

Black Women, Struggle and the Transnational State*

Spring 2016

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Course Overview

This course surveys black women's experiences living with and confronting state oppression around the world. From the United States to Brazil, 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. 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?

Objectives 1) To think critically about the multiple forms of oppression that affect black women's lives globally; 2) To consider how black women's political identity has been defined by experiences with oppression transnationally; 3) To define and articulate black women's agency in response to oppression

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

Course Texts:

Sister Outsider, Audre Lorde (1984)

Left of Karl Marx, Carol Boyce Davies (2008)

ZenZeLe: A Letter for My Daughter, J. Nozipo Maraire (1997)

* Syllabus subject to change by the instructor during the semester. All changes will be communicated in a timely fashion to course participants.

Course Schedule

Week 1 – Course Introduction

January 19 – Course Introduction

January 21 – “Combahee River Collective Statement”

* Collaborative class project brainstorm

Black Women, Feminism and Terrorism: A U.S. Perspective

Week 2

January 26 - [“An Introduction to TFW's Forum on Assata Shakur: America's Grammar Book on Black Women and Terrorism”](#) (Lomax 2013)[†]

January 28 – [“Feminists We Love: Assata Shakur \(Love Note\)”](#)[†]

Week 3

February 2 - “Introduction”, *Home Girls* (Smith 1983)

February 4 – “The Race for Theory” (Christian 1987)

Week 4

February 9 – *Sister Outsider* (Lorde 1984)

Film: “Audre Lorde: The Berlin Years (1984-1992)”

February 11 – *Sister Outsider* (Lorde 1984)

Mental Health: Transnational Perspectives

Week 5

February 16 – TBD

February 18 -- SPECIAL GUEST: Dr. Kimberly Burdine,
“Black Women and Mental Health”

Week 6

February 23 – “Cartographies of Knowledge and Power” (Alexander and Mohanty 2010)

– “Transnational Feminist Practices Against War” (Bacchetta et. al 2002)

February 25 – “Women and the defence of place in Colombian black movement struggles.” (Libia Grueso and Leyla Andrea Arroyo, 2002)

[†] Online article – see hyperlink in digital syllabus

Recommended: ["The Crisis in Buenaventura"](#) (Human Rights Watch 2014)†

Representation

Week 7

March 1– Representation, Fetishism and Disavowal
"The Spectacle of the Other" – Stuart Hall

March 3 - "The Venus Hottentot (1825)" (Elizabeth Alexander 2010)
Film: "The Life and Times of Sara Baartman: The Hottentot Venus"

Week 8

March 8 – Midterm Review
March 10 - Midterm

Week 9

March 15 & 17 – Spring Break

Prisons and Policing

Week 10

March 22 – ["Law Enforcement Violence Against Women of Color"](#) (Ritchie 2006)
March 24 – "Prison, Foster Care, and the Systemic Punishment of Black Mothers"
(Roberts 2012)

Week 11

March 29 – "Through the Eyes of a Strong Black Woman Survivor of Domestic Violence:
An Australian Story" (Kina 2005)
Film: "Crime After Crime"
March 31 – "Domestic Enemies and Carceral Circles: African Women and
Criminalization in Italy" (Angel-Ajani 2005)

Week 12

April 5 – "Black Magik Women: Policing Appearances" in Managing African Portugal
(Fikes 2009)
April 7 – "Moral Panic: Sex Tourism, Trafficking and the Limits of Transnational
Mobility in Bahia" (Williams 2011)

Black Women, Citizenship, Politics

Week 13

April 12 – [“Blackening Feminism”](#) (Sueli Carneiro)†

[“Transnational Anti-Imperialism and Middle East Women’s Studies”](#)

(Davis 2013)†

April 14 – “Delta Creek Women’s Engagement and Nigerian Oil Insurgency”

(Oriola 2012)

Week 14

April 19 – *Left of Karl Marx* (Boyce Davies 2008)

April 21 – *Left of Karl Marx* (Boyce Davies 2008)

