

Last Updated: January 20, 2012
 (Syllabus subject to change. Latest syllabus will be posted on blackboard)

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Office Location: Johnson Center 240C

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COURSE SYLLABUS

Women's Activism: From Jim Crow to Black Power

WMST 300-001, AFAM 390-002, HIST 389-011,

SOC 395-008, GOVT 329-001

Class Location: Innovation Hall 131

Class Time: MW 12:00 PM - 1:15 PM

Course Description

Through the use of historical texts, autobiography, articles, and film, this course will investigate the activism of women who challenged hierarchical race, class and gender structures. Focusing on the experiences and struggles of African American women from the Jim Crow period to the rise of the Black Power Movement, the course will explore the role of sexist and racist ideologies in their lives, their alliances with white women, the changes in their economic and political status, the legal and social barriers they faced, and the ways in which they were defined within families and within popular culture. The course materials present us with the multifaceted experiences of black women by focusing on the intersecting ideologies of race, color, class, sexuality and gender.

Required Course Texts

All books, except for Ransby's are available to read in the Women and Gender Studies Center, 240 K Johnson Center.

-Alfreda Duster, *Ida B. Wells, Crusade for Justice*

-Paula Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*

-Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*

-Angela Davis, *Angela Davis: An Autobiography*

-Septima Clark and Cynthia Stokes Brown, *Ready From Within: Septima Clark and the Civil Rights Movement*

Learning objectives

At the end of this course, students will ...

know to conduct research using primary sources;

understand how stereotypes are used to reinforce oppression

know how racism infused the mainstream struggle for women's suffrage

understand how sexual politics was embedded in fostering violence and limiting opportunity

understand the impact of state and federal laws, and court decisions on the structuring of opportunity along race and gender lines

understand the determinants for successful interracial, cross gender organizing

develop an appreciation for the importance of intersectional analysis for the examination of movements and experiences

Course Requirements and Methods of Instruction and Evaluation

1. Class participation (10%)
2. Sojourner Truth Lecture Reflection (10%)
3. Five-minute class presentation and paper (20%)
4. Midterm Exam (25%)
5. Final Exam (35%)

1. Class participation (10%)

Attendance Policies: Students are expected to be prepared for each class and to participate in discussion. Instructors may use absence, tardiness, or early departure as de facto evidence of nonparticipation. More than four absences over the course of the semester can negatively affect this grade.

2. Sojourner Truth Lecture Reflection (10%)

Students will write a paper incorporating information from one of the interviews in the book *Hands on the Freedom Plow* (**blackboard**) and the Sojourner Truth Lecture and/or Panel Presentation dealing with the activism of women in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). The events will take place in late February/early March. (If students cannot attend either event, an alternative assignment will be given.)

The papers should run **three full pages** in length and be double-spaced, with type 12-point font and regular one-inch margins. Anything less will incur a significant grade reduction. Students should run spell and grammar checks before turning in papers.

Students should read at least one of the accounts from one of the speakers who will be on the Panel:

Hands on the Freedom Plow: Personal Accounts By Women In SNCC:

Jean Smith Young, "Do Whatever You are Big Enough to Do" 240-249;

Judy Richardson, "SNCC: My Enduring 'Circle of Trust'," 348-366;

Betty Garman Robinson, "Working in the Eye of the Social Movement Storm," 366-380
(blackboard)

Recommended:

Book TV Interview:

<http://www.booktv.org/Watch/11884/Hands+on+the+Freedom+Plow+Personal+Accounts+By+Women+In+SNCC.aspx>

3. Five-minute class presentation; 4 to 5 page paper (20%)

Students will be assigned to conduct extra research in the databases below on information that is related to the topic covered in one of the class readings. Students should select at least three primary sources from these databases to incorporate into a 4-page paper that also draws information from the related class readings. In addition students will briefly present to the class what they uncovered in their research. The presentation is due on the day of the class readings. The paper may be turned in within a week of the student's assigned class reading. If papers are not turned in within the week, they will not be accepted.

The papers should run **at least four full** pages in length and be double-spaced, with type 12-point font and regular one-inch margins. Anything less will incur a significant grade reduction. Students should run spell and grammar checks before turning in papers.

