

**African & African American Studies 4995**  
**African American Gender**  
**Fall 2008**

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**Course Description**

Gender is a new and emerging field of study. At one point in academia, gender would only encompass women however the new field of gender study now includes men. Gender is a social construct just like race and because of this different peoples of the world have constructed and performed gender differently. It also means both men and women experience gender however this experience is different. The focus of this class is to examine African American gender. Because of the history of African Americans in the United States, many scholars look at African American gender as mimicking their European counterparts, as an African retention, emerges out of slavery, or as a unique gender that was created in the Americas. This class explores the distinct perspectives of African American feminisms, womanism, as well as African American masculinities. We will examine the origins of all three perspectives and connect the histories of these perspectives to the performance of contemporary gender. Also, we examine how African Americans have responded to different crises such as racism, sexism, sexuality, health care, and organizing, in very gender specific ways.

**Course Objectives**

The student will know the historical roots of African American gender  
The student will be able to define and give examples of African American feminism, womanism, and African American masculinity  
The student will be familiar with the academic debates over African American gender  
The student will be able to explain the relationship between African American feminism, womanism, and African American masculinity  
The student will learn about contemporary issues of gender affecting the African American community  
The student will be able to situate her/himself within one of these perspectives and be able to explain why he/she relates to that perspective

**Required Books**

Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (Second Edition), 2000. (BFT)

Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Sexual Politics*, 2004. (BSP)

Natalie Hopkinson and Natalie Moore, *Deconstructing Tyrone*, 2006. (DT)

Athena Mutua, *Progressive Black Masculinities*, 2006. (PBM)

Layli Phillips, *The Womanist Reader*, 2006. (TWR)

Gwendolyn Pough, *Check It While I Wreck It*, 2004. (CIWIWI)

<b>Grading Assignment</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Due Date</b>
Take Home Exam	20%	Week 14
Project	20%	Week 14, 15, 16
Quizzes	10%	Anyday
Journal	15%	Week 13
Participation	20%	Everyday!!!
Film Reviews	15%	1b4 & 1after midpoint

**Grading  
Scale**

<b>A</b>	100-92
<b>A-</b>	91-90
<b>B+</b>	89-86
<b>B</b>	85-83
<b>B-</b>	82-80
<b>C+</b>	79-76
<b>C</b>	75-73
<b>C-</b>	72-70
<b>D+</b>	69-65
<b>D</b>	64-60
<b>F</b>	59 & below

**Requirements:**

- **Take Home Exam:**

The exam is a take home exam that intermixes short identification, matching, and essay questions. The students will prepare the short ID questions for the exam and the essay questions. The students as a class will design the questions for the exam that incorporate the readings, lectures, and class discussions. The materials for the exam will cover the entire class and the take home exam should be prepared alone without any help from anyone. The take home exam is due at the beginning of class. The exact number of short ids, matching, and essay questions will be determined by the class two to three weeks before the exam is due.

- **Project:**

In consultation with the professor, the student will design his/her own research project that deals with African American Gender. The subject matter for the projects must include some aspect of African American Gender such as class, sexuality, gender performance, biography, autobiography and etc. These projects include but are not limited to research papers, documentary films, oral history collection, folklore collection, etc and may be done individually or in groups. Each project must have primary source documentation as a major (3-5) component of the research. Primary sources include newspapers, diaries, government publications, organization's records, magazines, oral history, folklore, etc. The project is in five parts and all parts must be present to receive a final grade: the research proposal, bibliography, the final product, the presentation to the class, and the summary report. Only the final project gets a grade meaning all five parts at the end of the semester. Format for the research proposals are at the end of the syllabus. Although you may work in groups, certain parts are authored individually such as the research proposal and the summary. Each part has its own due date and no work will be accepted late. If you do not turn in on time one part of the project then you will receive a 0 on the entire project. An example is if you do not turn in the research proposal by September 30 then you will receive a 0 for the entire project. Only in a rare and case-by-case situation will the student be able to turn in material late and this must be accompanied with written documentation.

Each student must buy a three ring binder (no matter if you are working in a group or alone) and turn this binder in at every checkpoint for example with the research proposals, bibliography, and the day of her/his presentation. Labeled tab dividers should separate each part and at the end of the semester the binder should have in it an approved proposal(s), an approved bibliography, a description of the in class presentation, the final project, and the summary. If I give back to you your research proposal or your bibliography with suggestions on it, keep the proposal/bibliography in your binder and put the new version (with the suggestions added typed) in the binder as well.

