

Black Women's History

Professor Kellie Carter Jackson

Summer 2021 Term II

Course Description

This course focuses on African American women's history in the United States with certain aspects of Black women's activism and leadership covered within the African Diaspora. We will examine the ways in which these women engaged in local, national, and international freedom struggles while simultaneously defining their identities as wives, mothers, leaders, citizens, and workers. The course will pay special attention to the diversity of Black women's experiences and to the dominant images of Black women in America from Mumbet (the first enslaved Black woman to sue for her freedom and win) to contemporary issues of race, sex, and class in the Age of (Michelle) Obama. Participants will explore such questions as: What is Black women's history? How does Black women's history add to our understanding of American history? Where should Black women's history go from here?

Course Readings

1. Cooper, Brittany. *Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 2019.
2. Dunbar, Erica Armstrong. *Never Caught: The Washington's Relentless Pursuit of Ona Judge*. New York: 37 Ink, 2018.
3. Hunter, Tera W. *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the Civil War*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998.
4. McGuire, Danielle L. *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—a New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*. New York: Vintage, 2011.
5. Mustakeem, Sowande' M. *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex, and Sickness in the Middle Passage*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2016.
6. Obama, Michelle. *Becoming*. New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2018.
7. Owens, Deirdre Cooper. *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2018.

Course Requirements

- Contribute to five discussion boards
- Participate in at least three Q&As

- Complete one book review (1,000 words)
- Complete a 15-page research paper or project of appropriate rigor

Learning Objectives

1. To provide the student with a general background in important trends, concepts, and interpretations relating to African American women
2. To foster analytical skills, in particular those associated with the identification, interpretation, and critical evaluation of historical sources
3. To prepare students with general research, writing, and communication skills necessary for the pursuit of a graduate education
4. To present students with the study of social justice and tools in which to engage and encourage local, national, and global activism
5. To cultivate a general interest in the history of African American women and an acknowledgment of its value toward understanding how historic ideologies and events of the past continue to influence those in the present.

Group Work

This course requires students to work in groups assigned at the beginning of the semester. Groups will complete readings together and interact on discussion boards focused on final paper/projects.

Peer Review (discussion boards four and five)

This two-part assignment requires that you a) post an abstract and the first five pages of your final paper/project to your group discussion board and b) review and add track changes to the first five pages of the other members of your group's final paper/projects.

Book Review

Write a 1,000-word book review on one of the books from your final paper/project bibliography. (See assignment descriptions in Classes for an example.)

Class Schedule

Week 1 Module A: July 8–11

What is Black Women's History?

Readings

- Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs* 17 (1992): 251–274. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week 1 module.)

- bell hooks, "Sexism and the Black Female Slave Experience," in *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism*, 15–49. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week 1 module.)

Women and the Middle Passage

Readings

- Mustakeem, full

Assignments

- Discussion Board One: Introduce yourself to your group and list three potential topics for your final paper/project. Comment on one potential topic for each member of your group.
 - First post due Friday, July 9
 - Second post due Sunday, July 11

Week 1 Module B: July 12–14

Assignments

- Final paper/project research question: due July 14
 - In roughly 1–2 pages, outline the question your final paper or project will attempt to answer. This should include a description of the paper or project you are proposing, some background information and historical context on your topic, a brief description of your research plan, and a justification for why your particular paper or project is worth pursuing.

Q&A Session One: Tuesday, July 13 - 8:00-9:30 p.m. ET

Week 2 Module A: July 15–18

Women on the Run

Readings

- Armstrong, full
- Stephanie Camp, "I Could Not Stay There...," *Slavery and Abolition* 23 (December 2002): 1–20. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week 2 module.)

Women Who Write

Readings

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, ed. Lydia Maria Child (Boston: 1861), available on Documenting the American South, University of North Carolina. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week 2 module.)