Databases for Research

<http://furbo.gmu.edu/dbwiz/news>

click on "African American Periodicals"

<http://furbo.gmu.edu/dbwiz/soc>

click on

"Black Thought & Culture" and/or "Oral History Online"

How to cite references (Chicago style):

periodicals

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/04/>

books

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/03/>

web sources

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/05/>

interviews

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/07/>

4. Midterm Exam (25%)

Covers material from the beginning of the semester. Will include multiple choice, short answer and longer essay. Missed exams cannot be made up without a doctor's excuse.

5. Final Exam (35%)

Final Exam: Covers material from after the midterm. Will include multiple choice, short answer and longer essay. Missed exams cannot be made up without a doctor's excuse.

Grading Scale

100-95 A+

94-93 A

92-90 A-

89-87 B+

86-83 B

82-80 B-

79-77 C+

76-73 C

72-70 C-

69-60 D

59 and below F

About Blackboard

This management system is a very important tool for the course. I will post on blackboard the syllabus, instructions for all course assignments, selected class notes, exam review questions, some required and recommended readings, links to relevant web sites, photographs, instructions for accessing and using library databases, and selected campus services. If any changes occur in the syllabus, I will post an updated document on blackboard. I also will announce any changes to the syllabus in class and through email.

About Writing Skills

Students may elect to visit the Writing Center on their own to get help with writing strategies. After your first writing assignment, I may recommend students to visit the writing center. These services are valuable and free.

"The Writing Center will not proofread your work for you, but we will work with you to develop revision and editing strategies that can last a lifetime. Our tutors want to emphasize positive attitudes and helpful ways of thinking about writing. We want you to become more confident and effective writers across the curriculum and in your personal and professional lives." <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>

703-993-1200 wcenter@gmu.edu

PLEASE NOTE: COURSE POLICIES

1. George Mason University Honor System and Code Honor Code

George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.

Plagiarism (statements from Mason Web Site)

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit.

<http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm#plagiarism>

Please familiarize yourself with the Honor System and Code, as stated in the George Mason University *Undergraduate Catalog*. When you are given an assignment as an individual, the work must be your own. Some of your work may be collaborative; source material for group projects and work of individual group members must be carefully documented for individual contributions.

<http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>

2. Class Registration

Students are responsible for verifying the accuracy of their own schedules. Students need to check PatriotWeb regularly to verify that they are registered for the classes that they think they are. This is particularly important since students are no longer dropped for nonpayment. Faculty may not allow a student who is not registered to continue to attend class and may not grade the work of students who do not appear on the official class roster.

Deadlines each semester are published in the Schedule of Classes available from the Registrar's Web Site registrar.gmu.edu

The add and drop deadlines for classes:

Last day to drop with no tuition penalty: Jan 31

Last day to add: Jan 31

Last day to drop (67% tuition penalty): Feb 24

Selective Withdrawal Period: Feb 27 - Mar 30

After the last day to drop a class, withdrawing from this class requires the approval of the dean and is only allowed for nonacademic reasons. Undergraduate students may choose to exercise a selective withdrawal. See the Schedule of Classes for selective withdrawal procedures.

3. Accommodations for students with disabilities:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see

me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

The need for accommodations should be identified at the beginning of the semester and the specific accommodation has to be arranged through the Office of Disability Resources. Faculty cannot provide accommodations to students on their own (e.g. allowing a student extra time to complete an exam because the student reports having a disability).

George Mason University: Diversity Statement

George Mason University promotes a living and learning environment for outstanding growth and productivity among its students, faculty and staff. Through its curriculum, programs, policies, procedures, services and resources, Mason strives to maintain a quality environment for work, study and personal growth.

An emphasis upon diversity and inclusion throughout the campus community is essential to achieve these goals. Diversity is broadly defined to include such characteristics as, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, age, disability, and sexual orientation. Diversity also entails different viewpoints, philosophies, and perspectives. Attention to these aspects of diversity will help promote a culture of inclusion and belonging, and an environment where diverse opinions, backgrounds and practices have the opportunity to be voiced, heard and respected.

The reflection of Mason's commitment to diversity and inclusion goes beyond policies and procedures to focus on behavior at the individual, group and organizational level. The implementation of this commitment to diversity and inclusion is found in all settings, including individual work units and groups, student organizations and groups, and classroom settings; it is also found with the delivery of services and activities, including, but not limited to, curriculum, teaching, events, advising, research, service, and community outreach.