Although the student will design each project, each student will be required to present her/his research to the class in an appropriate format. Also, no matter

what the project is there will be a written summary of no more than 3 pages and at least two pages that gives an analytical analysis of the project. This analysis should include the type of project, its tie to African American Gender, the class, and finally what you learned from the project. Please make sure you have a thesis statement and etc that goes along with writing an academic paper. Include a bibliography and citations in the text of the paper as well as make sure you follow the rubric for writing in this class (at the end of the syllabus). These papers are due the day of your presentation.

### **Journals**

For every week, write at least 2 pages and no more than 5 pages journal entry about the week's readings. Translation at the beginning of the week when you walk in the door you should be able to share and show your journal entry for that week. The journal entry should deal with how that week's reading affected you and your understanding of your gender. These can be past events, current events, how it will change your future understanding of gender, you can also apply the readings to current issues and topics as well. The entries must be grammatically correct but you have the freedom to be creative. You can write a poem that tells your story or a song you can draw a picture (but you still will have to write an entry) but you should feel free to express your feelings in a variety of formats. Throughout the semester, there will be surprise checkpoints to turn in your journals. At each checkpoint, you will receive a letter grade and those letter grades will add up to your final grade. When you turn in the completed journal, I will only grade the section that had not been covered since the last checkpoint.

### **Quizzes**

I will give both scheduled and unscheduled quizzes over the readings and lectures. These quizzes are handled at the beginning of class and last only about 10 minutes. If you come in five minutes late then you would only get 5 minutes on your quiz. If you come in after the quiz has been taken up then you received a 0 on that days quiz but make sure you get on the roll for the day.

### **Film Reviews**

Write two film reviews for the class—one prior to the midpoint and one after the midpoint but before Projects begin. The film review should be 1-2 pages in length. Give a very brief synopsis of the film (2-3 lines) in the introduction. Analyze the film in terms of African American gender performance. Use the theories in the class to analyze the gender performance. In the paper, state if these performances have real life implications either negatively or positively. How did it inform the public/viewer about gender and lastly how did it affect your understanding about your gender?

- **Participation/attendance**

Attendance is vital during a semester and I will be taking attendance daily. The student will receive two days of unexcused absences before her/his attendance adversely affects the grade. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> absence the course grade will be

dropped one letter grade for each day you miss passed two. An example would be if someone missed 4 days and had an A in the class. The new grade would be a C for the two extra days. Of course, emergencies happen and will be considered only with written documentation (doctor's note, funeral program, traffic accident ticket, etc). Also, tardies will be counted and a tardy constitutes being more than ten minutes late but up to twenty minutes (if you come twenty minutes after you are counted as absent) or leaving early by my watch. Two tardies will count as one absence and if you come in late it is YOUR responsibility to make sure you are on the roll for that day but this must be done at the end of class. So please come to class on time. When the projects start, attendance is mandatory and you must be on time to hear your classmates' presentations the ten-minute rule is not observed during projects because it is rude to walk in late during someone's presentation. If you do not show up during the presentations or leave early, you will receive a 0 on your project and these projects are 20% of your final grade.

In order to participate in the class, you obviously must be physically present in class. Participation means showing up to class having read **ALL** the materials, with questions about the readings, and having note cards from the readings and these will be used for the exams. The course is reading intensive and students must keep up with the reading prior to entering the class to be prepared. Receiving the full 25% for class attendance/participation gives a significant boost to one's final class average, while losing the entire 25% deducts two full letter and a half grade deduction from your final class grade. Pushing the envelope with tardiness/class absences or the degree of preparation to class meetings might have a "subjective" impact on the final class average if the student's final average falls within a borderline range. These attendance/participation policies will be observed **strictly and without exception**. If students find these policies too restrictive or obnoxious, then such students should immediately drop the course at the start of the semester before proceeding further into the course.

- **Computer Resources:**

Students are required to activate their University of Memphis email addresses and regularly check or forward their UofM student email to a personal account. The university sanctions student email accounts as the official method of contact and will use your student email account for any university related notifications. In addition, university policy requires that instructors use these accounts to contact groups of students. Contact technology services for any help with getting a UofM email address.

