

WST 6935/Spring 2023

## Critical Girlhood Studies



**Instructor: Dr. Jillian Hernandez**

E-mail: [jillianhernandez@ufl.edu](mailto:jillianhernandez@ufl.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30pm-3:00pm and by appointment, Ustler Hall 304 or via

Zoom at <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/7897322769>

Class meeting times: Mondays, 12:50-3:50pm

Location: Ustler Hall 108

This course enacts a critical mapping of girls' studies, a multidisciplinary intellectual formation that coalesced into a sub-field of Women's and Gender Studies in the late 1990s. The course will consist in part of a survey of work in the field, but the bulk of our efforts will place analytic pressure on the question of which girls become legible as the "proper objects" of girls' studies and what questions about girlhood are (im)possible to ask. We will think collectively and creatively to (re)imagine what histories, methods, pedagogies and futures a formation of *critical* girlhood studies could offer as both an intellectual and social justice project. Course material will reflect the instructor's expertise in the areas of sexuality, body politics, arts-based community praxis, Black and Latinx studies, and popular cultures. Students will design part of the course syllabus to reflect their own research interests and address blind spots we have identified in the field.

## Required Texts

Dorothy Allison. *Bastard Out of Carolina*. 1992. Penguin Books.

Ruth Nicole Brown. 2013. *Hear Our Truths: The Creative Potential of Black Girlhood*. The University of Illinois Press.

Rita Indiana. 2016. *Papi (a novel)*. University of Chicago Press.

All other texts available on Canvas in modules or via library course reserves.

## Trigger Warning and Sensitive Content Notice

Some of the required materials in this class include explicit depictions and/or descriptions of nudity, sexual acts, and physical and emotional violence. Some materials describe or depict experiences of sexual, gender-based, and race-based trauma. I have assigned these works to facilitate learning on girlhood studies. If you believe engagement with these materials would likely cause you significant discomfort, it may be in your interest to drop the course.

## Grading in this Course

I calculate grades in this course using a point system. Assignments have corresponding point values that add up to a maximum of 100. Point values for assignments are listed below. I use this scale in determining your final grade.

100-95 points A / 94-90 A- / 89-85 points B+ / 84-80 points B / 79-75 points C+ / 74-70 points C /

69-65 points D+ / 64-60 points D

Information on UF's grading policy can be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/> (Links to an external site.)

You should expect your work to be graded within 7 days of submission. If I anticipate a delay due to unforeseen circumstances, I will inform you.

## Course Work

Your final grade will be based on the following:

**6 Discussion Prep Worksheets (5 points each; 30 points total):** You will submit six discussion prep worksheets via Canvas on the weeks of your choice. **The sheet should reflect all assigned reading for that day, which means you will copy and paste the prompts in your document to accommodate the number of texts.** They must be posted by 11:59pm on Sundays before class, as I will be drawing from them in our seminar discussions.

**Object of Study Presentation (10 points):** You will find or create a physical object that reflects the concepts from the course material of a given week. The object will be presented informally in class and will serve to provoke our seminar discussion. You do not need to purchase anything. Be creative, it can be a leaf, something in your recycling bin, a drawing, etc. This is meant to be a conceptual project, so the link to the material does not need to be visually obvious, we can flesh that out in the discussion. I will assign object of study presentation dates after the add/drop period and announce them on Canvas.

**Participation (15 points):** We learn best when we all show up and prepare ourselves to engage. I cultivate the classroom as a space of collaborative study and expect for students to:

- Read, watch, listen to assigned material
- Share questions and comments about the material in class
- Engage in productive conversation with peers and the instructor

Not completing the assigned reading and/or failing to participate places a greater burden on others to keep the conversation going. I understand that at times other commitments may keep you from being able to read everything that is assigned. When this occurs, I suggested skimming or reading selections from each of the assigned materials so that you can participate in seminar. Mid-way through the semester I will provide you with feedback on your participation in class.

**Meditation on Methods Paper (10 points):** You will submit a 3-4 page paper that explores the question of methodology in the girls' studies work we have engaged in the class. You can craft this essay in several ways. You can center on methodological approaches that interested you and discuss why, or discuss approaches that you found problematic. If you choose to write a critique, make it constructive, address what alternative approaches identifying these shortcomings can lead us to. You can also choose a different angle. It is an informal paper to be written in response paper style. It is an opportunity to reflect on

the methods we have engaged and how you might want to design the methodology for your own work. **These papers can be turned in any time throughout the semester but must be submitted by March 27th.**

**Collaborative Syllabus Curation Assignment (10 points):** To curate means to select, organize, and present materials. Curation is shaped by the curator's particular research interests, specializations, and activist/political orientations. In this curation assignment you will work in groups to address a blind spot we have identified in the field, address a topic we have not covered in class, or conduct research into an area of girls' studies you have a shared interest in. You will **select 3 materials** for the class to engage during one of the dates listed on the syllabus for student curation. **At least one of these should be an academic text, you can also include media such as films, literature, features of girl-serving projects, music, etc.**

Your study group will facilitate the conversation on those texts and submit a collaboratively authored 4-5 page paper in which you will describe your motivations for selecting the texts, introduce the authors/creators, explain what issues the texts address, and what you hope they add to our class. **By February 20<sup>th</sup> a representative of your group needs to meet with me to discuss the materials you have in mind and provide me with the PDFs, links, etc. to post on Canvas or screen in class.** The papers will be due on the date of your facilitation (everyone in the group will upload the same paper). I will try to organize the dates thematically and share the assigned dates shortly after February 27<sup>th</sup>.

