

AML 4685: “But Some of Us Are Brave:” Black Women, Writing and Race

**Instructor:** Randi Gill-Sadler

**Office Hours:** T 5, W 5 and By Appointment

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**Course Description:** Taking its name from the groundbreaking collection *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave*, this course serves as a space to critically engage Black women’s literature and theory on race and processes of racialization in the United States and the Caribbean. The course highlights the ways that Black women have challenged dominant conceptualizations of race through critically reflecting on their lived experiences and rigorously interrogating seemingly “race-less” concepts like geography, mobility and humanity. Students will acquire a critical vocabulary around critical race theory and engage with Black female writers and intellectuals like Mary Prince, Zora Neale Hurston, Edwidge Danticat, Carole Boyce Davies and Hortense Spillers. To be successful in this course, students must demonstrate consistent critical thinking, a commitment to class discussion and coherent and clear writing.

**Required Texts:**

*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* by Harriet Jacobs

ISBN-10: 1481292110

*The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave* by Mary Prince

ISBN-10: 0486438635

*The Farming of Bones* by Edwidge Danticat

ISBN-10: 1616953497

*Assata: An Autobiography* by Assata Shakur

ISBN-10: 1783601787

All other texts will be available to you via e-learning. Please bring hardcopies of each text to class on the day the texts are assigned.

**Course Expectations**

**Communication**

The best way to get in contact with me is via email. Please allow at least 24 hours for me to respond to any inquiries. You can also meet with me during office hours and by appointment.

### **Classroom Behavior**

In-class participation and discussion are **REQUIRED** in this class. Thoughtful participation in class discussion and completion of **ALL** writing assignments are the best ways to ensure success in this class. Any disrespectful or disruptive behaviors will not be tolerated and will result in dismissal from class.

### **Attendance**

Consistent attendance is required. You are allowed three unexcused absences in this class.

**After that, each unexcused absence will result in a ten point deduction from your grade. If you have more than six unexcused absences, you will fail this course.** Excused absences will not be counted against you, but only university sponsored events such as athletics, band, theater and religious holidays and medical issues with documentation qualify and as excused absences. All excused absences **REQUIRE** documentation. In the event of any absence, it is **YOUR** responsibility to find out any notes, assignments or syllabus changes you missed. Please contact one of your fellow students to find out what you missed in class. Additionally, being more than ten minutes late without proper notification will result in an unexcused absence.

### **Course Assignments**

#### **Race Definition Synthesis Paper**

**100 Points**

In this assignment, students will synthesize two critical works and their own lived experiences to develop a working definition of race. Student will demonstrate their ability to engage with scholarly discussions and theorize from their own experiences. This assignment, exploratory in nature, is designed to provide a point of reference that students can refer back to as their definition of race changes throughout the semester. Paper must be at least 750 words.

#### **Panel Presentation**

**150 Points**

Panel Presentations will be group projects that allow students to expand the class' discussion of literary texts through various means including, but not limited to, producing and sharing annotated bibliographies of secondary sources on literary text, dramatic and artistic reinterpretations of literary texts and keywords lists from those text. Instructions for the group presentations are at the end of the syllabus.

In-Class Participation

**150 Points**

Students will be assessed on the quality of participation in class. Students will be required to submit written documentation of group and individual in-class work. Students who earn the most points will offer informed and relevant contributions to class discussions on a consistent basis.

Unit Response Papers

**300 Points**

At the end of units where students did not prepare a panel presentation, students will be required to submit a unit response paper worth 150 points, totaling to 300 points for all two responses. The response paper is an opportunity for students to work with and interrogate new terms introduced in the unit. Also, the response paper will allow students to synthesize a few of the works in the unit for a fuller understanding of Black women’s writing on race. Response papers that earn the most points will cite multiple texts directly from the unit and offer thorough, clear and thoughtful reflection on the unit. Response papers must be at least 500 words.

Final Paper

**300 Points**

The final paper is an extended annotated bibliography. There will be a list of guiding questions, centered on the various themes of the course, and each student may chose the questions he/she wants to answer. To answer the question, students will annotate three terms of their own choosing. Two of the terms **must** be from the critical terms list. The final term can be another entry from the critical terms list or the literary terms/ places/ figures list. Students must give definitions and/or summaries of all three terms and illustrate how they are in conversation with each other and how the terms answer the guiding question. Successful final papers will be thorough, well- researched and demonstrate critical thinking and synthesis skills. Papers must be at least 1,500 words. (Key Terms List Is at the End Of the Syllabus)

Grading Scale

A 930-1000	C 730-769
A- 900-929	C- 700-729
B+ 870-899	D+ 670-699
B 830-869	D 630-669
B- 800-829	D- 600-629
C+ 770-799	E 0-599

Schedule

**Unit 1: Defining Race and Racialization**

**8/24-** Overview of Course Syllabus, Policies and Guidelines

8/26- Higginbotham “African American Women’s History and the Metalanguage of Race

8/28- Morrison “Black Matters” *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*

