

**AFA 3930, WST 3930, AMH 3931, Section Varies—Slavery & Black Girlhood**  
**Meeting Time: MWF 11:45 AM-12:35 PM      Spring 2024      Location: TUR 2306**

**Dr. Courtney Moore Taylor-Lecturer**

**Contact Information:**

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**Office Hours:**

Mondays & Wednesdays: 10:35 am-11:35 pm or 12:45 pm-1:45 pm  
or by appointment

**Course Description:**

North American slavery continues to captivate the American public. While scholars have greater insight into enslaved peoples' lives, attention is just beginning to focus on the girls and teenagers who populated Southern plantations and farms. This course examines those enslaved youth by using theoretical frameworks of Black Girlhood to examine how age altered the enslaved female experience. Slave narratives, Works Progress Administration interviews and scholarly research will be examined to explore the concept of girlhood, how it was impacted by race and class, girlhood in relation to slavery and its historiography, and the day-to-day experiences of Black girls and teens as they moved toward adulthood. The course concludes by exploring historical connections with modern day Black girls. Students will analyze these concepts and historic accounts through lectures, class discussions, and an array of data including peer-reviewed journal articles, primary source documents, and audio-visual materials.

***Note: This syllabus is a general outline of the course, but it is subject to change. I will let you know if modifications are made.***

**Course Objectives & Goals:**

During the course, students will:

- Be able to identify the concept of girlhood and the manner race and class shapes this developmental stage.
- Understand the theoretical framework used to examine Black girls.
- Examine the historiography of slavery, paying attention to works that engage Black women and girls.
- Explore specific rites of passage associated with the adolescent enslaved female experience.
- Demonstrate an understanding of basic concepts common in discourse about the enslaved female experience in the United States.
- Enhance critical analysis and research skills.
- Practice public speaking and presentation skills.

**Required Texts:**

Jacobs, Harriet Ann, 1813-1897. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl. Written by Herself.* Ed. Lydia Maria Child. Boston: The Author, 1861.

Keckley, Elizabeth Hobbs, 1818-1907. *Behind the Scenes, Or, Thirty Years a Slave and Four Years in the White House.* New York: G. W. Carleton, 1868.

White, Deborah Gray. *Ar'n't I a Woman? : Female Slaves in the Plantation South.* Rev. ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999.

**Required Articles and Book Chapter Excerpts (most are accessed in the Course reserves):**

Alexander, Hadden (2017) "From Silent Object to Vocal Subject: An Analysis of the Historiography of American Slavery," *Armstrong Undergraduate Journal of History*: Vol. 7: Iss. 2, Article 4. (access using the following link: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=aujhd>)

Bailey, David Thomas. "A Divided Prism: Two Sources of Black Testimony on Slavery." *The Journal of southern history* 46, no. 3 (1980): 381–404.

Farmer, Ashley D. "In Search of the Black Women's History Archive." *Modern American history (Cambridge.)* 1, no. 2 (2018): 289–293.

Field, Corinne T., and LaKisha Michelle Simmons. *The Global History of Black Girlhood*. Edited by Corinne T. Field and LaKisha Michelle Simmons. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2022.

Halliday, Aria S. *The Black Girlhood Studies Collection*. Edited by Aria S. Halliday. Toronto: Women's Press, an imprint of CSP Books Inc., 2019. (Chapters by Ashley Smith and Claudine Taafee)

Hine, Darlene Clark. "'Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South': Twenty Years After." *The Journal of African American history* 92, no. 1 (2007): 13–21.

King, Wilma. "'Mad' Enough to Kill: Enslaved Women, Murder, and Southern Courts." *The Journal of African American history* 92, no. 1 (2007): 37–56.

\_\_\_\_\_. "'Prematurely Knowing of Evil Things': The Sexual Abuse of African American Girls And Young Women In Slavery And Freedom." *The Journal of African American history* 99, no. 3 (2014): 173–196.

Pargas, Damian Alan. "From the Cradle to the Fields: Slave Children and Childhood in the Antebellum South." *Slavery & abolition* 32, no. 4 (2011): 477–493.

Pasierowska, Rachael L. "Up from Childhood: When African-American Enslaved Children Learned of Their Servile Status." *Slavery & abolition* 37, no. 1 (2016): 94–116.

Stevenson, Brenda E. "What's Love Got to Do with It? Concubinage And Enslaved Black Women and Girls in The Antebellum South." *The Journal of African American history*, 98, no. 1 (2013): 99–125.