- **Students with Disabilities:**

Any student who may need class or test accommodations based on the impact of a disability is encouraged to speak with me privately to discuss your specific needs. Students with disabilities should also contact Student Disability Services (SDS) at 110 Wilder Tower, 678-2880. SDS coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

- **Academic Honesty** is fundamental to the principles and activities of a university. You are responsible for knowing the university's policy on academic honesty. Ignorance is NOT a defense for any charge of dishonesty. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, unauthorized collaboration, fabrication or falsification of information, submission of work or substantial portion of a piece of work more than once without permission from all professors involved. For your protection, please familiarize yourself with the university's policy on academic honesty. If you are suspected of academic dishonesty, your case will be turned over to the appropriate academic officials for review. If an allegation of dishonesty is proven, **you will receive an F for the course.**
- **ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS** for the class shall have the following format. The papers must be typed or word processed, with 12 point font using Times New Roman (the size and font used on this syllabus), double spaced, and with standard margins. If you make direct reference then you must have citations and direct quotes should not be long meaning if it has to be put in block quotes then leave out and paraphrase but cite the paraphrase. Also, use quotes when you have to and the paper should not be filled with quotes, a five-page paper should not have more than 4 direct quotes. The paper should follow the directions for paper length meaning if the paper is suppose to be 3 pages then it should be 3 full pages and not 2 ½ or 2 ¾ but 3. The citation formats that must be used for all papers are Turabian or Chicago Manual Style and the use of footnotes. [http://myrin.ursinus.edu/help/resrch\\_guides/cit\\_style\\_chicago.htm](http://myrin.ursinus.edu/help/resrch_guides/cit_style_chicago.htm) this website provides examples of Chicago Manual Style and at the end of the syllabus there is an example from the University of California-Berkley. There should be a back sheet that includes the title, the type of project, your name, and date and none of this information should be included anywhere else in the paper. The back page will be the last page stapled. All papers need to be stapled and have page numbers without any accompanying headers or footers. Please ask any questions or concerns about this format to the professor in a timely manner. All assignments that do not follow this format will receive an automatic 0.
- **All work is due when specified and late materials will not be accepted unless accompanied with written documentation (e.g. doctor's note, funeral program).** If you have an emergency please contact me as soon as possible so we can discuss how to handle the assignment.
- Eating in class is acceptable if it is a snack e.g. potato chips, candy bar, or a drink. Please do not bring a full course meal to class and expect to eat it.
- **INCOMPLETE GRADES**  
An Incomplete grade is assigned when extenuating circumstances, such as illness, the death of a family member, or a family emergency, prevent a student from completing assignments and other course requirements by the end of the semester. An incomplete grade must be changed by the deadline specified on the college

calendar or will be automatically changed to an “F.” The removal of an “I” grade does not guarantee a passing grade.

- **CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

A student that is not paying attention and not actively involved in the class will not be tolerated. Students will not be able to sleep and if a student falls asleep or is suspected of sleeping in the in class the student will be rudely awoken and asked to leave receiving a 0 or class participation for the entire course. If the behavior continues after he/she has been penalized once the student will fail the course. Other behavioral issues will not be tolerated and the above mentioned penalties apply to any behavior that is not conducive to a learning environment.

A note about attire—students both males and females are not permitted to wearing any head wear unless it is for religious belief.

- **CELL PHONES**

All cell phones and other electronic communications devices are to be switched off or turned on “silent” for the duration of the class (silent does not mean vibrate!!!). Using the phone to text or talk in class is prohibited. If a phone or any other electronic device goes off during class the student will receive a 0 the day and will be asked to leave. If a device goes off during a test the student will automatically receive a 0 on the test

- **My professor often said, “The law of common courtesy has not yet been repealed.” I hope that we will engage in many debates over the semester. I expect that we will all treat each other and each other’s ideas with respect.**

**This syllabus and the schedule are a living-breathing document hence things are subject to change or be rearranged at the professor’s discretion. If any changes do occur the student will be informed in a timely manner.**

### Schedule

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Introduction</b>	<b>08/25-08/29</b>
Readings:	Pedagogy of the Oppressed Handout	
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Feminisms, Masculinities, Womanism</b>	<b>09/01-09/05</b>
	<b>Labor Day 09/01/2008</b>	
Readings:	BSP Intro & ch. 1, BFT Ch 1-2, PBM ch. 1 TWR intro	
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Gendered</b>	<b>9/08-9/12</b>
Readings:	BSP ch. 2-3	
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Gendered cont.</b>	<b>09/15-09/19</b>
Readings:	BSP Part II & III	

