

Professor Stephanie Smallwood
HIUS 183/283
Women, Race, and (Black) Power in Slavery and Freedom

Tues. 12:30-3:20
H&SS 6008

Office: H&SS 6085
Office Hours: Tu. 3:30-4, Th 12-2, or by appt.

Phone: (858) 534-8940
Email: ssmallwood@ucsd.edu

This reading and discussion course examine the varying obstacles black women have encountered and strategies they have devised to define and attain “power” in their lives. Our goal will be to problematize the meanings of “power,” and to consider the ways systems of race- and gender-based oppression have given particular shape to black women’s pursuit of personal autonomy and control. Accordingly, our larger aim will be to both gain understanding of black women’s experience and to use black women’s history as a lens through which to approach broader questions regarding the intersecting roles of race and gender in U.S. History.

Required Readings:

The following eight books are required and should be ordered they are also on reserve at Geisel Library (main circulation desk). Additional readings (both required and recommended) will be available online at J-Stor (www.jstor.org) or through Geisel Library E-Reserves.

- Stephanie M. H. Camp, Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women & Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South (University of North Carolina Press, 2004)
- Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, Gender & Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920 (University of North Carolina Press, 1996)
- Anna Julia Cooper, A Voice from the South (1892; Oxford University Press, reprint ed., 1990)
- Angela Y. Davis, Blues Legacies and Black Feminism: Gertrude “Ma” Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday (Pantheon Books, 1998)
- Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God (Perennial, 1998)
- Belinda Robnett, How Long, How Long? African American Women and the Struggle for Freedom and Justice (Oxford University Press, New Edition, 1999)
- Elaine Brown, A Taste of Power: A Black Woman’s Story (Anchor Books, 1993)
- Gwendolyn D. Pough, Check It While I Wreck It: Black Womanhood, Hip Hop Culture, and the Public Sphere (Northeastern University Press, 2004)

Weekly Assignments

- (1) Regular preparation for and participation in class discussions is essential to the success of this colloquium. You are expected to come to class each week having completed all assigned readings; and you are expected to come to class prepared to make a substantive contribution to weekly class discussions. In order to guide your preparation, you are required to submit 2-3 type-written pages of comments on the assigned reading each week.
- (2) In addition, two students will be responsible for leading class discussion each week. You may prepare questions for discussion individually, or collaborate as a team. It’s up to you, though you probably will enjoy the work more if you choose the teamwork route.

Research Paper and Oral Presentation:

(1) You will be required to write one 15pp. research paper, on a topic determined in consultation with me. A rough draft of your paper will be due the last week of class; your final draft will be due during finals week. To make timely progress on your research project, you are expected to meet the following deadlines:

19 April (4th week): choose paper topic

3 May (6th week): submit annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources

(2) You will also be asked to give regular oral progress reports on your research, and will be required to make an oral presentation on your research project on the last day of class (31 May)

Grading:

Your work will be evaluated as follows:

Weekly Reading Responses	10%
Oral Presentation	10%
15pp. Research Paper	40%
Class Participation	40%

CALENDAR

Week 1 (March 29): Introduction

Week 2 (April 5): Race and Gender in Colonial Slave Society

Joan Gunderson, "The Double Bonds of Race and Sex: Black and White Women in a Colonial Virginia Parish,"
Journal of Southern History 52: 3 (1996), pp. 351-372 (www.jstor.org)

Betty Wood, "White Women, Black Slaves and the Law in Early National Georgia: The Sunbury Petition of 1791,"
The Historical Journal, 35: 3 (1992), pp. 611-622 (www.jstor.org)

Week 3 (April 12): The Problem of "Resistance" in the Antebellum Slave South

Stephanie M. H. Camp, Closer to Freedom

Week 4 (April 19): Confronting Racial Terror in the Wake of Emancipation

***Paper topics due**

Anna Julia Cooper, A Voice From the South

Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, Gender & Jim Crow

Week 5 (April 26): Black Women and the Feminist Voice of the Blues

Angela Y. Davis, Blues Legacies and Black Feminism

Week 6 (May 3): Creating Power in the Mind's Eye: Fiction and Black Feminism

***Annotated bibliographies due**

Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God

Week 7 (May 10): Can Women Lead the Race to Freedom?

Belinda Robnett, How Long, How Long? African American Women and the Struggle for Freedom and Justice

Week 8 (May 17): Black Women and (Black) Power

Elaine Brown, A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story

Week 9 (May 24): Gender and Power in the Hip Hop Age

Gwendolyn Pough, Check It While I Wreck It: Black Womanhood, Hip Hop Culture, and the Public Sphere

Week 10 (May 31): Student Presentations on Research Projects

***Rough drafts due this week**

***Final drafts due finals week**