

AFA3332 - Black Feminist and Womanist Theory  
Spring 2024

**Professor R. Barnes, Ph.D.**

**Associate Professor of African American Studies and Anthropology**

**Associate Director and Undergraduate Coordinator, African American Studies Program**

**Graduate Faculty in Anthropology and Gender, Sexualities, and Women's Studies**

University of Florida

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**Course Meeting Time:**

T | Period 5 (11:45 AM – 1:40 PM) Norman Hall 1001

R | Periods 5-6 (11:50 PM - 1:40 PM) Norman Hall 1001

**Office Hours:**

To Be Determined and By Appointment

(In person or via zoom)

**Course Description**

This course examines historical, critical, and theoretical perspectives on the development of Black feminist theory/praxis and Womanist theory/praxis. In this course, we engage many of the challenges and debates that revealed a need for Black feminist/womanist thought in the U.S. context and how it has been used in other parts of the world. We also interrogate Black feminist and Black womanist thought with the understanding that primary to their emergence is an acknowledgement that they are grounded in standpoint theory and as such, operate as a theory, a methodology, and a praxis that is constantly being reshaped, redefined, and retooled to best fit the needs of Black women and their communities. Students will also learn that both Black feminist and Womanist thought are grounded in the social realities of systems of oppression and how they impact not only the life outcomes of Black cis and trans women, but of other excluded and marginalized groups.

**Course Objective:**

Through course work, in addition to learning the key ideas and texts within Black Feminist/Womanist theor(ies), students will develop an understanding of Black feminisms and womanisms as a theoretical paradigm, methodology and praxis that can help them to see and address systems of oppression on micro and macro levels.

**Course Structure**

This is a course in which class discussion of the readings and films is the most important assignment. I expect that you will participate actively in class, ask questions, and challenge the ideas put forward by the texts or class discussions. I ask that you treat your peers with respect and consideration when they are speaking so that we can create an open environment in which all feel they have a right to voice their **informed** ideas. What is meant by informed? In a world in which anyone with a phone and a social media account can be an expert, it is even more necessary that we begin with vetted information and critical analysis.

The classroom is definitely the place for healthy debate, but no debate was ever “won” without some degree of prep. Interested in healthy debate? Consider what you want to say, think about it in the context of the space and place you are in, say it, and expect questions that have gone through a similar process. But what is really valuable in the classroom is not debate, but dialogue. There is no winner in dialogue, just the exchange of information with the goal of not winning or persuasion, but understanding.

This course is designed to engage students in research, critical thinking, and formal research skills through various means of learning in an attempt to provide all students with multiple opportunities to utilize their optimal learning style while building other styles. Students will be asked to demonstrate their learning through writing assignments, oral reports, class discussions and examinations. In each instance students will be assessed based upon the content and the form. For example: in the case of a writing assignment, there may be deductions in the student’s grade if the writing impairs the reader’s ability to understand the content or the content is not thoroughly argued and/or researched. Students should feel free to see me or to utilize the myriad resources available to assist students in their academic life here at the University of Florida.

Support Structures: My pedagogical practice is one that supports student growth. I do not look for ways to penalize students, on the contrary, I look for ways to encourage greater, deeper understanding and growth across the time we have together in this course. To that end, I may occasionally recommend that students see me and/or a counselor for student success assistance. This may be with critically engaging a reading, preparing a stronger written response, or working through challenges with oral presentations. In any of these or related cases, I may ask the student to resubmit an assignment after having met with me and/or a peer-mentor. This is the only time I allow resubmissions.

#### **Extensions, Late Assignments, Absences, Etc.**

I understand that this course is but one part of students’ lives and that occasionally external factors may cause a student to miss class or require more time on an assignment. I ask that in this case, the student communicates their needs and we come up with a pathway forward. While I am willing to be flexible, if a pattern develops in which it becomes clear that as student will not be able to meet the expectations of the course, we will have to meet and consider options including withdrawing and/or not passing. It is always better to talk with me first than to get to that point.

