

Fall 2014 AML 2410: Topics in American Literature and Culture
Section 3698: Womanism, Black Feminism, and Feminism: Woman is the Word

Instructor: Keasha Renee Worthen (reneeworthen@ufl.edu)

Schedule and Location: M/W/F at 3rd period in Rinker Hall, room 210

Office Hours and Location: Friday, 4th – 5th period, Turlington Hall room 4363

During the press junket after the 2015 Academy Awards, actress and award winner Patricia Arquette observed the following about equal rights and women: "It's time for all the women in America and all the men who love women and all the gay people and people of color we've fought for to fight for us now." The backlash was immediate. Many argued that Arquette seemed to be prioritizing one kind of equality over others – that of heterosexual, probably white and probably class-secure women – while forgetting that people in the LGBTQ community and people of color are *also* women who face intersectional discrimination.

Womanism is a term coined by author Alice Walker to describe the "specificity of *Black Feminism* and contrast it with what she sees as an ethnocentric and separatist white feminism." It describes a political continuum of Black women and women of color whose experiences and struggles exists on multiple fonts in a non-exclusive manner. It is, according to Walker, "A woman who loves other women, sexually and/or non-sexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and women's strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or non-sexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically, for health. Traditionally Universalist... Loves music. Loves dance. Loves the moon. Loves the Spirit. Loves love and food and roundness. Loves struggle. Loves the Folk. Loves herself. Regardless."

Black Feminism on the other hand deals directly with the issues of traditional feminism but with a special focus on the concerns of black women. In other words, it acknowledges the intersectionality of race, class, and gender. Feminine discourse within the concerns of queer and transgender communities takes another, more complex, discursive challenge,

This class will examine the discursive landscape of feminism from the first wave to contemporary conversations. We will focus specifically on how Womanism, Black feminism, and Transfeminism's challenge and/or rely on traditional feminism.

Required Texts

The Color Purple. Walker, Alice. United States: Harcourt Books, 1982. ISBN-13: 978-0156031820

The Feminine Mystique. Betty Friedan. New York: Norton, 2001. ISBN 978-0-393-06379-0

Ain't I a Woman? bell hooks. South End Press. 1981. ISBN 0-89608-129-X

The Butterfly and the Flame. Dana De Young. iUniverse. April 27, 2011. ISBN: 978-1450288774

The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood Among Ghosts. Maxine Hong Kingston. New York: Vintage International, 1989.

The Bell Jar. Sylvia Plath. New York: Harper & Row, 1971

Optional Texts: Many of the readings in the course will come from anthologies. I will post the needed materials on Canvas, but it is recommended that you own a copy of the following texts:

Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought (ed. Beverly Guy-Sheftall) ISBN-10: 1565842561; ISBN-13: 978-1565842564

Womanist Reader. Layli Philips. New York: Routledge, 2006. ISBN-13: 978-0415954112

Trans/forming Feminisms: Trans/feminist Voices Speak Out. Dixon K. Scott. Toronto: Sumach Press, 2006. ISBN: 978-1894549615

Course Requirements:

1. Reflection Essays:

You will submit a total of five (one page to two page, typed, double spaced) reflection papers throughout the semester. I will draw on your reflection papers to facilitate class discussion. Each paper must address at least two of the readings assigned on a specific date. Use your reflection papers to comment on things that you find contradictory, controversial, confusing or otherwise noteworthy in the readings. Please end each of your papers with two specific questions for class discussion. Reflection papers are intended to keep you engaged with the readings, and to help elicit productive class discussions. They should not be used to provide detailed summaries of the assigned texts.

2. Monologues

You will write a monologue in response to one of the readings that you will present/perform to the class. Students will need to sign up for a specific date to present their monologues.

3. Midterm Essay

Your midterm essay will be literary review of the literature we have read up to this point in the semester.

