

READING BLACK WOMEN WRITERS (ONLINE)

SUMMER 2015

Course Description

This course will examine literature speaking to the experiences and histories of Black women in the United States.

Some guiding questions that we will explore are:

1. What role does gender, race, and sexuality play in the writing of the experiences and histories of women in the United States? How do these different articulations of experience resonate and differ from one another?
2. What role do other aspects of identity and experience--such as disability, nationality, gender identity, citizenship status--impact the experiences and histories of these women?
3. How does literature connect to or reflect "real life"? How does literature connect to your life? Can literature bring about social change?

Goals

This course fulfills the requirements for the following GEC categories: (1) Writing and Communication – Level 2, (2) Literature, and (3) Diversity in the U.S. **This means that this class is both reading- and writing-intensive.**

Writing and Communication – Level 2: Students are skilled in written communication and expression, reading, critical thinking, oral expression and visual expression. This goal is met through structured analytical papers, analysis of pop culture, and in-class discussions.

- Through critical analysis, discussion, and writing, students demonstrate the ability to read carefully and express ideas effectively.
- Students apply written, oral, and visual communication skills and conventions of academic discourse to the challenges of a specific discipline.
- Students access and use information critically and analytically.

Literature: Students evaluate significant texts in order to develop capacities for aesthetic and historical response and judgment; interpretation and evaluation; and critical listening, reading, seeing, thinking, and writing. This goal is met through historical and social context lectures, analytical writing assignments, and in-class discussion of texts in context.

- Students analyze, interpret, and critique significant literary works.
- Through reading, discussing, and writing about literature, students appraise and evaluate the personal and social values of their own and other cultures.

Social Diversity in the U.S.: Students understand the pluralistic nature of institutions, society, and culture in the United States and across the world in order to become educated, productive, and principled citizens. This goal will be met through reading articles, books, short stories, and poetry by Black women which critically engages categories of difference and identity in a variety of forms.

- Students describe and evaluate the roles of such categories as race, gender and sexuality, disability, class, ethnicity, and religion in the pluralistic institutions and cultures of the United States.
- Students recognize the role of social diversity in shaping their own attitudes and values regarding appreciation, tolerance, and equality of others.

Texts

- *Assata: An Autobiography*, Assata Shakur [pronouns: she/her] (ISBN: 978-1-55652-074-7)
- *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*, Audre Lorde [pronouns: she/her] (ISBN: 978-0-89594-122-0)
- *Bloodchild*, Octavia Butler [pronouns: she/her] (ISBN: 978-1583226988)
- *Americanah*, Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche, [pronouns: she/her] (ISBN: 978-0307271082)
- PDFs and links to articles on Carmen (required unless noted otherwise)

Krista Benson, MA

Email: benson.150@osu.edu

Text: 1-425-224-6715 (do use the 1)

SkypeID: benson.150

Facetime: 509-205-0697

Google Hangout: kristalinbenson@gmail.com

Virtual Office Hours: T, 12-2 pm on Skype or FaceTime. For phone calls, please arrange ahead of time.

Physical Office: University Hall 037

When emailing me, **INCLUDE WGSST 2367.04 in the subject line.** Email is usually the best way to contact me. Emails should always include a subject, a greeting, and a signature. Emails not addressed in this way will not be answered.



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**ONLINE POSTINGS DUE
EVERY TUESDAY & FRIDAY**

Course Requirements & Grading

Attendance & Participation	25%
4 Reading Responses	15%
In-Class Writings	10%
Oral Final	5%
Papers	45%

Attendance & Participation Discussions: 25%

Active participation is a critical part of the learning experience in this course.

We will explore a variety of issues, some of them quite controversial and complicated. Thus, it's important that we all respect each other's needs, values, and views. There is no way for this class to succeed if students don't prepare materials thoughtfully and participate fully in the class. I expect each of us to arrive each week fully prepared to thoughtfully enter into an ongoing discussion.

Personal opinions play a role in class dialogues but do not substitute for a concerted effort to grasp the scholarly material in the course. Understanding the material does not mean you have to embrace all or any of the viewpoints represented. However, it does require that you read it, think about it, and discuss it. Please keep in mind that we address this class from a perspective that assumes inequality exists.

