

ETHN 147/CGS 147: Black Feminisms, Past and Present – Summer Session I
“A Black Feminist Approach to Science, Technology and Reproduction”
Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:00 to 4:50 pm, Center Hall 205

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Office Hours: By appointment
Office: Mandeville Coffee Cart (Art of Espresso)

COURSE OVERVIEW:

This course explores both historical and contemporary Black feminist approaches to issues around science, technology and reproduction in forming conceptions of race, gender and class. The knowledge and experiences of Black people, and in particular, Black women have been largely devalued in the United States. This class centers Black feminists to think about the role of science and technology in forming conceptions of race, gender and class. Such an engagement will allow us to politically, socially, and culturally contextualize the institutions of science and technology. How does scientific thought constitute itself as objective? How have some populations benefited from scientific knowledge production while others are either excluded from or become science's subjects/objects of study? How dependent are notions of race inscribed on the visual markings of bodies? How does Black feminism as a field help us to think about the constitutive intersection between discourses of science/technology/reproduction and social categories of power, difference and identity?

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS/EXPECTATIONS

In order to pass this class, you are required to do all readings, submit all written work and attend all class sessions. Late work will not be accepted unless you have informed me before the due date.

Grading and Grade Distribution:

Attendance and Participation (20%)
Presentations (20%)
Quizzes (20%)
Final Paper (40%)

*Grading Policy: In order to receive a passing grade in the class, students must complete all course assignments.

Attendance and Participation –

Your participation grade is based on presence and engagement. This will require that you (1) engage the weekly readings thoroughly and arrive prepared to discuss them in detail; (2) take intellectual, emotional, and political risks when developing and sharing your ideas; and (3) read texts and participate in discussions omnivorously, generously, and productively. You should have the readings completed before you attend class. While your comments in class should be informed by the readings and lectures, you should not focus on “right” and “wrong” answers; instead, you should think critically about the historical issues raised in readings, lectures, and discussions. Absence will be reflected in the final grade. Because we will only meet twice a week, any absence will affect your participation grade unless you have a documented emergency.

Group Presentations & Handouts –

Each student is expected to present **once**, in pairs, over the course of the class. Your presentations are not individualized performances of expertise; they are not solely (or even primarily) evaluated on students' personal mastery of relevant knowledge. Rather, group presentations are collaborative intellectual exercises, both in and out of the classroom. Each week's presentation should reflect a collective engagement by the presenters with each other, their classmates, and the full set of the assigned readings for the week. Your presentation should not be lengthy detailed summaries of the readings for the week; rather, they should start by answering a set of questions (see below) and then expand to consider the broader implications of the readings as a whole in the context of the class, the field of ethnic studies, and/or the contemporary political landscape. Your presentation grade will reflect the degree of critical thought, originality, rigor, and collaborative spirit demonstrated by (1) your oral presentation and your posing of a handful of questions that provoke engaged, productive dialogue among the class.

What is/are the central question(s) explored in the week's readings, and what are the key terms/concepts/frameworks used to answer or address these questions?

- What is/are the central argument(s) of each text? What kinds of evidence are used to support those arguments, and why? How are the arguments in each of the week's readings related to each other?
- How might we trace the relationship among the readings for the week [As well as previous readings]?
- What questions do the readings raise for you?

Quizzes-

Four unannounced quizzes will focus on required readings for the day of the quiz.

Final Paper–

Your final paper should be an analysis of a research topic relevant to the course (5-7 typed pages). Paper must include at least 3 references from class. Paper must include a bibliography and properly follow conventions of citation and formatting according to MLA, Chicago, or APA style.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

In order to save paper, I will allow laptops **ONLY** to access readings and to take notes. All other electronic devices must remain silent and in your bags. If I see you on any other websites or on your phone, I will ask you to leave and mark you absent for the day.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

According to the UCSD Policy on Academic Integrity, "no student shall engage in any activity that involves attempting to receive a grade by means other than honest effort." This includes:

- Completing an exam or assignment for another student or allowing an exam or assignment to be completed by another person for you;
- plagiarizing or copying the work of another person and submitting it as your own;
- using unpermitted aids (notes, phones, computers) when completing an exam or assignment.

Any work that you produce for this course that violates the UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship will automatically result in an 'F' on that assignment. Further penalties may include your failure in the course and your suspension and/or expulsion from the University.

ACCOMODATIONS

If you have a medical condition or different physical or learning needs for which you may need accommodation in order to participate fully and successfully, please feel free to speak with me individually so that we can make necessary adjustments. You may also seek assistance or information from the Office for Students with Disabilities (858-534-4382).

