



Bowie State University
Department of History and
Government
History 204:
Black Women's History:
Colonial Times to the Present
3 Credits Fall 2009



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COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course examines black women's lives from colonial times to the present. It highlights their activities and contributions within the family, workforce, and the black community. Special emphasis is placed on women in slavery.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- Jacqueline Jones, *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present*. New York: Vintage Books, 1995.
- Jacobs, Harriet. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Boston, 1861. — may be accessed through <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/neh.html> and on reserve in the library
- Berry, Mary Frances. *My Face Is Black Is True: Callie House and the Struggle for Ex-Slave Reparations*. New York: Vintage Books, 2005. [Dr. Brown will provide the readings.]
- Shaw, Stephanie J. *What a Woman Ought to Be and to Do: Black Professional Women Workers during the Jim Crow Era*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996. [Dr. Brown will provide the readings.]
- Clark-Lewis, Elizabeth. *Living In, Living Out: African American Domestic Workers and the Great Migration*. New York: Kodansha International, 1996. [Dr. Brown will provide the readings.]
- Brown, Elaine. *A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story*. New York: Anchor Books (Doubleday), 1992.

EMERGING ISSUES: As Bowie State University strives to become a campus sensitive to the issues of preserving the environment, elements of the class will be conducted in accordance to this ideal. Moreover, through the study of history students will be able to determine their place within an ever changing diverse and global society.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS: This course is web enhanced and has components on University's Blackboard system.

LIBRARY REQUIREMENTS: Students will be required to utilize the holdings of the University's library as well as other accessible repositories to complete the assigned research project. The project and class assignments will introduce students to primary and secondary sources, reference materials, and tools that the historian uses in his/her craft.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course covers the impact of African American women on the establishment and development of United States history. It covers the challenges of surviving the devastation of slavery through the promise of emancipation and Reconstruction; segregation and Jim Crow, the Great Migration and the Great Depression; world wars; and the struggle for civil rights in various manifestations with regard to but not limited to family, work, religion and self. It gives voice to a story that is not always told as part of either American or African American history.

This course establishes foundations for future study in each student's selected field of study as well as for his/her lifelong learning experiences. For students studying history, women's studies or social studies, it provides them with a fundamental base of knowledge in American history and how to structure and relay this information to a general audience. Specifically, this course is designed to provide history majors and women's studies minors with an expanded base of historical knowledge, and social studies teachers with skills and information for their future classroom experience.

STUDENT EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Students will:

1. be acquainted with the historian's craft (*Ia, If, Ila, IIIb, IIIc, IVa, Va, Vd*);
2. be exposed to various historiographical writings centered on black women's history (*Ia, If, Ila, IIIb, IIIc*);
3. understand the African American gendered historical experience from 1619, in order to better understand the present and future directions of the country and world through a critical examination of the past (*Ia, If, Ila, IIIb, IIIc*);
4. understand the past and how socioeconomic, political, and cultural institutions developed over time and place within the African American community from an African American gendered perspective (*Ia, If, Ila, IIIb, IIIc*); and
5. learn about the impact of African American women in the development American heritage. This knowledge will then help students to better understand the present and to determine their place within contemporary America from an African American gendered perspective (*Ia, If, Ila, IIIb, IIIc*).

SPECIFIC LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. to assist the student's understanding of the methodology and techniques of the historian's craft by utilizing the material culture of the African American gendered historical experience from enslavement to the present;
2. to develop the student's skills in research and library skills through the use of African American historical documents and bibliographic reference tools as they particularly focus on the female's historical experience;
3. to strengthen the student's ability in the areas of critical thinking and abstract reasoning through the examination of historical problems that the confronted black women from enslavement to the present; and
4. to aid in the student's understanding of the larger plight of humanity through the uniqueness of the African American gendered historical experience in western culture.