Wright *Becoming Black* p.27-32; p.54-65

8/31- Cliff *If I Could Write This in Fire, I Would*

9/2- Race Definition Synthesis Paper Peer Review

### **Unit 2: Race, Slavery and the Black Woman’s Body**

9/4- Prince *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave*

#### **Race Definition Synthesis Paper DUE**

9/7- LABOR DAY NO CLASS

9/9- Prince *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave*

9/11- Jacobs *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

9/14- Jacobs *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

9/16- Jacobs *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*

9/18- Spillers “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe: An American Grammar Book”

Davis “Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves”

9/21- Panel Presentations

9/23-Panel Presentations

#### **UNIT 2 RESPONSE PAPER DUE**

### **Unit 3: Black Women, Space and Mobility**

9/25- Hurston “How It Feels To Be Colored Me”

9/28- Marshall “To Da-Duh in Memoriam”

9/30- Danticat *Farming of Bones*

10/2- Danticat *Farming of Bones*

10/5- Danticat *Farming of Bones*

10/7- Davies “Introduction: Migratory Subjectivities” *Black Women, Writing and Identity*

10/9- Panel Presentations

10/12- Panel Presentations

### **UNIT 3 RESPONSE PAPER DUE**

#### **Unit 4: Race as Lived Experience: Black Women’s Autobiography**

10/14- Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*

10/16- Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*

10/19- Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*

10/21- Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*

10/23- Lorde *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*

10/26- Lorde *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*

10/28- Lorde *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*

10/30- Lorde *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*

11/2- Guest Lecture: Black Women’s Lives in a White Supremacist Capitalist State

Justin Hosbey, PhD Candidate, Anthropology Dept., UF

11/4- Panel Presentations

### **UNIT 4 RESPONSE DUE**

11/6- NO CLASS HOMECOMING

#### **Unit 5: Foundation and Futures in Black Women’s Theory**

11/9- Hull, Scott and Smith “Introduction” *All the Women Are White,*

*All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave, Black Women's Studies*

11/11-NO CLASS VETERAN’S DAY

11/13- Crenshaw “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Anti-Racist Politics”

11/16- Hammonds “Black (W)holes and the Geometry of Black Female Sexuality”

**11/18-** Silvera, “Man Royals and Sodomites: Some Thoughts on the Invisibility of Afro-Caribbean Lesbians”

Cohen “Punks, Bulldaggers and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?”

**11/20-** Film: *Pariah*

**11/23-** Film: *Pariah*

**11/25- NO CLASS THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

**11/27-NO CLASS THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY**

### **Unit 6: Final Paper Preparation**

**11/30-** Final Paper Overview/ Workshop

**12/2-** Annotated Bibliography and Synthesis Workshop

**12/4-** Conference for Final Papers

**12/7-** Marlene Nourbese Phillip “The Absence of Writing or How I Almost Became a Spy”

**12/9-** Final Paper Peer Review

**FINAL PAPER DUE DECEMBER 11, 2015**

### **Course Policies**

**Statement of Student Disability Services:** The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. For more information, please see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

**Academic Honesty:** All students are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, please see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a serious violation of the 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 a work of another. Plagiarism includes: (but is not limited to)

a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.

b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

Please see: University of Florida Student Honor Code:  
<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcode.php>

All acts of plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment. Every case is different, but plagiarism on an assignment could result in failure of the entire course. **All work must be your own!** Work from another class is not acceptable. Have integrity; be responsible, organized, and honest about your work. Do not claim ignorance. Be sure to talk to the instructor about any questions you may have with regard to plagiarism, academic honesty and proper citation methods.

### **Panel Presentation Assignment Outline**

The purpose of the panel presentation is for students to lead and extend the class discussion of the group's assigned literary text and scholarly essays from the corresponding unit and create a key terms list from the unit. Each group will present at the end of a unit and will assist the class in synthesizing the unit materials and highlighting themes from the assigned literary text. The final product for the panel presentation is two-fold: 1) Each group will create a page (wiki) on the class canvas site. This site will serve as a central location for all the panel presentation deliverables (which will be listed below). 2) Each group will present their respective page and deliverables and lead discussion for that particular class session.

### **Deliverables**

Each group must demonstrate the ability to lead, extend and class discussion and create a key terms list. There are several ways the group can approach those tasks. Below I have listed multiple ways to lead and extend discussion. **(There is only one option for the key terms list).** You are **required** to do **ONE** of the bullet points under leading and extending discussion. You are more than welcome to do multiple bullet points:

#### **Leading Discussion**

- Create and moderate a discussion on the panel's canvas homepage. Pose (a) thought-provoking question(s) to the class. Then during the in-class presentation, highlight threads and themes of the conversation that you gleaned from the discussion.
- Host a twitter discussion of the text using the hashtags #ButSomeOfUsAreBrave and #MaryPrince, for example.

#### **Extending Discussion**

- Create an annotated bibliography of 3-5 scholarly essays on the literary text you are presenting on and post it to the canvas page. All sources should be in MLA format. The annotations should be between 7-10 sentences that explains the articles major argument,

evidence used to support that argument and how this text might be useful for your classmates' understanding of the text.

