

Western University

Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies

1030F/G –Introduction to Black Studies

January – April 2023

Instructor: Erica S. Lawson
Office Hours: Thursdays 11:30-12:30
TA: MehnaZ Tabassum
TA: Rayn Rudy El Haddad

Course Description

Black Studies is comprised of the knowledge production practices and worldviews among African and African descendant peoples across the globe. It is rooted in rich histories, cultures, and philosophies that have given rise to anti-colonial, anti-racist, the Negritude, Pan-African and civil rights movements, including #BlackLivesMatter; as well as contributions to worldmaking.

This survey course introduces students to foundational debates, ideas, and practices in the Black intellectual tradition. With an emphasis on interdisciplinarity indicative of diverse perspectives, course materials include book chapters, journal and magazine articles, music, film, art, and poetry.

We will locate contemporary topics (e.g., identity, aesthetics, gender, race, sexuality, and popular culture, etc.) in historical frameworks, with a focus on resilience and resistance in Black life. The purpose of the course is to deepen our understanding of how social, political, economic, and cultural issues are taken up in the Black intellectual-activist tradition.

Class Times: Thursdays 1:30pm – 3:30pm
Location: UCC41
Office Hours: Tuesdays 10 – 11 am (zoom)
Office Hours: Mondays 10 – 11 am (zoom)

Introduction to Black Studies

Learning Objectives

- Familiarity with debates in the Black intellectual tradition
- Identify connections between historical experiences and contemporary events
- Improved research and writing skills
- Critical evaluation and analytical skills
- Improved knowledge about Black histories
- Application of theory/analysis to issues and events

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Assignments & Evaluation

- Attendance & Participation 10%
- Essay 35% (thesis and annotated bibliography – 15%); and final paper (20%)
- Creative assignment 20%
- Final exam 35%

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01

Jan 12 Week One

Welcome, course expectations, open discussion (co-facilitated with Dr. Cornel Grey, Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies)

Jan 19 Week Two

What is 'Black Studies'?

Cole, J. (2004). "Black Studies in Liberal Arts Education." In J. Bobo, C. Hudley, and C. Michel (eds.) *The Black Studies Reader*. New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 21–33.

Carter, D. (2018). "Black Study." In A. Johnson, R. Joseph-Salisbury, and B. Kamunge (eds.), *The Fire Now: Anti-Racist Scholarship in Times of Explicit Violence*. London, UK: Zed Books, pp. 38–43.

Hine Clark, D. (2014). "A Black Studies Manifesto: Characteristics of a Black Studies Mind." *The Black Scholar*, 44(2):11–15

Being Black in Canada
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ntn0Nx8OT44>

Jan 26 Week Three

Negritude

Abrah, S.S.F (2015). "Concept of Negritude." The Sage Encyclopedia of African Cultural Heritage in North America, pp. 2–5.

Moise, M. (2021). "Antillean Women and Black Internationalism: The feminine Genealogy of Negritude." *The Black Scholar*, 51(2): 33–32.

Walcott, R. (2000). "Who Is She and What Is She to You?" Mary Ann Shadd Cary and the (Im)Possibility of Black/Canadian Studies." *Atlantis*, 24(2): 137–146.

Documentary

Mary Ann Shadd Cary – "Breaking the Ice"

Jan 26 Week Four

Pan-Africanism

Malisa, M., and Messedja, T.Q. (2020). "The Origins and Evolution of Pan Africanism." In R. Rabaka (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Pan Africanism*. London: Routledge, 35–47.

Boyce Davies, C. (2014). "Pan-Africanism, Transnational Black Feminism and the Limits of Culturalist Analyses in African Gender Discourses." *Feminist Africa 19: Pan-Africanism and Feminism*, 78–93.

Van Klinken, A. "Queer Pan-Africanism in Contemporary Africa." *The Origins of Pan Africanism*. In R. Rabaka (ed.) *Routledge Handbook of Pan Africanism*. London: Routledge, 343–354.

