

HIS 350R-17
AFR 374D/ WGS 340-9
Black Women in America
Spring 2016
The University of Texas at Austin

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Office: Garrison Hall Room 1.104
Phone: 512.471.3261
Class: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11:00am-12:30pm

Course Description:

In a White House Blog posted on 10 February 2012, First Lady Michelle Obama announced the 2012 theme for Black History Month: Celebrating Black Women in American Culture and History. "They are women," she explained, "who fought against slavery, who stood up for Women's suffrage, and marched in our streets for our civil rights." Continuing, she noted that African American women also "... stirred our souls and they've opened our hearts." In addition to celebrating Black Women's contributions, we must also look at the struggles women overcame to be a part of the American fabric; struggles over their images, representation, and reputation. No time is more important than now given the recent media shortcomings to understanding black womanhood from Harriet Tubman to Sandra Bland; Oprah Winfrey to Susan Rice. Many of the women in this course do not all fill the pages of history books and are lesser-known figures than those typically discussed.

The course relies on material found in primary sources, historical monographs, and essays to provide a chronological and thematic overview of the experiences of black women in America from their African roots to the early 20th century. Additionally, the course will draw upon documents with a particular focus on the historiographies of gender, sexuality and race. This seminar is discussion driven and will address the following topics: the evolution of African American women's history as field of inquiry; historians of African American women's history; the trans-Atlantic slave trade; Middle Passage; enslavement in the United States; abolition and freedom; the free black experience during slavery; emancipation; lynching; labor and culture.

Course Flags:

This course carries the **Independent Inquiry** flag. Independent Inquiry courses are designed to engage you in the process of inquiry over the course of a semester, providing you with the opportunity for independent investigation of a question, problem, or project related to your major. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from the independent investigation and presentation of your own work.

This course carries the **Writing Flag**. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Class Etiquette:

Each student is expected to attend class, participate in discussions, and complete all reading and writing assignments by the deadlines indicated in this syllabus or any written addenda. Class discussions are an important component and students will be graded on their participation, contributions to discussions and engagement with their peers. It is the student's responsibility to come to class prepared to discuss the reading for this course; therefore, each student must arrive with two discussion questions based upon the weekly readings. Students are not allowed to record class interactions unless they have written permission from the professor. Please arrive to class on time and turn off cell phones.

Grading Policy:

Please note that this class, like other undergraduate courses at UT, will now utilize plus and minus options for final grades. However, class assignments are based on a point system with an overall course total of 100 points (see below). Class attendance is mandatory and late assignments are not accepted. The professor will consider medical or other emergencies with written documentation and/or prior notification on a case-by-case basis.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED

Final Grade Distribution:

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|----|--------|
| A | 94-100 |
| A- | 90-93 |
| B+ | 87-89 |
| B | 83-86 |
| B- | 80-82 |
| C+ | 77-79 |
| C | 73-76 |
| C- | 70-72 |

| | |
|----|-----------------|
| D+ | 67-69 |
| D | 63-66 |
| D- | 60-62 |
| F | Below 60 points |

Required Readings*:

Camp, Stephanie M.H. *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women & Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

LeFlouria, Talitha L. *Chained in Silence: Black Women and Convict Labor in the New South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015.

Lewis , Catherine M. and J. Richard Lewis, eds., *Women and Slavery in America: A Documentary History*. Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2011.

Millward, Jessica. *Finding Charity's Folk: Enslaved and Free Black Women in Maryland*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015.

Sterling, Dorothy, ed. *We Are Your Sisters: Black Women in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1984.

*Additional readings are posted electronically on Canvas.

Policies and Procedures:

University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Plagiarism

The University's *Institutional Rules* (Section 11-802(d)) define plagiarism as including, "but not limited to, the appropriation of, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any other means material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source . . . and presenting that material as one's own academic work offered for credit." In other words, "**handing in someone else's work and taking credit for it as if it were your own.**" Source: History Department statement on Academic Integrity:

<http://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/history/about/academic-integrity.php>

For examples of plagiarism see the site above or the Student Judicial Services Website.

Documented Disability Statement

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>

Use of E-Mail for Official Correspondence to Students

E-mail is recognized as an official mode of university correspondence; therefore, you are responsible for reading your e-mail for university and course-related information and announcements. You are responsible to keep the university informed about changes to your e-mail address. You should check your e-mail regularly and frequently—the university recommends daily, but at minimum twice a week—to stay current with university-related communications, some of which may be time-critical. You can find UT Austin's policies and instructions for updating your e-mail address at: <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.php>

Email in recent years has often mistakenly become a substitute for office hours and students sometimes abuse email by the nature of their comments, requests, demands, and questions. This practice will not be tolerated.