I will take this time to remind you to respect each other's opinions and input. If at any time anyone is disrespectful to anyone in the class, I reserve the right to remove posts and address students individually.

Students will **be required to take a syllabus quiz in the 1st week** as participation.

What does participation look like online?

SAFE SPACES: This class has been built with an ethic of shared respect and a genuine desire for us to learn together well. I also encourage all students to remember that there are likely survivors of violence in our class. Though this is a space of respect, I cannot guarantee that it is a safe space. I welcome feedback from students on how to make your learning environment more welcoming, but I also encourage anyone triggered by materials/ discussions to inform me privately so that I can direct you to appropriate resources for support. If you think that there may be subjects that would be impossible for you to engage with, please let me know so that we can address the best way for you to succeed in this class.

Every week you are required to participate in two ways: you must post questions on the assigned reading and you must respond to your classmates' questions on the assigned reading. Each class date, you have 24 hour period to complete your posting.

BETWEEN MONDAY AT NOON AND TUESDAY AT MIDNIGHT EST, If your **last name is A-K**, you will post questions, putting the articles/chapters/lectures in conversation with one another. **If you last name is L-Z**, you are required to respond to questions, drawing on examples from our readings.

BETWEEN THURSDAY AT NOON AND FRIDAY AT MIDNIGHT EST, L-Z will post questions and A-K will respond. Every week, you are responsible for one question AND two responses.

If you fail to post questions or responses within the 36 hour period of the date on the syllabus, you will be marked absent for the day. You lose 5 attendance and participation points for every missed post. If you do post a question or response but you do not reference course materials adequately, you will receive half attendance for the day.

I will also post lectures via recorded PowerPoints and internet links with relevant information for each class period, helping us make connections between texts from class period to class period. You are expected to draw on this material in your discussion posts (questions or responses) as well as your writing assignments. I recommend that

you listen to the lectures before your begin your discussion posts. If you rarely draw on the lectures, your attendance and participation grade will reflect that. **If you have missed more than 3 posts by the 3rd week of class or more than 7 posts in the semester, you will automatically fail the course.**

Reading Responses: 15%

Starting in Week 1, you are required to turn in **4 reading responses** during the semester. Students may not submit more than one response per week. Typed response papers of 3-3.5 double-spaced pages that address at least one of the readings from the previous week are due in Dropbox by **midnight on Sundays**. Response papers should both summarize and critically engage with the material, tying critical investigation to the text summary. These are not simply personal responses (I liked it/I hated it), but are the beginnings of critical investigations of the material and should include direct references to the text. This is the place to exercise your skills in critical analysis, skills you will need to participate in class discussion and to compose longer papers. **Failing to submit at least 3 of these responses will result in automatically failing the course.**

In-Class Writing: 10%

Over the course of the semester, I will assign in-class writing and/or quizzes during your lectures. These can only be done prior to the end of your posting time for that class (Tuesdays at midnight for Lecture 1, Friday at midnight for Lecture 2 each week). They cannot be made up if a student is absent. The

intent with these writings is to have students display a foundational knowledge of readings for the day and to get feedback from the instructor on your analysis.

Oral Final: 5%

Students will be required to do a final oral exam intending to address the range of topics in the course. Signup sheets for this exam will be posted 2 weeks into the term – students must take the oral exam in real-time, either using Skype/ Google Hangouts or in the professor's office. A study guide will be posted at least one week prior to the exam.

Tips To Avoid Plagiarism

Using an Author's Exact Words:

- Use quotation marks around all words copied from a source.
- Choose to quote an author's exact words when the phrasing is unique or strengthens your argument.
- Provide a citation for the source of the exact words you used immediately after the quotation.

Paraphrasing an Author's Words:

- Paraphrase an author's words by stating his or her ideas in your own words with your own phrasing.
- Compare your paraphrased writing with the author's exact words to make sure you have not copied phrases or sentences from the author.
- Always provide a citation for the paraphrased ideas.

Stating Common Knowledge:

- Information that is commonly known by the public or the intended readers of a paper do not need citations for sources.
- Unsure if an idea is common knowledge for the intended readers of your paper? When in doubt, cite a source.

