

BLACK FEMINISMS: PAST AND PRESENT

WINTER 2022

Instructor

Prof/Dr. Kianna Middleton
(She/Her/Hers)

Course

ETHN/CGS 147

Email

kmmiddleton@ucsd.edu

Virtual Meeting Time*

**Zoom TuTh 2-3:20pm
(PT)Link**

*first 2 weeks of class

Physical Location*

Center Hall (CENTR) 218

*after the first 2 weeks

Virtual Office Hours

Wednesdays 2-4pm PT
(by appointment only)

Zoom Office Hours Link

**Office Hours Sign Up Sheet
Link**

Course Overview

When we speak of Black feminisms, we do so with the knowledge that stories, theory, and praxis in the present is connected to and in conversation with the past. Black feminisms are circular (we speak to and with ancestors), dynamic (Black feminist interventions are happening everywhere), and expansive (the future of Black feminism is endless). This quarter in *Black Feminisms: Past and Present* we will study feminist and womanist themes and real-world political enactments. Though we know that Black feminisms are intersectional, disabled, trans, intersex, and queer lived experiences and theory are still under-studied. For this reason, this quarter's texts prioritize the above intersections and uplift other Black ways of knowing and being. By the end of the quarter, we will be better able to articulate the general terrain of Black feminist theory and we will be better advocates (and accomplices) of Black feminisms.

Required Text

All readings, films and videos are uploaded to Canvas. You are not responsible for purchasing any texts for this course. If Canvas is not accessible to you, please speak to me about alternative ways of accessing course materials.

Resources

Throughout the quarter, I will upload to Canvas resources, supplemental readings (not required readings), campus and community events, recorded lectures, social media posts, etc. that align with course themes. You may also send me any resources that you would like to have available for others.

COURSE SCHEDULE (COMPLETE MATERIALS BY THE DATE THEY APPEAR BELOW)

Week	Theme	Materials (Readings, Films, etc.)
Week 1 (Jan 4, Jan 6)	<i>Hello, Hello</i> (Course Introduction)	TU: Introductions TH: U. Taylor “Making Waves: The Theory and Praxis of Black Feminism”
Week 2 (Jan 11, Jan 13)	<i>Roots</i> (From Margin to Center, Eternally)	TU: b. hooks “Loving Blackness as Political Resistance” AND b. hooks “Feminist Class Struggle” TH: b. hooks “Moving Beyond Pain” (on Beyoncé’s <i>Lemonade</i>) AND b. hooks “It’s a Dick Thing: Beyond Sexual Acting Out”
Week 3 (Jan 18, Jan 20)	<i>Respiration</i> (On Love and Breathing)	TU: J. Nash “Love in the Time of Death” TH: <i>The Sacred and Liberatory Power of Rest with Tricia Hersey of The Nap Ministry</i> (podcast) AND D. Moore “Black Radical Love: A Practice”
Week 4 (Jan 25, Jan 27)	<i>Imagination</i> (Feminist Futures)	TU: S. Schalk, “The Future of Bodyminds, Bodyminds of the Future” from <i>Bodyminds Reimagined: (Dis)ability, Race, and Gender in Black Women’s Speculative Fiction</i> TH: Janelle Monáe “ <u>Dirty Computer</u> [Emotion Picture]” AND <i>We’re Queer – and Apparently So Is Everybody Else</i> (podcast)

Week	Theme	Materials (Readings, Films, etc.)
Week 5 (Feb 1, Feb 3)	<i>Stories</i> (Ways of Telling, Ways of Being)	<p>TU: M. Richardson “Listening to the Archives: Black Lesbian Literature and Queer Memory”</p> <p>AND</p> <p>FILM: <i>The Watermelon Woman</i> (Dir. Cheryl Dunye)</p> <p>TH: S. Hartman “Venus in Two Acts”</p>
<p>**MIDTERM PROJECT – FLEXIBLE DUE DATE OF 2/4 **</p>		
Week 6 (Feb 8, Feb 10)	<i>Respiration, Reprise</i> (Un/breathability)	<p>TU: A. Gumbs “That Transformative Dark Thing”</p> <p>AND</p> <p><i>A Breathing Chorus with Alexis Pauline Gumbs</i> (Podcast)</p> <p>TH: C. Sharpe (Interview) “Antiblack Weather vs. Microclimates”</p>
Week 7 (Feb 15, Feb 17)	<i>Blackish</i> (Troubling Skin Tones)	<p>TU: b. hooks “Eating the Other: Desire and Resistance”</p> <p>TH: M. Cherid “‘Ain’t Got Enough Money to Pay Me Respect...”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>For Harriet</i> video “Cyn Santana is right. Black men DO treat Latinas better.” • “Boyz” by Jesy Nelson ft. Nicki Minaj • “Do it Like Me” Bhad Bhabie
Week 8 (Feb 22, Feb 24)	<i>Divergence</i> (Blackness Beyond Normalcy)	<p>TU: M. Bailey and I. Mobley “Work in the Intersections: A Black Feminist Disability Framework”</p> <p>TH: C. Bell “Introducing White Disability Studies: A Modest Proposal” (CONT. NEXT PAGE!)</p>

