

Black Women and the State

WGS340 / AFR360E / LAS324L / ANT 324L

Course instructor: Dr Nadia Mosquera Muriel (she/her/hers)

Fall 2022



Pictured: Beatriz Nascimento (Brazil), Prof. Angela Davis (US), the late Rio de Janeiro city councilor Marielle Franco (Brazil) and the late community organizer Maria Elena Moyano (Peru)

Land Acknowledgment

I would like to acknowledge that we meet on Indigenous land. I also acknowledge and pay respect to the Carrizo & Comecrudo, Coahuiltecan, Caddo, Tonkawa, Comanche, Lipan Apache, Alabama-Coushatta, Kickapoo, Tigua Pueblo, and all the American Indian and Indigenous Peoples and communities who have been or have become a part of these lands and territories in Texas, here on Turtle Island.

Course Overview:

This course surveys Black women's experiences living with and confronting state oppression around the world. From North America, Central America, South America and the Caribbean, black women experience similar patterns of political, social, and economic inequality. Transnationally, racism, sexism, patriarchy, homophobia, and classism affect the quality of life of black women, particularly within nation-states with legacies of slavery and colonialism. This course takes an historical, social, and theoretical look at the roots of this inequality and how black women have chosen to respond to it locally and globally and students will explore the following questions: How have interlocking forms of oppression affected Black women's citizenship within the modern nation-state? How have Black women, in turn, sought to organize themselves in response to this oppression? What does it mean to resist?

Key Topics: Racism, sexism, patriarchy, homophobia, classism, transnationalism, representation, agency, black feminism

Learning Objectives:

1) Students will think critically about the multiple forms of oppression that affect black women's lives globally.

- 2) Students will consider how black women's political identity has been defined by experiences with oppression transnationally.
- 3) Students will be able to communicate and articulate through written analysis, modes in which Black women exercise agency in response to oppression.

Required Readings:

All assigned reading material, podcasts and films are available through links on our Canvas site and UT library catalog.

Course Policies and Expectations: Participation and Engagement

Students should be ready to create and maintain a classroom environment grounded in respect for one another. Empathy, solidarity, kindness, and enthusiasm are also values that will help us to create a collective community committed to learning as a liberatory praxis, whereby everyone is welcomed and respected. While systems of oppression such as racism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, classism, transphobia permeate deeply in how society is structured and we may not all agree on how to address these structural inequalities, we will treat every class member with respect and dignity. This course is designed to push you to think critically about interlocking systems of power, to question taken for granted beliefs and assumptions shaped by such systems. No student is expected to have all the answers. Indeed, mistakes and questions are welcome in the spirit of learning. To engage critically, we will practice radical generosity, by respecting each other's ideas, listening with an open mind, and developing a critical assessment of social issues grounded on facts whilst avoiding misinformation and personal attacks.

Active engagement in the classroom is crucial. Assigned readings and materials covered in my class, are carefully crafted to guide you through, and prioritize key elements of the material. Engage deliberately and thoughtfully. We understand that family, illness, and unexpected circumstances (and multiple expected unexpected events since the COVID-19 pandemic) may require you to miss class. We can integrate forgiveness for this, up to a point.

Complete the assigned readings before your class. All classes will assume a familiarity with the assigned readings. You will discuss and engage the reading material in class, and you will be asked to share your thoughts, views and questions. These activities are designed to develop your *critical* reading and watching skills. Beyond reading, put the readings to work! Ask: What are the connections between the readings / podcasts / audio-visual resources and the theories and case studies we've discussed in class? What intellectual perspective is the author writing from? How does the reading help me understand the course material better and/or problematize it? What questions does the reading raise for me?

Due Dates. Our class will heavily rely on weekly participation. For this reason, it is very important that you stay on top of weekly deadlines. Due to the accommodations already embedded into the class, late work, e-mailed work, or makeups for participation credit completed in class, course assignments, or

exams will not be accepted. The exception is a medical/ family (broadly conceived) emergency that is verified via the UT-Austin emergency medical services (Do so here: <https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/absencenotificationrequest.php>) OR if you are a primary caregiver (e.g. parent or sibling of a child in your primary care, or responsible for elder-care).