#### **Student Accessibility:**

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with me and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

<https://disability.ufl.edu/students/accommodations/>

**Sensitive Subject Matter:**

This course requires engagement with issues of a potentially sensitive nature. Some of our readings and class discussions will frankly address race, ethnicity, health, and sexuality among other topics. While you are not required to self-disclose in assignments or discuss information with which you are uncomfortable, I do expect you to read and discuss in class the articles and chapters assigned. If you anticipate problems completing the readings or participating in class discussions, please talk to me well in advance. A passing grade in this class is not dependent on what you disclose in your writings and discussion but rather how well you engage the reading, think analytically, and write effectively. (adapted from Lindeman SDSU)

**Colleague Sensitivity:**

We each come from a range of backgrounds and have had a host of experiences that may affect how we read, discuss, and experience various aspects of the course and our work together as colleagues. There may be information presented or statements made that cause various emotions during class, while reading, or even post class when one has had time to think about the material alone or with others. I ask that we come to the readings, assignments, and discussions with compassion and empathy; for ourselves as individuals, and for others as colleagues in a community of learning. As your course instructor and facilitator, I will work to be attentive and to address concerns as sensitively as possible, however, I ask that if you experience something you would like to discuss, please make me aware after class, in office hours, or by appointment.

**Wellness:**

We are currently experiencing particularly difficult times as a society. The University offers resources that you should feel welcome to utilize.

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 352-392-1575; and the University Police Department: 352-392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

**Course Work Expectations:**

All student assignments must be type-written, double-spaced, with pagination, your name on each page, and submitted via Canvas using docx or pdf files. This class requires a good deal of reading and writing. Writing assignments are given as an opportunity to build students' research, critical thinking, and formal scholarship skills. Therefore, writing is assessed along with content and will result in deductions in grading if there are significant errors in grammar, punctuation and style and/or the writing impairs the reader's ability to understand the content. With this in mind, please utilize the College of Arts and Sciences Writing Center.

I may occasionally recommend that students see me and/or a counselor for assistance in which case the student would be able to resubmit the assignment after having met with me and/or a tutor. This is the only time I allow resubmissions.

**Plagiarism and Cheating:**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. Students caught plagiarizing, defined as misrepresenting another's work as one's own through omission, evasiveness, and/or improper citation, may receive an F on the assignment and in the class. Common yet no less egregious plagiarism includes using verbatim other authors' summaries of research and then citing the primary source rather than citing the author who summarizes that primary source. If you are unsure about when you may be in danger of plagiarizing please talk with me. (adapted from Lindeman SDSU)

**Classroom Policies Honor Code/Ethical Practice:**

You are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. Any violation of the academic integrity expected of you will result in a minimum academic sanction of [faculty to insert their minimum academic penalty, for example: "failing grade on the assignment or assessment"] Any alleged violations of the Student Honor Code will result in a referral to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. Please review the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code at [sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/](https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/)

**Audio/Visual Policy:**

To encourage active engagement and academic inquiry in the classroom, as well as to safeguard the privacy of students and faculty, no form of audio or visual recording in the classroom is permitted without explicit permission from the professor/instructor or without a letter from the Disability Resource Center, signed by the faculty member, authorizing the recording as an accommodation. Authorized recordings may only be used by a student who has obtained permission and may not be shared or distributed for any reason.

See the University of Florida Guidance for Recording a Class Lecture

<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/codechanges/>

**Avoid Unauthorized Recordings:**

A Student shall not make a video or audio Recording. A Recording must not be Published without the prior express written consent of the Faculty or guest lecturer.

A Student shall not make a Recording in class, through any means over any medium, of anything other than a Class Lecture, including but not limited to the Recording of any assessment, clinical activity, lab, or student presentation. The Recording of any meeting or conversation in class between Students or between Students and Faculty or guest lecturer is strictly prohibited.

**Do Not Share or Publish Recordings:**

A Student, independently or with another person or other people, must not without express written authorization take, give, Publish, post or submit, transmit, or receive materials, information, or resources in any manner, through any medium, for the purpose of gaining or providing an improper academic advantage to any Student.

