

African-American Women's Political Activism

UGS 302

Unique Number 62520

Spring 2017

TuTh 8:00 am to 9:30 am

PAR 210

Professor

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4.140 Batts Hall

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Office Hours: TuTh 11:00 am to 12:30 pm

Description

This course explores how racial, gender, and class dynamics in the United States have shaped Black women's participation in the American Political System. We will critically examine what impact Black women's position as a marginalized group has had on their ability to benefit from citizenship and equal protection under the law and how this has affected their political behavior. Topics will include Black women's engagement in protest politics, social movements, electoral politics, judicial politics, and nontraditional forms of political activism. Further, this course will discuss how representations of Black women's aesthetics, sexuality, and reproductive behavior have been used to shape historical and contemporary policy debates.

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 one or more 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.

This course carries the flag for Cultural Diversity in the United States. Cultural Diversity courses are designed to increase your familiarity with the variety and richness of the American cultural experience. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.

Prerequisites

None.

Required Text Books

There is one required text book for this course, which is available for free as an eBook through www.lib.utexas.edu:

Collier-Thomas, Bettye, and V. P. Franklin, eds. 2001. *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*. New York: New York University Press.

Required Coursepack

There is also a coursepack for this course, which is available at Paradigm Books, 2104A W. 24th St., Austin, TX 78705, 512-472-7986.

Grading

Your grade will be based on two exams, leading class discussion, a term paper, and several discussion assignments. The format for the two exams will be multiple choice and will cover the lectures, films, and readings. Exams will **NOT** be cumulative. In the case of a conflict, please notify me ahead of time so that we can make alternative arrangements. Without prior notification and proper documentation, missed assignments and exams cannot be made up. **NO EXCEPTIONS**. The weight of each assignment in determining your final grade is as follows:

Leading Class Discussion	10%
Exam 1	15%
Exam 2	15%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
First Draft of Term Paper	15%
Peer Review of First Draft	10%
Final Draft of Term Paper	20%
Discussion Assignments	5%

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D	60-69
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	F	0-59
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72		

Term Paper

You will submit a 5-page term paper that addresses one of the topics below and answers the following questions: How have Black women attempted to influence contemporary American politics? What obstacles have they faced? What have been some of their successes?

Possible Topics

- Black Women and Technology
- Black Women and the Arts
- Black Women Elected Officials
- Black Women and Collective Action

- Black Women and Religion

The term paper will be written in stages. In the first stage, students will select their topic, develop their thesis, and prepare an annotated bibliography of 2 scholarly sources supporting and 2 scholarly sources opposing the students' thesis. In the first draft of their paper, students will combine their thesis statement and annotated bibliography to form a completed first draft of the term paper. Finally, students will be required to revise their first drafts into a final draft of their term paper. More information on the requirements for the annotated bibliography and term paper will be posted on Canvas.

All assignments must be typed in a 12-point font and have margins no bigger than 1.25 inches. While the use of course readings is permissible, 'A' quality papers rely on scholarly sources not covered over the course of the semester. All papers must be uploaded to Canvas. No assignment is to be e-mailed to me. Papers not submitted by the end of class on the due date will be considered late and will **NOT** be accepted.

Peer Review of First Draft of Term Papers

Each student is responsible for providing feedback on the first draft of someone else's paper. Comments must be submitted to Canvas no later than the end of class on the due date. Comments must follow the format below:

1. Find at least two or three places you want information/details you're not getting, and ask for them as specifically as possible;
2. Describe the central argument, whatever you think is the most interesting or important part of the paper; and
3. Indicate the passage where you like the writing best, and try to explain in a sentence or two what you like about it.

Leading Class Discussion

Working in groups of 2 or 3, students will choose a section on the syllabus and lead class discussion. You can sign up for your section on Canvas. You will have ten minutes to present an artifact to the class to look at and consider. You will explain how that artifact relates to your topic. You will then lead the class discussion of that artifact. Your artifact may be:

- A couple of quotes;
- A chart or diagram;
- A set of images;
- A questionnaire that gets people thinking;
- A set of bullet points;
- Or ask classmates to generate their own artifact by writing for a few minutes about a question.

Citation

All papers require proper citation. When citing course material, please cite the original source, not the lectures. All sources must be cited; not citing sources will result in a grade penalty. The complete lack of citation and/or not having a bibliography will result in a zero grade for the assignment. This course will use the American Political Science Association citation style (based on the *Chicago Manual of Style*). The use of other citations styles will result in a grade penalty. Examples of the American Political Science Association citation style are available on Canvas.

Note about Electronic Devices

Electronic devices (phones, laptops, tablets, mp3 players, etc.) may be used during class for academic purposes only. Students disrupting the class because of their use of electronic devices for non-academic purposes will be asked to leave class. Under **NO** circumstances may electronic devices be used during an exam. Students using electronic devices during an exam will be given a zero grade for that exam.

Website

For class information and assignments please see the Canvas site at canvas.utexas.edu. Class notes **WILL NOT** be on Canvas.