Assignments

- Discussion Board Two: Post three potential sources (a mixture of primary and secondary) for your final paper or project. Suggest an additional primary or secondary source for each of the members in your group and explain why you chose that source.
 - First post due Friday, July 16
 - Second post due Sunday, July 18
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Week 2 Module B: July 19–21

Assignments

- Revised question and annotated bibliography due Wednesday, July 21
 - Revise your initial proposal to incorporate your section professor's feedback, AND
 - Create an annotated bibliography containing at least five sources. Each of these sources should be followed by a short paragraph describing the source and what it will contribute to your final paper/project.
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Week 3 Module A: July 22–25

Women and Their Bodies

Readings

- Cooper Owens, full

Women, Respect, and Religion

Readings

- Stephanie M. H. Camp. "The Pleasures of Resistance: Enslaved Women and Body Politics in the Plantation South, 1830–1861," *Journal of Southern History* 68, no. 3 (Aug. 2002): 533–572. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week 3 module.)
- Evelyn Higginbotham, "The Politics of Respectability," in *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880–1920* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), 185–229. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week 3 module.)

Assignments

- Discussion Board Three: Post an outline of your final paper/project.
 - Post due Sunday, July 25**Q&A Session Two: Thursday, July 22 - 8:00-9:30 p.m. ET**
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Week 3 Module B: July 26–28

Assignments

- Paper/project preview due Wednesday, July 28
 - Paper: Turn in a rough draft of the first five pages of your final paper.
 - Project: Submissions of the project preview will differ from project to project according to type. Determine with your section professor an appropriate portion of your final project to turn in.
 - Discussion Board Four: Post a 200-word abstract for your final paper/project. Submit the first five pages of your paper (or the portion of your final project submitted to your section professor) to your group members for peer review.
 - Due Wednesday, July 28
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Week 4 Module A: July 29–August 1

Women and Their Labor

Readings

- Hunter, full
- Association of Black Women Historians, "An Open Statement to the fans of *The Help*," August 12, 2011. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week 4 module.)
- Kellie Carter Jackson, "'She was a Member of the Family': Ethel Phillips, Domestic Labor and Employer Perceptions," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 45, no. 3 & 4 (Fall/Winter 2017): 160–172. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week 4 module.)

Women and the Long Freedom Struggle

Readings

- McGuire, full
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Week 4 Module B: August 2–4

Assignments

- Discussion Board Five: Return peer reviews to group members as attachments on the discussion board.
 - Due Wednesday, August 4

Q&A Session Three: Monday, August 2 - 8:00-9:30 p.m. ET

Week 5 Module A: August 5–8

Women and Their Anger

Readings

- Cooper, "White-Girl Tears," 171–200.
- Audre Lorde, "The Uses of Anger" (1981), Blackpast.org. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week 5 module.)

Women on the Political Run

Readings

- Watch *Chisholm '72: "Unbought and Unbossed"* (2016). (A link to this video can be found in the Week 5 module.)
 - Barbara Jordan Speeches (A link to these readings can be found in the Week 5 module.)
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Week 5 Module B: August 9–11

Assignments

- Book review due Wednesday, August 11
 - Write a 1,000-word review of one of the books in your final paper/project bibliography.

Q&A Session Four: Tuesday, August 10 - 8:00-9:30 p.m. ET

Week 6 Module A: August 12–15

Women and #MeToo

Readings:

- Nell Irvin Painter, "Hill, Thomas, and the Use of the Racial Stereotype," in *Race-ing Justice, En-gendering Power*, ed. Toni Morrison (New York: Pantheon, 1992), 200–214. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week 6 module.)
- Angela Onwuachi-Willig, "What About #UsToo?" *Yale Law Journal* forum, June 18, 2018. (A link to this reading can be found in the Week 6 module.)

Women and Michelle Obama

Readings

- Obama, full
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Week 6 Module B: August 16–18

Assignments

- Final Draft due Wednesday, August 18