

**Professor:** Dayo F. Gore

**Office Hours:** Tues. 2:30-3:30pm, Thurs. 10-11am, and by appointment

**Office:** Bartlett 261

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**Women's Studies 391M - Fall 2009**  
**African American Women in the U.S. Civil Rights/Black Power**  
**Movements**  
**Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00-2:15 pm, Bartlett 3**

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 black freedom movement in the United States (including civil rights, black power, feminism and transnational activism) from the 1930s to the 1980s. Centering black women's experiences as grassroots organizers, charismatic leaders and political theorists, the course explores significant events, organizations and political debates that helped to form and transform the black freedom struggle. It also explores the impact of these struggles on black women's daily lives and status as well as gender and race politics 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, negotiating power and difference, 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: An Autobiography* (1987)  
Additional Readings available on course website through SPARK

All required books are available at **Food For Thought Books** at 106 N. Pleasant St. Individual readings are posted on the course website, through SPARK. You must be registered for the course to access SPARK. Log on using your oit user name and password.

***Assignments and Grades:***

This is at times a challenging, but it also has the potential to be a powerful learning experience. Given the historical focus and depth of this course active engagement in the class,

including participating in class discussion, consistent class attendance, and **thorough completion of all** readings and written assignments, is crucial. Reflecting this, 20% of your grade will be based on class participation including regular attendance, contributions to class discussions, participation in class breakout sessions and in class pop quizzes. **More than 2 unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your participation grade.**

To encourage active engagement with the readings you will be responsible for completing three (3) 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 have some understanding 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. One response paper is **due Thursday October 1<sup>st</sup>**, another is **due Thursday November 19<sup>th</sup>**, and the last response paper can be handed in on any Thursday of your choice (except the last week of class). Each paper will be worth 5% of your grade (15% 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, oral interviews artistic work etc.) that relates to and raises questions for the week's discussion. Be creative. Some of the most engaging presentation have included dramatic readings, videos, debates, mock interviews, power points, music, etc. 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 and **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. This assignment is intended to not only encourage exploration of non-course material but also for students to experience the benefits and demands of working collectively. Therefore, **group members will all receive the same grade** on the presentation.

The remaining course work (45% of your grade) 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 woman activist (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 three parts described below (**A more detailed handout of the assignment will be forthcoming**).

- A 2 pg. abstract written in clear language that describes your research topic, the key arguments you will address, and the major sources (including one primary source) you will use in your research. The abstract is due at the beginning of class on **Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>** and must include an annotated bibliography. It will count for 10% of your grade.
- A detailed outline of your research paper that lays out paragraph by paragraph the structure of your research paper including key arguments and evidence to support your points. The outline must include a selected bibliography and is due at the start of class on **December 1st**. You must hand in an outline to have your final paper

accepted. It 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 16<sup>th</sup>**

***Summary of Assignments:***

|  |     |     |
|--|-----|-----|
| 3 Response papers                                  | 15% |     |
| Group Presentation                                 | 20% |     |
| Class Participation (in class activities, quizzes) |     | 20% |
| 2 pg. Abstract and Bibliography                    | 10% |     |
| Outline of Research Paper                          | 10% |     |
| 12-15 pg. Research Paper                           | 25% |     |

***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/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/)

**Week 1: Introduction and Overview**

Readings: E. Higgenbotham "African American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race" on SPARK  
13, 14 & 15 Amendments on SPARK  
Plessy v. Ferguson (full version on SPARK)  
<http://www.let.rug.nl/usa/D/1876-1900/plessy/plessy.htm>

Sept. 8: Overview of Course

Sept. 10: Theory, Timeline and Geography of a Movement

**Week 2: Setting the Stage: Early Organizations**

Readings: Moody, *Coming of Age*, Childhood Section (p. 12- 79)  
Ransby, "Fighting Her Own Wars" on SPARK  
Excerpt "Origins of the Civil Rights Movement" on SPARK

Sept. 15: From 1930s Radicalism to Post War Resistance

Sept. 17: Discussion *and Sign-up for Group Presentations*

**Week 3: Black Life in the South and Daily Resistance**

Readings: Moody, *Coming of Age*, Childhood Section and High School (p. 80-214)  
W. Chafe, et. al., *Remembering Jim Crow*, selections on SPARK

Sept. 22: Defining the Power and Politics of Racism

Sept. 24: White Supremacy and Black Resistance

#### **Week 4: Setting the Stage: Gender and Racial Politics in U.S.**

Readings: Robin Kelley, "We Are Not What We Seem," on SPARK  
Feldstein, "I Want the Whole World to See" on SPARK

Sept. 29: Black Women and Racial Politics North and South

Oct. 1: Presentation and Discussion

**Response Paper Due On This Weeks Readings at the Start of Class**

#### **Week 5: Black Women, Desegregation and Organized Resistance**

Readings: "Brown v. Board" & "Bigger Than a Hamburger" *Eyes on the Prize Reader* on  
SPARK

*Sisters in the Struggle*, chp. 4

Melba Patillo Beals, *Warriors Don't Cry*, on SPARK

Oct. 6: The Meanings of Desegregation: From Radical Resistance to Respectability

Oct. 8: 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 (p. 215-384)  
*Sisters in the Struggle*, chp. 6