E-mail

No assignment is to be e-mailed to me. Also, I regularly check my e-mail, but sometimes I am unable to respond quickly. Please allow one to two days for an e-mail response. In addition, please limit your e-mails to questions about class topics. Any grievances involving the class must be handled during my office hours. Please exercise proper e-mail etiquette (for etiquette tips see <http://www.101emailtipstips.com/101-email-etiquette-tips.pdf>). Finally, make sure to check the syllabus or Canvas first before sending an e-mail. In many cases they will answer your question.

Excused Absences

An absence from class will only be excused if proper documentation is presented. In the case of an illness you will need to produce a note from the doctor stating that you could not attend class that day. Generic UHS slips will not be accepted. In all other cases you will need to provide documentation from the university. In the case of planned activities, the documentation must be presented to me at least a week before your scheduled absence. I will not accept a planned activity as a valid excuse for an absence after the fact. In the case of unexpected circumstances, the documentation must be turned in within a week of your return.

Expectations

Meeting the goals of the class requires three things—attendance, preparation and professionalism.

- Attendance: Although attendance is not mandatory, it is expected. Therefore, I find it unnecessary to formally take attendance. Nevertheless, missing class will greatly affect your grade. First, I frequently give in-class assignments. Students that miss an assignment will receive a zero. Second, exams are based on a combination of the course readings, class lectures, and supplementary media presentations.
- Preparation: Doing well in this class necessitates that students are informed and prepared. Therefore, you will be expected to complete the readings prior to the first day we are scheduled to cover that topic. This course covers a large amount of material in a short amount of time. If you do not keep up with the readings, your grade will reflect it.
- Professionalism: Remember that this is an academic environment. Therefore, I ask that you minimize unnecessary disruptions. This includes (but it is not limited to) side conversations, cell phone calls and the consumption of tobacco products. I also ask that you be proactive if any conflict occurs. This means notifying me ahead of time if you are unable to meet the requirements of the course.

Ground Rules

Because this course will sometimes deal with sensitive material, it is imperative that we set a series of ground rules.

1. Respect others. There will be times when you disagree with an idea that has been presented to the class. Although you have the right to disagree with someone, you must remember to challenge the idea and not the person.
2. Listen attentively. The purpose of this course is to present and discuss different ideas. In order to reap the benefits of such an exchange, you must be willing to pay attention to what others have to say.
3. Think before you speak. Refrain from making broad, general, and/or unsubstantiated comments. Make sure that you use evidence and provide a rationale for your statements.
4. Maintain the dignity of the academic environment. Your ideas should be presented using Standard English.
5. Raise your hand. This helps to maintain order in the classroom and helps to ensure that everyone has a chance to talk.
6. Be courteous. Refrain from interrupting or engaging in private conversation while others are speaking. Also, limit disruptive behavior, such as newspaper reading, personal grooming, etc.

Procedures for Dealing with Grade/Evaluation Concerns

Grade/evaluation concerns will only be considered if the following procedure is followed:

All grade complaints must be **TYPED** and must clearly express the student's specific concerns. These written statements must be accompanied by citations of support from course materials, i.e. readings, textbook, and/or lecture notes, in order to ensure accuracy. Written statements will not be considered until one week **AFTER** the assignment is returned to students. This allows the student time to reread his/her answers and think carefully about what improvements could have been made. Grievances will not be considered once two weeks have passed. For example, if I return a graded assignment on Monday, the student must submit a complaint **BEFORE** the Friday of the following week. Once class is over on that Friday, no complaints will be considered for that assignment. Since class time is limited, I will only deal with questions or concerns during scheduled office hours. Finally, submitting a grade grievance will result in a complete re-grade of the assignment.

University Code of Conduct

“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.”

Student Honor Code

“As a student of The University of Texas at Austin, I shall abide by the core values of the University and uphold academic integrity.”

Academic Dishonesty

According to the Institutional Rules, scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and falsifying academic records. In the event that a student violates the University policy on scholastic dishonesty, he or she will be subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. For further information, please visit the Student Judicial Services web site at www.utexas.edu/depts/dos/sjs/.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>.

Religious Holy Day Observance

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, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Emergency Evacuation Policy

In the event of a fire or other emergency, it may be necessary to evacuate a building rapidly. Upon the activation of a fire alarm or the announcement of an emergency in a university building, all occupants of the building are required to evacuate and assemble outside. Once evacuated, no one may re-enter the building without instruction to do so from the Austin Fire Department, University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office. Students should familiarize themselves with all the exit doors of each room and building they occupy at the university, and should remember that the nearest exit routes may not be the same as the way they typically enter buildings. Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructors in writing during the first week of class. Faculty members must then provide this information to the Fire Prevention Services office by fax (512-232-2759), with "Attn. Mr. Roosevelt Easley" written in the subject line. Information regarding emergency evacuation routes and emergency procedures can be found at <http://www.utexas.edu/emergency>.

Outline of Course Topics and Readings

I. Introduction: Studying Black Women's Activism

Reading: Springer, Kimberly. 1999. "Introduction: African American Women Redefining Activism for the Millennium." In *Still Lifting, Still Climbing: African American Women's Contemporary Activism*, ed. Kimberly Springer. New York: New York University Press.