**Final Research Paper (25 points):** You will conduct an original girls' studies research project of your choosing. The paper should be between 10-12 double spaced pages (12pt font). I expect for you to utilize some course material in addition to relevant scholarship you find on your own. **You must discuss your research idea with me by April 1<sup>st</sup> and be prepared to discuss your project informally during our final class meeting on April 24<sup>th</sup>. You will then submit the paper on Canvas by noon on May 1<sup>st</sup>.** A works cited page in the format you are most familiar with in your field is required.

## Course Policies

- **Attendance**

Since we only meet once a week and have a discussion-based class, attendance is extremely important. You may miss 2 class meetings without influencing your grade. Think of these as "personal days" at work. I do not need to be informed of why you are not in class. If you will miss several seminars in a row or will go beyond this limit please do contact me. Every unexcused or undocumented absence thereafter will affect your final grade, 10 points will be deducted for each absence past this limit. In order to be counted as present you must arrive on time and stay until class concludes.

- **Correspondence**

I can answer questions during office hours or via e-mail. Please be aware that I receive a high volume of e-mails, if your query is time sensitive please indicate that in the subject line. Questions that require substantive engagement, such as commentary on an assignment, would be best addressed during office hours. I will expect for you to check your UF e-mail once a day in the event that there is a schedule change or if I need to send you important information. Class alerts will be sent via the Canvas system.

- **Academic Integrity**

Whether intentional or inadvertent, plagiarism is a serious violation. All work submitted in this course must be your own. The use of sources such as ideas, quotations, paraphrases, or anything written by someone else must be properly acknowledged and cited. If you have questions about the proper citation of sources, please ask me. Students who plagiarize, or who cheat on an exam, will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with University policy.

- **Electronic Devices and Laptops**

Cell phones must be turned off or set to silent in the classroom. If you must take an urgent call or send an important message please quietly exit the room. Excessive disruption of class for use of cell phones will negatively impact your participation grade.

Laptops and tablets can be utilized solely for the purpose of taking notes. This privilege is contingent upon responsible use of these devices. If I notice or am informed that students are being distracted by improper use of such technology they will no longer be allowed in class.

- **Late Submission of Assignments**

Please contact me in advance if you foresee an issue with turning an assignment in on time so that we can come up with an alternative arrangement.

## **Accessibility**

I am committed to making learning in this course accessible to all. Please contact me to discuss any learning needs that you may have. You can also access the resources listed below.

**UF Disability Resource Center** celebrates disability identity as a valued aspect of diversity. We champion a universally accessible community that supports the holistic advancement of individuals with disabilities.

<https://disability.ufl.edu/>  
001 Building 0020 (Reid Hall). For information, call 352-392-8565 or email  
[accessUF@ufsa.ufl.edu](mailto:accessUF@ufsa.ufl.edu)

**UF Counseling and Wellness Center** offers individual counseling, wellness counseling, couples counseling, problem solving help, CERC crisis services, and other assistance:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/>  
3190 Radio Road; (352) 392-1575 (8am-5pm, Monday through Friday)

### **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual Harassment is unacceptable anywhere on UF's campus. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see:

[http://www.ufsa.ufl.edu/faculty\\_staff/fees\\_resources\\_policies/sexual\\_harassment/](http://www.ufsa.ufl.edu/faculty_staff/fees_resources_policies/sexual_harassment/)

### **Course Evaluation Process**

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. [Click here for guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner.](#) Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email that 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 here.](#)

### **Course Recording Policy and Privacy Statement**

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.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written

consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040.

### **Consider Adding a Certificate in Women's Studies**

If you are taking this course, you are likely only 9 credits away from earning a Certificate (12 credits total) that will appear on your transcript and can be listed on your CV.

The *Certificate in Women's Studies* (WST) is designed for graduate students from any discipline who wish to focus on interdisciplinary issues related to feminist theory and practice. All graduate students in an MA or PhD program from all colleges at UF are eligible to enroll in this program. You can also do a Certificate in *Gender and Development*. For more information see: <http://wst.ufl.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-certificates/graduate-certificate-in-womens-studies/> And contact graduate coordinator Dr. Jillian Hernandez ([jillianhernandez@ufl.edu](mailto:jillianhernandez@ufl.edu)) with any questions.

