

AA297/HI 297/ WS 297
African American Women's History

Boston University, Spring 2018
T/TH 2:00pm-3:15pm

Professor: Ashley D. Farmer
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Office: 226 Bay State Road #210
Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00pm-3:00pm (*sign up via Slotted. Link on Blackboard*)

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Office: 226 Bay State Road, #B08
Office Hours: Thursdays, 11:30am-1:30pm

Course Description:

This lecture course examines the experience of African American women in American history. It is designed with the idea that there is not one singular experience of black women in America, but rather a multitude of black women's voices and perspectives that comprise this history. We will explore black women's experiences across class, regional, and organizational lines. Themes and issues will include family life, work, political activism, and sexuality. The course will focus on how white and black Americans have attempted to control and represent African American women. We will also foreground how African American women have articulated their perspectives, needs, and emancipatory goals.

Required Texts: *= available online or online through BU Libraries

1. * Bettye Collier-Thomas and V.P. Franklin eds., *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*. New York: New York University Press, 2001. [SIS]
2. * Dayo F. Gore, Jeanne Theoharis, Komozi Woodard eds., *Want to Start a Revolution? Radical Women in the Black Freedom Struggle*. New York: New York University Press, 2009. [WTSR]
3. *Susie King Taylor, *Reminiscences of Life in Camp: An African American Woman's Civil War Memoir*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006.
4. Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective* [HWGF]
5. All other materials available via Blackboard Learn (BL)

Grading:

Class Attendance:	10%	Midterm Exam	20%
Class Participation	10%	Final Exam	15%
In-Class Quizzes (2x 15% each)	30%	Final Project/ Blog	15%

Class Attendance:

Regular attendance in class is absolutely necessary. Please **NOTIFY THE TF** (in advance if possible) if you know that you will need to be absent from class. *After one unexcused absence, we will begin deducting 1/3 of a letter grade off your final grade for every missed class.*

Class Participation:

In-Class Discussions are a crucial component of this course. All students are expected to read all course materials and engage in class debates and discussions. Students will be evaluated based on their ability to contribute to reading-based discussions and in-class activities. The participation grade will be calculated based on vocal contributions to class discussion as well as **10 in-class activities** which will ask students to complete handouts or other written work for submission. Consistent tardy, disengaged, or disrespectful students (including those who text or engage in other activities during class) will receive lower participation grades. However, students who have demonstrated outstanding course preparation and participation *will be eligible* to receive a 1-2% boost to their attendance/ participation grades.

Quizzes: February 27th and April 19th

There will be two scheduled quizzes over the course of the semester based on material in the lectures and reading. Each quiz will consist of a set of identifications and a textual analysis or short answer question.

Midterm Exam: March 15th, In-Class

The midterm exam will consist of multiple choice, short answer, or long-form essay questions and will be administered in class. It will cover all material on the syllabus and from in-class lectures and discussions up until March 15th.

Final Exam: During Exam Period

The final exam will cover material on the syllabus and from in-class lectures and discussions after March 15th. It will take place at the date and time scheduled by the university.

Black Women at BU and Boston Blog

For the final project, you will help construct a blog about Black Women at BU or in Boston. The project will consist of several parts. First, you will research on your own or consult BU librarians to identify a list of black women teachers, students, activists, or black-women centered events on campus or in the Boston area. These may include buildings, spaces where black women protests, the first African American women who were the first to enroll or complete a degree, or other sites where important “firsts” happened. You will write a blog about this particular African American woman, the challenges she faced, and how she made Boston or BU history. More details about the project will be distributed in-class on February 1st.

Abbreviated Grading Rubric for Black Women in Boston Blog:

Short write up and posting of potential subjects on Blackboard site–15 points

Selection of woman to be the focus of blog post- 15 points

Short write up about research progress on Blackboard site – 15 points

Blog post- 55

Late Assignments:

Please **contact the TA** well in advance of an assignment's due date if you think that you will have difficulty meeting a particular deadline. *All assignments submitted late without my permission will automatically be marked down one half grade per day.*

Plagiarism Policy:

Each student is expected to complete all stages of work. Taking the words of others, or presenting the ideas of others as your own is a violation of the University's Academic Conduct Code. It is your responsibility to understand all of the provisions of the CAS Academic Conduct Code. *The minimum penalty for such offenses is to fail the assignment; the more common penalty is to fail the course.*

Please be sure to review the BU Academic Conduct Code, which can be found online at:

<http://www.bu.edu/academics/policies/academic-conduct-code/>.

Accessibility:

If you are a student requiring accommodations for a disability, please let me know as soon as possible.

The Office of Disability Services is available to assist you and may be contacted at 353-3658.

Email and Electronics Policy:

Email communication with the professor and the TF should be considered formal, similar to other business-style correspondence. You should remember to include a proper salutation and sign your name at the end of the email. I will usually be able to answer emails within 24 hours except for weekends and holidays. *I typically will not respond to email between 8pm and 8am.*

You are permitted to use electronic devices and laptops to take notes during the lecture portion of our class. I reserve the right to ask you to discontinue the use of devices during class discussion or ban them if students are caught engaging in non-academic activity.