Week 15

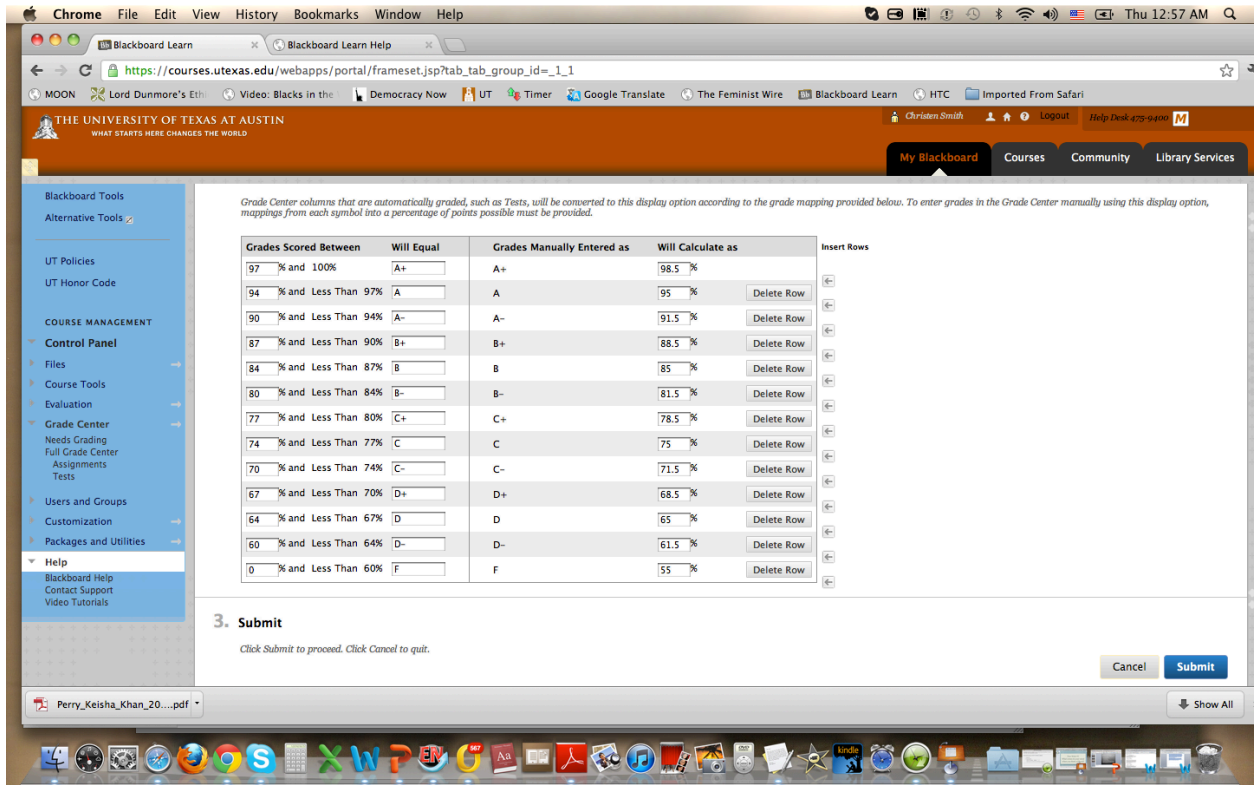
April 26 & 28– *ZenZeLe: A Letter for My Daughter*, J. Nozipo Maraire (1997)

Week 16

May 3&5 – Final Presentations

GRADING CRITERIA AND COURSE GUIDELINES

Grading Scale



How your grade in this class will be calculated:

Class Participation – 20%

- Attendance – 10%
- Engaged participation in class discussion and social media discussions– 10%

Midterm –30%

Final – 30%

Collaborative Class Project – 20%

Class Participation

Attendance and Engaged Participation

Students who acquire six or more unexcused absences will receive a failing grade.

Please note that this is an upper level undergraduate seminar and your success in this course depends on close reading and engagement with the texts (readings, films, video clips, web links and information posted to Canvas), as well as active and informed participation in class discussions. You will be responsible for checking the Canvas course site and your email regularly for additional texts and announcements.

Your class participation grade will be based on attendance and meaningful participation in class discussions. Meaningful participation is taken to be analytic engagement with the texts and course themes in class discussions (both in the classroom and in virtual classroom space i.e. Facebook or Twitter), not vague commentary or generalizations. Each student is expected to come to class prepared to participate actively in class discussions each week. This includes but is not limited to doing the assigned reading and preparing thoughtful questions to share with the class. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings.

Those students who take the initiative to engage critically with the readings and themes of the class and actively participate in class discussions by sharing their ideas and thoughts openly and respectfully on a regular basis will be graded highly. Those who do not participate in class discussions unless called upon will be graded down. *Always be prepared to speak when you are called upon.*

Social Media Discussions: As an extension of our classroom conversations, we will also engage in discussion for this course via social media, particularly Twitter. Each student will be required to have a twitter account and share your twitter name with the professor and your TA (If you don't have one please set one up. If you don't like the idea of having twitter you can always set up an alias and delete the account after the course is over.) From time to time, you will be asked to tweet your thoughts about current events, questions, etc. to share. This tool will allow us to share information quickly and easily with one another and insert our classroom conversations into public discussions. We encourage you to share links with the class about relevant topics and post your thoughts and reflections about the themes and ideas of the course. One of the goals of this requirement will be to help us to think through what it means to engage in public advocacy, criticism and reflection in responsible and provocative ways. We will discuss this more in class throughout the semester.

In-Class Assignments: Students will also be graded on their thoughtful completion of in-class assignments. In-class assignments will be assigned throughout the semester at the discretion of the instructor. In-class assignments will be announced in class and/or posted to Canvas.

Collaborative Class Project: Together, our class will come up with a collaborative project designed to heighten the public's awareness of black women's transnational struggles against violence and oppression. This will be a truly collective project in that

the students will be responsible for brainstorming, designing and executing the project. To that end, the grading criteria will also be determined collectively by you (the students) in conversation with the instructor. We will discuss more about this in-class.