Week	Theme	Materials (Readings, Films, etc.)
		AND J. Kim “Toward a Crip-of-Color Critique: Thinking with Julie Minich’s ‘Enabling Whom?’”
Week 9 (March 1, March 3)	<i>The Erotic (As Power)</i>	TU: A. Lorde “Uses of The Erotic: The Erotic as Power” AND <i>Erotic Power with Toluwanimi Obiwole</i> (podcast) TH: <i>Adrienne Maree Brown on Pleasure as a Birthright</i> (podcast) AND J. Jackson <i>The Velvet Rope</i> (album)
Week 10 (June 1, June 4)	<i>Legacy (Goodbye for Now)</i>	TU: WILL DETERMINE AS A CLASS TH: WILL DETERMINE AS A CLASS

****ALL CLASS WORK DUE BY 3/11****

****FINAL PROJECT DUE 3/18***

A Statement About Access

The Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD) asks you to submit your access needs to your Disability Specialist or to the OSD at osd@ucsd.edu. You may also find more information about OSD resources at osd.ucsd.edu. It is critical to note that the OSD may not be able to provide support to you for all your access needs. Your frustration is valid. Please email me with questions or suggestions for how I can make this course more accessible for everyone. Please share what you need with either/both the OSD and me as soon as possible.

Attendance and Participation

I understand that attendance is difficult during the pandemic for several personal and technological reasons. I will take attendance, but loosely. If you miss class, please note that you may complete assignments, listen to recorded lectures, and submit discussion responses on your own. However, I encourage attending class lectures for discussion and community. If you attend class, we may begin the class period with a warmup writing assignment that can serve as a form of participation if you do not wish to participate in other ways (speaking up in class,

writing in chat box). You may submit your warmup during class or at any point during the rest of the day for 'credit'. You do not need to inform me as to why you have missed class; however, if you know that you will only be able to attend class remotely, please let me know as soon as possible.

There are multiple ways to participate in class: submitting warmups; speaking during Zoom meetings; typing in the chat box during Zoom meetings; attending office hours; attending and contributing to breakout sessions; working with a partner or group on final projects. I am also open to other forms of participation. For example, if you participate in an extracurricular organization, community group, etc. that overlaps with class themes, we can talk about making your participation there count towards our class.

Lectures

Lectures for this class will be recorded and uploaded to our Canvas page after class. Note: all lectures are meant to provide you with background information about the authors/artists, their main arguments and/or artistic intentions, and provocative questions that will guide discussion (in class and discussion board posts). You are responsible for either listening to lectures on your own or attending class.

Assignments

All assignments for this course have flexible deadlines, though all assignments need to be submitted by the end of the quarter (**March 11, 2022**). If you have difficulties submitting assignments by the final deadline, please let me know. You are responsible for the following assignments:

1. Writing Warmups
2. Discussion Board Posts in Small Groups (must complete 5 total)
3. Midterm Project: *Write a Black Feminist*
4. Final Project (or Paper): *Black Feminists Conversations* (Includes 2 brief progress reports)

Writing Warmups:

Though we may not write each class, on the days that we do this is the format: For the first five minutes of class, we will free-write on a topic that relates to the week's course materials/themes. You do not need to submit polished writing: writing can be fragments, lists, etc. Daily writing will also loosely serve as an attendance and participation meter, though there is no formal attendance for this course and there are other ways to participate. If you are unable to attend class, please submit your writing before the start of the next class meeting.

Discussion Board Posts (Small Group Work):

On Canvas, you will find a corresponding discussion board question that explores the readings and themes for each week. You are responsible for answering 5 out of 10 discussion board posts. You will have time to work with others in class, but each person is responsible for submitting a response. You may choose any weeks you would like. You may post as we go or complete all posts by the end of the quarter (**March 11, 2022**). Discussion posts must be a paragraph (minimum) that: (1) clearly identify a course text, film, etc. (2) addresses the discussion question (3) ends response by asks a question to the rest of the class. You do not need to do more than the answer the above components.

