

Women's Studies 297E: Black Women in The U.S.

Instructor: Jeannine Marks
Office Hours: TTH 12:30-2:30
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Spring 2005 TTh 11:15-12:30
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course will be a topical exploration of the lives of Black women in the United States. Traveling between the era of slavery and the present day, we will investigate and discuss how certain aspects of Black women's lives have evolved with the passage of time. Central topics include motherhood, womanhood, citizenship and nationalism, sexuality, reproductive freedom, healthcare, work, education and technology. These will be exploring in an interdisciplinary manner using theory, literature and historical documents.

REQUIRED BOOKS (3):

Gwendolyn Brooks, *Maude Martha*

Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Beverly Guy-Sheftall, *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought*

E-reserves (located on-line) (password "wost297" is case sensitive)

Books are available at Food For Thought Books in downtown Amherst: 253-5432

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & POLICIES:

Attendance (20%): A total of **three (3) absences** are allowed during the course of the semester. If you are ill or in any other way unable to attend class, you must present written verification. All unexcused absences beyond the allotted three will result in the reduction of your grade, one half a grade per missed class. Your attendance is important and can significantly impact your final grade. We need you and your ideas for discussion.

Class participation (20%): This grade stands independently of your attendance grade. Your physical presence does not mean you are participating in class activities and discussions. You are expected to be prepared with the day's readings and engage in meaningful discussion. On certain days you will be expected to do in-class writing/quizzes or a take-home writing assignment. Re-writes for all writing assignments are not an option.

Discussion: Class discussion is a significant part of this class. Our goal is to create an environment that stimulates a level of comfort.... we want everyone to feel as though they can say what they feel. With this in mind, it is very important that discussions follow

a few rules: 1) respect other's opinions 2) speak to one another with respect and tact 3) understand that difficult material/issues will require more of these and patience. Come to class prepared with questions, comments and topics that interest you. There is never a stupid question...if you have question, someone in the class probably has the same one. It is best that we are all on the same page. This is your class...I play a certain role, but the class is what you make it. I consider myself a facilitator and do not like to take over the class and teach down to you. I will be lecturing periodically, otherwise filling in information or guiding discussion in a certain direction. These are your discussions, so you must sustain them.

Assignments: The following will be required of you during the semester as graded material: oral presentation, take-home/in-class writing assignments, and a final paper. Please see the syllabus for respective due dates.

Oral Presentation & Paper (15%): Each student is expected to give an oral presentation to the class on a specific reading. You are to present on a specific topic/issue related to a reading and also initiate discussion with the rest of the class. Do not forget the last part of this presentation grade. You are expected to be fully prepared with solid, in depth material. One presentation paper is required that thoroughly summarizes your contribution and thoughts on your presentation, **notes are not accepted, must be in essay form**; due on day of presentation, 4 pages in length. A works cited page is required as well as proper citation.

Short Paper (15%): You will be given a topic/directions. 4-5 pages in length. The take-home assignment (1) is expected to be 4 pages in length (15% total grade). Re-writes for all writing assignments are not an option. A works cited page is required as well as proper citation.

Final Paper (30%): Your final project for the class will be a comparative paper, 8-12 pages in length. This paper is to be a comparative analysis of 3 course texts, related to themes explored in class. You are expected to explore the concepts of good and evil as written by the authors/experiences by the characters, by exploring race, history, power and resistance. Let me finish by saying that Academic Honesty is required and expected by all. Please see "The Undergraduate Rights and Responsibilities" for more detailed info, this does include web-plagiarism. Late papers: a percentage will be taken off for each day late. Rewrites of papers are not offered as a grading option. A works cited page is required as well as proper citation.

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1: Introduction to course and concepts

1/27 Introduction to course: review syllabus and course requirements

WEEK 2: Talking about Race

2/1 Lecture: Race, Ethnicity, Gender, and American Culture

2/3 E-reserve: Beverly Tatum: Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 (25)

Book reserve: Beverly Tatum: Chapter 6 (20)

WEEK 3: The Female Slave: Intersections of Race, Class and Gender

2/8 E-reserve: bell hooks: Introduction (12); Sheftall: Introduction (23)

2/10 Book reserve: bell hooks: Chapter 1 (34)

E-reserve: Hazel Carby

WEEK 4: "Docile" Slaves and "Matriarchal" Women

2/15 E-reserve: Gray White (27); Patricia Hill Collins (23)

2/17 Sheftall Chapter 1: Intro, Stewart, Truth, Watkins Harper, Cooper, Foote, Mossell (pp23-61)

PRESENTATION # 1

WEEK 5: Anti-Lynching Campaigns and Self-Definition for Community Salvation

2/22 Sheftall: Terrell, Wells-Barnett (pp63-76)

E-reserve: Giddings Chapter 1 (14)

Sheftall Chapter 2: Intro, McDougald, Dunbar-Nelson (pp77-88)

2/24 Sheftall Chapter 2: Garvey, Alexander, Kennedy, Jones, Ansberry (first only) (pp89-127)

E-reserve: Hurston (19)

PRESENTATION #2

WEEK 6: Literary Reflections: A Woman Defining Herself

3/1 Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (Foreword, pp1-75)

3/3 Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (pp76-138)

PRESENTATION #3

WEEK 7: (Note: 3/6- ABC airing of TV movie rendition of novel)

3/8 Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (pp139-193)

3/10 Discussion: No reading due

Short paper due in class

WEEK 8

3/15-3/17 No Class: Spring Recess

WEEK 9: Turbulent Movements of Purpose: Civil Rights & Women's Rights

- 3/22 Sheftall Chapter 3: Intro, Beale, Weathers, La Rue, Robinson, Murray (pp143-198)
3/24 Sheftall Chapter 3: Davis, Wallace (pp199-227)
E-reserve: Giddings Chapter 18 (10)
PRESENTATION #4

WEEK 10: Literary Reflections on Changing Times

- 3/29 E-reserve: Maya Angelou Chapters 5 & 6 (20)
Gwendolyn Brooks, *Maude Martha* (pp1-39)
3/31 Gwendolyn Brooks, *Maude Martha* (pp40-107)
PRESENTATION #5

WEEK 11: Literary Reflections on Changing Times

- 4/5 Gwendolyn Brooks, *Maude Martha* (pp108-150)
4/7 Gwendolyn Brooks, *Maude Martha* (pp151-180)
PRESENTATION #6

WEEK 12: Defining a Black Feminist Movement

- 4/12 Sheftall Chapter 4: Intro, Combahee, Clark, Smith, hooks (pp229-282)
4/14 Sheftall Chapter 4: Lorde, King, Grant, Collins (pp283-336)
PRESENTATION #7

WEEK 13: Violation of the Body: Violence and Reproduction

- 4/19 Sheftall Chapter 5: Intro, Omolade, Hine, Chisholm, Richie, Jordan (pp359-412)
4/21 Sheftall Chapter 5: Giddings, Cleage, Hammonds (pp413-450)
PRESENTATION #8

WEEK 14

- 4/26 Reserve: Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty*
4/28 Reserve: Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty*
E-reserve: Lorde Chapters 11 & 12 (25)
PRESENTATION #9

WEEK 15: Literary Reflections

- 5/3 E-reserve: Walker, Morrison
5/5 E-reserve: Naylor, Jordan (2 readings)
PRESENTATION #10

WEEK 16

- 5/10 Final Paper Preparations
5/12 LAST CLASS: Course summary and closing remarks
FINAL PAPERS DUE: Wednesday, May 18, 2005 at 1pm
No exceptions