

**Department of History**  
**Dartmouth College**  
**Spring 2012**

**Women and Gender in the African Diaspora (Hist 6.3, AAAS 88.2)**

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*Course Information*

MWF 10-11:05 a.m.  
X-hour: Th 12-12:50  
Office hours: W 1-4 or by appointment

**Course Description**

The intersection of race, gender, sexuality, and class has been particularly significant for people of African descent—for both men and women. This course uses memoirs to explore the social, political, cultural, and economic aspects of men’s and women’s lives across the Atlantic World in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The course will focus on the lives of female diasporic subjects from New Orleans to Russia, Jamaica to Harlem, even rural New Hampshire, and as they engaged social, political, and cultural institutions, from prisons to churches, beauty salons to brothels, educational institutions to protest movements. We will give attention to the ways these women made sense of their lives and experiences as well as gendered arrangements of power, hierarchy, and meaning. In focusing on both women and gender, we will better understand the complex ways in which all persons of African descent defined their places in relation to one another and the broader society, imagining and enacting freedom dreams for themselves and transnational communities.

The concept of the African diaspora is as expansive and controversial as it is old. There have been many diasporas over time and space, and others are being created at this very moment. This course focuses on the migrations and circulations of persons of African descent across the Atlantic World, with an emphasis on nineteenth- and twentieth-century North America. We will delve deeply into several “epitomizing events” rather than attempt exhaustiveness. This approach is not without conceptual problems, and we will explore those tensions over the term. But this approach will allow us to understand international subjects in relation to the broader geopolitical shifts of slavery, industrialization, and modernization. In so doing, we will appreciate the diversity and complexity of thoughts and interests expressed in black women’s writings about themselves, their histories, and their hopes.

## Classroom Philosophy

In typical class periods, I will lecture for no more than 30 minutes. The remainder of our sessions will involve active learning techniques, particularly discussion. This approach will allow higher order thinking, increase retention of materials, and increase classroom interaction.

## Evaluation

<i>Course Requirements</i>		<i>Grading Scale</i>	
Participation	20%	A	94-100
Museum Visit Paper (5pp)	15%	A-	90-93.99
Midterm Exam	20%	B+	87-89.99
Short Essay	20%	B	83-86.99
Final Paper (12-15pp)	25%	B-	80-82.99
		C+	77-79.9

## Expectations

I expect you to:

- **Attend class.** This course relies heavily on participation. If you are not here *on time*, you cannot participate, thereby depriving yourself and your classmates of your class contribution. I make no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences, and I reserve the right to lower your grade due to tardiness and absences at my discretion.
- **Read the assigned materials.** Our meeting times will focus on analyzing information, not imparting it. That means you must show up every day with a baseline of knowledge from the readings. We will have occasional in-class quizzes to ensure that you are reading effectively. *There are no makeups for these quizzes.*
- **Submit all assignments in a timely and appropriate manner.** Late work will be penalized one letter grade per day.
- **Use technology judiciously.** You may use your laptops and iPads during class as long as they do not become a distraction to you or anyone else.

You can expect me to:

- Plan each lesson while remaining flexible enough to follow your interests.
- Give you feedback, both written and oral, on your work in a reasonable, respectful, and timely manner.
- Promote a sense of community in the classroom while allowing for individual learning styles.
- Respect you as an adult, with all the privileges and responsibilities accruing thereunto.

### Discussions

We will integrate lectures, discussions, and activities throughout the term. However, several days are reserved for extended discussions. In preparation for these sessions, post 2-3 questions on Blackboard by 8 pm the night before. You will facilitate these discussions, so your peers may ask you to pose your questions to the class.

### Exam and Papers

Written assignments include two short essays (5pp), one midterm exam, and a final paper. You may choose any topic for your final paper as long as it focuses on some aspect of gender in the African diaspora. The paper must incorporate primary and secondary sources. You must discuss your topic with me during office hours prior to submitting your proposal form. The final paper is due **Friday, June 1, 2012 at 8:00 a.m.**

### **Required Texts:**

Lorene Cary, *Black Ice*

Paule Marshall, *Triangular Road: A Memoir*

Nancy Prince, *A Black Woman's Odyssey through Russia and Jamaica*

Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*

Blackboard: Additional required readings are posted on the course Blackboard site [BB].

### **Additional Course Policies**

Honor Principle: You should consult and cite primary and secondary sources when writing your papers. See *The Chicago Manual of Style* or the library's website for instructions.

Plagiarism is the intentional or unintentional failure to include complete citations, a serious offense at Dartmouth and the larger academic community. See "Sources and Citation at Dartmouth College" (<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~writing/sources/>) for additional information. If you have any questions related to the Academic Honor Code, please come to my office hours.

### Student Needs

Students with disabilities enrolled in this course and who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to see me as soon as possible. All discussions will remain confidential, although the Student Accessibility Services office may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation of any accommodation requested.

The Research Center for Writing, and Information Technology (RWiT)  
(<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~rwit/>)

The Student Center for Research, Writing, and Information Technology (RWiT) is a place where you can meet with an undergraduate tutor to discuss a paper, research project, or multi-media assignment. The RWiT tutors are trained to help you at any phase of your process. Whether you are brainstorming or planning, drafting or structuring, tweaking or polishing, the RWiT tutors can provide feedback that will help you to create final products of which you can be proud.