Guy-Sheftall, Beverly, ed. 1995. *Words on Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*. New York: The New Press. Pages 25-68.

II. Ida B. Wells and the Anti-Lynching Campaign

Reading: McMurry, Linda E. 1998. *To Keep the Waters Troubled: The Life of Ida B. Wells*. New York: Oxford University Press. Introduction, Chapters Seven and Eight.

Video: *Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice*

III. Black Women as Citizens

Reading: Harris-Perry, Melissa. 2011. *Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes and Black Women in America*. New Haven: Yale University Press. Chapters One and Two.

IV. Civil Rights Activism

Reading: Collier-Thomas, Bettye, and V. P. Franklin, eds. 2001. *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*. New York: New York University Press. Chapters Two, Four, and Six.

V. *Black Power*

Reading: Collier-Thomas, Bettye, and V. P. Franklin, eds. 2001. *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement*. New York: New York University Press. Chapters Twelve and Thirteen.

VI. *Activism through Work*

Readings: Gill, Tiffany M. 2010. *Beauty Shop Politics: African American Women's Activism in the Beauty Industry*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. Chapters Two and Five.

VII. *Activism against Sexual and Domestic Violence*

Reading: White, Aaronette M. 1999. "Talking Black, Talking Feminist: Gendered Micromobilization Processes in a Collective Protest against Rape." In *Still Lifting, Still Climbing: African American Women's Contemporary Activism*, ed. Kimberly Springer, 189-219. New York: New York University Press.

Canaan, Andrea R. 1990. "I Call Up Names: Facing Childhood Sexual Abuse." In *The Black Women's Health Book: Speaking for Ourselves*, ed. Evelyn C. White, 78-82. Seattle: Seal Press.

Hollies, Linda H. 1990. "A Daughter Survives Incest: A Retrospective Analysis." In *The Black Women's Health Book: Speaking for Ourselves*, ed. Evelyn C. White, 82-92. Seattle: Seal Press.

White, Evelyn C. 1990. "Love Don't Always Make it Right: Black Women and Domestic Violence." In *The Black Women's Health Book: Speaking for Ourselves*, ed. Evelyn C. White, 92-98. Seattle: Seal Press.

Video: *NO! Confronting Sexual Assault in Our Communities*

VIII. *Demanding Justice in the Criminal Justice System*

Reading: Smith, Jennifer E. 1999. "ONAMOVE: African American Women Confronting the Prison Crisis." In *Still Lifting, Still Climbing: African American Women's*

Contemporary Activism, ed. Kimberly Springer, 219-240. New York: New York University Press.

Finzen, Margaret E. 2005. "Systems of Oppression: The Collateral Consequences of Incarceration and Their Effects on Black Communities." *Georgetown Journal of Poverty Law & Policy* XII (2): 299-324.

IX. Black Women and Domestic Policy

Reading: Jordan-Zachary, Julia S. 2009. *Black Women, Cultural Images, and Social Policy*. New York: Routledge. Chapters Two and Six.

X. Black Women and Foreign Policy

Reading: Marby, Marcus. 2007. *Twice As Good: Condoleezza Rice and Her Path to Power*. New York: Modern Times. Chapters Twelve and Thirteen.

XI. Contemporary Cultural Politics

Reading: Morgan, Joan. 1999. *When Chickenheads Come Home to Roost: A Hip-Hop Feminist Breaks it Down*. New York: Simon & Schuster. Chapters Three, Four, and Five.

XII. Electoral Politics

Reading: Smooth, Wendy. 2006. "Intersectionality in Electoral Politics: A Mess Worth Making." *Politics & Gender* 2 (3): 400-414.

Philpot, Tasha S. and Hanes Walton, Jr. 2005. "An Historical Election in Context: The 2001 Atlanta Mayoral Election." *National Political Science Review* 10: 43-53.

Course Schedule at a Glance

January 17	Welcome and Introductions
January 19 – January 24	Introduction: Studying Black Women’s Activism
January 26 – February 2	Ida B. Wells and the Anti-Lynching Campaign
February 7 – February 9	Black Women as Citizens
February 14 – February 16	Civil Rights Activism
February 14	Field Trip – March ON!
February 21 – February 23	Black Power
February 28 – March 7	Activism through Work
March 2	Field Trip – Library Instruction – PCL Learning Lab 4
March 9	Exam 1
March 13 – March 19	Spring Break – No Class
March 21	Annotated Bibliography Due
March 21 – March 23	Activism Against Sexual and Domestic Violence
March 28 – March 30	Demanding Justice in the Criminal Justice System
April 4	First Draft of Term Paper Due
April 6	Peer Review of First Draft Due
April 4 – April 6	Black Women and Domestic Policy
April 11 – April 13	Black Women and Foreign Policy
April 18 – April 20	Contemporary Cultural Politics
April 20	Final Draft of Term Paper Due
April 25 – May 2	Black Women and Electoral Politics
May 4	Exam 2