Course Schedule

Week 1: Introduction and Overview

January 18th:

- Introduction to African American Women's History

Week 2: Black Women in the Old and New World

January 23rd:

- Jennifer L. Morgan, ““Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder”: Male Travelers, Female Bodies, and the Gendering of Racial Ideology, 1500-1770,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 54, No. 1, Constructing Race (Jan., 1997) **(BL)**

January 25th:

- Sowande Mustakeem, “I Never Have Such a Sickly Ship Before:” Diet, Disease, and Mortality in 18th Century Slaving Voyages” *Journal of African American History* Vol. 93, No. 4 (2008). **(BL)**

Week 3: Women and Slavery in the South

January 30th:

- Diana Berry, “I Had to Work Hard, Plow, and Go Split Wood Jus’ Life a Man:’ Skill, Gender, and Productivity in Agricultural Settings” in *Swing the Sickle for the Harvest Ripe: Gender and Slavery in Antebellum Georgia* **(BL)**

February 1st:

- Diana Berry, “Dey S’lected Me Out to Be a Housegirl:’ The Privileges and Pain of Nonagricultural Labor,” in *Swing the Sickle for the Harvest Ripe*, **(BL)**
- **Introduction to Black Women at BU Project**
- **Group Discussion - Bring readings in print or electronic version**

Week 4: Free Black Women in the North

February 6th:

- Maria Stewart, “Religion and the Pure Principles of Morality” **(BL)**
- Sojourner Truth, “Woman’s Rights” **(BL)**

February 8th:

- Carla Peterson, ““A Sign unto This Nation:’ Sojourner Trough, History, Orature, and Modernity” in *Doers of the Word*, **(BL)**

Week 5: Civil War**February 13th:**

- Suzie King Taylor, *Reminiscences of my Life in Camp: An African American Woman's Civil War Memoir*, pp. 1–37.

February 15th:

- Suzie King Taylor, *Reminiscences of My Life in Camp: An African American Woman's Civil War Memoir*, pp. 38–69.

Week 6: Reconstruction**February 20th: Substitute for Monday Classes****February 22nd:**

- Leslie A. Schwalm, “‘Sweet Dreams of Freedom’: Freedwomen’s Reconstruction of Life and Labor in Lowcountry South Carolina” *Journal of Women’s History* 9:1 (1997) **(BL)**

Week 7: Jim Crow. Labor, and Criminality**February 27th:**

- **Quiz # 1**
- **Discussion- bring readings to class**

March 1st:

- Mary Church Terrell, “The Progress of Colored Women” **(BL)**
- Kali Gross, “Of Law and Virtue: Black Women in Slavery, Freedom, and Early Criminal Justice,” in *Colored Amazons: Crime, Violence, and Black Women in the City of Brotherly Love*, **(BL)**

Week 8: SPRING BREAK**Week 9: Jim Crow Resistance and Leisure****March 13th:**

- Tera Hunter, “‘Dancing and Carousing the Night Away’” in *To Joy My Freedom* **(BL)**
- Ida B. Well, “Lynch Law in America” **(BL)**

March 15th:

- **In-Class Midterm**

Week 10: New South, New Women, and Migration

March 20th:

- Talitha L. LeFlouria, “‘Under the Sting of the Lash’: Gendered Violence, Terror, and Resistance in the South’s Convict Camps” *Journal of African American History*, Vol. 100, no. 3 (2015). **(BL)**

March 22nd:

- Alice Dunbar Nelson, “The Negro Woman and the Ballot” **(BL)**
- Darlene Clark Hine, “Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West: Preliminary Thoughts on the Culture of Dissemblance” **(BL)**

Week 11: The New Negro and the Great Depression

March 27th:

- Lashawn Harris, “Running with the Reds: African American Women and the Communist Party during the Great Depression,” *Journal of African American History*, 94:1 (Winter 2009) **(JSTOR)**
- Cookie Woolner, “‘Woman Slain in Queer Love Brawl,’” African American Women, Same-Sex Desire, and Violence in the Urban North, 1920-1929. **(JSTOR)**

March 29th:

- Amy Jacques Garvey, “Our Women Getting into Larger Life” **(BL)**
- Ula Taylor, “‘Negro Women Are Great Thinkers as Well as Doers:’” Amy Jacques-Garvey and Community Feminism, 1924-1927 *Journal of Women’s History* (2000) **(JSTOR)**

Week 12: Cold War/ Civil Rights

April 3rd:

- Dayo F. Gore, “From Communist Politics to Black Power: The Visionary Politics and Transnational Solidarities of Victoria “Vicki” Ama Garvin” **[WTSR]**

April 5th:

- Jeanne Theoharis, “‘A Life History of Being Rebellious’: The Radicalism of Rosa Parks,” **[WTSR]**

Week 13: Civil Rights Movement

April 10th:

- Dorothy Height, “‘We Wanted the Voice of a Woman to Be Heard:’ Black Women and the 1963 March on Washington,” [SIS]
- Sharon Harley, “‘Chronicle of a Death Foretold’: Gloria Richardson, the Cambridge Movement, and the Radical Black Activist Tradition,” [SIS]

April 12th:

- Vicki Crawford, “African American Women in the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party,” [SIS]

Week 14: Black Power

April 17th:

- Tracye Matthews, “‘No One Ever Asks What a Man’s Role in the Revolution Is’: Gender Politics and Leadership in the Black Panther Party, 1966-71,” [SIS]
- Ashley Farmer, “The Black Revolutionary Woman,” in *Remaking Black Power* (BL)

April 19th:

- **Quiz # 2**
- **Discussion**

Week 15: Sister Outsider

April 24th:

- Sherie M. Randolph, “‘Women’s Liberation or...Back Liberation, You’re Fighting the Same Enemies:’ Florynce Kennedy, Black Power, and Feminism” [WTSR]

April 26th:

- Premilla Nadasen, “‘We Do Whatever Becomes Necessary:’ Jhonnie Tillmon, Welfare Rights, and Black Power,” [WTSR]
- Combahee River Collective Statement [HWGF]
- Barabara Smith [HWGF]
- Beverly Smith [HWGF]

Week 16: Black Women Today**May 1st:**

- Duchess Harris, “From Kennedy Commission to Combahee Collective: Black Feminist Organizing, 1960-1980,” [SIS]
- Alicia Garza [HWGF]

**** Final Blog Due During Exam Period***