

**Professor:** Dayo Gore

**Office Hours:** Tu. 2:30-3:30, Th. 11-12 pm and by appointment

**Office:** Bartlett 261

**Contact:** 413.545.2433, dfgore@wost.umass.edu

### **Women's Studies 391M**

#### **African American Women and the U.S. Civil Rights/Black Power Movement**

Tuesday and Thursday, 1-2:15 pm, Bartlett 212

This course examines black women's participation in, and influence on, the civil rights movement from the 1940s to the 1970s as well as the impact of these civil rights struggles on black women's daily lives, status and politics in the United States. Centering black women's experiences as grassroots organizers and political leaders, this course explores significant events, organizations and political debates that helped to form and transform the civil rights movement during the latter part of the 20th Century. 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 movement. 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)

Maya Angelou, *The Heart of A Woman* (1981)

Course Reading Packet

All required books are available at Food For Thought Books and the Reading Packet is available at Copy Cat. *Sisters in the Struggle* and the Course Reading Packet will also be available on reserve at DuBois Library.

#### **Assignments and Grades:**

Given the focus and depth of this course class attendance and active engagement is crucial. Reflecting this, 15% of your grade will rest on class participation and will be based on regular attendance, contributions to class discussion and participation in class

activities such as breakout sessions. **More than 3 unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your overall grade.**

To encourage active engagement you will also be responsible for completing Six (6) 1-2 pg. response papers. These papers **should not** summarize the readings, rather they are an opportunity for a more in-depth examination of one or two ideas emerging from the readings and should clearly show that you have read and understand the week's assignment. The papers will be due on any six Tuesdays of your choice and each paper will be worth 5% of your grade (30% total).

A 15-minute group presentation (really only 15 minutes) that shares with the class information/perspective gained from an outside source (i.e. film, recent book not used in course, current event 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. Your grade will be based on the full participation of every group member, clarity in presentation, organization and how well it relates to the topic of the week. This will count for 15% of your grade.

The remaining percentage of your grade (40%) will rest on a research project (described in forthcoming handout). The project includes a 2 pg. research proposal and bibliography(1-2 pgs.) worth 10% and due in-class March 11th (week 7) and a 10-15 pg. research paper on an aspect of African American women and civil rights activism worth 30% and due at the end of the semester.

### **Week 1: Introduction and Overview**

*Sisters in the Struggle*, chp. 2 and 3

Jan 29: Overview of Course and Film, *Fundi: The Story of Ella Baker*

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

Strong, "Southern Youth's Proud Heritage" in Reading Packet

Murray, "Sharecroppers Life..." in Reading Packet

Excerpt "Origins of the Civil Rights Movement" in Reading Packet

Feldstein, "I Want the Whole World to See" in Reading Packet

Feb 3: From 1930s Radicalism to Post War Resistance

Feb 5: Discussion and sign-up for group presentations

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

Moody, *Coming of Age*, Childhood Section

Beulah Richardson, "A Black Woman Speaks..."

Feb. 10: Black Women and Racial Politics North and South

Feb. 12: Timeline and Geography of a Movement

**Week 4: Black Life in the South and Daily Resistance**

Moody, *Coming of Age*, Highschool and College Sections

Robin Kelley, "We Are Not What We Seem," in Reading Packet

Feb. 17: White Supremacy and Black Resistance

Feb. 19: Discussion and Presentation

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

*Brown v. Board* decision in Reading Packet

Robinson, *The Montgomery Bus Boycott*, in Reading Packet

*Sisters in the Struggle*, chp. 4 and 7

Melba Patillo Beals, *Warriors Don't Cry*, in Reading Packet

Feb. 24: The Meanings of Desegregation: From Radical Resistance to Respectability

Feb. 26: Discussion and Presentation

**June Jordan Conference!!!!**

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

Moody, *Coming of Age*, The Movement Section

*Sisters in the Struggle*, chp. 5

"SNCC Statement" and "Bigger Than a Hamburger" in Reading Packet

March 2: The Sit-Ins and Freedom Rides

March 4: Discussion and Presentation

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

*Sisters in the Struggle*, chp. 8 and 9

Fleming, "Freedom Summer and Sexual Politics"

March 9: The Struggle for Power and Economic Rights

March 11: Discussion and **2 pg. Research Paper Outline and Bibliography Due**

**No Classes Spring Break March 13<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> !!!**

**Week 8: Artist, Culture and the Movement**

"Interview with Bernice Johnson Reagon," in Reading Packet

Nina Simone, "I Put a Spell on You," and lyrics in Reading Packet

Duziak, "Josephine Baker, Radical Politics," in Reading Packet

March 23: Black Women Artists and the Movement

March 24: Film: Freedom is a Song

**Week 9: Movement Organizing in the North**

*Sisters in the Struggle*, chp. 10

Angelou, *Heart of a Woman*, chp. 1-9

March 30: The Connections and the Differences in the Northern Civil Rights Movement

April 1: Discussion and Presentation

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

*Sisters in the Struggle*, chp. 11

Kristin Anderson Bricker "Triple Jeopardy" in Reading Packet

"What We Believe" and "Black Panther Women Speak," in Reading Packet

James, "Angela Davis Introduction," in Reading Packet

Dass, "Revolutionary Art Is a Tool for Liberation" in Reading Packet

April 6: The Political Implications and Meanings of a Changing Movement

April 8: Discussion: What Was Lost? What Was Gained?

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

Perkins, "Inside Our Dangerous Ranks," in Reading Packet

Brown, excerpt "A Taste of Power," in Reading Packet

Kathleen Cleaver, *NYT* in Reading Packet

April 13: Where Were the Women in the Black Power Movement?

April 15: Discussion and Presentation

**Week 12: Black Power and Gender**

*Sisters in the Struggle*, chp. 12, 13 and 15

Angelou, *The Heart of A Woman*, chp. 10-14

April 20: Why Gender Matters for Black Liberation

April 22: Discussion and Presentation

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

Elbaum, "The System Becomes the Target," in Reading Packet

Angelou, *The Heart of a Woman*, chp. 15-end

April 27: Internationalizing the Movement and Fighting Colonialism

April 29: Discussion and Presentation

**Week 14: The Empire Strikes Back**

*Sisters in the Struggle*, chp.14

Angela Davis, "If They Come in the Morning," in Reading Packet

"Regents of U of C v. Allan Bakke" in Reading Packet

May 4: Destroying a Movement: The impact of COINTELPRO

May 6: Discussion and Presentation

**Week 15: Remembering the Movement and Moving Forward**

Davis, "Afro Images"

May 11: Film

May 13: Final class