4. Final Exam Essay

Contemporary issues in Feminism, Womanism, and Black Feminism: Students will choose a current topic that is being reported in the news today and analyze how the issues today reflect the theories of feminism that we have discussed throughout the semester.

5. Quizzes:

There will be 10 unannounced quizzes. The two lowest quiz scores will be dropped.

Grades:

A: 94-100 (4.0)

C: 74-76 (2.0)

A-: 90-93 (3.67)

C-: 70-73 (1.67)

B+: 87-89 (3.33)

D+: 67-69 (1.33)

B: 84-86 (3.0)

D: 64-66 (1.0)

B-:80-83 (2.67)

D-: 60-63 (.67)

C+: 77-79 (2.33)

E: 0-59 (0)

Course Policies

Attendance

AML 2410 is a participation-oriented course. Students are allowed to miss 3 classes without penalty; however, the fourth absence results in the deduction of a letter grade (A to A-, B to B- etc.), and each continued absence will reduce the student's course grade by one further letter. The sixth absence results in an automatic failure of the course. If a student arrives late to class, after I take attendance, they will be marked tardy; two tardies are equivalent to one absence. **Students must keep track of their absences over the semester. Failure to do so may result in greatly reduced final averages.**

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to):

- Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
- Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student. (University of Florida, Student Honor Code, 15 August 2007 <<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honorcode.php>>)

Students commit plagiarism when they present the ideas or words of someone else as their own. Students commit plagiarism if they use the following without crediting the source:

- Any part of another person's essay, speech, or ideas
- Any part of an article in a magazine, journal, newspaper; any part of a book, encyclopedia, CD-ROM, online WWW page, etc.
- Any idea from another person or writer, even if you express that idea in your own words.

Important tip: There should never be a time when a student copies and paste something from the Internet and without provide the exact location from which it came.

All acts of plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment and may result in failure of the entire course. Plagiarism can occur even without any intention to deceive if the student fails to know and employ proper documentation techniques.

Unless otherwise indicated by the instructor for class group work, all work must be your own. Nothing written for another course will be accepted.

Graded Materials

Students are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a re-submission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the student's responsibility to have and make available this material.

Classroom Behavior

Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diverse student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students requesting accommodation should contact the Students with Disabilities Office, located at Peabody 202. That office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

Statement on harassment.

UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentconductcode.php#s4041>

Course Schedule (Schedule is subject to change)

First Wave (1848 - 1920): Historical Overview

Week 1 (8/25 – 8/29)

- Monday: Course Introductions and Unit Overview
- Wednesday: “What is Feminism” Rosalind Delmar (Canvas); “Theorizing Difference From Multiracial Feminism” - MAXINE BACA ZINN and BONNIE THORNTON DILL (Canvas)
- Friday: Alice Walker’s Womanism: “Coming Apart”, “Gifts of Power: The Writings of Rebecca Jackson.” (Canvas)

Week 2 (9/1 – 9/5) Feminism Deconstructed

- Monday: “Womanism: On its Own” – Layli Phillips (Canvas)
- Wednesday: “Womanist/Feminist Dialogue: Problems and Possibilities” (Canvas); “Some Implications of Womanist Theory” – Sherley Ann Williams (Canvas)
 - **Reflection Essay 1 Due**
- Friday: Discussions

Week 3 (9/8 – 9/12)

- Monday: **Holiday**: Read: *The Feminine Mystique* – Betty Friedan; “Growing Up White: Feminism, Racism, and the Social Geography of Childhood” – Ruth Frankenberg (Canvas);
- Wednesday: *The Feminine Mystique*

- Friday: *The Feminine Mystique*
 - **Reflection Essay 2 Due**

Week 4: (9/15 – 9/19)

- Monday: *Feminist : stories from women's liberation* (DVD – In Class)
- Wednesday: *Feminist : stories from women's liberation* (DVD – In Class)
- Friday: **Monologues: Theme - Liberation**

Week 5 (9/22 – 9/26):

