AML 4685

Women Writing about Race:
“The Trouble between Us”

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Place: Turlington 1315      Email: dwking@ufl.edu
Class Time: 9-11th periods     Office hours: M 6-8th periods &
Office: 4352 Turlington Hall                         by Appointment

**Description:** This course surveys women’s writing during the mid 19th Century to the present, focusing on gendered Black and White race relations as presented in their literature and in American culture critiques. Students will trace, analyze and discuss how Black and White women talk about each other, coop and reject each other, or, simply, ignore each other in literature as they and their characters negotiate gendered social, political, and personal challenges.

**Goals:** To discover how change and racial relations are developed both in our culture and in the way writers and their readers respond to those changes and situations. Students will discuss how Black and White women, as represented in literature (and film adaptations), move through and solve challenging racial situations and bonding opportunities.

**Format:** The readings and teaching methods of this course are eclectic in pursuit of a variety of texts and experiences. The class sessions include lectures, discussions, and student reports. Our discussions will focus on novels, short stories, poetry, essays, videos and films. As investigators and scholars, our inquiries will play in the spaces between practice, method, and theory in order to address the commonalities, disruptions, gaps, absences, and silences that exist among the primary texts.

**Primary Texts:** (asterisked texts are available as eBooks)

- *Kidd, Sue Monk. The Invention of Wings* (978-14-72212746)

Other readings are available on course reserve under course number AML 4685. How can you access course reserves? “Course reserves can be accessed through the library’s course reserve management software, ARES. A student can locate the items that a professor has requested for course reserve by creating an account in ARES, and then doing a search by course name, course number or the instructor. Once a particular course has been located, students can add the listing to their account and either link to electronic items or obtain call numbers and library locations for physical items.” You may also assess ARES via Canvas.
Course Schedule

Week 1 -- 8/22

Course Introduction: Purpose and Goals

1. Discussion of “Difficult Conversations” (found under assignments in Canvas) and key terms (page 7 of syllabus).
2. Consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss them in class:
   a. “What keeps Black and White women apart?
   b. What strengthens their relationships?”
   c. What makes the path to friendship, mutual support and respect easier or more difficult today than in the past?
   d. What do you see in the future of B/W women’s relationships--five years from now?
3. Assignment: Think about your desired group session assignment. Select a primary and a secondary text preference. Submit an email to me with your request before 6:00 pm Wednesday the 7th. Please use the subject heading “Group Request AML 4685” so your request will not be lost. I cannot promise your request will be met, but I will do my best. There will be five slots available for each group. The group sessions begin on 10/17.
4. Assignment: Begin weekly submission of entrance pass assignments at the start of our next class meeting. In-class participation grades will be recorded.

Week 2 – 8/29

Required Readings:


*Entrance Pass Assignment Tip:* Many of the texts are paired by subject matter and theme. Consider how they engage the terms and themes contained in this syllabus as you write.

*Alert:* This will be an “Impromptu Discussion” session. Be prepared.

Week 3 – 9/5  NO CLASS—Labor Day

*Alert:* Everyone should read ahead. *The Help*, for instance, is a very long text. Begin reading it if you have time.

Week 4 – 9/12

Required Readings:


Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. NY: Alfred A. Knoff, 1987, 74-85. (Course Reserve)--in class video excerpt will be shown for discussion

*Alert:* This will be an “Impromptu Discussion” session. Be prepared.

*After Break:*

*Group presentation assignments will be distributed followed by a Group Planning Session*
Planning Session Instructions: Plan how you are going to communicate. Select a group leader and a recorder. Discuss talents each team member might be able to bring to the presentations. You should plan at least one meeting for outside of class time.

Week 5 – 9/19
Required Reading:


*Assignment: Read your assigned novel in preparation for next week’s class session.

*Alert: This will be an “Impromptu Discussion” session. Be prepared.

Week 6 – 9/26
Required Reading:


*Alert: This will be an “Impromptu Discussion” session. Be prepared.

Week 7 – 10/3
Required Reading:


Breines, Winifred. “‘What’s Love Got to Do with It?’ White Women, Black Women, and Feminism in the Movement Years.” Signs 27.4: 2002. 1095-1133. (Course Reserve)


*Alert: This will be an “Impromptu Discussion” session. Be prepared.