<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Feminisms</b>	<b>09/22-09/26</b>
Readings:	BFT ch. 3-8	
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Feminisms cont.</b>	<b>09/29- 10/03</b>
Readings:	BFT ch. 9-12 <b>Research Proposals Due 09/30</b>	
<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Masculinities</b>	<b>10/06-10/10</b>
Readings:	PBM Ch. 2-3, Part 2, Part 6	
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Masculinities cont.</b>	<b>10/13-10/17</b>
Readings:	<b>Fall Break 10/11-10/14</b> PBM Part 3, part 4, part 5, part 7	
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Womanism</b>	<b>10/20-10/24</b>
Readings:	TWR part I, part II	
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Womanism cont.</b>	<b>10/27-10/31</b>
Readings:	TWR Part III (assigned readings), Part IV <b>Bibliography Due 10/28</b>	
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Gendering Hip Hop Generation</b>	<b>11/03-11/07</b>
Readings:	DT Intro & ch.1-5; CIWIWI Intro ch. 1-4	
<b>Week 12</b>	<b>Gendering Hip Hop cont</b>	<b>11/10-11/14</b>
Readings:	DT ch. 6-11; CIWIWI ch. 5-7	
<b>Week 13</b>	<b>Semester Review</b>	<b>11/17-11/21</b>
	<b>Journals due</b>	
<b>Week 14</b>	<b>Take Home Exam given out</b>	<b>11/24-11/28</b>
	<b>Projects</b>	
	<b>Thanksgiving 11/27-11/30</b>	
<b>Week 15</b>	<b>Projects cont</b>	<b>12/01-12/03</b>
	<b>Take Home Exam due 12/02 Final day of class</b>	
<b>Final Exam period----</b>	<b>Projects cont</b>	<b>12/05-12/11</b>
*****Presentations attendance is mandatory*****		



**Rubric for written assignments**

**Thesis:** **20%**  
**1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10**

Clear, concise, developed and viable thesis statement

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Content:** **30%**  
**1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10**

Facts and ideas developed to prove the thesis

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Logic & Argument:** **20%**  
**1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10**

Internal and external consistency (consistency of ideas within the paper and to the thesis).

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Organization & Structure:** **20%**  
**1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10**

Elaborate of ideas, flow of ideas, completeness of thoughts, follows the outline made by thesis

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Technical Writing Quality:** **10%**  
**1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    9    10**

Turabian, spelling, grammar, punctuation, vocabulary

Comments \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Evaluation for Ephemeral Projects

Prof. Lanois

Type of Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation: 5=best to 1=No Credit

1. **Imagination:**            1        2        3        4        5  
Uniqueness of the ephemeral project
  
2. **Organization**            1        2        3        4        5  
Extent of preparedness and flow of the performance
  
3. **Substance:**            1        2        3        4        5  
Relevance to African American Gender. How well did the project blend culture and history?
  
4. **Creativity:**            1        2        3        4        5  
How well did imagination and substance blend together to make a clear statement?
  
5. **Insight:**                1        2        3        4        5  
How well did the project give a sound understanding of African American Gender and culture?
  
6. **Group Presentation:** 1        2        3        4        5  
Was everybody involved and was this involvement enthusiastic?

**Overall:**

A+    A-    A        B+    B        B-    C+    C        C-    D        F

**Comments**

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## Evaluation for Oral History/Folklore Collection

Prof. Lanois

Type of Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation: 5=best to 1=No Credit

1. **Oral history/Folklore:**                    1        2        3        4        5  
Grasp of oral history/folklore; the story the interviewer told
  
2. **Organization:**                    1        2        3        4        5  
Extent of preparedness and flow of the powerpoint
  
3. **Substance:**                    1        2        3        4        5  
Relevance to African American Gender. How well did you blend the interviewer to history?
  
4. **Creativity:**                    1        2        3        4        5  
How well did substance, organization, & oral history/folklore blend together to make a clear statement?
  
5. **Insight:**                    1        2        3        4        5  
How well did you give a sound understanding of African American Gender and culture through your interview and research?
  
6. **Presentation:** 1        2        3        4        5  
Are you involved enthusiastically?

**Overall:**

A+    A-    A        B+    B        B-    C+    C        C-    D        F

**Comments**

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## Evaluation for Documentary Film

Prof. Lanois

Type of Presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Evaluation: 5=best to 1=No Credit

1. **Film Content:**                    1        2        3        4        5  
Tells a compelling story that aligns with the tradition of documentary filmmaking
  
2. **Organization:**                1        2        3        4        5  
Uses film techniques to transition to new topic/events/scenes. The film has an orderly flow to it that is discernable.
  
3. **Substance:**                    1        2        3        4        5  
Relevance to African American Fraternalism. How well did the film blend its subject to African American Fraternalism?
  