Acknowledging that the attainment of diversity and inclusion are dynamic and continuous processes, and that the larger societal setting has an evolving socio-cultural understanding of diversity and inclusion, Mason seeks to continuously improve its environment. To this end, the University promotes continuous monitoring and self-assessment regarding diversity. The aim is to incorporate diversity and inclusion within the philosophies and actions of the individual, group and organization, and to make improvements as needed.

Women and Gender Studies Commitment to Diversity Statement

Women and Gender Studies seeks to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and ability. We encourage all members of the learning environment to engage with the material personally, but to also be open to exploring and learning from experiences different than their own.

Class Schedule

January 23

Introduction

Nina Simone song: "Four Women"

Lyrics <http://boscarol.com/nina/html/where/fourwomen.html>

Video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCwME6Jpn3s>

LYNCHING, JIM CROW AND THE RISE OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN'S CLUB MOVEMENT

January 25

Stereotypes

Films:

Lip (PN1995.9.N4 L56 1999)

Illusions (PN1995.9.E96 D3)

Interview: Melissa Harris-Perry: Confronting Stereotypes of the Black Woman, Nation of Change, December 22, 2011

<http://www.nationofchange.org/melissa-harris-perry-confronting-stereotypes-black-woman-1324574054>

African-American Images

http://web.wm.edu/amst/370/2005F/sp6/early_print_african_american_images.htm

The Mammy Caricature

<http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/mammies/>

<http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/links/mammy/>

Jezebel

<http://www.ferris.edu/jimcrow/jezebel/>

Aunt Jemima

http://web.wm.edu/amst/370/2005F/sp6/auntjemima_history.htm

January 30

Joan Marie Johnson, "Ye Gave Them a Stone': African American Women's Clubs, the Frederick Douglass Home, and the Black Mammy Monument," *Journal of Women's History* 17, 1 (2005): 62-86.

Sexual Politics of Lynching

February 1

"Without Sanctuary, Photographs and Postcards of Lynching in America," Collection of James Allen and John Littlefield

<http://www.withoutsanctuary.org/main.html>

Giddings: "Prelude to a Movement" (75-83) and "Defending Our Name" (85-94).

February 6

Giddings: "'To Be a Woman, Sublime': The Ideas of the National Black Women's Club Movement" (95-117).

February 8

Duster, *Crusade for Justice*:

"The Free Speech Days" (35-45)

"Lynching at the Curve" (47-52)

"At the Hands of the Mob" (61-67)

"To Tell the Truth Freely" (69-75)

"Light From the Human Torch" (83-86)

February 13

Duster, *Crusade for Justice*: "Illinois Lynchings" (309-320).

Paula Giddings, "Missing in Action Ida B. Wells, the NAACP, and the Historical Record," *Meridians* 1,2 (Spg, 2001): 1-17.

February 15

Film - *A Passion for Justice: Ida B. Wells* (E161.A544 I33 2004)

THE SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

February 20

W.E.B. Du Bois, "Votes for Women," *The Crisis Magazine* (September 1912)
(blackboard)

Giddings: "The Quest for Woman Suffrage (Before WWI)," 119-131 and "The Radical Interracialists," *159-170.

THE GREAT DEPRESSION
WORLD WAR II AND CIVIL RIGHTS**February 22**

Giddings: "Black Braintruster: Mary McLeod Bethune and the Roosevelt Administration," 217-230.

Elaine M. Smith, "Mary McLeod Bethune's 'Last Will and Testament': A Legacy for Race Vindication," *The Journal of Negro History* 81, 1/4, (Winter - Autumn, 1996): 105-122.

February 27

Yvette Richards, *Conversations with Maida Springer*, 132-145 (**blackboard**).

Pauli Murray, *The Autobiography of a Black Activist, Feminist, Lawyer, Priest and Poet*

"Getting to Know Mrs. Roosevelt," 189-195

"Don't Get Mad, Get Smart," 232-238 (**blackboard**).

Rosenberg, Rosalind. "The Conjunction of Race and Gender." *Journal of Women's History* 14, 2 (2002): 68-73.

Susan M. Hartmann, "Pauli Murray and 'Juncture of Women's Liberation and Black Liberation'," *Journal of Women's History* 14, 2 (2002): 74-77.

