examples that support your own analysis and interpretations. The papers will be due at the beginning of class on any five Thursdays of your choice (except the last week of class) and each paper will be worth 5% of your grade (25% total). **Late response papers will not be accepted.**

An additional 20% of your grade will be based on a 15-minute group presentation (really only 15 minutes). The presentations should provide the class with information/insights gained from an outside source (i.e. film, recent book not used in course, current event, historical article, primary source document, artistic work etc.) that relates to and raises questions for the week's discussion. Students will choose groups (size dependent on class numbers) and sign-up for presentations the second week of class. Each Group should discuss with me their proposed source. On the day of your presentation, you must provide me with a citation sheet listing your source(s) and group members. Presentations will be evaluated on the full participation of every group member, clarity in presentation, organization and how well it relates to the topic of the week. Group members will all receive the same grade on the presentation.

5 in class quizzes worth 1% each (a total of 5% of your grade)

The remaining course work (35%) will be based on the completions of a 12-15 pg. research paper that makes use of outside sources to detail the political contributions and life experiences of a particular African American women activists (for example: Beulah Richardson, Daisy Bates, Kathleen Cleaver etc.) or examines black women's involvement in a specific civil rights/black power organization or event (i.e. SNCC, Third World Women's Alliance, Freedom Rides, etc.). The paper will be graded in two parts.

- A 2 pg. abstract outlining your paper topic and major sources (including one primary source) is due at the beginning of class on Thursday, November 9th. The abstract must include an annotated bibliography and a copy of your primary source, and will count for 10% of your grade.
- The completed final research paper, which accounts for the final 25% of your grade, is due in the Women's Studies office by 4 pm on December 19th. A more detailed handout of the assignment will be forthcoming.

Summary of Assignments:

5 Response papers	25%
Group Presentation	20%
Class Participation/In class activities	15%
2 pg. Abstract and bibliography	10%
10-15 pg. Research Paper	25%
5 In-class Quizzes	5%

Academic Honesty

It is expected that all assignments handed in for this class are your own original work. Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated and you are responsible for being knowledgeable of University's official policy on academic honesty. You can read it in full at http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/code_conduct/acad_honest.htm

Week 1: Introduction and Overview

Higgenbotham "Race as a Metalanguage" on Course Website
Sisters in the Struggle, chp. 2

Sept. 7: Overview of Course

Week 2: Setting the Stage: Early Organizations

Readings: *Sisters in the Struggle*, chp. 3
Ransby, "Fighting Her Own Wars" on Course Website
Excerpt "Origins of the Civil Rights Movement" on Course Website

Sept. 12: From 1930s Radicalism to Post War Resistance

Sept. 14: Discussion and sign-up for group presentations

Week 3: Setting the Stage: Racial Politics in U.S.

Readings: Moody, *Coming of Age*, Childhood Section
Feldstein, "I Wanted the Whole World to See" on Course Website

Sept. 19: Black Women and Racial Politics North and South

Sept. 21: Timeline and Geography of a Movement

Week 4: Black Life in the South and Daily Resistance

Readings: Moody, *Coming of Age*, High School Section
Robin Kelley, "We Are Not What We Seem," on Course Website

Sept. 26: Defining the Power and Politics of Racism

Sept. 28: White Supremacy and Black Resistance

Week 5: Black Women, Desegregation and Organized Resistance

Readings: *Sisters in the Struggle*, chp. 4
"Brown v. Board of Ed.," in *Eyes on the Prize Reader* on Course Website
Robinson, *The Montgomery Bus Boycott*, on Course Website
Melba Patillo Beals, *Warriors Don't Cry*, on Course Website

Oct. 3: The Meanings of Desegregation: From Radical Resistance to Respectability

Oct. 5: Presentation and Discussion: Desegregation its victories and lessons

Week 6: The Movement Takes off : Sit-ins and Student Organizing

Readings: Moody, *Coming of Age*, College and The Movement Sections
Sisters in the Struggle, chp. 7
"SNCC Statement" and "Bigger Than a Hamburger" in *Eyes on the Prize Reader* on Course Website

Oct. 10: The Sit-Ins and Freedom Rides

Oct. 12: Film

Week 7: Freedom Summer and the Mississippi Democratic Freedom Party

Readings: *Sisters in the Struggle*, chp. 8 and 9
Fleming, "Freedom Summer and Sexual Politics" on Course Website

Oct. 17: The Struggle for Power and Economic Rights

Oct. 19: Presentation and Discussion

Week 8: Artists, Culture and the Movement

Readings: Nina Simone, *I Put a Spell on You* (excerpt) and lyrics on Course Website
Waldo Martin, "Be Real Black For Me" (excerpt) on Course Website
"Interview with Bernice Johnson Reagon," in *Eyes on the Prize Reader* on Course Website

Oct. 24: Black Women Artists and the Movement

Oct. 26: Presentation and Discussion

Week 9: Movement Organizing in the North

Readings: Theoharis and Woodard, "Introduction" and "I'd Rather Go to School in the South" from *Freedom North* on Course Website
Sisters in the Struggle, chp. 10
Assata, intro - chp. 5

Oct. 31: The Connections and the Differences in the Northern Civil Rights Movement

Nov. 2: Presentation and Discussion

Week 10: From Civil Rights to Black Power a Movement in Transition

Readings: James, "Angela Davis Introduction," on Course Website
"What We Believe" and "Black Panther Women Speak," on Course Website
Assata, chp. 6-12

Nov. 7: The Political Implications and Meanings of a Changing Movement

Nov. 9: Presentation and Discussion: What Was Lost? What Was Gained?

Abstract and Bibliography Due Thursday At The Start of Class

Week 11: The Politics of Black Power and Black Women's Leadership

Readings: Angela LeBlanc-Ernest "The Most Qualified Person," on Course Website
Cleaver, New York Times article on Course Website
Sisters in the Struggle, chp. 11 and 13

Nov. 14: Where Were the Women in the Black Power Movement?

Nov. 16: Presentation and Discussion

Week 12: Black Liberation and Gender

Readings: Springer, selections from "Soul of Women's Lib" on Course Website
Sisters in the Struggle, chp. 12

Nov. 21: Why Gender Matters for Black Liberation

Nov. 23: No Class, finish up *Assata*

Week 13: Third World Revolutionaries at Home and Abroad

Readings: Max Elbaum, "The System Becomes the Target," on Course Website
Assata, chp. 12-end

Nov. 28: Internationalizing the Movement and Fighting Colonialism

Nov. 30: Presentation and Discussion

Week 14: The Empire Strikes Back

Readings: *Sisters in the Struggle*, chp.14
Angela Davis, "If They Come in the Morning," on Course Website
"Regents of U of C v. Allan Bakke" in *Eyes on the Prize Reader* on Course Website

Dec. 5: Destroying a Movement: The impact of COINTELPRO

Dec. 7: Presentation and Discussion

Week 15: Legacies and Lessons from the Civil Rights Movement

Readings: Davis, "Afro Images" on Course Website
Website Interview w/ Kathleen Cleaver
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/race/interviews/kcleaver.html>

Dec. 12: Final Class

FINAL PAPER DUE BY 4PM TUESDAY DECEMBER 19th