Academic Integrity. Plagiarism, cheating and other misconduct are serious violations of your contract as a student. You are expected to know and follow the University's policies. Plagiarism includes: using another writer's words or ideas without proper citation, citing your source but reproducing exact words without quotation, borrowing the structure of another author's phrases or sentences without crediting them, copying from a peer the main argument, use of examples, concepts etc. in your work, buying or borrowing the work of other students, sharing quiz or exam answers or working together on these (unless we say you should), using of non-sanctioned shared review documents (like google drive/docs) to memorize set answers for quizzes and exams. (Review guides that you compile together with your peers, TAs and myself as part of the course are welcomed. You will know the difference.) Assignment design, review and assessments and the community we develop together are carefully structured so that it is unlikely you will plagiarize or otherwise "cheat". If you do so, it also means it will be easy to identify. Any student who plagiarizes in any form, however minor, will receive no credit for the assignment in question. Without exception and however minor, in cases of plagiarism I instigate the required procedures with the university administration. This is for your longer-term benefit and that of your peers. I use this process to report integrity violations: Please see the following resource for avoiding plagiarism. Also, if you require assistance with your writing, the University of Texas at Austin offers advising services and writing professional support through the University Writing Center and the Sanger Learning Center.

Accessibility Services, Accommodations, and Safety:

Accommodating students with disabilities is an important and valued part of my job. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities (471-6259) or contact them through their website <http://ddce.utexas.edu/disability/>. Please inform me as soon as possible of your needs. Note that I will make the appropriate changes to assist you appropriately if you inform your needs no later than September 6. Right now, we know that students are experiencing heightened and adverse impacts on their mental health. Depression, anxiety, sleeplessness, obsessive acts and even suicidal thoughts are expected and quite rational responses to the last few years of pandemic. I am here to support you, along with a body of organizations and people at UT. If you're struggling, let me know as soon as you can. If you wait to let me know in the second half of class, and have missed substantial assignments, I will recommend you retake the class next year.

COVID-19 Mitigation. Our mental and physical health, and that of our community, is a top priority. The format of this class is now in-person, based on informed CDC recommendations and UT requirements. If you are unwell, please prioritize your health and the health of others by not attending

class. You will find the class slides on Canvas for your review, and I encourage you to contact peers for missed material.

Using Canvas. The course will be web-assisted using Canvas at canvas.utexas.edu. You should check this website at least twice a week. You will log in to the site with the same username and password that you use for your email. For tech support with Canvas, contact them via <http://canvas.utexas.edu/>, or see the guidelines for a host of student questions at <http://guides.instructure.com/m/4212>. You can also contact UT tech support via 512-475-9400. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have access to the course website.

Q drop Policy. If you realize you want to drop a class after the twelfth-class day (i.e. after September 7, 2022), you'll need to execute a Q-drop before the Q-drop deadline. Any queries about dropping a class, please contact your undergraduate academic advisor:

CWGS: Alma Jackie Salcedo, ajsalcedo@austin.utexas.edu

Anthropology: Jenna Habeeb, jenna.habeeb@austin.utexas.edu

AADS: Julian Falgout, j.falgout@austin.utexas.edu

Latin American Studies: Dr Pilar Zazueta, pzazueta@utexas.edu

Assessment. In this course you are expected to read and write regularly and abundantly, and in varied ways, both outside and within the classroom. Writing exercises involve four (4) **reading reflections** on the weekly reading material, weekly written mini-assignments in the classroom (i.e., 'exit tickets'), regular in-class write-to-learn exercises and a podcast episode as a final assignment. You will regularly revise your writing and share it with your peers. Although writing (and sharing it) can be intimidating, these will be low stake exercises that will help you to challenge yourself in a supportive, non-judgmental environment.

Course assignments and grading components (100 points)

Attendance (10 points): Attendance of each class is worth 0.4 points. Attending all classes may include some extra credit (up to 2 points extra credit for perfect attendance).

Participation (10 points) *Due during class.* You are expected to attend all classes in-person and to come prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that week. All students will be called upon to participate. Examples of 'participation' include the following and will be a useful way to prepare for in-class interventions and writing exercises: Noting down the key words that arose for you from the readings, commenting on the readings and connecting readings to the class/other student's comments, raising questions about the content of the reading or class material, responding to questions, providing insights into your understanding of the key concepts, connecting different students' comments and ideas together, balancing speaking with listening actively and carefully. In addition to these requirements, your participation grade will assess your improvement and engagement over the course of the entire semester. This portion of your grade will not be posted to canvas but may be shared with you only in one-on-one meetings.

Exit tickets (10 points): Besides discussing the class material, you will be invited to answer a question on a sheet of paper on a weekly basis (i.e., What was the most important thing you learned about today's class? What elements of the class can you introduce into your personal life to enact change in your community?) You will submit your written response (i.e., exit ticket) as you leave the classroom.