Webster, Crystal Lynn. "The History of Black Girls and the Field of Black Girlhood Studies: At the Forefront of Academic Scholarship." (access using the following link: <https://www.oah.org/tah/issues/2020/the-history-of-girlhood/the-history-of-black-girls-and-the-field-of-black-girlhood-studies-at-the-forefront-of-academic/>)

White, Deborah Gray. *Ar'n't I a Woman? : Female Slaves in the Plantation South*. Rev. ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999. (Chapters 2-4)

White, Deborah Gray. "'Matter Out of Place': Ar'n't I a Woman? Black Female Scholars and the Academy." *The Journal of African American history* 92, no. 1 (2007): 5–12.

White, Shane and Graham White. "Slave Clothing and African American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries." In *Past and Present*, no. 148, (August,1995): 149-186.

### **Course Assignments and Assessments:**

Student grades are derived from writing assignments, primary research, and exams. The course has firm deadlines for assignments. Most assignments are submitted via Canvas. Below are brief descriptions for each assignment and their percentage in the final overall grade.

**Attendance: (5%)** Students are expected to **sign-in** at the beginning of ALL class meetings. Attendance factors into your final grade therefore it is vital that students attend class regularly.

**Black Girlhood Reflections: (10%):** Each student will compose a reflection on Black girlhood. 600-900 word reflections should provide the student's definition of girlhood and reflect on what it means to be Black and a girl in the United States of America from a historical and contemporary sense. **(Due: January 18<sup>th</sup>)**

**Class Facilitator - 10%:** Student will co-facilitate a class session with the instructor. Assignment components include: Scheduling a meeting with the instructor via Zoom or during office hours to discuss the upcoming class session, preparing questions that will guide the conversation, and leading discussion of assigned readings for that week. Students must submit a **minimum of 5** questions to the instructor as part of the facilitation grade. **(Due: Varies by Student; Students will sign up with instructor for due date)**

### **WPA Interview Research (20%):**

Students will review WPA interviews uncovering examples of the rites of passage Black girls and teens experienced as they transitioned toward womanhood. **900-1200** word assessments will introduce the interviewees, provide an overview of their lives, and engage the specific rite researched. Topics that will be researched include work, dress, sex, and resistance.

Assessment 1: Work & Dress

**(Due: February 4<sup>th</sup>)**

Assessment 2: Sexual Knowledge & Resistance

**(Due: February 11<sup>th</sup>)**

**Eulogy of an Enslaved Girl-(10%)** Write a 300-600 word eulogy for one of the enslaved women we've engaged during the first half of the term (i.e Harriet Jacobs or one of the enslaved women used for the WPA Interview research). Eulogies should reflect on their lives as enslaved girls and their specific experiences. Students will share their eulogy in class. **(Due: March 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

**Midterm- (15%)** The midterm will test your knowledge of various course readings as we progress through the course. **(Due: March 8<sup>th</sup>)**

**Black Girls Then & Now: (15%)-** Students will construct a presentation of American Slavery and Black Girlhood that could be engaged with public school children (K-12) in their classrooms. Projects will consist of some aspect of enslaved girlhood displayed in a PPT or Canva format as well as an age-appropriate activity for the specified audience. In addition to the presentation, students will write a 1200-1500 word project overview that discusses the topic selected, rationale for the selection of the specific topic and activity and identifies the different resources used to construct your presentation. Projects will be presented to your classmates. **(Due: April 14<sup>th</sup>)**

**Final Exam- (15%)** Exam will assess knowledge of the material engaged over the semester. **(Due: April 29th)**

**Note: More specific guidelines for writing assignments will be given as their due dates approach.  
Make-up exams will be permitted ONLY at the instructor's discretion.**

### **Grading Scale:**

94-100=A, 90-93=A-, 87-89=B+, 84-86=B, 80-83=B-, 77-79=C+, 74-76=C, 70-73=C-, 67-69=D+, 64-66=D, 60-63=D-, Below 60 = E.

### **Course Policies:**

**Attendance Policy:** Students are expected to *be present, punctual, and prepared* and **sign-in** at the beginning of ALL class meetings for the instructor's records. **Attendance counts for 5% of your final grade.** Without question, students who fail to attend class miss vital information which contributes to their lack of success.