*Alert: We will begin discussion of Alice Walker’s Meridian in two weeks.

Week 8 – 10/10
This three-hour class session will be for the benefit of group session preparations. Please be prepared to work with your group. You do not have to meet in the classroom, but you
must meet. Group leaders are responsible for reporting attendance to me by the end of the day (dwking@ufl.edu).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 9 -- 10/17</th>
<th>Group I -Introduction to the text <em>Meridian</em> (1976)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required Reading:</td>
<td>Walker, Alice. <em>Meridian</em>.</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Alert:</em></td>
<td><em>Dessa Rose</em> will be our next text. Begin reading.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 10— 10/24</th>
<th>Group II -Introduction to the text <em>Dessa Rose</em> (1986)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required Reading:</td>
<td>Sherley Anne Williams, <em>Dessa Rose</em></td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Assignment:</em></td>
<td>Group members of <em>Meridian</em> only: 6 typed pages response papers email submission due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Alert:</em></td>
<td><em>Can’t Quit You, Baby</em> will be our next text. Begin reading</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 11 – 10/31</th>
<th>Group III -Introduction to the text <em>Can’t Quit You, Baby</em> (1988)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required Reading:</td>
<td>Douglas, Ellen. <em>Can’t Quit You, Baby</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Assignment:</em></td>
<td>Group members of <em>Dessa Rose</em> only: 6 typed pages response papers email submission due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Alert:</em></td>
<td><em>The Help</em> will be our next text. Begin reading.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 12 – 11/7</th>
<th>2 group-presentations today</th>
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<tr>
<td>Group Session IVA-Introduction to</td>
<td>Chapters 1-15 of the text <em>The Help</em> (2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Required Reading:</td>
<td>Stockett, Kathryn, <em>The Help</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>15 minute break</td>
<td>Group Session IVB-Introduction to Chapters 16-Conclusion the text <em>The Help</em> (2009)</td>
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<tr>
<td><em>Assignment:</em></td>
<td>Group members of <em>Can’t Quit You Baby</em> only: 6 typed pages response papers email submission due</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 13 – 11/14</th>
<th>THE HELP Continued</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Assignment:</em></td>
<td>Group members of <em>The Help</em> only: 6 typed pages response papers due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Alert:</em></td>
<td>This will be an “Impromptu Discussion” session. Be prepared.</td>
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Week 14 – 11/21

Group Session V-Introduction to the text *The Invention of Wings* (2014)

Required Reading:

Week 15 – 11/28 – IMPROMPTU Discussion Session
Cumulative-focused issues and topics you are to address: TBD

*Assignment:* Group members of *The Invention of Wings* only: 6 typed pages response papers due

Week 16 – 12/5 – IMPROMPTU Discussions continue
Cumulative-focused issues you are to address: TBD

**Grade Distribution**

250 total points available: Response Papers

During the second half of the semester we will have panel presentations. You should focus your response paper efforts on your group presentation text and readings. Your response paper must be no more than six (6) pages long.

This is not the place for self-evaluation and life meditations. Here you demonstrate your knowledge, compare theories, and engage the text -- the more original your contemplations and assessments, the better your grade. Keep the course objectives in mind when writing (but you may also expand your comments beyond this boundary). Research the text or topic you are considering and share your thoughts. This is a requirement of the response papers. Without presenting evidence of outside research and its consideration in the paper, you will earn no more than 187.5 points (or 75%). If you run into problems, see me.

50 points: Panel Sessions

These forty-minute, panel sessions probe previously discussed questions and explore new ones. Be creative in your presentations. Do not line up and give reports. I repeat: DO NOT. Have fun with this project! Present your analysis and interpretations through narration while acting out a scene or revising a scene; stage a debate or a trial; juxtapose the novel with artwork, music, or poems. Be sure to involve the class. Only your imagination limits the possibilities! Two full class periods are dedicated to panel planning so there should be no excuse for any member’s lack of participation. From the final in class planning period, the panel is expected to produce a one-paragraph abstract of the proposed presentation and submit it to me during the next class period. The first group should plan to do this earlier (if my assistance is required). In addition, each panel member is asked to write a brief summary of the group’s work, individual effort, and the panel’s contribution to the class objectives. These two or three page summaries are due the day of the panel presentation (email only, please). Individual grades are assigned for these papers and added to panel presentation grades. I record only the final score.