GUIDELINES

Due Dates/Late Policy: As a general policy late assignments will not be accepted without the instructor's prior approval. Any late assignments accepted will carry a penalty of 10% of the assignment grade per day late. – **six days late or more will automatically receive a grade of 0.**

I will make exceptions to this penalty policy **only** in the event of a documented medical or family emergency, or if you have official, documented University of Texas business off-campus; in such a case, please notify me as soon as possible.

Format Guidelines for Writing Assignments:

All coursework must be double-spaced and typed in 12pt Times New Roman font. All papers must have 1-inch margins on all sides. Please use the AAA Style Guide: http://www.aaanet.org/pubs/style_guide.pdf as a guideline for bibliographies and citations.

Grading Evaluation

Rubrics: Rubrics will be used as grading criteria for most course assignments including class participation. These rubrics will be available on Canvas and will be discussed in-class.

Class Policies

1. Again, please come to class on time and prepared to participate actively in class discussions each day.
2. Hot and cold beverages are okay to bring to class, but please **NO FOOD ALLOWED IN THE CLASSROOM** (unless you have brought a goodie for everyone and you have cleared it with me first).
4. Please be attentive and polite to one another during class. If you wish to read the *Texan*, surf the web, talk with your neighbor during lecture, sleep, or do anything else disruptive, then please go elsewhere.
5. Please respect your classmates and your instructor. In this course, there will be a lot of lively discussion and debate. Even if you don't agree with someone, you should still treat that person with respect and be kind. We are all here to learn!

5. Due dates for all assignments are listed on the syllabus and/or will be announced in class and/or will be announced on Canvas. Late assignments carry stiff penalties. Please see note on “due dates” above.

6. ACADEMIC HONESTY IS IMPERATIVE. I will refer all cases of academic dishonesty (i.e. cheating and plagiarism) to the Dean of Student’s Office. If you have questions about what constitutes academic dishonesty, visit the University’s official statement: http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php

Writing Center

I strongly encourage you to use the Undergraduate Writing Center, FAC 211, 471-6222 or <http://uwc.fac.utexas.edu> The Undergraduate Writing Center offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. Any undergraduate enrolled in a course at UT can visit the UWC for assistance with any writing project. They work with students from every department on campus, for both academic and non-academic writing. Whether you are writing a lab report, a resume, a term paper, a statement for an application, or your own poetry, UWC consultants will be happy to work with you. Their services are not just for writing with ‘problems’. Getting feedback from an informed audience is a normal part of a successful writing project. Consultants help students develop strategies to improve their writing. The assistance they provide is intended to foster independence. Each student determines how to use the consultant’s advice. The consultants are trained to help you work on your writing in ways that preserve the integrity of your work.

Documented Disability Statement

Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at (512) 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone). Faculty are not required to provide accommodations without an official accommodation letter from SSD. *(Note to Faculty: Details of a student’s disability are confidential. Faculty should not ask questions related to a student’s condition or diagnosis when receiving an official accommodation letter.)*

- Please notify me as quickly as possible if the material being presented in class is not accessible (e.g., instructional videos need captioning, course packets are not readable for proper alternative text conversion, etc.).
- Please notify me as early in the semester as possible if disability-related accommodations for field trips are required. Advanced notice will permit the arrangement of accommodations on the given day (e.g., transportation, site accessibility, etc.).

- Contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 1-866-329-3986 (video phone) or reference SSD's website for more disability-related information: http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/for_cstudents.php

Behavior Concerns Advice Line (BCAL)

If you are worried about someone who is acting differently, you may use the Behavior Concerns Advice Line to discuss by phone your concerns about another individual's behavior. This service is provided through a partnership among the Office of the Dean of Students, the Counseling and Mental Health Center (CMHC), the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), and The University of Texas Police Department (UTPD). Call 512-232-5050 or visit <http://www.utexas.edu/safety/bcal>.

Religious Holy Days

By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Q drop Policy

The State of Texas has enacted a law that limits the number of course drops for academic reasons to six (6). As stated in Senate Bill 1231:

"Beginning with the fall 2007 academic term, an institution of higher education may not permit an undergraduate student a total of more than six dropped courses, including any course a transfer student has dropped at another institution of higher education, unless the student shows good cause for dropping more than that number."

Emergency Evacuation Policy

Occupants of buildings on the UT Austin campus are required to evacuate and assemble outside when a fire alarm is activated or an announcement is made. Please be aware of the following policies regarding evacuation:

- Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of the classroom and the building. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when you entered the building.
- If you require assistance to evacuate, inform me in writing during the first week of class.
- In the event of an evacuation, follow my instructions or those of class instructors.
- Do not re-enter a building unless you're given instructions by the Austin Fire Department, the UT Austin Police Department, or the Fire Prevention Services office.

Process for grade appeals (Liberal Arts): Students must first contact course instructor, then if dispute not resolved, they must contact Associate Chair. If Associate Chair declines appeal, the student can appeal to the Dean. See below for details. (I have attached the linked pdf to this email as well)

http://www.utexas.edu/cola/student-affairs/files/pdf/grade_appeals_form_student_version.pdf