Oct. 13: No Class – Monday Schedule

Oct. 15: Discussion The Sit-Ins and Freedom Rides (*No Presentation*)

#### **Week 7: Freedom Summer and the Mississippi Democratic Freedom Party**

Readings: *Sisters in the Struggle*, chp. 8 and 9  
Wesley Hogan, "The High Summer of Transformation" on SPARK

Oct. 20: The Struggle for Power and Economic Rights

Oct. 22: Presentation and Discussion  
*Last Day to Drop with a "W"*

## **Week 8: Movement Organizing in the North**

Readings: Theoharis and Woodard, "Introduction"  
*Assata*, Intro – p. 117 (thru chp. 6)

Oct 27: The Connections and the Differences in the Northern Civil Rights Movement  
**Abstract & Bibliography Due at the Start of Class**

Oct. 29: Presentation and Discussion

## **Week 9: From Civil Rights to Black Power a Movement in Transition**

Readings: *Sisters in the Struggle*, chp. 10 and 11  
*Assata*, p. 118-233 (chp. 7-16)

Nov. 3: The Political Implications and Meanings of a Changing Movement

Nov. 5: Presentation and Discussion: What provoked the shift? What did it produce?

## **Week 10: The Politics of Black Power and Black Women's Leadership**

Readings: Robyn Spencer, "Engendering the Black Freedom Struggle" on SPARK  
BPP, "What We Believe" on SPARK  
*Assata*, p. 234 - end (chp. 16-Postscript)

Nov. 10: Women, the Black Panthers, and the Black Power Movement

Nov. 12: Library or Film (*No Presentations*)

## **Week 11: Black Liberation and Gender**

Readings: *Sisters in the Struggle*, chp. 12  
Sherie Randolph, "Florynce Kennedy, Black Power, and Feminism" on SPARK  
Combahee River Collective Statement (1977) on SPARK

Nov. 17: Why Gender Matters for Black Liberation

Nov. 19: Black Liberation/Women's Liberation  
**Response Paper Due at the Start of Class on This Weeks Readings**

## **Week 12: Artists, Culture and the Movement**

Readings: Nina Simone, *I Put a Spell on You* (excerpt) and lyrics on SPARK  
"Interview with Bernice Johnson Reagon," in *Eyes on the Prize Reader* on SPARK

Nov. 24: Black Women Artists and the Movement, Presentation

Nov. 26: No Class - Thanksgiving Break

**Week 13: Third World Revolutionaries at Home and Abroad**

Readings: Max Elbaum, "The System Becomes the Target," on SPARK  
Joy James, "Framing the Panther" on SPARK

Dec. 1: Internationalizing the Movement and Challenging the System  
**Research Paper Outline Due at Start of Class**

Dec. 3: The Empire Strikes Back: The impact of COINTELPRO

**Week 14: Legacies and Lessons from the Civil Rights/Black Power Movements**

Readings: "Regents of U of California v. Allan Bakke" in *Eyes on the Prize Reader* on SPARK  
Civil Rights and Black Power in Current Events, reading will be posted on SPARK

Dec. 8: Lessons and Legacies

Dec. 10: The Methods and Meanings of Change (*No Presentations*)

**List of Due Dates- ALL Thursday Assignments Due at the Start of Class**

Response Paper Due Thursday October 1, 2009

Research Paper Abstract and Annotated Bibliography Thursday, October 27, 2009

Response Paper Due Thursday November 19, 2009

Research Paper Outline and Selected Bibliography December 1, 2009

FINAL PAPER DUE BY 4PM WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 16, 2009

**Group Presentation**

GROUP # :

GROUP MEMBERS NAMES AND CONTACT INFO:

**PRESENTATION DATE:**

**PRESENTATION TOPIC FOR WEEK:**

**Some Suggested Sources and Individuals**

**Desegregation** - Joanne Robinson, *the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It*; Emmett Till Case; Mamie Till-Mobley and Christopher Benson, *Death of Innocence*; Claudett Colvin; Hoose, *Twice Toward Justice*; Daisy Bates and the Little Rock Nine; Ruby Bridges, Charlayne Hunter-Gault, *In My Place* (desegregating U of Georgia)

**Student Activism/Sit-In** - Diane Nash Interview; *Letters From Mississippi*; Ella Baker; Septima Clark, Highlander Center, Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC); Mississippi Burning (movie); Albany Movement,

**Black Power/Black Panthers**- Angela Davis; Johnnie Tillmon and National Welfare Rights; Kathleen Cleaver; *Fire* ; *Black Panther: the Revolutionary Art of Emory Douglass*; Elaine Brown, *A Taste of Power*; Peniel Joseph, *Waiting 'Till the Midnight Hour*

**Black Feminism/Black Art** - *The Black Woman: An Anthology* ; Audre Lorde; Faith Ringgold; Betye Saar; Third World Women's Alliance; Odetta; Sonia Sanchez; *Freedomways* journal

**Third World Transnationalism** - Young Lords Party; Mariam Makeba; Queen Mother Audle Moore; Palante, Siempre Palante! (video); Vietnam War Protests; A Panther in Africa (video); Cynthia Young, *Soul Power*; Ghana and African decolonization, Bandung Conference; Eslanda Robeson