### **Tentative Course Calendar:**

*(Subject to modification)*

March 26      Course Introduction

#### **Gender: Useful Category or Western Conceit?**

March 28      Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,"  
*American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986)  
Oyeronke Oyewumi, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense  
of Western Gender Discourses*, Chapter One  
Ama Ata Aidoo, "The African Woman Today"

#### **Part One**

#### **Women on the Loose and Loose Women in the Age of Slavery**

March 30      Nancy Prince, *A Black Woman's Odyssey through Russia and Jamaica*, Part One

April 2          Prince, entire

April 4          "'Disgusting Depravity': Sex across the Color Line," in Judith Kelleher  
Schafer, *Brothels, Depravity, and Abandoned Women: Illegal Sex  
in Antebellum New Orleans*  
Peter W. Bardaglio, "'Shamefull Matches': The Regulation of Interracial  
Sex and Marriage in the South before 1900," in Martha Hodes,  
*Sex, Love, Race: Crossing Boundaries in North American History*

#### **Masculinities in Slave Societies**

April 6          James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the  
African-Portuguese World, 1441-1770*, Chapter Two  
Martha Hodes, "The Mercurial Nature and Abiding Power of Race: A  
Transnational Family Story," *American Historical Review* 108:1  
(2003): 84-118.

## **Women, Girls, and Vulnerable Populations in Sub-Saharan Africa**

- April 9        **Presenter: Dr. Chloe Schwenke**  
Senior Advisor on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance at the  
Africa Bureau of USAID  
Chloe Schwenke, "Empowerment and Transgender," *Development* 53:2  
(2010): 187-190.  
Chloe Schwenke, *Reclaiming Value in International Development*, excerpts

## **Violence, Race, and Gender**

- April 11        Criminality and Incarceration  
Gross, *Colored Amazons*, Chapters Two and Three  
Estelle B. Freedman, "The Prison Lesbian: Race, Class, and the  
Construction of the Aggressive Female Homosexual, 1915-1965,"  
in Hodes, *Sex, Love, Race*
- April 13        Displaying Bodies of Color: Lynchings and Postcards  
Ida B. Wells, *A Red Record*, excerpts  
Christraud M. Geary, "The Black Female Body, the Postcard, and the  
Archives," in Barbara Thompson, ed., *Black Womanhood: Images,  
Icons, and Ideologies of the African Body*  
Nancy MacLean, "The Leo Frank Case Reconsidered: Gender and  
Sexual Politics in the Making of Reactionary Populism," *Journal of  
American History* 78: 3 (December 1991): 917-948.
- April 16        Gender in the Gulf South  
Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road: An Autobiography*, Chapters 12-  
13  
Hurston, "Women Tales," in *Every Tongue Got to Confess: Negro Folk-tales from  
the Gulf States*, 185-189
- April 18        The Great Migration and the Politics of Respectability  
Resolutions of the National Association of Colored Women (1904)  
Victoria Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in  
Interwar Detroit*, Chapters 1-2
- April 20        Discussion #1
- April 23        **MIDTERM EXAM**

## **Part Two**

### **Gender and Global Black Imaginaries**

- April 25        World Wars and Culture Wars  
Kevin J. Mumford, *Interzones: Black/White Sex Districts in Chicago and New  
York in the Early Twentieth Century*, Chapters One and Two  
Robin D. G. Kelley, "The Riddle of the Zoot: Malcolm Little and Black  
Cultural Politics During World War II," in *Race Rebels: Culture,  
Politics, and the Black Working Class*

- April 27 Journeys from the Caribbean to the US  
Marshall, *Triangular Road*, p1-60
- April 30 Marshall, *Triangular Road*, entire  
June Jordan, “For My American Family: A Belated Tribute to a Legacy  
of Gifted Intelligence and Guts,” in *Some of Us Did Not Die*
- May 2 Gender and International Activism  
Assata Shakur, *Assata: An Autobiography*, Chapters 1-7
- May 4 Shakur, Chapters 8-14
- May 7 Shakur, Chapters 15-21
- May 9 Discussion #2  
**Paper DUE**
- May 11 Hood Museum Visit

### **Part Three**

#### **Women of Color Reflect**

- May 14 On Beauty  
bell hooks, “Straightening Our Hair”  
Gloria Naylor, “Mommy, What Does ‘Nigger’ Mean?”  
Clarisse Jones, “Light Skin Versus Dark Skin”
- May 16 On Gender and Sexuality  
Tricia Rose, *Longing to Tell: Black Women Talk About Sexuality and  
Intimacy*, excerpts  
June Jordan, “A New Politics of Sexuality,” in *Some of Us Did Not Die*  
Kellee Terrell, “Black and Transgender: A Double Burden,” *theroot.com*,  
October 18, 2011
- May 18 Discussion #3  
**Hood Museum Paper DUE**
- May 21 On Education  
Cary, *Black Ice*
- May 23 On Upward Mobility in a “Postracial” World  
Cary, *Black Ice*
- May 25 Research Workshop
- May 30 Final Matters and Evaluations

**Final Paper DUE on Friday, June 1, 2012 at 8:00 a.m.**