Midterm Project: Write a Black Feminist:

There is no formal midterm assignment for this course. Instead, you will practice feminist letter writing. Letters allow space for thinkers to write each other about such topics as: their intellectual work, activism, marginalization, health, love, and heartache. This assignment provides you a space to craft your own letter to a feminist (living or deceased) concerning any topic of your choosing. Ideas include current events (political, cultural, academic), the importance or resurgence of their work, entertainment, medicine and science. Letter requirements: references the work of chosen feminist, must be two pages (minimum, max 4). The letter can be either typed or handwritten (if handwritten, please upload images to Canvas). **Suggested due date is February 4, 2022; however, you may submit your midterm up until March 11, 2022.**

Final Project (or Paper): Black Feminist Conversations

If you select the final project option for this course, you must work with a partner to host a conversation about either past or current issues that deserve Black feminist interruption(s). You may be aware of the more well-known conversations between James Baldwin and Nikki Giovanni (1971). Other powerful conversations include: James Baldwin and Maya Angelou (1975) and Angela Davis, Kwame Ture, and Fannie Lou Hamer (1973). For this project you will craft a number of questions that you will answer through conversation with your partner. Topics include: Black feminism (as a definition/terrain/praxis); cross-community solidarity and accomplices; popular culture (ex. a musician, film); a current event. Specifications: Partners are required to meet and plan their conversation at least twice during the quarter and turn in a brief progress report. Partners must craft a minimum of four questions to be addressed in conversation, research a conversation topic, and must record (audio only or audio and video) or formally type up a transcript of the conversation.

If you select the final paper option for this course, you will work alone to write a traditional paper that puts Black feminist thinkers in conversation, even if their work does not directly reference each other. For example, you may write about the linkages between Adrienne Maree Brown's pleasure activism and its indebtedness to Audre Lorde's work, particularly "Uses of the Erotic". Another example could be about the connections between Saidiya Hartman's "Venus in Two Acts" and Cheryl Dunye's *The Watermelon Woman* and Dee Rees' *Pariah* (outside reference). Essentially, you will make an argument for why and how class texts inform each other's thinking. Additionally, your essay will explore how Black feminist thought (as a way of knowing/experiencing the world) is strengthened by the work of your chosen thinkers for your paper. Specifications: 10pgs (15pgs max), double-spaced, 12 point, includes a bibliography and appropriate citations (MLA, APA, Chicago, etc.).

Papers must include 2 main texts (books, articles, films, music videos) from class and a minimum of one external text/reference.

Due dates for assignments:

Meeting the listed due dates for assignments is encouraged. This course was designed to give you enough time to work on projects throughout the quarter. However, you may find that you need more time to complete assignments. With that being said: you may turn in all assignments by the end of quarter if you choose. Note: this may put a heavier workload on you at the end of the quarter if you choose this route. Furthermore, you may not receive feedback on your work and risk submitting work at the end of term with no guarantee or knowledge of the grading system for this course. If you can submit assignments by the suggested dates listed here, I encourage you to do so.

Late Work Policy:

Since all assignments have flexible due dates, late work is highly discouraged. If you turn in your midterm, discussion posts, writing prompts, etc. after March 11, 2022, the highest you will receive is 50% for each assignment. I will not accept any late final exam projects (due March 18, 2022).

Finals Week

Our class will not meet during finals week nor will we have a traditional final exam. Rather, student will work on final projects or papers throughout the quarter and submit them by the end of finals week (**March 18, 2022**). You may submit your final earlier than finals week; however, you must complete your progress reports before submitting your final project.

Grading

Participation 20% (includes daily writing exercises, group work and final projects, class discussions, office hours)

Discussion Posts 25% (5 total)

Midterm Project: Write a Black Feminist 25%

Final Project: Black Feminist Conversations 30%

**Detailed rubrics for each assignment will be posted in the assignment tab on Canvas.

Grading Scale:

A+ (97-100)	B (85-83)	C- (72-70)
A (96-93)	B- (82-80)	D and below – not passing
A- (92-90)	C+ (79-76)	
B+ (89-86)	C (75-73)	

Academic Integrity

From the University:

"Academic Integrity is expected of everyone at UC San Diego. This means that you must be honest, fair, responsible, respectful, and trustworthy in all of your actions. Lying, cheating or any other forms of dishonesty will not be tolerated because they undermine learning and the University's ability to certify students' knowledge and abilities. Thus, any attempt to get, or help another get, a grade by cheating, lying or dishonesty will be reported to the Academic Integrity Office and will result sanctions. Sanctions can include an F in this class and suspension or dismissal from the University. So, think carefully before you act by asking yourself: a) is what I'm about to do or submit for credit an honest, fair, respectful, responsible & trustworthy representation of my knowledge and abilities at this time and, b) would my instructor approve of my action? You are ultimately the only person responsible for your behavior. So, if you are unsure, don't ask a friend—ask your instructor, instructional assistant, or the Academic Integrity Office. You can learn more about academic integrity at academicintegrity.ucsd.edu" (Source: Academic Integrity Office, 2018).

For this course:

It is understandable that you are now navigating new educational terrain. You may be attending class from a location where you do not have the same resources, dedicated time, silence, etc. to work on assignments. Our goal is to work together this quarter to create new educational materials and familiarize ourselves with the concept of decolonization. Work does not need to be perfect; it is more about working intentionally on projects of interest. Please do not submit work you have written for other courses or work that is not your own. What you complete this quarter is more than enough.

Additional Resources (Minors)

Consider a Minor in [Critical Gender Studies](#)

Consider a Minor in [Ethnic Studies](#)