

Black queer Literature and Film

Professor Matt Richardson

SPRING 2012

E376M, AFR 374F, WGS 340

MWF 2-3 Parlin 303

Office Hours Wed 12-1PM in 327 Parlin

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In recent years the term “queer” has emerged as an identity and an analytical framework that focuses on non-normative ways of being. This seminar will combine elements of critical race theory to investigate the particular experiences and cultural production of Black gender and sexually variant communities. We will analyze written works and films/videos by and about lesbians, bisexual, transgender and gay Black people. Emphasis will be on understanding the historical and theoretical construction of sexual and gender identities and sexual/cultural practices in Black communities. Special attention will be paid to the construction of race, gender and sexual identities in North America, the Caribbean and the United Kingdom .

Required Texts

Audre Lorde Sister/Outsider

Jackie Kay Trumpet

Melvin Dixon Vanishing Rooms

Sharon Bridgforth Love, Conjure, Blues

Samuel Delaney, Times Square Red, Times Square Blue

Films from various artists including Marlon Riggs, Isaac Julien, Yvonne Welbon and Cheryl Dunye.

Films: Even though these are films are not paper reading material, all films are required texts for the class. Students may be required to watch some films outside of class time. At such times, films will be available at the Fine Arts Library.

Course Reader: Readers are available at Jenn's Copy on Guadalupe and 21st St.

Course Requirements:

Requirement Breakdown:

Attendance	10%
Midterm Paper 4-6pgs	20%
Presentation Paper 4-6pgs	20%
Presentation/Blog Posts	20%
Final Paper (8-10)	30%

Office Hours: Students are REQUIRED to come to office hours at least once during the semester to discuss your progress in the class and any additional questions you may have. You are encouraged to take further advantage of office hours and I am also available by appointment.

Attendance and Participation: Students are expected to attend class every session. Participation in all aspects of the class is MANDATORY including short in-class writing assignments that will happen throughout the semester. All readings and assignments should be completed before class meetings and students are responsible for adding to class discussions of material. Please note that attendance and participation is worth 10% of your total grade. Late arrivals are disruptive to class and I will not repeat concepts and assignments given during class, nor will you be able to sign in if you miss the sign-in sheet. If you miss a class or are late, you are still responsible for any announcements, assignments, lecture material and/or deadlines that are made. Your grade will be affected if you have more than two unexcused absences during the semester.

Take Home Midterm: You will be given a prompt relating to the readings and films from class and expected to write a close reading analysis of the text.

Online Blog: Each week all students will write a paragraph or two about your observations of the text. A few students will sign up or be assigned the responsibility of starting our class discussion by posting an extended close reading in response to the week's prompt in the comment section of the that week's page. Blog posts, like papers, involve doing a close reading of a particular scene and using the essays in the course packet. Close readings are detailed analyses of a particular scene in the film. Students are to post their responses on the website by 6pm the day before we are to discuss them in class and receive written feedback from me and oral commentary from classmates. Use the

feedback as the basis for revising your post into a 4-6 page paper to be handed in at the end of the month. Posts are the basis of our class discussion. **The prompt for each blog is the following: What is a main theme of this film, novel or poem? What is the film, novel or poem's argument about this theme? Choose a scene/passage/line that exemplifies the theme that you have chosen and discuss how and why it is illustrative of the film, novel or poem's argument. How does it relate to the reading?**

Final Paper: The final is designed to assess students' accumulated knowledge. Students will hand in an 8pg final paper on a topic of his/her choosing based on the films discussed in class. **The final will be a take home exam.** Papers must be TYPED, double-spaced, with times new roman (or equivalent) 12 point font and 1inch margins.

Course Blog and Blackboard: Please check the course blog frequently! This is the first place that I will post updates to the syllabus and other important information about the class. I will be in contact with you about updates in assignments through Blackboard. It is the students' responsibility to make sure that Blackboard has your updated email address.

NO LATE PAPERS.

Code of Mutual Respect: In general, this is not a lecture class, but one grounded in dialogue. Feel free to be candid and direct in this class. Your opinions and insights are important, and your voice needs to be heard, so look forward to the opportunity to chime in. I will respect you as adults and assume that you will treat others in the class with respect as well. Because we will be sharing many personal ideas that may conflict with your own personal ideas and beliefs, it is important that you strive to be considerate, sensitive, and respectful. Be prepared to offer constructive criticism as well as receive it. We will discuss work that includes explicit descriptions of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender sexual practices and themes in this course. Students are expected to approach all class material with maturity and academic rigor.

Code of Academic Conduct: University policy requires that students cite sources they use in their work. THIS INCLUDES PARAPHRASING of materials. Any inclusion of ideas that are not your own will be considered plagiarism. Students who do not properly cite ideas, quotes or paraphrasing of other published or unpublished material will automatically face disciplinary action which will also be reflected in their grade.

Students with Disabilities: Any student with a documented disability (physical or cognitive) who requires academic accommodations should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities area of the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259 (voice) or 471-4641 (TTY for users who are deaf or hard of hearing) as

soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations.

Religious Holidays: If you observe a recognized religious holiday that is in conflict with the university schedule, please come talk to me.