Four (4) Mini essays (40 points): Roughly once a month and will be due Thursdays by 5pm. Over the course of the semester, you will submit 4 mini-essays (length: 750 words) to Canvas. You will take a critical academic perspective i.e., you will consider how the working state of power cuts across social categories (race, gender, class, sexuality, etc.) by structurally sustaining systems of disadvantage for Black women. You will engage with the weekly readings (as well as other academic sources such as articles from journals) available on Canvas as part of your essay.

Collaborative Final project: Podcast series (30 points). Students will work collaboratively in groups (of 4), (total: 6 groups / 1 group with 3 participants) to produce a 20-minutes episode part of a podcast series entitled *HerStory: Biographies of Trailblazer Black Women - A Transnational View*. In the podcast you will focus on the political lives of Black Women trailblazers at the international level. You will receive further guidance about how to produce this podcast episodes throughout the semester.

Grading: The grading scale for this course is based on a points system. Therefore, **grades will NOT be rounded up or down** (It will not be tolerated to ask for it) and they are distributed as follows:

Class attendance: 10%

Class participation: 10%

Weekly exit tickets: 10%

Mini Essays: 40%

Collaborative Podcast Project: 30%

Total: 100%

Grading scale:

A: 100 – 94.5%	B+: 89.99% - 88%	C+: 79.99% - 78%	D+: 69.99% - 68%
A -: 94.49 – 90%	B: 87.99% - 82%	C: 77.99% - 72%	D: 67.99% - 62%
	B-: 81.99% - 80%	C-: 71.99% - 70%	D-: 61.99% - 60%
			F: Below 60%

Due Dates. Our class will lean heavily on participation week by week. For this reason, it is very important that you stay on top of weekly deadlines. Due to the accommodations already embedded into the class, late work, e-mailed work, or makeups for participation credit completed in class, course assignments, or final will not be accepted. The exception is a medical/ family (broadly conceived) emergency that is verified via the UT-Austin emergency medical services (Do so here: <https://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/emergency/absencenotificationrequest.php>) OR if you are a primary caregiver (e.g. parent or sibling of a child in your primary care, or responsible for elder-care). Discuss with me if you cannot make one of the scheduled assignments to grant permission.

Grade Contestation, Disclosure, and Incompletes. All information concerning your performance in this course is covered by federal privacy legislation, known as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). No grades or status questions will be provided by telephone or over email. You are welcome to come to my office hours to discuss your performance (but let me know if

you need a private appointment). I will determine grade rubrics and assignments and **I do not tolerate grade lawyering or bargaining** (e.g I need/ deserve an A/B/C grade because...). Contestations will receive a response within a week. On rare occasions, I offer an incomplete ("I" grade) if you have completed most of the class but have serious medical/family-related issues in the last 2-3 weeks that have affected your ability to finish it. Please come to me as early as possible once you recognize that this applies to you. Again, if you come to me once you have missed substantial parts of the class, I will recommend you retake the class in the spring or next year.

Preferred Names and Pronouns:

To honor an environment of inclusion, equity and diversity grounded on respect and dignity in the classroom setting, please advise me early in the semester on your preferred pronouns that reflect your self-identification, gender identity and/or chosen names you would like to be addressed.

Observance of Religious holidays

The observance of religious holidays and cultural practices are an important reflection of diversity. As your instructor, I am committed to providing equivalent educational opportunities to students of all belief systems. At the beginning of the semester, you should review the course requirements to identify foreseeable conflicts with assignments, or other required attendance. University policy requires students to notify the instructor as soon as possible. Please contact me within the first two weeks of the first-class meeting, if possible, to allow time for us to discuss any absence due to religious holidays and make fair and reasonable arrangements.

Communication Policies and Email policy:

Email is a great way to communicate with me. Please find below a few tips regarding communication via email:

- You can email me directly at nadia.mosqueramuriel@austin.utexas.edu
- How to address me via email: Dr. Mosquera or Dr Mosquera-Muriel (please note that "Nadia" is not acceptable). Include "[Course/Number]" in your email's subject line and your name in the body of your email.
- I'll try to respond within 24 hours, weekdays and between 9:00am and 4:00pm
- Please check your official university email address daily (Mondays through Fridays) during our academic term.

Content Warning

While the material included for discussion in this course is grounded in Black Women's resistance practices, it may include references to violence, death, anti-blackness, displacement, and rape amongst other modes of raced and gendered systemic violence that ground the historical situatedness of Black women's modes of resistance. Some readings and audiovisual resources may trigger feelings of discomfort. If you anticipate that this content might trigger trauma, please discuss it with me before the class.