**Course Evaluation:**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/](http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [ufl.bluera.com/ufl/](http://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/](http://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/)

**Use of Electronics:**

It is true that we now live in a sort of “Jetsons” age. However, I view the classroom as a professional environment much like an office or team meeting. It is quite rude in that context to take or receive phone calls, emails, chats, etc. Therefore students are asked to turn off or silence their electronic devices including smart phones before arriving in class. If you forget and your phone rings, you are asked to quietly turn it off and proceed with class without any further distractions. If you need to take the call, silence it, and quietly leave the classroom and take your call outside. If you have, or anticipate an emergency that requires you to be available electronically, you are required to let me know, and step outside the classroom to take care of **ALL** electronic communications. Students may use laptops, ipads, ereaders, and other electronic reading devices **to read or view classroom materials ONLY**. You may not use these devices for social networking, “googling”, or other purposes not related to the course.

**Grades will be calculated as follows:****Discussion/Participation (20%)**

Students are required to attend class prepared to discuss the readings. Students will be given opportunities to engage in class by responding to lecture points and discussion questions. Students will also be assigned readings wherein they will facilitate class discussion. Guidelines will be provided.

**Special Events Papers (20%)**

Students are required to attend at least two events over the course of the term related to Black Feminisms/ Black Womanisms and write a short paper discussing the events. Guidelines for the papers will be provided. While the deadline is rolling, students are encouraged to attend events and submit these papers as early in the semester as possible. Some events will be suggested in class. However, students are also free to locate events themselves. If you are unsure if the event will meet the requirements, please check with me. Also, feel free to share your knowledge of events with your classmates.

**Midterm Examination (20%)**

Students will complete a take-home exam on key concepts and theories. Details will be given in class and on Canvas.

### **Discussion Leader (20%)**

In Part four of the course, students will choose one of two of our assigned topics/books to focus their attention. Students choosing the same topic/book will work together in groups. Together, you will prepare a conversation that engages the readings and a current event to allow your peers to apply a Black Feminist or Womanist lens to the current event. Groups should prepare with the expectation that not everyone has read their particular topical book and will be prepared to engage students in discussion providing a summary, key points and application outside class/academia. This engagement, including student participation, should take appx. 30 minutes of the in-class session. Students in the same group will submit a group visual aid (ppt. canva, etc). Each student will also write an individual paper about the topic/text. Guidelines will be provided for each component in class and via Canvas.

### **Final Project. Black Feminist/Womanist Theor(ies) and Praxis (20%)**

Students will develop a preliminary project using Black Feminisms/ Womanisms as a primary theoretical position. This is the type of activity one may use to build an independent study, thesis project, or to develop an art project (any of the arts), or a project for a community organization, nonprofit, or public service initiative. I will help you develop topics and you will have the opportunity to consult a research librarian. Students will create a presentation to be uploaded for class observation. Students will also write an accompanying summary to explain the presentation. I will provide you with guidelines and additional resources and suggestions over the course of the semester.

#### **Required Texts:**

All books are available through UF Bookstore and other book retailers. Students will also read articles, view films, etc. All materials that are not actual books will be provided via CANVAS.

In order of appearance:

*Misogynoir Transformed* (2022) Moya Bailey

*Raising the Race* (2015) Riché J. Daniel Barnes

*Black Feminist Thought* (any edition) Patricia Hill Collins

*Hood Feminism* (2021) Mikki Kendall

*Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (any edition) Audre Lorde

**Trigger Warning: Some of the readings in this course may touch on very sensitive issues. Students should let me know as soon as possible if they encounter readings or materials that make it difficult to complete assignments for the course. I will make every effort to be sensitive to these issues however, if a student believes these are issues they are not ready to explore in an academic setting, I would suggest the student withdraw from the course. –with well wishes and respect, Professor Barnes**

## COURSE OUTLINE:

Your reading assignment is provided for each week. Course requirements are due the day they appear on the outline. In-class assignments, homework assignments and pop quizzes/short writing assignments will be disseminated periodically throughout the course. The schedule is subject to minor changes you will be notified of changes verbally and in writing. **Students should ALWAYS check CANVAS for real-time announcements.**

### Thursday, August 22:

Introduction to the course  
Syllabus

### Part 1: What's in a Name? Feminist/Black Feminist/Womanist...

#### Tuesday, August 27

In Class Discussion

#### Thursday, August 29

**See Canvas for class instructions for Today's Class**

Hobson, Janelle. 2016. Black Beauty and Digital Spaces: The New Visibility Politics, *Ada: A Journal of Gender, New Media, and Technology*. <https://adanewmedia.org/2016/10/issue10-hobson/> last accessed 1/15/21

#### Tuesday, September 3

**No Class: Dr. Barnes has Jury Duty**

**Please Complete the Readings and See Canvas for Assignment**

Guy-Sheftall, Beverly. 1995. "Introduction: The Evolution of Feminist Consciousness among African American Women," in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought*. The New Press: New York.