- Monday: *The Bell Jar - Sylvia Plath*;
- Wednesday: *The Bell Jar - Sylvia Plath*
- Friday: *The Bell Jar - Sylvia Plath*

Week 6 (9/29 – 10/3)

- Monday: *Ain't I a Woman* – bell hooks; “Ain't I a Woman” – Sojourner Truth
- Wednesday: *Ain't I a Woman* – bell hooks
- Friday: *Ain't I a Woman* – bell hooks; “Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory” – Bell Hooks(Canvas)
 - **Reflection Essay 3 Due**

Week 7 (10/6 – 10/10)

- Monday: “Harmony, Hegemony, or Healing” – Helen Charles (canvas); “The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought” – Patricia Hill Collins(Canvas)
- Wednesday: “What’s in a Name: Womanism, Black Feminism, and Beyond” – Patricia Hill Collins (Canvas)
- Friday: **Monologues: Theme - Equality**

Week 8 (10/13 – 10/17)

- Monday: Research Essay - Library
- Wednesday: Essay Workshop/Discussion on Feminisms
- Friday: Peer Review: Midterm Essay/Research Due

Week 9 (10/20 – 10/24)

- Monday: *The Color Purple* – Alice Walker
- Wednesday: *The Color Purple* – Alice Walker
- Friday: *The Color Purple* – Alice Walker
 - **Monologues: Theme - Identity**

Week 10 (10/27 – 10/31)

- Monday: *The Color Purple* (Film – In Class)
- Wednesday: *The Color Purple* (Film – In Class)
- Friday: *The Color Purple* (Film – In Class)

Week 11 (11/3 – 11/7)

- Monday: *The Woman Warrior* – Maxine Hong Kingston; “The Development of Feminist Consciousness among Asian American Women” - Esther Ngan-Ling Chow (Canvas);
- Wednesday: *The Woman Warrior* – Maxine Hong Kingston

- Friday: *The Woman Warrior* – Maxine Hong Kingston; “A Womanist Production of Truths: The Use of Myths in Amy Tan.” (Canvas)
 - **Reflection Essay 4 Due**

Week 12 (11/10 – 11/14)

- Monday: "Patriarchal Colonialism" and Indigenism: Implications for Native Feminist Spirituality and Native Womanism" - M. A. JAIMES GUERRERO (Canvas); “Yellow Woman” Leslie Marmon Silko (Canvas)
- Wednesday: “Chicana Feminist Discourse” – Alma M. Garcia (Canvas); Portraits of Mujeres Desjuiciadas: Womanist pedagogies of the everyday, the mundane and the ordinary” - Ruth Trinidad Galvan (Canvas); The Woman Hollering Creek – Sandra Cisneros (Canvas)
- Friday: **Monologues: Theme - Difference**

Week 13 (11/17 – 11/21) **Third Wave**

- Monday: “*What is Third Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay*”; “*Third Wave Feminism and the Defense of Choice*” – R. Clair Snyder-Hall (Canvas)
- Wednesday: “Trans/Forming Feminism: An Introduction” – Krista Scott-Dixon (Canvas); “Making it Perfectly Queer” – Lisa Duggan (Canvas)
 - **Reflection Essay 5 Due**
- Friday: “Kuaering Queer Theory: My Autocritography and a Race-Conscious, Womanist, Transnational Turn.” Wenshu Lee

Week 14 (11/24 – 11/28)

- Monday: **No Class**
- Wednesday: **Thanksgiving Break – No Class**
- Friday: **Thanksgiving Break – No Class**

Week 15 (12/1 – 12/5)

- Monday: *The Butterfly and the Flame* - Dana De Young
- Wednesday: *The Butterfly and the Flame* - Dana De Young
- Friday: *The Butterfly and the Flame* - Dana De Young

Week 16 (12/8 – 12/10)

- Monday: Workshop
- Wednesday: Peer Review. Final Essay/Research Due