**Other expectations and Assignments—200 points**

**Attendance:** Discussions cannot be replicated; so, if you miss a day of class you will have missed the lesson for that day irrevocably. Therefore, I take attendance very seriously and expect you to come to
class every day on time. You are allowed up to two unexcused absences. If you reach nine missed class sessions you will automatically fail the course and should withdraw from the class or you will receive an “E” for the semester. Remember, this class meets once a week representing three class sessions. That is three absences--if the entire class is missed.

Caveat: Excused absences are permitted if you provide a typewritten letter documenting an illness, a family crisis, or participation in a university sponsored event. All students should consult with me to make up material missed during an absence. Unfortunately, given the nature of the course, if you miss three weeks of class (equating nine sessions) you will automatically fail and receive an E. For additional information, please see our University guidelines as indicated in the “Course Policies” section of this syllabus.

Tardiness will be recorded and considered during grading. Consistent tardiness will result in a final letter grade reduction.

Preparation (50 pts): All readings, entrance passes and take-home assignments must be prepared and ready for each class session. Write a comment on your entrance pass cards demonstrating your preparation for the day’s session. Poorly constructed, irrelevant or perfunctory comments will result in point reductions in this area of grading. I do not want you to tell me you liked a particular reading, for instance. Your response to assigned readings must be intelligent, thoughtful and scholarly. Identify why the material is valuable to our class discussion (or objectives) or how the material engages the genre being studied. Consider the categories listed above for those doing the final response paper assignment—this may help you think about what you want to write. Your work on these cards will be graded during assigned impromptu discussions, so do your best work at all times. Even if I do not ask you to enter into a discussion, your entrance cards are required. Be prepared at all times.

IMPROMPTU Discussions
Beginning on November 14, I will select several students (during class) to enter into discussions guided by issues raised in your entrance cards or issues assigned for entrance card responses. You must bring depth to the idea on the floor for discussion as well as offer your own card remarks for consideration. Discussions will proceed as follows:

1st Speaker—offers entry card commentary on the assigned reading
2nd Speaker—responds with reflections on the opening statement
   You may agree with the opening speaker or disagree, but you must discuss why.
1st Speaker—responds to the reflections of speaker #2 with depth of insight
2nd Speaker—adds additional information from his or her own entry card
1st Speaker—responds to the additional information
   You may agree with the opening speaker or disagree, but you must discuss why.
2nd Speaker—responds to the reflections of speaker #2 with depth of insight
Speaker #2—concluding statements
Speaker #1—concluding statements
Speaker #3—Summary of the issues raised
Summary participants review what was argued or discussed and offer insights overlooked or not fully considered. The selected summary speaker must summarize and should introduce related information from additional texts read that week, from texts read in previous weeks, or from his/her own entry pass.

Open Class Discussion—volunteers from the class and professor offer insights
This pattern will repeat with new speakers. Be prepared for participation without prior notice.
Participation (100 pts): Students should complete all readings and assignments prior to the class meeting and participate fully in class discussion. Assessment for participation is made in the areas of attendance, engagement, leadership, teamwork, and originality.

Strong participation includes:
1. only excused absences with no recorded tardiness
2. adherence to course policies, assignments and guidelines
3. response paper submissions providing evidence that readings are completed and ready for class discussions
4. outside research done and shared with class on multiple occasions
5. clear and respectful exchanges with other students and the professor
6. volunteering to enter or begin discussions (brief presentations included)
7. leadership within small group activities noted by reporting out for the group or taking a guiding role
8. an understanding of teamwork and ones responsibility to advancing positive class or group dynamics
9. originality in thought, discussion and response paper information and sharing
10. encouraging others’ ability to enter or sustain participation in discussions
11. engaging questions from the professor or other students without hesitation or persuasion

Rubric

“A” level participation is strong in all key areas and earns 100-90 points.
“B” level participation, albeit promising, is notably weak in two key areas and earns from 89-80 points.

Exams, Quizzes and Other assignments (50 pts): There may be a few pop quizzes—no makeup quizzes. Your performance during class, progress evaluations (tests and quizzes) and in-class discussions will determine if a final exam is necessary. I will inform you of my decision.