Prepare ahead of time!

- Studies show that students plagiarize most often when they are worried about completing an assignment.

Tips from
<http://www.nwmissouri.edu/library/services/plagtips>.

Paper Assignments: 45%

Paper 1, 20%, 3-4 pages: A writing prompt will be handed out for the paper. If you get lower than a 75, you will have the option to revise this paper by our last class meeting, with the first and the revised grades averaged together for a final grade. **Due 7/10 at 5 pm.**

Paper 2, 25%, 4-7 pages: Students will develop their own paper topics with **proposals uploaded to the Paper 2 Dropbox on Wednesday, 7/22/15 by 5 pm.** Further directions for the framework of the paper will be available prior to this due date. Students without approved proposals will be docked 10% off their Paper 2 grade every day that the proposal is late. **Paper 2 is due by Saturday, 8/1 at 5 pm.**

All papers are expected to be typed, double spaced, with a standard 12 point font and 1" markings! all papers must adhere to either MLA or APA citation format and should include a Works Cited section and in-text citations. Your thesis statement must be underlined. Papers should not merely repeat class discussion or consist of plot summaries or descriptions - papers should argue a clear position and analyze the texts read in class. Papers should be submitted to the appropriate folder in Carmen Dropbox by the time noted on the assignment sheet.

Extra Credit

During the semester, I will post some extra credit events you can attend (there are fewer in the summer). Students must attend the event and submit a 2 page paper that summarizes the event and connects it analytically to course materials. A maximum of 2% per paper can be added to your final grade, with no more than 2 events attended and papers submitted per term. **Due by 8/1/2015.**

Course Policies

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

We all come to learning with different needs and I strive to do what I can to make this class accommodating to a variety of needs and learning styles. **If you need accommodations, either for documented disabilities or for other reasons, please contact with me as soon as possible so that we can discuss your needs.** Please note that the only way to guarantee accommodated your needs in all classes is to work with the Office of Disability Services. The Office for Disability Services (150 Pomerene Hall; 292-3307; 292-0901) verifies the need for accommodations and assists in the development of accommodation strategies.

Your Mental Health!

A recent American College Health Survey found stress, sleep problems, anxiety, depression, interpersonal concerns, and alcohol use among the top ten health impediments to academic performance. Students experiencing personal problems or situational crises during the quarter are encouraged to contact the OSU Counseling and Consultation Services (614-292-5766). This service is free and confidential.

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism

As defined in University Rule #3335-31-02, plagiarism is "the representation of another's works or their ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas." Plagiarism is one of the most serious offenses that can be committed in an academic community; as such, it is the obligation of this department and its instructors to report all cases of suspected plagiarism to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. After the report is filed, a hearing takes place and if the student is found guilty, the possible punishment ranges from failing the class to suspension or expulsion from the

university. Although the existence of the Internet makes it relatively easy to plagiarize, it also makes it even easier for instructors to find evidence of plagiarism. It is obvious to most teachers when a student turns in work that is not her or his own; plagiarism search engines makes documenting the offense very simple.

- -Always cite your sources (I can help with this)
- -Always ask questions before you turn in your assignment if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism
- -Always see your TA or professor if you are having difficulty with an assignment.

To preserve the integrity of OSU as an institution of higher learning, to maintain your own integrity, and to avoid jeopardizing your future, DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.

Late Assignment Policy

I do not accept late reading reflection, participation, paper proposals, or in-class writing.

Papers 1 and 2 will be docked 15% for every 24 hour period that the paper is late (even if it is one hour late). Papers not submitted within 3 days of the due date will receive a zero.

Your questions/concerns:

Firm deadlines this term:

Friday, 7/10, 5 pm: Paper 1

Wednesday, 7/22, 5 pm: Paper 2 Proposal

8/1, 5pm: Paper 2

Flexible deadlines this term:

Which 4 of these dates will you post a reading reflection of the previous week's work by Sunday at midnight? **It is strongly encouraged that you submit a couple of reading responses prior to your first paper.**

6/21

6/28

7/5

7/12

7/19

7/26

8/2

Post Carmen participation by Tuesday at midnight and Friday at midnight EST every week that class is held.