Combahee River Collective. 1977 (1983). *Combahee River Collective Statement*. in *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*. Barbara Smith ed. New York: Kitchen Table Press

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. (2020) "Until Black Women are Free None of Us Will Be Free." *The New Yorker*. <https://www.newyorker.com/news/our-columnists/until-black-women-are-free-none-of-us-will-be-free> (see Canvas for PDF)

#### Thursday, September 5

Walker, Alice. 1983. "Womanism" *In Search of our Mother's Gardens: Poetry and Prose*. Harcourt: San Diego.

#### Tuesday, September 9

Phillips, Layli. 2006. "Introduction: Womanism: On Its Own" and Chapter 1. "Alice Walker's Womanism: Coming Apart, Gifts of Power and Womanist" *The Womanist Reader*. 2006. New York: Routledge

Collins, Patricia Hill. "What's in a Name: Womanism, Black Feminism, and Beyond." *The Black Scholar*, WINTER/SPRING 1996, Vol. 26, No. 1.

**Thursday, September 12**

Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name: A Biomythography*  
Opening pages and Chapters 1-10

**Tuesday, September 17**

Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name: A Biomythography*  
Opening pages and Chapters 11-24

**Thursday, September 19**

Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name: A Biomythography*  
Opening pages and Chapters 25-31 thru end pages  
Film: *A Litany for Survival*

**Part 2. Intersectionality, Black Feminist Thought, and Womanist Theories**

**Tuesday, September 24**

Love, Bettina. 2019. "We Who Are Dark" and "Theory Over Gimmicks: Finding Your North Star" (2019). In *We Want to Do More than Survive*. Boston: Beacon Press.

**Thursday, September 26**

Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. 1992. "African American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs* 17(2): 251-274.

**Tuesday, October 1**

King, Deborah. 1988. "Multiple Jeopardy: Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology," *Signs* 14(1): 42-72.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review*, 43(6): 1241-1299.

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought*. Chapters 1 and 2. Routledge Press.

**Thursday, October 3**

**Dr. Barnes Away for Research Trip**

**Tuesday, October 8**

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought*. Chapters 3-5. Routledge Press.

**Thursday, October 10**

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought*. Chapters 9-10. Routledge Press. (we will read chapters 6-8 later).

**Tuesday, October 15**

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought*. Chapters 11-12.

**Thursday, October 17**

Alexander-Floyd, Nikole and Evelyn Simien. 2006. "Revisiting What's in a Name? Exploring the Contours of Africana Womanist Thought." *Frontiers* Vol. 27(1). 68-132

Rousseau, Nicole. 2013. "Historical Womanist Theory: Re-Visioning Black Feminist Thought." *Race, Gender & Class*; Vol. 20, (3/4): 191-204.

**Tuesday, October 22****Mid-Term Distributed**

Townes, Emilie. 2003. "Womanist Theology" Vanderbilt University. 159-176.

Grant, Jacquelyn. 1986. "Womanist Theology: Black Women's Experience as a Source for Doing Theology, with Special Reference to Christology" in *Still Brave: The Evolution of Black Women's Studies*. eds Stanlie M. James, Frances Smith Foster & Beverly Guy-Sheftall. 2009. New York: The Feminist Press. 67-85.

Bryant-Davis, Thema and Lillian Comas-Díaz. 2016. "Introduction" in *Womanist and Mujerista Psychologies: Voices of Fire, Acts of Courage*. American Psychological Association. 3-26.

**Midterm Take Home Exam**

**Thursday October 24 no class work on midterm due Wednesday, October 30**

**Part 3 (Re)Productive Justice: Black Women, Work, and Motherhood****Tuesday, October 29**

Jones, Jacqueline. 2010. Introduction. *Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family, from Slavery to Freedom*. New York: Basic Books.