Course Schedule and Required Readings

Required readings are available on our Canvas page. See Canvas for access to additional readings and class materials.

Week	Themes and Reading Material
Week 1	Introduction and overview
Tuesday August 23	Introductions and course outline
The Gender of Race	
Thursday August 25	<p>Collins, Patricia H. (1993). Toward a new vision: Race, class, and gender as categories of analysis and connection. <i>Race, Sex & Class</i>, 1(1), 25–45.</p> <p><u>Supplementary readings:</u></p> <p>Crenshaw, Kimberlé (1991) “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color.” <i>Stanford Law Review</i> 43(6): 1241–99.</p> <p>Davis, Angela (1981). Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves. <i>The Black Scholar</i>, 12(6), 2-15.</p> <p>Recommended audiovisual resource: <u>The urgency of intersectionality</u> by Kimberlé Crenshaw.</p>
Week 2	Let's think about the state
Tuesday August 30	Gilmore, Ruth Wilson (2002). "Fatal couplings of power and difference: Notes on racism and geography." <i>The professional geographer</i> 54.1: 15-24.
Thursday September 1	Mbembé, J-A., and Libby Meintjes. "Necropolitics." <i>Public culture</i> 15.1 (2003): 11-40
Week 3	Through the eyes of Black women: knowledge production and transnational struggles
Tuesday September 6	Combahee River collective statement (1977). https://combaheerivercollective.weebly.com/the-combahee-river-collective-statement.html
Thursday September 8	Alexander, Jacqui and Mohanty, Chandra (2010). Cartographies of Power: Transnational Feminism as Knowledge and Power.
Week 4	Motherhood, care and resisting amid pain

Tuesday September 13	<p>Lawson, Erica S. "Bereaved black mothers and maternal activism in the racial state." <i>Feminist Studies</i> 44.3 (2018): 713-735.</p> <p>Abdullah, Melina (2012). "Womanist mothering: Loving and raising the revolution." <i>Western Journal of Black Studies</i> 36(1): 57.</p>
Thursday September 15	<p><u>Media Resource:</u> Transforming anthropology Podcast: Smith Christen (2016). "Sorrow as artifact: Radical Black Mothering in times of terror": https://soundcloud.com/transformanthro/christen-smith</p> <p>Supplementary reading Smith, Christen A. "Facing the dragon: Black mothering, sequelae, and gendered necropolitics in the Americas." <i>Transforming Anthropology</i> 24.1 (2016): 31-48.</p>
Week 5	Health disparities and the state
Tuesday September 20	Hogan, Vijaya, Araujo, Edna, Caldwell, Kia, Gonzalez-Nahm, Sarah, Black Kristin (2018). "We black women have to kill a lion everyday": An intersectional analysis of racism and social determinants of health in Brazil." <i>Social Science & Medicine</i> (199): 96-105.
Thursday September 22	Martinez, Rebecca (2018). . Ch3: Targeting Women: Bodies Out of "control", public health, and the body politic pp. 83-131 in <i>Marked Women: The Cultural Politics of Cervical Cancer in Venezuela</i> .
Week 6	Reproductive Struggles
Tuesday September 27	<p>Audiovisual resource: <u>The History of Reproductive Justice</u> (in class)</p> <p>Ross, Loretta J. "African-American Women and Abortion: 1800-1970," in <i>Theorizing Black Feminisms: The Visionary Pragmatism of Black Women</i>, edited by Stanlie M. James and Abena P.A. Busia, 141-160. Hoboken: Taylor & Francis Ltd., 1999</p>
Thursday September 29	<p>Simpson, Monica (2022). 'To Be Pro-Choice, You Must Have the Privilege of Having Choices'</p> <p>https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/11/opinion/abortion-black-brown-women.html</p>
Week 7	Black women's political activism / Genealogies of Struggles
Tuesday October 4	<p>Carneiro, Sueli (2016). Women in movement (translated by Regina Camargo). <i>Meridians</i>, 14(1), 30-49.</p> <p>Screening in class: <u>The danger of being a Black Woman in Brazil</u> **trigger warning**</p>
Thursday October 6	Figuroa, Aurora Vergara, and Katherine Arboleda Hurtado (2016). "Afrodiasporic feminist conspiracy: Motivations and paths forward from the first international seminar." <i>Meridians</i> 14(2): 118-129.
Week 8	Genealogies of struggles contd.