4. **Creativity:**                    1        2        3        4        5  
How well did substance, organization, & film technique blend together to make a clear statement?
  
5. **Insight:**                        1        2        3        4        5  
How well did you give a sound understanding of African American Fraternalism and culture through your research and film?
  
6. **Presentation:** 1        2        3        4        5  
Are you involved enthusiastically in the presentation of the film in the class?

**Overall:**

A+    A-    A        B+    B        B-    C+    C        C-    D        F

**Comments**

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## Research Proposal

### OVERVIEW

#### THE RESEARCH PROSPECTUS

A prospectus is a proposal to undertake a research project. It describes the questions, sources, and methods a researcher will use in her or his research. Each prospectus must contain a clear and concise introduction to the topic, state the main research question(s) that you want to answer, summarize the basic arguments that surround the research topic, discuss the main primary sources (archival and/or published) that will be used to direct the project, and explain your analytical approach(s).

#### OUTLINE

The Research Prospectus must adhere to the following outline:

##### *Introduction Project Overview and Significance*

- 1) Provide a clear and concise introduction to the topic (time period and historical context).
- 2) Provide a clear thesis statement.
- 3) Provide a brief description and statement of the central research question.
- 4) Explain the significance of the research and how it illuminates key themes and issues in African American Gender.

##### *Literature Review*

- 1) Provide a critical overview and analysis of the state of current research; in other words, present the main arguments from the 2 books and 1 article in your bibliography as they relate to your research topic. (Do Not use any of the text books for this!!!)
- 2) Discuss the significance of your proposed project by addressing how the study will add new knowledge and/or a new understanding of the topic for you.

##### *Proposed Plan of Research*

- 1) Describe your plan of research (when, where).
- 2) Describe your methodology (whether you will examine historical or contemporary written documents, use oral interviews, analyze films, etc.).
- 3) Describe the primary source collections (archival and/or published) that you will use for the project.
- 4) Describe your analytical approach(s) towards these materials in studying African American Gender (such as intersectionality, womanism, masculinities, sexuality)

##### *Preliminary Bibliography (this is not the bibliography that you have to do for the project but for the proposal)*

- 1) The bibliography must include at least six secondary sources (books) of major books

and articles related directly to your topic.

2) The bibliography must include primary source collections (collections are the entirety of a primary sources located at a library/archives) that will facilitate your study, such as

- primary sources published as a book
- a manuscript collection in an archive
- a photography or visual collection in an archive
- a rare books collection in an archive or library
- a database collection via the internet or a CD-ROM)

3) The bibliography must be properly formatted using the *Chicago Manual of Style* or Turabian guidelines. See the RESOURCES BELOW.

## **RESOURCES**

### **PROSPECTUS GUIDES**

#### **Research Prospectus Guidelines**

"Writing Your Research Prospectus - University of Colorado at Boulder

<http://www.colorado.edu/PWR/writingtips/20.html>

Writing a Prospectus University of Florida, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

<http://web.clas.ufl.edu/users/shegeman/prospectusguide.htm>

### **WRITING AND CITATION GUIDES**

#### **Online Resources**

Grammar, Style, and Citation Guides GSU, Writing Across the Curriculum

[http://wac.gsu.edu/content/students/style\\_grammar\\_guides.shtml](http://wac.gsu.edu/content/students/style_grammar_guides.shtml)

James Mauch, *Guide to the Successful Thesis and Dissertation: A Handbook for Students and Faculty*, Fifth Edition

Writing Your First History Paper Wesleyan University, Writing Workshop

<http://www.wesleyan.edu/writing/workshop/departments/history.html>

"Writing a Research Paper: The First Draft" Purdue University. Online Writing Lab

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResearchW/1draft.html>

### **PRIMARY SOURCE COLLECTIONS (EXAMPLES)**

#### **Local**

The University of Memphis Special Collections

<http://exlibris.memphis.edu/resource/special.html>

Memphis and Shelby County Public Library – The Memphis Room Benjamin L. Hooks

Central Library 4<sup>th</sup> Floor

<http://www.memphislibrary.lib.tn.us/history/memshe1.htm>

**National**

National Archives Online Research Tools -

<http://www.archives.gov/research/tools/index.html>

Library of Congress Online Catalogue - <http://catalog.loc.gov/>

American Antiquarian Society Newspaper Collection (early American and Caribbean) -

<http://www.americanantiquarian.org/newspapers.htm>

Travel Accounts in the Early Americas - <http://americanjourneys.org/>