Resources

The Writer's Center

The university provides an incredible writing resource with the University Writing Center. The Writing Center allows you to make appointments to get assistance from trained writing tutors! To utilize this service, contact the Writing Center at (614) 680-4291 or visit their website at <http://cstw.osu.edu/>

Student Wellness Center

The wellness center works with students on emotional, career, social, spiritual, physical, financial, intellectual, creative, and environmental wellness. Find out more at <http://swc.osu.edu/>

Counseling & Consultation

Provides counseling and consultation to currently enrolled undergraduate, graduate and professional students through individual & group counseling, psychiatrists, nutritional counseling, couples counseling, outreach, workshops, crisis debriefing, and community referrals.

<http://www.ccs.ohio-state.edu/>

Course Plan

CAR = posted on Carmen / AS=Assata: An Autobiography / ZA=Zami / Bloodchild / AM=Americanah

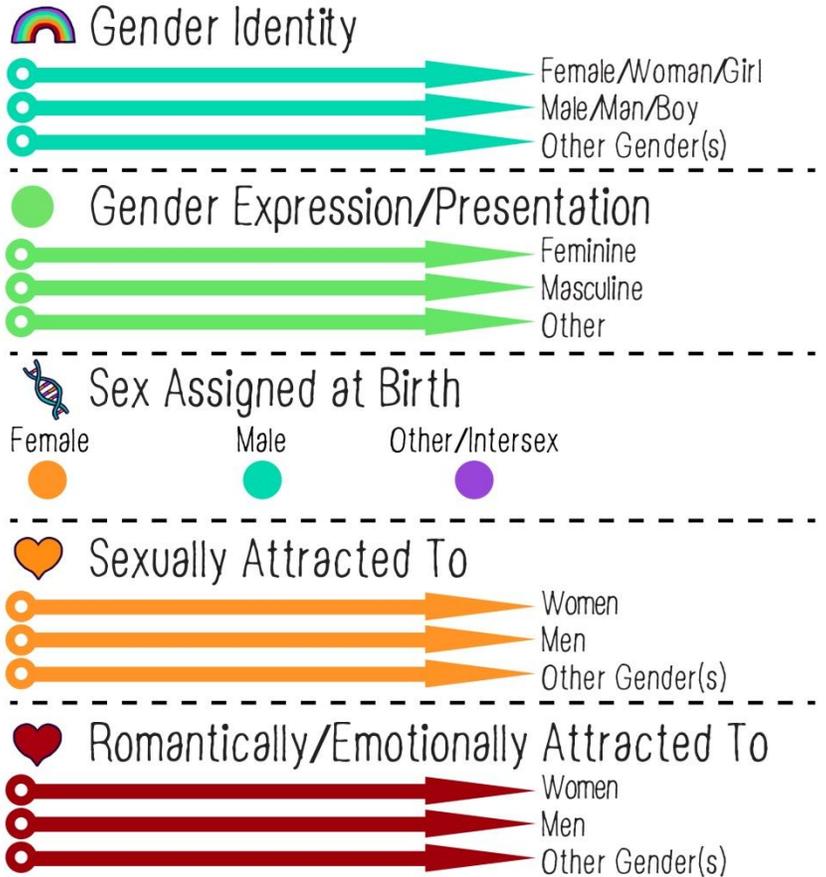
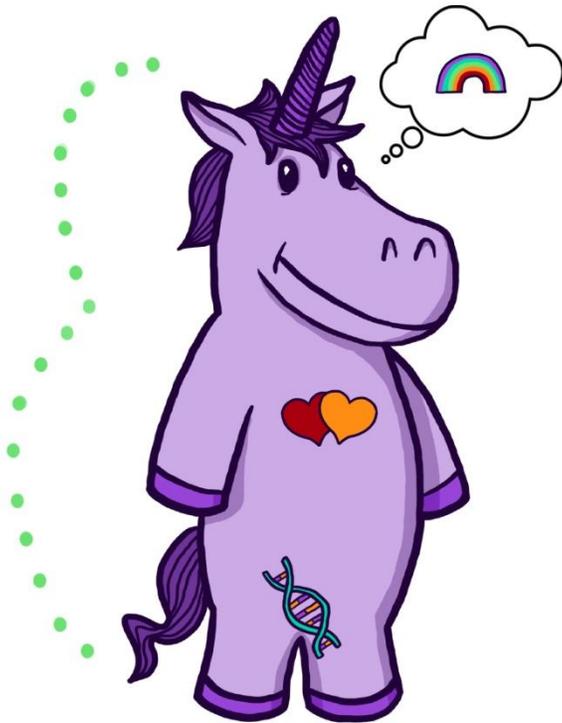
Information on this course schedule is an outline and is subject to change either due to instructor or collective class decisions. Students will be told in advance of the change and an updated syllabus will be posted to Carmen.