ON NAMES AND PRONOUNS

There is a long history of dialogue and activism around how we address one another, with respect to both names and pronouns. Students should be referred to by the name they prefer, and with the proper pronunciation, by faculty and other students. I will gladly honor your request to address you by the name you prefer and gender pronouns that correspond to your gender identity. Please advise me of your name's proper pronunciation, and any name or pronouns not reflected by the record.

DISCUSSION ETHICS

This class is intended for students interested in challenging commonly held understandings of gender, race, sexuality, nation, and class. Given the nature of the course there will likely be a wide range of opinions. Ideally the course will prompt you to think for yourself and to raise questions about conventional views and received wisdom. However, please engage one another in discussion with respect and consideration. Abusive and harsh language, intimidation and personal attacks will not be tolerated. These norms are reflected in the UCSD Principles of Community that we are all expected to follow. For more information about the UCSD Principles of Community, visit (<http://www.vcb.ucsd.edu/principles.htm>).

READING SCHEDULE -

Unit 1: Towards a Black Feminist Approach

Tuesday 7/2/19

Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement," in Guy-Sheftall, *Words of Fire* 231-241.

E. Frances White. "Black Feminist Interventions." *Dark Continent of Our Bodies: Black Feminism and the Politics of Respectability*. Philadelphia: Temple UP, 2001. 25-80.

Thursday 7/4/19 - No Class Today (4th of July)

Please Read at home –

Hammonds, Evelyn, and Banu Subramaniam. "A Conversation on Feminist Science Studies." *Signs* 28, no. 3 (2003): 923-44. doi:10.1086/345455.

Black Feminist Science - <http://www.anthropology-news.org/index.php/2019/03/18/black-feminist-science/>

Unit 2: Constructing Science, Race and Womanhood

Tuesday 7/9/19

White, E. Frances. "The Dark Continent of Our Bodies: Constructing Science, Race, and Womanhood in the Nineteenth Century." In *Dark Continent Of Our Bodies: Black Feminism & Politics Of Respectability*, 81-116. Temple University Press, 2001. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt14bt2jx.6>.

Thursday 7/11/19 - No Class Today

Please watch at home –
The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks (2017)

Harvey, S. (2016). The HeLa bomb and the science of unveiling. *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience*, 2(2), pp. 1-30.

Unit 3: Medical Imaginaries/ Medical Exploitation

Tuesday 7/16/19

Washington, Harriet. "Southern Discomfort: Medical Exploitation on the Plantation" and "Profitable Wonders" In *Medical Apartheid: A Dark History of Medical Experimentation on Black Americans from Colonial Times to the Present*, pp. 189-216.

Roberts, Dorothy. "Chapter 2 - Separating Racial Science from Racism" in *Fatal Invention: How Science, Politics and Big Business, Re-Create Race in the Twenty-First Century*, pp. 42-77

Thursday 7/18/19

Nelson, Alondra. "Introduction" in *The Social Life of DNA: Race, Reparations, and Reconciliation after the Genome*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2016. Pp. 1-34.

Unit 4: The Labor of Science and Reproduction

Tuesday 7/23/19

Owens, Deirdre Cooper. "Introduction: American Gynecology and Black Lives." *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender, and the Origins of American Gynecology*. 1-15.

Ivy, Nicole. "Bodies of Work: A Meditation on Medical Imaginaries and Enslaved Women." *Souls* 18.1 (2016) 11-31.

Thursday 7/25/19

Ross, Loretta J. "Reproductive Justice as Intersectional Feminist Activism," *Souls*, 19:3, 2017, pp. 286-314.

Roberts, Dorothy. "The Dark Side of Birth Control" In *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty*. New York: Vintage, 1998. 56-103.

Unit 5: Race, Gender and Science Fiction

Tuesday 7/30/19

Butler, Octavia. (1997). *Dawn (Xenogenesis #1)*. New York, NY: Open Road Integrated Media.

Roberts, Dorothy. "Race, Gender, and Genetic Technologies: A New Reproductive Dystopia?" (2009). Faculty Scholarship, Paper 1421.

Thursday 8/1/19

Butler, Octavia. (1997). *Dawn (Xenogenesis #1)*. New York, NY: Open Road Integrated Media.

Majoring or Minorin in Ethnic Studies

Many students take an Ethnic Studies course because the topic is of great interest or because of a need to fulfill a social science, non-contiguous, or other college requirement. Often students have taken three or four classes out of interest yet do not realize how close they are to a major, a minor, or even a double major. An Ethnic Studies major is excellent preparation for a career in law, education, medicine, public health, social work, counseling, journalism, government and politics, international relations, and many other careers. If you would like information about the Ethnic Studies major or minor, please contact: 858-534-3277 or ethnicstudies@ucsd.edu or visit www.ethnicstudies.ucsd.edu