### **Course Schedule, *subject to change***

#### **January 9<sup>th</sup>**

Course introduction and syllabus review

#### **January 16<sup>th</sup>** (no class, Martin Luther King Jr. Day)

### **Mapping the Field**

#### **January 23<sup>rd</sup>**

"Coalescing: The Development of Girls' Studies", 2009, Mary Celeste Kearney. *Feminist Formations*, Volume 21 (1): 1-28.

Ruth Nicole Brown, Introduction from *Black Girlhood Celebration: Toward a Hip-Hop Feminist Pedagogy* (Peter Lang, 2009)

"Why We Need Girls' Studies blog"

Dr. Ruth Nicole Brown, <https://www.girlmuseum.org/why-we-need-girls-studies-ruth-nicole-brown/>

Dr. Anastasia Todd, <https://www.girlmuseum.org/why-we-need-girl-studies-anastasia-todd/>

Dr. Sarah Godfrey, <https://www.girlmuseum.org/why-we-need-girls-studies-sarah-godfrey/>

## **Girlhood and Carceral Capture**

### **January 30<sup>th</sup>**

Mary E. Odem, Chapter 1: “White Slaves” and “Vicious Men”: The Age-of-Consent Campaign, from *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920*

Anne Meis Knupfer. 2001. “To Become Good, Self-Supporting Women”: The State Industrial School for Delinquent Girls at Geneva, Illinois, 1900-1935” *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9 (4): 420-446.

Savannah Shange. 2019. “Black Girl Ordinary: Flesh, Carcerality, and the Refusal of Ethnography.” *Transforming Anthropology* 27 (1): 3-21.

## **Sexual Violence in the South**

### **February 6<sup>th</sup>**

Dorothy Allison. 1992. *Bastard Out of Carolina*. Penguin Books.

Mélanie Grué, “Trauma and Survival in Dorothy Allison’s *Bastard Out of Carolina*, or the Power of Alternative Stories,” from *Trauma Narratives and Herstory*, 2013.

## **The Possibility of Pleasure?**

### **February 13<sup>th</sup>**

Lauren Berlant. 1995. “Live Sex Acts (Parental Advisory: Explicit Material)”. *Feminist Studies* 21 (3): 379-404.

Selections from Sharon Lamb. 2002. *The Secret Lives of Girls: What Good Girls Really Do—Sex Play, Aggression, and Their Guilt*. The Free Press.

Christina Carney, Anya Wallace, Jillian Hernandez. 2016. “Sexual Knowledge and Practiced Feminisms: On moral panic, Black girlhoods, and Hip Hop.” *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 28: 412-426.



## **Racialized Embodiment and Aesthetics**

### **February 20<sup>th</sup>**

Jillian Hernandez. 2020. Introduction and Chapter 2 "Sexual-Aesthetic Excess: Or, How Chongas Make Class Burn" from *Aesthetics of Excess: The Art and Politics of Black and Latina Embodiment*

Sarah Projansky. 2013. Chapter 4 " 'I'm Not Changing My Hair': Venus Williams and Live TV's Racialized Struggle Over Athletic Girlhood" from *Spectacular Girls: Media Fascination and Celebrity Culture*. New York University Press.

Linda Duits and Liesbet van Zoonen. 2006. "Headscarves and Porno-Chic: Disciplining Girls' Bodies in the European Multicultural Society". *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13 (2): 103-117.

## **Queerness and Gender Variance**

### **February 27<sup>th</sup>**

Excerpts from Liz Prince's graphic novel *Tomboy*, 2014, Zest Books

Chapter "Telling Gender Stories" from Tey Meadow's "Telling Gender Stories." *Trans Kids: Being Gendered in the 21st Century*, University of California Press, 2018, pp. 187 - 211.

Jillian Hernandez, Chapter 3 "'Fine as Hell' The Aesthetic Erotics of Masculinity" from *Aesthetics of Excess*

## **Transnational Girlhoods**

### **March 6<sup>th</sup>**

Rita Indiana. 2016. *Papi (a novel)*. University of Chicago Press.

Catherine Vanner. 2019. "Toward a Definition of Transnational Girlhood." *Girlhood Studies* 12 (2): 115-132.

**Theory/Praxis: Saving Our Lives, Hear Our Truths****March 20<sup>th</sup>**

Ruth Nicole Brown, 2013. *Hear Our Truths: The Creative Potential of Black Girlhood*. The University of Illinois Press.

Introduction

Chapter 3: When Black Girls Look at You: An Anti-Narrative Photo Poem

Chapter 4: Bad Days: "If You Hit Me, I'm Gonna Hit You Back"

**March 27<sup>th</sup>**: Student Curated

**April 3<sup>rd</sup>**: Student Curated

**April 10<sup>th</sup>**: Student Curated

**April 17<sup>th</sup>**: Student Curated

**April 24<sup>th</sup>**: Informal Research Project Discussions