

**RHE 379C/ AFR 374F/WGS 340: “Politics of Black Sexuality”  
(Advanced Topics in Rhetoric and Writing)**

***Tues. & Thurs. – 2:00pm-3:30pm, Parlin Hall, Room 303 (Fall '10)***

**Instructor:** Dr. Eric Pritchard

**Office:** 129 Parlin Hall

**Office Hours:** Tues. 3:45pm-5:15pm; Thurs. 11:30am-1:00pm and *cheerfully* by appointment.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a rhetorical approach to the politics of black sexuality as examined across disciplines, including: literacy, history, literature, visual culture and performance. Of particular interest are the multiplicity of black sexualities with gender, race and ethnicity, class, disability and other identities. We will examine the ways rhetoric is used historically and contemporarily to construct claims about black sexuality. In addition, we will explore the rhetorical strategies Black people employ in resistance to problematic claims and problematic depictions of black sexuality.

**COURSE GOALS:**

- We will examine black gender and sexuality through a multitude of issues and sites of inquiry (e.g. health, popular culture, social movements, etc.).
- We will apply skills of critical/rhetorical analysis to readings, visual images, music, etc. to analyze how black gender and sexuality is being constructed by or about African-Americans.
- We will learn several keywords/concepts useful to our understanding and analysis of discourses of black gender and sexuality.
- We will learn through assignments how to apply rhetorical devices to improve our written and verbal communication in our daily lives.
- We will interrogate issues of identity, diversity and culture (e.g. race, gender, sexuality and class privilege) as they relate to black gender and sexuality, obviously, but also in relationship to our own experiences and in the larger public.
- We will use classroom discussion, writing community workshops and in-class exercises as a way to learn strategies for giving timely, careful, and useful skills of rhetorical listening and offering feedback to our peers, practicing the art of community building and productive citizen interaction.
- We will learn about the specific exigencies African-Americans identify in the construction and transmission of rhetoric's of black gender and sexuality.
- We will draw on our own experiences to broaden the knowledge base of our instructor and our peers.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**

**Available at the University Co-Op:**

*Black Sexual Politics: African Americans, Gender and the New Racism* (P. Hill-Collins)

*Drifting Toward Love: Black, Brown, Gay, and Coming of Age on the Streets of New York* (K. Wright)

**Available at Jenn's Copies:**

I have prepared a course reader for you to purchase at Jenn's Copies located at 2200 Guadalupe (located downstairs under the scientology building).

**REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS AND INSTRUCTOR EXPECTATIONS**

In addition to knowing all concepts presented in class lecture, students will be expected to be active and regular contributors to class discussions, complete response papers selected from course readings, prepare critical questions for and lead one course discussion, and submit a final research paper (topic to be decided on in consultation with and approved by the professor).

In addition to informal and short assigned writing assignments, major writing assignments are:

1. Early Reflection Essay
2. A short critical analysis paper
3. Discussion Leader Exercise (Group)
4. Final research paper

**NOTE: Late Work**

I do not accept late work. All assignments must be turned in to me in class on the day that they are due. If you believe that you may need to turn in an assignment late, please see me right away. Any exceptions are reserved for cases where you can provide written documentation of an emergency or other problem. Otherwise, please turn in all assignments on time.

**GRADING**

The breakdown of grades will serve as follows:

*Grades:*

30% -- Final Research Paper

25% -- Critical Analysis Essay - Short

25% -- Discussion Leader Exercise (Presentation) & Presentation Debrief Paper

20% -- Participation (will include: early reflection essay, class discussion, quizzes, various workshops, attendance, additional writing assignments, etc).

Grading Scale:

Your papers, discussion leader/group exercise, informal writing and participation will receive a letter grade assigned the following values:

A / 100-94

A- / 93-90  
B+ / 89-87  
B / 86-84  
B- / 83-80  
C+ / 79-77  
C / 76-74  
C- / 73-70  
D+ / 69-67  
D / 66-64  
D- / 63-60  
F / 59-0

### **ATTENDANCE**

All rhetoric classes have an attendance requirement that appears in the policy statement you have read and signed. Your absence hurts the class and your group, so penalties are strict. You may miss 4 sessions without failing, though this may still adversely effect your grade since it effects your participation in “in-class” graded assignments. Upon the 5<sup>th</sup> absence you automatically *fail* the course and receive an F for the semester. You have 4 free absences. I do not discriminate between excused and unexcused absences. Use your allowed absences wisely. Absence from class does not excuse you from submitting work on the date that it is due. Should you miss class the day an assignment is due, you should find some way to have that work submitted by the time class would end.

**DO NOT BE LATE** -- You must be on time for class, being late is inconsiderate to me and to the class. If you are late four times this will be marked as the equivalent of one absence in this class. If there is a reason you may have to be late (example: a class meeting just before ours).

**You will not be penalized for missing class on religious holy days.** A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor, in writing, well in advance of the absence, so that alternative arrangements can be made to complete work. If you know you will have to miss class(es) for this reason, provide your instructor with the date(s) as early as possible. Please note that the University specifies very few other excused absences (e.g., jury duty). When you must miss a class, you are responsible for getting notes and assignments from a classmate.

### **SCHOLASTIC HONESTY**

Turning in work that is not your own, or any other form of scholastic dishonesty (cheating on exams, for example), will result in a major course penalty, possibly failure of the course. This standard applies to *all* drafts and assignments, and a report of the incident will be submitted to the Office of the Dean of Students and filed in your permanent UT record. Under certain circumstances, the Dean of Students will initiate proceedings to expel you from the University. So, take care to read and understand the *Statement on Scholastic Responsibility*, which can be found online at:

<http://www.utexas.edu/cola/depts/rhetoric/firstyearwriting/plagiarismcollusion.php>

## **STUDENT RESOURCES**

### **UNDERGRADUATE WRITING CENTER**

The UWC administration and staff are amazing! You are strongly encouraged to use the Undergraduate Writing Center in FAC 211 (471-6222; <http://uwc.fac.utexas.edu/>), which offers *free* one-on-one writing consultations with trained specialists. UWC consultants are trained to help you develop and improve your writing in ways that preserve the integrity of your work.

### **STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TDD. I am asking that you provide me with the official notification from the Dean of Students office regarding these accommodations by the end of the first full week of class so that I can meet your needs immediately.

### **Subjects of Lectures/Discussions**

- Rhetorics of Black Bodies: Slave Economies, Sexual Labor and Stereotypes
- Black Gender and Popular Culture
- Blackness and the Rhetorics of Intersectionality
- Black Communities and Sexual Violence:
- HIV/AIDS Education and Prevention in Black Communities
- Black Queer Youth Culture

**Final Due on or before Tuesday, December 7, 2010 by 12 Noon. Directions for submission are on the assignment sheet.**