Curriculum Themes	Corresponding Outcomes or Objectives
✓ Academic Scholar	Outcomes 1, 2, & all objectives
✓ Multicultural and Global Perspectives	Outcomes 3, 4, 5 & all objectives
✓ Personal and Interpersonal Perspectives	Outcomes 3, 4, 5 & all objectives
✓ Technological Applications	Outcomes 1 & 2; Objectives 1 & 2

ACTIVITIES TO ACHIEVE THE EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

Lecture and discussion of conceptual and factual information from the assigned texts and additional materials such as handouts, articles, and audiovisual material (Ia, IIa, IIIb, IIIc, IVa, Va, Vd):

- to help students' reading and comprehension skills through synthesizing large amounts of information from required reading materials;
- to develop historical analysis skills and relate the past to contemporary events;
- to help students develop listening and note taking skills.

Examinations (Ia, IIa, IIb, IIIb, IIIc):

- to test the retention of historical knowledge.

Research Project and Written Essays (Ia, If, IIa, IIIb, IIIc, IVa, Va, Vd):

- to assist students in developing a thesis emphasizing critical thought with regard to a historical problem or question;
- to assist students in the synthesis of gathered detailed or factual information in a comprehensible and structured fashion;
- to assist students in the analysis of a historical question or problem;
- to draw conclusions for the development of individual perspectives and interpretations of historical problems or questions.

TEACHING MODES



Black Women's History is primarily a discussion course and will utilize instructional lectures, assigned readings, and class discussion. Students will apply these skills to solving problems or answering questions concerning the study of the American historical experience. In the process, students will learn how to relate detailed or factual information within conceptual frameworks. This will be accomplished by asking questions such as how do historians know? Students will learn how to ask questions about the past and then to begin process of learning to address these questions. Finally, students will learn how to effectively communicate their conclusions to a general audience through the development of written and oral presentations. The course also emphasizes reading historical texts as well as listening to other's ideas—all of which are important in the learning process.

The course information will be conveyed to students through lectures, assigned readings, written assignments, and computer work. Corresponding assignments will develop critical thinking, communication, and problem solving skills. In addition, students will produce an original research project to improve their communication and problem solving skills. Lectures will assist students in the process of comprehending general concepts and relating details or facts to these through the synthesis of information. Finally, the course will provide students will a foundation for lifelong learning.

To prepare for class, students should refer to the course outline and focus on the weekly topics and assignments. Students should also utilize the Blackboard component to this course to access assignments, notes and announcements. Students are responsible for completing all assignments, and should pay particular attention to the weekly topic of discussion and activity for focused reading and preparation.

STUDENT PREPARATION ROLES

This course emphasizes three competencies that help facilitate the student's role in a global and diverse contemporary American society. Students will receive instruction on identifying historical problems or questions; understanding broad historical concepts, gathering related details or facts, and synthesizing information; and testing their required and retained knowledge. Students are required to do a number of prepared written and oral class presentations. Generally the student will work on an individual basis to complete the requirements for the course. ***Students who have a disability and who would like accommodations should report immediately to Disability Support Services (DSS), located in Room 1328 in the Business and Graduate Studies Building or call Dr. Michael S. Hughes, DSS Coordination at 301-860-4067.***

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is required to complete the course successfully. **University rules and regulations state that a student may fail a course if she/he misses a certain number of classes** [six (6) for a course that meets three (3) times a week; four (4) for a class that meets twice a week; and two (2) for a class that meets once a week]. Students are expected to attend (on time) and participate in all scheduled classes and activities. Quizzes and daily class activities are considered class participation and cannot be made up. All students are expected to take examinations and turn in all assignments at the scheduled time. Students who miss assignments because of tardiness will not be able perform make-up work without a valid excuse. Make-up work will be at the discretion of the instructor. For example, if a student misses a quiz, the instructor may require the student to write a paper that is equivalent to that particular activity.