Date Due	Topic	Reading/Activity Due
Week 1 T, 6/15	Introduction to the class & framing the discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Syllabus (read closely) Won't You Celebrate With Me?, Lucille Clifton (CAR) Who Said It Was Simple?, Audre Lorde (CAR) Must complete an introduction on Carmen Discussion Week 1 and get a 70% on the syllabus quiz in Carmen by Monday at 5 pm to have access to the rest of the course readings past Week 2
F, 6/18	Histories & Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ain't I a Woman? - Sojourner Truth (CAR) The Status of Women in America - Anna Julia Cooper (CAR) The Politics of Black Feminist Thought - Patricia Hill Collins (CAR) Writers Like Me, Martha Southgate (CAR) In Search of Our Mother's Gardens - Alice Walker (CAR) Poetry Is Not a Luxury - Audre Lorde (CAR)
Week 2 T, 6/23	Histories & Voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference, Audre Lorde (CAR) Mapping the Margins, Kimberlé Crenshaw (CAR) Statement of Trans Inclusive Feminism and Womanism (CAR) How My Past As A Black Woman Informs Me As A Black Male Feminist, Dr. Kourtney Ryan Ziegler (CAR) A Black Feminist Statement, Combahee River Collective (CAR) Men: Comrades in Struggle - bell hooks (CAR)
F, 6/25	Sexuality, Race, & Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 1-17, pp. 1-124, (ZA) Theme Introduction: Autobiography - Leigh Gillmore (CAR)
Week 3 T, 6/30	Sexuality, Race, & Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 18-23, pp. 124-256 (ZA) Color, Hair Texture, and Standards of Beauty - Patricia Hill Collins (CAR) Baby Hair for Gabby, Blue Ivy, and Me Robin M. Boylorn (CAR)
F, 7/3 (class cancelled)		
Week 4 T, 7/7	Revolution & Incarceration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 1-9, beginning to p. 147 (AS) The Rebirth of Caste, Michelle Alexander (CAR)
F, 7/10	Revolution & Incarceration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 10-end, pp. 148-274 (AS) Paper 1 Due
Week 5 T, 7/14	Strange Futures & Forgotten Pasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Butler, <i>Bloodchild</i> (ix-144, "Preface" to "Furor Scribendi") Black to the Future, Alley Peznoski (CAR)
F, 7/17	Strange Futures & Forgotten Pasts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PRIOR TO CLASS Watch - <i>Pay It No Mind: The Life and Times of Martha P. Johnson</i> (link on CAR)
Week 6 T, 7/21	Transnational Black Woman-ness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 1-16, pp. 1-212 (AM)

		Wednesday, 7/22, Paper 2 Proposal Due
F, 7/24	Transnational Black Woman-ness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 17-35, pp. 213-398 (AM) • 'Americanah' Author Explains 'Learning' To Be Black In The U.S. - Fresh Air (listen to full interview, CAR)
Week 7 T, 7/28	Transnational Black Woman-ness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 36-end, pp. 399-588 (AM)
F, 7/31	Writing/Review Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Krista Available for meetings/questions/writing consultations from 10 am-2 pm on Skype/email, or by appointment
Sa, 8/1	Final Paper Due, 5 pm	
Final Exams Su-T, 8/2-8/4	Schedule online	

The Gender Unicorn

Graphic by:
TSER
Trans Student Equality Resources



To learn more go to:
www.transstudent.org/gender
Design by Landyn Pan