- Provide historical context for the publication of the literary and /or scholarly text (i.e. when was it published, did the author face any obstacles in creating and/or publishing the work, was there backlash or support of the work after it was published, can you situate the scholarly work in a larger academic debate going on at the time) or the setting of the literary text (i.e. for Mary Prince, present a political, social, economic view of Antigua, Bermuda or England to help the class understand how these factors are shaping Prince's experiences)
- Conduct an interview with a professor who could give more insight into the text, author or scholarly ideas from the unit and post portions of the audio in the canvas page to share with the class.
- Post artistic work, archival references and/ or dramatic reinterpretations of the work that allow the class to engage with work in another context. These posts should be accompanied by a 2-3 paragraph description of the post, why you chose it and what this post might add to our discussion of the text

### **Unit Key Terms List**

- Compile a list (5-10) of key terms from your assigned literary text and the corresponding scholarly texts that you believe that class should know, define and engage with to understand Black women's writing about race. Please provide a brief description of why each term warrants further engagement. (1 paragraph per term)

As a group, you are responsible for dividing tasks amongst each other. Multiple people can work on each deliverable. For example, two people in the group can compile the annotated bibliography together for extending the conversation, or two people could be responsible for extending the conversation and choose two different bullet points. Either option is appropriate. Each group will need to provide a breakdown of who was responsible for what tasks so that I may grade each of you based on your own work. This assignment is worth 150 points. Those points will be split between the work on the canvas page and the class discussion leading. You will be graded individually on your canvas work, but the group will be graded as a collective on class discussion leading. This assignment is meant to encourage collaborative work, creativity and extending our discussion beyond this classroom. Have fun and make it your own!

### **Final Paper**

For the final paper, you must demonstrate your ability to explain, discuss and synthesize key themes, figures and places from the course. Your final paper will be an annotated bibliography where you discuss **three (3) terms** from the list below. At least **two (2)** of the terms must come from the Scholarly Key Terms List and the last term may come from Literary Terms/Figures/

Places List or the Scholarly Terms List. You will select all three terms independently. Choose wisely as you will be required to compare, contrast, and/or synthesize all three terms. The annotated bibliography must be **at least 1500** words long. This average out to about 500 words per annotation (not including MLA citations of sources).

Each annotation for a scholarly term should include context for the term, what it means, how you have seen it used or applied in texts and/or film in the course and what its significance is for Black women's writing. You are expected to use multiple sources for your annotations of the scholarly terms. You are not required to use scholarly sources in your annotations of literary terms, figures and places, but you may where you deem it appropriate. Each annotation must be accompanied by proper MLA Citations of all sources used in the annotation. Again, these do not count towards the word count. In your annotations, you are expected to highlight similarities as well as points of contentions among scholars on said terms. You must also explain how a literary term, place, or figure is related to both the terms you incorporated. (Is the literary term an illustration of a scholarly term? Does the literary term extend the definition of a scholarly term? Contradict it? Nuance it?) You must clearly articulate how those terms and your discussion of those terms answers your guiding question. The guiding question should be written out at the top of the final paper as well. **This paper is worth 300 points and is due December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 11:59pm.**

## **Scholarly Key Terms**

Race

Gender

Metalanguage

“Lady”

Double-Voiced Discourse

Black

Blackness

Black Other

The-Other-From-Within

Black American Other-from-Within

American Africanism

Eurocentric

European Man

British Empire

Colorism

Black Matriarch

Motherhood

Middle Passage

Moynihan Report

“Undoing Gender”

Tangle of Pathology

Pornotroping

Body vs. Flesh

Vestibule

American Grammar

*Partus sequitur ventrem*

Sapphire

Migratory Subjectivity

Mobility

“Playful World Traveling”

Black Feminist Criticism

Black Women’s Studies

Intersectionality

Structural Intersectionality

Political Intersectionality

Identity Politics

Rape

Lesbian

Black Wholes

Politics of Silence

Culture of Dissemblance

Sister Outsider

Queer

**Literary Terms/ Figures/Places**

Jamaica

Zoe

“Red”

Buckra

Cowboys and Indians

Mary Prince

Daniel

Mr. and Mrs. Wood

Bermuda

Plantation

Salt Ponds

Ranger

Harriet Jacobs/Linda Brent

Aunt Martha

Uncle Benjamin

Dr. Flint

Mrs. Flint/ Jealous Mistress

Mr. Sands

The Garret

Eatonville

Jacksonville

Harlem

“Colored”

Haiti

The Dominican Republic

Parsley Massacre

Amabelle

Sugar Woman

Orphaned People

“Travay te pou zo”

Dajabón River

Da-Duh

Barbados

Modernity

Empire State Building

Assata

Black Liberation Army

Black Panther Party

Prison

Motherhood

Capitalism

COINTELPRO

Zami

“Age Old Triangle of Mother-Father-Child”

“Triad of Grandmother-Mother-Daughter”

Man Royal

Sodomite

Miss Bibi

Miss Jones

Alike