Unless otherwise specified all blog posts are due on Sundays at 6pm.

Spring 2013			Schedule
Week	Day	Date	Assignment/Event
1	M	1/14	Introduction
	W	1/16	FILM: B.D. Women, Inge Blackman, 1994, 20 min; "The Good Eye: Looking at Pictures Using Compositional Interpretation" from Visual Methodologies, Second Ed. Sage Press, 2007; I Used to be Your Sweet Mama Angela Davis. Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith and Billie Holiday. New York: Vintage Books, 1999.
	F	1/18	Combahee River Collective Statement, This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color, Kitchen Table:Women of Color Press, 1983; Pat Parker, Movement in Black, Ithaca: NY 1978: "For the Straight Folks,""Boots are Being Polished,""There is a Woman in this Town""My Lady Ain't No Lady"; Blog post due Sunday 6pm
2	M	1/21	MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY
	W	1/23	Audre Lorde, Sister/Outsider: "Poetry Is Not a Luxury," "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," "Uses of the Erotic" Lorde, Audre. Sister/Outsider, Freedom, California: Crossing Press, 1984.
	F	1/25	FILM: Michelle Parkerson and Ada Gay Griffin, A Litany For Survival, 1995. Poem "A Litany for Survival"; Blog post due Sunday at 6pm
3	M	1/28	Discussion of Film, (read first half) Audre Lorde, Zami: A New Spelling of My Name, Boston: Crossing Press, 1981.
	W	1/30	Audre Lorde, Zami: A New Spelling of My Name, Boston: Crossing Press, 1981.
	F	2/1	Finish Zami; Selections from Barbara Smith, The Truth That Never Hurts: Writings on Race, Gender and Freedom, New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1998.

4	M	2/4	Discussion of Zami and Barbara Smith
	W	2/6	Essex Hemphill, Ceremonies: Prose and Poetry, NY:Plume, 1992. "Does Your Mama Know About Me?" "Miss Emily's Grandson," "Commitments," "If Freud Had Been a Neurotic Colored Woman," "Loyalty" "To Some Supposed Brothers"
	F	2/8	FILM: Marlon Riggs, Tongues Untied, 1991; Blog Post due Sunday at 6pm.
5	M	2/11	Discussion Tongues Untied
	W	2/13	Melvin Dixon, Vanishing Rooms, Seattle: Cleis Press, 1992
	F	2/15	2nd half of Vanishing Rooms; Blog Posts due Sunday at 6pm
6	M	2/18	Discussion of Vanishing Rooms
	W	2/20	Vanishing Rooms and Selected Poetry from Voices Rising: Celebrating 20 Years of Black Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Writing, G. Winston James and Other Countries eds. Washington, DC: Redbone Press, 2007.
	F	2/22	FILM: Isaac Julien, Young Soul Rebels Blog Posts Due Sunday at 6pm
7	M	2/25	Discussion of Young Soul Rebels
	W	2/27	Young Soul Rebels
	F	3/1	FILM: Isaac Julien, Looking for Langston; Blog Posts Due Sunday at 6pm
8	M	3/4	Discussion of Looking for Langston
	W	3/6	MIDTERM PAPER DUE; Looking for Langston
	F	3/8	Selected Poetry from Voices Rising: Celebrating 20 Years of Black Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Writing, G. Winston James and Other Countries eds. Washington, DC: Redbone Press, 2007.
	M	3/11	SPRING BREAK
	W	3/13	SPRING BREAK
	F	3/15	SPRING BREAK
9	M	3/18	Samuel Delaney, Times Square Red, Times Square Blue, New York: New York University Press, 1999.
	W	3/20	FILM: Fred Barney Taylor, The Polymath: Or the Opinions of Samuel R. Delaney, Gentleman, 2007;
	F	3/22	Discussion of The Polymath; Blog Post due on Sunday at 6pm
10	M	3/25	My Gender Workbook; FILM: Paris is Burning; Article: Marlon Bailey, Gender/Racial Realness(on blackqueerliteratureandfilm.wordpress.com)

	W	3/27	FILM: The Aggressives, My Gender Workbook; Trumpet
	F	3/29	My Gender Workbook discussion; Blog Post Due Sunday at 6pm
11	M	4/1	Trumpet
	W	4/3	Trumpet
	F	4/5	Trumpet
12	M	4/8	Trumpet; C. Riley Snorton, "The Psychic Life of Passing" Hypatia, Darnell Moore, "The Queer Shamed and Shame Queered" Social Text
	W	4/10	Sharon Bridgforth, love, conjure/blues, Washington, DC: Redbone Press, 2004.
	F	4/12	Sharon Bridgforth, love, conjure/blues, Washington, DC: Redbone Press, 2004.
13	M	4/15	love, conjure/blues
	W	4/17	love, conjure/blues
	F	4/19	FILM: Rag Tag; Blog Post Due Sunday at 6pm
14	M	4/22	Discussion of Rag/Tag
	W	4/24	Rag/Tag
	F	4/26	Watermelon Woman; Abstract for Final Paper at Sunday 6pm
15	M	4/29	Discussion of Watermelon Woman
	W	5/1	Watermelon Woman
	F	5/3	Discussion of Final Paper