Extra Credit (5 bonus points): This is an optional assignment. You may give a fifteen minute oral report to the class on an issue or author under discussion. These reports must be approved prior to presentation. Submit a short proposal describing what you plan to do. The assignment will earn scores ranging from 1/2 to 5 points (added to your overall course score). Reports might cover an issues such as “Black and white Mothers on Welfare,” “Interracial Marriage,” “Race and The View,” “Sunshine Laws,” or “Black and White Women in Prison.” The choice as well as the presentation design is yours. Any powerpoint presentation, however, must follow the 1-1-5 rule. By that, I mean one image, used one time with no more than five words per slide.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION AND GRADING METHOD

All papers and short essay quizzes are evaluated on content, originality, creativity, connections to course objectives, and form (grammar, spelling, bibliography, etc.). Grades will be calculated in terms of possible score percentages with no curve. You are guaranteed an A+ through an A- if you earn 450 points or more out of 500 possible points (90 %+).

435 to 449 (87% +) B+  385 to 399 (77 % +) C+  335 to 363 (67 %+) D+
Assignments will be graded on how proficiently they meet expectations in the key areas of content, organization, and grammar/mechanics and prose style.

**Strong content includes:**
- A clearly delineated and/or interpreted topic
- A strong, clear, and logically developed thesis that is supported by fully developed ideas in the form of relevant textual evidence and research
- Ideas that show evidence of independent thinking
- Commentary that explains how the concrete details support the thesis. Commentary may include interpretation, analysis, argument, insight, and/or reflection.
- Research supporting materials (note: Google searches are fine for starters, but please use academic journals and books for strong research effort)

**Strong organization includes:**
- The effective arrangement of points that reveals itself in very good incorporation of evidence (use of summary, paraphrase) and the sparing and judicious use of quotations
- Rounded and well-connected paragraphs
- The use of appropriate transitions

**Strong grammar, mechanics, and prose style is characterized by:**
- Mature sentence structure, syntax, and diction
- Strong audience awareness as evidenced in the use of appropriate style, register, tone, and vocabulary
- Little to no errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation as well as less than three fatal errors in the entire document
- The formatting of document in keeping with prescribed guidelines—including length of response submissions

**Rubric**
The “A” (or A-) submission has strong content, strong organization, AND strong grammar/mechanics and prose style. To receive an “A” or “A-” work needs to offer support in the form of textual evidence and secondary research materials (using direct quotes and paraphrase), present original insight in argumentation, and be organized clearly and logically with sources documented using MLA style guidelines.

A “B” submission is notably weak in ONE of the above key areas.
A “C” submission, albeit promising, is notably weak in TWO or more of the above key areas.
A “D” submission is significantly weak in TWO or more of the above key areas.

Additional information concerning UF grading policies may be found on the undergraduate catalog web page [https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx](https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx)

**Course Policies**

1) **“Fatal Errors” Policy:** Students must meet high standards in writing. To this end, all written assignments must meet minimal presentation criteria to be acceptable. These standards address spelling, punctuation, format and basic grammar. The term Fatal Errors refers to formal writing
errors of form. Specifically, they include the following and will be identified in evaluated written assignments by error number:

1. Each different word misspelled;
2. Each sentence fragment;
3. Each run-on sentence or comma splice;
4. Each mistake in capitalization;
5. Each serious error in punctuation that obscures meaning, including errors in the use or failure to use italics and quotation marks;
6. Each error in verb tense or subject/verb agreement;
7. Each instance of ending a sentence with a preposition;
8. Each improper citation, or lack of citation, where one is needed;
9. Each misuse of words (who for that or unwarranted use of clichés, for instance) and reference problems (note: pronouns refer to the last person mentioned);
10. Poor paragraphing or lack of paragraphing;
11. Lack of conformity with assignment format.

Papers with more than three (3) fatal errors on any one page or more than seven (7) for the entire document will be returned to the student for revision and will suffer a half letter grade deduction. Only one resubmission is allowed. Penalties for final course papers (where there is no time for a resubmission) will be based on the magnitude of errors and the relative importance of the assignment to the determination of the final course grade. This policy applies to all written assignments, except in class quizzes.