STATEMENT OF ETHICAL AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS FOR THE COURSE

According to the "Code of Student Conduct," students are to achieve high standards of ethical and professional academic standards. This includes behavior and appearance in the classroom. For written and non-written scholarship, students are encouraged to be creatively responsible for making a contribution to the body of knowledge. This is accomplished through individual and group effort according to assigned activities. Students who commit acts of plagiarism or copying from other scholarship and/or violating academic standards in the classroom will be penalized according to the "Code of Student Conduct" for students as outlined by Bowie State University. "In cases involving academic dishonesty, a failing grade or a grade of zero (0) for either an assignment and/or course may be administered. Students who are expelled or suspended for academic dishonesty are not admissible to other institutions within the University System of Maryland." **Students engaging in academic dishonesty will fail this course!**

CLASSROOM DECORUM

Bowie State University "prohibits disorderly or disruptive conduct on University premises or at University sponsored activities, which interfere with the activities of others, including studying, teaching, research, and administrative operations." Students must not disrupt class for any reason such as excessive talking or continuously entering/exiting the classroom. Students should be dressed appropriately for an academic setting. Offensive or revealing clothing is not acceptable in a learning environment. Please refrain from the use of cellular phones (talking and text messaging) and other similar electronic devices (e.g., iPods or MP3 players) during class. These devices must be silenced prior to the start of class. Recording devices are not allowed in this class. Students who fail to adhere to these policies will be penalized accordingly.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be evaluated on a critical book review, research project, final exam and a combined assignment, attendance and participation grade. There will be one take home final examination due during the exam period. Students are required to research and present a research project (specific guidelines to follow) based on an approved topic relevant to African American women's history, and complete a critical book review (specific guidelines to follow) of an approved title. Students are required to complete and turn in reading summaries each week (specific guidelines to follow). Students will be assigned and should be prepared to thoroughly discuss each reading assignment. Only letter grades recorded in the four grade categories will be utilized in determining grades for the course. Optional extra-credit assignments may be assigned during the semester.

Evaluations

Critical Book Review — 20%
 Research Project — 30%
 Final Examination — 30%
 Assignments, Attendance and Participation —20%

Grading Scale

90 -100 — A
 80 - 89 — B
 70 - 79 — C
 60 - 69 — D
 under 59 — F

COURSE OUTLINE

NOTE: THE SCHEDULE MAY CHANGE GIVEN TIME CONSTRAINTS OR OTHER FACTORS.
 ADDITIONAL READINGS WILL BE ASSIGNED AS NECESSARY.

Date	Assignment	Miscellaneous
September 2	Harriet Jacobs part 1 ("Childhood" thru "New Perils"); Jones—chapter 1	
September 9	Harriet Jacobs part 2 ("The Loophole of Retreat" through "Free at Last"); Jones—chapter 2	
September 16	Berry—chapters 1-2; Jones—chapter 3	
September 23	Berry—chapters 3-4; Jones—chapter 4	
September 30	Shaw—chapters 1-3 (part one)	
October 7	Clark-Lewis—chapters 1-2; Jones—chapter 5	Research topics are due.
October 14	Clark-Lewis—chapters 3-5; Jones—chapter 6	
October 21	Clark-Lewis—chapters 6-8	Critical book reviews are due.
October 28	Brown—chapters 1-4; Jones—chapter 7	
November 4	Brown—chapters 5-8; Jones—chapter 8	
November 11	Brown—chapters 9-12	
November 13		Last day to drop from a class with a "W" grade: Last day to change from credit to audit.
November 18	Brown—chapters 13-18	Research papers are due.
November 25		Thanksgiving Break
December 2	Brown—chapters 19-21	
December 9	Paper Presentations	Last day of class
December 16	Final exams are due @ 4:55 PM	

BIBLIOGRAPHY: FOR A COMPREHENSIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR BLACK FEMINIST STUDIES SEE

[HTTP://WWW.LIBRARY.UCSB.EDU/SUBJECTS/BLACKFEMINISM/INTRODUCTION.HTML](http://www.library.ucsb.edu/subjects/blackfeminism/introduction.html)

- Abel, Elizabeth, Barbara Christian, and Helene Moglen. eds. *Female Subjects in Black and White: Race, Psychoanalysis, Feminism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- Aikau, Holulani K., Karla A. Erickson, Jennifer L. Pierce, eds. *Feminist Waves, Feminist Generations: Life Stories from the Academy*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007.
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- Apthekar, Bettina. "Directions for Scholarship." In *African American Women and the Vote, 1837-1965*, eds. Ann D. Gordon and Bettye Collier-Thomas, et al. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1997.
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- _____. *Women's Legacy: Essays on Race, Sex and Class in American History*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1982.
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