Davis, Angela. Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves," *Massachusetts Review*, 13(1/2): 81-100.

Dorothy Roberts. 1993. Racism and Patriarchy in the Meaning of Motherhood. Faculty Scholarship at Penn Law. 595. [https://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/faculty\\_scholarship/595](https://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/faculty_scholarship/595)

**Wednesday, October 30****Midterm Exam Due****Thursday, October 31**

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought*. Chapters 6-8.

**Tuesday, November 5**

Barnes, Riché J. Daniel, 2015. Introduction and Chapters 1-3 in *Raising the Race: Black Career Women Redefine Marriage, Motherhood, and Community*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press

**Thursday, November 7**

Barnes, Riché J. Daniel, 2015. Chapters 4-5 in *Raising the Race: Black Career Women Redefine Marriage, Motherhood, and Community*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press

**Tuesday, November 12**

Barnes, Riché J. Daniel, 2015 Conclusion and Epilogue in *Raising the Race: Black Career Women Redefine Marriage, Motherhood, and Community*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press

Barnes, Riché J. Daniel, 2015 "She Was a Twin: Black Strategic Mothering, Race-Work, and the Politics of Survival." *Transforming Anthropology* 24(1): 49-60

Ross, Loretta. *What is Reproductive Justice*. <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/php-programs/courses/fileDL.php?fID=4051>

Bailey, Moya and Whitney Peoples. 2017. "Towards Black Feminist Health Science," in *Catalyst: feminist, theory, technoscience*. Vol 3(2):1-27

**Part 4 Contemporary Black Feminist Thought**

**In this part of the course students will explore contemporary theorizing in Black Feminist Thought and begin organizing their research projects. Students will be organized into two groups to organize presentations and discussion on *Misogynoir Transformed* and *Hood Feminism***

**Thursday, November 14**

**Dr. Barnes is Away for the National Women's Studies Association Conference. Instead of Class Meeting Dr. Barnes will hold individual meetings with students regarding their final projects. See Canvas for associated assignments and meeting sign-ups.**

**Readings for *Misogynoir***

Bailey, Moya. And Izetta Autumn Mobley. Work in the Intersections: A Black Feminist Disability Framework. *Gender & Society* 33(1): 19-40

Hobson, Janelle. 2003. The "Batty" Politic: Toward an Aesthetic of the Black Female Body. *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy* 18(4): 87-105

Trudy. "Gradient Lair: A Womanist Blog"

**Readings for *Hood Feminism***

Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks. 1993. Chapter 7 "The Politics of Respectability," in *Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880-1920*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

(see again) Barnes, Riché J. Daniel. 2015. Chapter 5 "Black Career Women, the Black Community, and the neo-politics of respectability," in *Raising the Race: Black Career Women*

*Redefine Marriage, Motherhood, and Community*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Roach, Shanique. "Black Respectability Currency: Reading Black Feminism and Sexuality" in *The Journal of American Culture*." Vol. 42(1):10-20.

Pitcan, Mikaela, et.al. 2018. "Performing a Vanilla Self: Respectability and the Digital World," in *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communications*. Vol 23:163-179

**Tuesday, November 19**

Group Presentation on Moya Bailey's *Misogynoir*

Group Presentation on Mikki Kendall's *Hood Feminism*

**Thursday, November 21**

**Dr. Barnes is Away for the American Anthropological Association Conference**

**Individual Meetings Continue**

**See Canvas for Assignments**

**Break: November 25 thru November 29**

**No Classes**

**Tuesday, December 3. Last Day of Class. Course Wrap-Up**

Lemons, Gary. 1997. To Be Black, Male, and Feminist: Making Womanist Space for Black Men. *The International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 17(1/2): 35-61.

Sheehy, Chris and Surya Nayak. 2020. Black Feminist methods of activism are the tool for global social justice and peace. *Critical Social Policy* 40(2): 234-257.

hooks, bell. "Ain't She Still a Woman?" *Shambhala Sun*. January 1999.

**Final Project Due: Day and Time of Scheduled Final Exam:**

Final Exam: Thursday, December 12, 7:30AM to 9:30AM

**Final Project Due: Thursday, December 12 at 9:30AM**

**no extensions without university excuse**