**In response to COVID-19, the following recommendations are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.**

- **If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit [one.ufl.edu](http://one.ufl.edu) for screening / testing and vaccination opportunities.**
- **If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated.**
- **Course materials will be provided to you with an excused absence, and you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up work.**

**Communication:** Contact me through Canvas. I do my best to respond to your comments/emails in a timely manner during business hours (evenings are excluded). **Allow 24 hours** during the week for a response to course concerns/emails. ***Weekends, I do not check email, so it is imperative that you submit any questions to me before noon on Fridays.***

### **Written work format and submission:**

All assignments should be

- Written in standard English and demonstrate competence of capitalization, grammar, sentence structure, and paragraph structure
- Typed, double-spaced with Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, 1" margins
- Information with your name, date, and course should be in the top corner, single-spaced, on the first page only or on a cover page
- **All work must be properly documented. Students may use APA, MLA, or Turabian.**

I will provide feedback on all written assignments; these comments are intended to strengthen your writing skills. They should be taken as constructive feedback, as I am evaluating clarity, content, structure, and sources.

**Policy on late/make-up work:** All assignments are known well in advance; therefore, ***permission to hand in an assignment late is only granted for exceptional circumstances.***

**Academic Honesty:** UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Conduct Code specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. [Click here to read the Conduct Code.](#) If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

### **In-Class Recording:**

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

**Accommodations:** Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center. [Click here to get started with the Disability Resource Center.](#) It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access.

### **GatorEvals:**

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 <https://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 <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>

### **Campus Resources:**

- *Counseling and Wellness Center:* [Visit the Counseling and Wellness Center website](#) or call 352-392-1575 for information on crisis services as well as non-crisis services.
- *Student Health Care Center:* Call 352-392-1161 for 24/7 information to help you find the care you need, or [visit the Student Health Care Center website.](#)
- *Library Support:* Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- *Teaching Center:* Broward Hall, 352-392-2010 or to make an appointment 352- 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring.
- *Writing Studio:* 2215 Turlington Hall, 352-846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers.

### **Classroom Expectations and Etiquette:**

Courteous and appropriate classroom behavior is expected. Therefore, please be always mindful of the following during class:

- Students are expected to be **PRESENT, PUNCTUAL, AND PREPARED.**
- Cell phones should be silenced during class. **CALLS AND TEXT MESSAGING DURING CLASS ARE PROHIBITED.**
- Laptops and tablets are allowed in class for note-taking purposes. **HOWEVER – if they interfere with your attention and participation during the class session (i.e. playing on Facebook or checking email), you will be asked to shut down the device.**
- Bringing food to class is a distraction, so it is your responsibility to manage your time appropriately and eat **before class. As such ONLY BEVERAGES, WITH THE APPROPRIATE LIDS, ARE ALLOWED IN CLASS.**
- As we are in a professional learning environment that requires your **ACTIVE** participation, students are asked to **KEEP THEIR HEADS OFF OF THEIR DESKS, ABSTAIN FROM TAKING NAPS, REFRAIN FROM PUTTING THEIR FEET ON THE FURNITURE AND TO TAKE ALL NOTES THAT ARE PROVIDED BY THE INSTRUCTOR.**
- Lastly, we are dealing with material that may be sensitive in terms of race, gender, class, sexuality, violence, and/or political perspective. By remaining enrolled in the course, you are agreeing to complete all assignments and participate during class discussions, regardless of objections you may have on these grounds. **PLEASE KEEP THE DIALOG RESPECTFUL AND RELEVANT.** I encourage students to keep an open mind, and I expect you to **COMMUNICATE YOUR IDEAS WITHOUT HARSHLY OFFENDING YOUR PEERS. ALL ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES WILL BE RESPECTED BY THE INSTRUCTOR AND BY ALL CLASS MEMBERS AT ALL TIMES.**

## Course Outline

**Note:** Documentaries, and films may accompany a weekly module.  
Consult the Canvas Modules for the exact titles.

### Week 1

**January 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>**

Course Overview/How to be a Successful Student?

Lecture/Discussion: Define Girlhood. What does it mean to be Black and Girl in America?