Writing Center:

I strongly encourage you to use the Undergraduate Writing Center, FAC 211, 471-6222: <http://www.uwc.utexas.edu/>). The UWC offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis. These services are not just for writing challenges. Getting feedback from an informed audience is a normal part of any successful writing project. The UWC's trained consultants work with students from every department on both academic and non-academic writing. Using methods that preserve the integrity of your work, they help you develop strategies to improve your writing and become a more independent writer. 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.

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.

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>

Emergency Evacuation Policy:

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside. Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class. In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors. Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

The professor reserves the right to deviate or modify parts of this schedule. All changes will include written notice and any modified syllabi will be posted on Canvas.

Readings that are marked with an asterisk (*) are posted on Canvas.

Week 1 Introduction to Black Women's History: Theories & Implications

Tuesday 1/19/16 Course Introduction
Thursday 1/21/16 *Creating A Black Women's History of the United States*

Readings:

- * Higginbotham, "African American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race."
- *Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts"

Week 2 The Transatlantic Slave Trade and Enslavement in America

Tuesday 1/26/16 Racial Ideologies
Thursday 1/28/16 Captive Commodities

Readings:

- * Morgan, " 'Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulder' "
- *Lewis eds. *Women and Slavery in America*, pp. 2-4; 11-13; 15-27; and 62-64.

Week 3 Demographics and Slave Trade Statistics

Tuesday 2/2/16 Gender & Health in the Middle Passage
Thursday 2/4/16 Slave Trade Database The Numbers Game

Cultural Critique Due

Readings:

*Mustakeem, ""She Must go Overboard & Shall go Overboard""
*Smallwood, "Turning African Captives to Atlantic Commodities"

Week 4 Black Women Arrive in the New World

Tuesday 2/9/16 Women at Fort Mose in St. Augustine, FL
Thursday 2/11/16 **Film:** Africans in America

Readings:

Lewis, *Women and Slavery in America*, TBD
*Landers, "Founding Mothers: Female Rebels in Colonial New Granada and Florida," *Journal of African American History*, 98:1 (Winter 2013): 7-23.

Week 5 Colonial America

Tuesday 2/16/16 Life in the American Colonies
Thursday 2/18/16 PCL Library Workshop

Readings:

Millward, *Finding Charity's Folk*

Week 6 Resistance and Black Women's Quest for Personhood

OFFICE HOURS ON THURSDAY From 1pm-3pm this week

Tuesday 2/23/16 Resistance
Thursday 2/25/16 **Film:** Sankofa

Readings:

Camp, *Closer to Freedom*
Lewis and Lewis, eds. *Women and Slavery in America*,
pp. 80-87; 120-122; 136-140; 149-152; and 197-199.

Week 7 Enslaved and Freed Life in Antebellum America

Tuesday 3/1/16 **Film:** Sankofa
Thursday 3/3/16 The Fine line between Slavery and Freedom

Readings:

Lewis, eds. *Women and Slavery in America*, pp. 56-58; 67-68; 106-109; and 115-117
Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters*, pp. 18-44

Week 8 Civil War and Reconstruction and the Meaning of Freedom

Tuesday 3/8/16 War Experiences
Thursday 3/10/16 Freedom

Readings:

Lewis, eds. *Women and Slavery*, Chpt. 5
Sterling, *We Are Your Sisters*, TDB

Week 9 Spring Break

Readings:

LeFlouria, *Chained in Silence*, Ch. 1

*Gross, *Colored Amazons*, Ch. 2

Week 10 Law & Labor in the Aftermath of Slavery

Tuesday 3/22/16 Lynching

Thursday 3/24/16 Post-Slavery Labor

Draft Wikipedia Due (1)

Readings:

Chained in Silence, Ch. 2-3

Week 11 Family in the Aftermath of Slavery

Tuesday 3/29/16 Migration

Thursday 3/31/16 Building Black Communities

Readings:

LeFlouria, *Chained in Silence*, Ch. 4-5

Week 12 Research Week

Tuesday 4/5/16 Library Research

Thursday 4/7/16 Library Research

Draft Wikipedia Due (2)

Week 13 Black Women and Informal Economy at Early 20th Century Urban North

Tuesday 4/12/16 Defining Labor

Thursday 4/14/16 **Skype with a Scholar:** Dr. LaShawn Harris

Readings:

*Harley, "Working for Nothing but for a Living"

*Harris, "Madame Queen of Policy"

Week 14

Tuesday 4/19/16 Peer Review Wiki Pages

Thursday 4/21/16 Presentations

Draft Wikipedia Due (3)

Readings:

Week 15

Tuesday 4/26/16 Presentations

Thursday 4/28/16 Presentations

Week 16

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| Tuesday | 5/3/16 | Presentations |
| Thursday | 5/5/16 | Course Conclusions & Evaluations |

FINAL PAPERS DUE: Tuesday, May 17th