Tuesday October 11	Smith, Christen, Davies, Archie, & Gomes, Betania. "In Front of the World": Translating Beatriz Nascimento. The concept of Quilombo and Black Cultural resistance and For a (new) existential and Physical Territory. <i>Antipode</i> , 53(1), 279-316
Thursday October 13	Figueroa, Yomaira. "After the hurricane: Afro-Latina decolonial feminisms and destierro." <i>Hypatia</i> 35.1 (2020): 220-229.
Week 9	Resisting in cultural spaces
Tuesday October 18	<p>**Audiovisual resource**</p> <p>Victoria Santa Cruz: They called me Black (woman)- Poem with English subtitles: <u>Victoria Santa Cruz- Me gritaron negra/ They called me black (woman)- Poem with english subtitles</u></p> <p>Saunders, Tanya L (2009). "Grupo Oremi: Black lesbians and the struggle for safe social space in Havana." <i>Souls</i> 11(2): 167-185.</p>
Thursday October 20	<p>Gillam, Reighan (2017). "Representing black girlhood in Brazil: Culture and strategies of empowerment." <i>Communication, Culture & Critique</i> 10 (4): 609-625.</p> <p>Abadía-Rexach, Bárbara (2018). "Mujeres puertorriqueñas: alertas y combativas/Puerto Rican Womyn: Alert and Combative." <i>Women's Studies Quarterly</i> 46(3 & 4): 315-324.</p>
Week 10	Resisting in cultural spaces contd.
Tuesday October 25	Isoke, Zenzele. "Women, hip hop, and cultural resistance in Dubai." <i>Souls</i> 15.4 (2013): 316-337.
Thursday October 27	Rivera Rideau, Petra (2015). Remixing Reggaetón: The Cultural Politics of Race in Puerto Rico Ch.4 "Fingernails con Feeling"
Week 11	Catch up week
Tuesday November 1	Review of the concepts learned through the course
Thursday November 3	Review of the concepts learned through the course
Week 12	Police terror
November 8	<p>Smith, Christen (2021). Impossible Privacy: Black Women and Police Terror. <i>The Black Scholar</i>. Vol 51(1) pp. 20-29.</p> <p><u>Context/ Supplementary reading:</u></p> <p>Alves, Jaime Amparo. "From necropolis to blackpolis: Necropolitical governance and black spatial praxis in São Paulo, Brazil." <i>Antipode</i> 46.2 (2014): 323-339.</p>

November 10	<p><u>Audiovisual resource:</u> Film: <u>Say Her Name: The Life and Death of Sandra Bland (2018)</u> **trigger warning**</p> <p>Crenshaw, K. W., Ritchie, A. J., Anspach, R., Gilmer, R., & Harris, L. (2015). Say her name: Resisting police brutality against black women. <i>African American Policy Forum</i>. Pp.1-7 **trigger warning**</p>
Week 13	Intersections of gender, land and racial capitalism
November 15	<p><u>Audiovisual resource:</u> Documentary by Minority Rights Group: <u>Suárez Gold - Afro-Colombian miners defending their heritage</u></p> <p>Hernández-Reyes, Castriela Esther (2021). "Black Women's Struggles against Extractivism, Land Dispossession, and Marginalization in Colombia" (Chapter 11, pgs.261 -280), in <i>Latin American Extractivism: Dependency, Resource Nationalism and Resistance in Broad Perspective</i> (2020). Edited by Steve Ellner. Rowman and Littlefield.</p>
November 17	Hilda Lloréns (2021). Making Livable Worlds Afro-Puerto Rican Women Building Environmental Justice. University of Washington Press. Chapter 3 "Life Affirming Practices" pp. 83-123.
Week 14	Thanksgiving
November 22	Rest
November 24	Rest
Week 15	Latin America's Black Feminist Tide
November 29	<p>Gayles, Prisca, and Marianela Muñoz-Muñoz. "Unveiling Latin American White multiculturalism: Black women's politics in Argentina and Costa Rica." <i>Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies</i> (2022): 1-17.</p> <p>Figueiredo, Angela, and Naiara Leite. "Black Feminist Tide: As electoral candidates and movement leaders, Black women in Brazil are reshaping political power and forging new, affirming representations in the process." <i>NACLA Report on the Americas</i> 54.2 (2022): 172-176.</p>
December 1	HerStory: Podcast Series
	Discussion of collective collaborative project
Week 16	***STUDY WEEK***
December 6	Submission of final collaborative project