2) Cell phones and computers: Cell phones must be muted during the class session. If an emergency occurs and you have to respond to calls or texts, please leave the classroom. Computers (iPads or other electronics) are allowed for note taking, access to eBooks, at the request of the professor and presentations only. Anyone using a computer for any other purpose will be asked to deliver the devise to me for retrieval after class. You may record the class (presentations, for instance) with my permission only. Failure to acquire permission will result in participation point reductions.

3) Papers: All papers must be typed and double spaced using the 8 1/2 x 11 page layout with one inch margins all around. Use Courier or New York Times font at 12 point size. Documentation and form should follow the MLA style manual. Number all pages after the first within the upper right margin.

4) Grade Disputes: Questions about assigned grades are acceptable during my office hours only. If my written responses do not address your concerns, I will explain why a grade was earned. With the exception of miscalculation, I will not consider grade changes. Please do not ask; I consider it harassment. You may consult the department of English’s Associate Chair, for grade appeals, however. Please note: appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

5) Midterm assessment Report: Individual grades will be available after midterm in Canvas, indicating your current status in the class. These reports will offer information on all graded aspects of the course completed, including attendance, as recorded in the e-learning grade book. You should consider these performance-tracking grades carefully and govern yourself accordingly.

6) Missed class sessions: Make up work for approved absences must be addressed within one week of your return. See me for submission deadlines for missed work within this time frame.
7) **Response Paper Submission guidelines:** Like all written assignments, this paper **must be submitted electronically.** Microsoft Word compatible documents only please. Unreadable documents will be returned ungraded. Submit your project via email (dwking@ufl.edu) by midnight the evening of the due date. Late submissions will suffer a half letter grade reduction. Include the course number in the subject heading. Regardless of how you registered, your subject line for response paper submission should look like this: **Response Paper AML 4685.**

8) “**Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at:**

https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx.”

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**University Policies**

**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. It is your responsibility to contact the school administration regarding any disability you may have, and to inform me so we can make any necessary arrangements. For more information, see: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/

**ACADEMIC HONESTY:** Honor Code. “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.” This oath represents UF’s commitment to academic honesty and integrity. “Cheating, plagiarism, bribery, misrepresentation, conspiracy and fabrication” are violations of the Honor Code. All students must abide by the student honor code. For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/student---honor---code.aspx

**HARASSMENT:** UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eeo/sexharassment.htm

**COURSE EVALUATIONS:** “Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted online at https://evaluations.ufl.edu. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results.”
Some Suggested Readings


List of Key Terms

1. **Unctuousness**: “...a feistiness about life that nobody can wipe out, no matter how hard they try” Katie Cannon (*Katie’s Canon*)—a construction of Black womanist ethics.

2. **Escape**: not just physical escape, but other types of escape. What are we running from when we run from each other? How are we escaping and at what costs?

3. **Double consciousness**: being black and American

4. **Double Jeopardy**: race and gender oppression (Frances Beal)

5. **Triple Jeopardy**: race, gender and class oppression

6. **Codes of Silence

7. **Emotional Distance**: Institutional or public behavior change without personal or private attitudinal change.

8. **Friendship

9. **Outsider Within**: living and working with someone of the opposite race (usually white) but not being considered or respected as an equal partner within such relationships

10. **Surveillance**: A strategy of controlling blacks who enter “white spaces of the public and private spheres”--enforced by violence or the threat of violence and loss (economic, for instance). It “highlights individuality by making the individual hypervisible and on display” while (Patricia Hill Collins).

11. **Truth

12. **Stereotypes**: particularly how they are used

13. **Guilt

14. **Racial identities

15. **Racial instruction

16. **Memory

17. **Victim

18. **Cultural Reference

19. **Understanding

20. **Cultural Lag**: “a situation in which the old norms no longer fit new social realities” (Cathleen Gray and Shirley Bryant)

21. **White nostalgia** (Winifred Breines)

22. **Life Script** (Dave Spenceley) “A personal life plan which an individual decides early in life and is based upon his or her interpretation of the external and internal events which affect them. The script is a decisional model - this is very important - if I chose my own script then at any time given the right circumstances I can choose to make a change in my script. (When this change takes place in therapy the client is said to have made a Redecision.)... People follow their script because of the pay off, a familiar feeling, attempting to avoid the loss of love and in an attempt to gain love.”