February 29

Film - *Eleanor Roosevelt* (E 807.1.R7 E43, 2005)

Eleanor Roosevelt, "Some of My Best Friends Are Negro," originally printed in *Ebony* 9 (February 1953): 16-20, 22, 24-26. <http://www.newdeal.feri.org/er/er09.htm>

Transcripts:

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eleanor/filmmore/transcript/index.html>

Read from, "Several young men soon started to court her..." to "Eleanor and Franklin's early-married life was dominated by another powerful Roosevelt - Franklin's mother, Sara."

Read from, "In her travels, Eleanor saw how the Depression had devastated entire regions and industries..." to "she would face loss and betrayal."

Read from, "For Eleanor, the war against fascist Germany and Japan made America's own failings..." to "He had a war to win, he said."

Read from, "Eleanor still pushed herself with a relentless schedule of lectures and meetings, travel and committees..." to "Once there was a silly old...."

BLACK POWER AND FEMINISM**March 5****Sojourner Truth Lecture Due in Class**

Film - *Eyes on the Prize*, Part I, (E185.61 .E943 2006, DVD) #1 Awakenings (section on Rosa Parks)

Transcript: Begin reading from, "In Mississippi, a few black people stood up to the system." http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/about/pt_101.html

"Interview: Rosa Parks, January 20, 1980," 963-977, in Darlene Clark Hine, ed. *Black Women in American History: The Twentieth Century*, v. 3 (**blackboard**)

March 7

Film - *Eyes on the Prize*, Part I, #5 Mississippi: Is This America? (E185.61 .E943 2006, DVD)(section on Fannie Lou Hamer)

Transcript: Begin reading from, "I want people in this room to understand one, that people should expect to get beaten..."

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/about/pt_105.html

March 11-18 Spring Break

March 19 Midterm – readings from to January 23-February 29.

March 21

Nina Simone song: "Mississippi Goddam"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AUR9yWzN3zc>

Lyrics

<http://www.songlyrics.com/nina-simone/mississippi-goddam-lyrics/>

"Life in Mississippi: An Interview with Fannie Lou Hamer," 951-962 in Darlene Clark Hine, ed. *Black Women in American History: The Twentieth Century*, v. 3 (**blackboard**)

March 26

Septima Clark, *Ready from Within*, 23-70.

March 28

Septima Clark, *Ready from Within*, 71-126.

April 2

Film - *Fundi, The Story of Ella Baker* (E 185.97.B214F9, 1986)

Sweet Honey in the Rock song: "Ella's Song" (We Who Believe in Freedom Cannot Rest)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U6Uus--gFrc>

Lyrics

<http://thue.stanford.edu/jacquie/songs/ella.html>

April 4

Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*, 118-131, 137-147, 170-183.

April 9

Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*, 183-195, 247-252, 256-259, 281-286, 291-298.

April 11

Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement*, 306-313, 330-356.

April 16

Film: Eyes on the Prize, Part II, A Nation of Law? (1968-71) (E185.61.E943 2006, DVD) #6 (section dealing with the Panthers, Fred Hampton)

Transcript: Read from the beginning to “Amid growing criticism of the counterintelligence program, President Richard Nixon reaffirmed his support for the FBI during graduation ceremonies at the Bureau's national academy.”

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/eyesontheprize/about/pt_206.html

April 18

Film: Still Revolutionaries (Katherine Campbell, Madalynn Carol Rucker) (E185.615 .S834 2000)

Giddings: “The Women’s Movement and Black Discontent,” 299-324.

April 23

Angela Davis: An Autobiography, 77-105, 128-131, 158-161, 216-220.

April 25

Angela Davis: An Autobiography, 250-254, 265-269, 315-319, 362-383, 392-396.

April 30

Film - *Chisholm '72 Unbought & Unbossed* (E840.8.C48 c55 2005, DVD)

<http://www.pbs.org/pov/pov2005/chisholm/>

May 2

Shirley Chisholm, "The Black Woman in Contemporary America"

University of Missouri, Kansas City - June 17, 1974

<http://americanradioworks.publicradio.org/features/sayitplain/schisholm.html>

Sweet Honey in the Rock song: "Oughta Be a Woman"

<http://www.lyricsdrive.com/lyrics/flirtations/293372/oughta-be-a-woman-lyrics/>

Giddings: “Strong Women and Strutting Men: The Moynihan Report,” 325-335, and “A Failure of Consensus,” 337-340.

May 7 Final Exam Thurs. 1:30PM - 4:15PM