### Week 2

**WHAT IS BLACK GIRLHOOD?: The Field & Its Concepts**

**January 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> (MLK Day, January 15<sup>th</sup>, University Closed)**

**Facilitator Sign up must be completed by Friday, January 19<sup>th</sup>**

Class lectures and discussions on the following reading:

- “Theorizing Black Girlhood by Ashley L. Smith” in *The Black Girlhood Studies Collection* by Aria Halliday
- “The History of Black Girls and the Field of Black Girlhood Studies: At the Forefront of Academic Scholarship” by Crystal Lynn Webster (access via Google Search Engine)
- **Black Girlhood Reflections (Due: January 18<sup>th</sup> by 11:59 pm)**

### Week 3

**THE HISTORIOGRAPHY**

**January 22<sup>nd</sup>-26<sup>th</sup>**

Class lectures and discussions on the following reading:

- “From Silent Object to Vocal Subject: An Analysis of The Historiography of American Slavery” by Hadden Alexander
- “Ar’n’t I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South”: Twenty Years After by Darlene Clark Hine
- “Matter out of place”: Ar’n’t I a Woman? Black Female Scholars and the Academy by Deborah Gray White

### Week 4

**FINDING BLACK GIRLS IN THE ARCHIVES**

**January 29<sup>th</sup>-February 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**WPA Interviews (Due: February 4<sup>th</sup>)**

Lecture: Primary Source Overview of Harriet Jacobs, Elizabeth Keckley and WPA Interviews

Class lectures and discussions on the following reading:

- “A Divided Prism: Two Sources of Black Testimony on Slavery.” By David Thomas Bailey. *The Journal of southern history* 46, no. 3 (1980): 381–404.
- “In Search of the Black Women’s History Archive” by Ashley D. Farmer

## ENSLAVED GIRLS & THEIR EXPERIENCES

### Week 5

**February 5<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Rites of Passage through Work & Dress

**WPA Interviews (Due: February 11<sup>th</sup>)**

Class lectures and discussions on the following reading:

- “Up from Childhood: When African-American Enslaved Children Learned of Their Servile Status.” By Rachael L. Pasierowska. *Slavery & abolition* 37, no. 1 (2016): 94–116.
- From the Cradle to the Fields: Slave Children and Childhood in the Antebellum South by Damian Alan Pargas *Slavery & Abolition* 32, no. 4 (2011): 477–493.
- “Slave Clothing and African American Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries.” By Shane White, and Graham White. In *Past and Present*, no. 148, (August, 1995): 149-186.

### Week 6

**February 12<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>**

Lecture: Rites of Passage through Sex & Resistance

Class lectures and discussions on the following reading:

- “What’s Love Got to do with it? Concubinage and Enslaved Women and Girls in the Antebellum South by Brenda Stevenson
- “Prematurely Knowing of Evil Things: The Sexual Abuse of African American Girls and Young Women in Slavery and Freedom” by Wilma King
- “Mad” Enough to Kill: Enslaved Women, Murder, and Southern Courts by Wilma King

### Week 7

**February 19<sup>th</sup>-23**

Class lectures and discussions on the following reading:

- White, *Ar’n’t I a Woman? : Female Slaves in the Plantation South*. Chapter 2: “The Nature of Female Slavery”
- *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*: Chapters 1-19

### Week 8

**February 26<sup>th</sup>-March 1<sup>st</sup>**

**Eulogy of an Enslaved Girl (Due: March 3<sup>rd</sup>)**

Class lectures and discussions on the following reading:

- *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*: Chapters 20-41

### Week 9

**March 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>**

**Eulogy Presentations and Discussion/ Midterm (Due: March 8<sup>th</sup>)**

### Week 10

**March 11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup>**

**Spring Break, University Closed**



- Week 11**                    **March 18<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>**  
Class lectures and discussions on the following reading:
- *White, Ar'n't I a Woman? : Female Slaves in the Plantation South*. Chapter 3: "The Life Cycle of the Female Slave"
  - *Behind the Scenes*: Chapters 1-5
- Week 12**                    **March 25<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup>**  
Class lectures and discussions on the following reading:
- *White, Ar'n't I a Woman? : Female Slaves in the Plantation South*. Chapter 4: "The Female Slave Network"
  - *Behind the Scenes*: Chapters 6-10
- Week 13**                    **April 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>**  
Class lectures and discussions on the following reading:
- *Behind the Scenes*: Chapters 11-15
- Week 14**                    **BLACK GIRLS THEN & NOW**  
**April 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>**  
**Black Girls Then & Now Projects (Due: April 14th by 11:59 pm)**  
Class lectures and discussions on the following reading:
- A Meditation on (Re)imagining a world with Black Girls by Claudine "Candy" Taafee in *The Black Girlhood Studies Collection* by Aria Halliday
- Week 15**                    **April 15<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup>**  
**Black Girls Then and Now Presentations**
- Week 16**                    **April 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup>**  
Presentations & Course Wrap-up

**Final Exam:**

Due by 11:59 pm on Monday, April 29th

Note: Students will be able to access the exam beginning on April 27<sup>th</sup>