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Feb 9 Week Five

Activism and Protest in Black Life

Due: Annotated Bibliography

Cummings, R. and Mohabir, M. (2022). *Protests and Pedagogy: The Legacies of Caribbean Student Resistance and the Sir George Williams Protest*, Montreal 1969. *Topica: Canadian Journal of Cultural Studies*, 44:1–24

Russel, R. (2016) "Black Lives Matter: Toward a Modern Practice of Mass Struggle." *New Labor Forum*, 25(1): 34–42. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/epub/10.1177/109579601562071>

Hine Clark, D. (2014). "A Black Studies Manifesto: Characteristics of a Black Studies Mind." *The Black Scholar*, 44(2):11–15

Documentary

The Ninth Floor (The George Williams Affair)

Guest Speaker

Dr. Nataleah Hunter

Feb 16 Week Six

Capitalism & Slavery

Carrington, S.H.H. (2003). "Capitalism & Slavery and Caribbean Historiography: An Evaluation." *The Journal of African American History*, 88(3): 304–312.

Fuertes, D.C. (2010). "The Haitian Revolution: Legacy and Actuality." *International Journal of Cuban Studies*, pp. 286–300.

Bellegarde-Smith, P. (2011). "A Man-Made Disaster: The Earthquake of January 12, 2010 –A Haitian Perspective." *Journal of Black Studies*, 42(2): 264–275.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/20/world/americas/takeaways-haiti-reparations-france.html?searchResultPosition=6>

Guest Speaker

Spoken word poetry (to be confirmed)

Spring Reading Week
February 18–26

March 2 Week Seven

Black Feminist Thought

Due: Essay

Davies, C.B. (2009) "Sisters Outside: Tracing the Caribbean/Black Radical Intellectual Tradition." *Small Axe*, 28(13): 217–229.

Hiraide, L.A. (2022). "Please me Baby: Cardi B and the Black Feminist Politics of Pleasure." *Brief Encounters*, 6(6): 28–37.

Massaquoi, N. (2004). "An African Child Becomes a Black Canadian Feminist: Oscillating identities in the Black Diaspora." *Canadian Women's Studies*, 23(2): 140–144.

Alinia, M. (2015). "On Black Feminist Thought: Thinking Oppression and Resistance Through Intersectional Paradigm." *Ethnic & Racial Studies*, (38)13: 2334–2340.

Dr. Blitney Cooper: The Racial Politics of Time
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7z52RW_bDQ

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March 9 Week Eight

Black Diaspora

Walcott, R. (2005). "Emerging Diaspora Consciousness among African-Canadians in Toronto." In M. Ember, C.R. Ember, and I. Skoggard (eds.), *Encyclopedia of Diasporas, Immigrants, and Refugee Cultures around the World*. Boston, MA: Springer, 438–445.

Millão Martins, L.M. (2018). "Dionne Brand and Afua Cooper: Diaspora and Continuities Shaped by National and Regional Cultures." *African American Review*, 51(3): 197–209.

Góes, J. (2022). "Du Bois and Brazil: Reflections on Black Transnationalism and African Diaspora." *Du Bois Review, Social Science Research on Race*, 19(2): 292–308.

March 16 Week Nine

Black Aesthetic Representation

Gordon, L.R. (2017). "Black Aesthetics, Black Value." *Public Culture*, 30(1): 19–34.

Mason, M.W. (2022). "Embracing a Big, Black Ass at a Tiny, Tiny Ass Desk." *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly*, 267–282.

Ford, T. (2015). "The Afro Look and Global Black Consciousness." *Journal of Contemporary African Arts*, 37: 28–37.

Lizzo: NPR Music Tiny Desk Concert
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DFtLdByWIDYr>

March 23 Week Ten

Contesting Public Memory

Due: Creative Assignment

Bell, M. (2021). "Against a Simple Removal: A Defence of Defacement as a Response to Racist Public Monuments." *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 1–15.

Nasar, S. (2020). "Remembering Edward Colston: histories of slavery, memory, and black globality." *29(7): Women's History Review*, 1218–1225.

Langford, R. (2008). "Photography, Belgian Colonialism, and Hergé's Tintin au Congo." *Journal of Romance Studies*, 8(1): 77–89.

Inside the World's Last Colonial Museum in Belgium
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PYxWXdFyKwIIZzo>

Guest Speaker

Dr. Wesley Crichlow

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UOnOfUaKcA>

Angel Maxine – Wo Fie feat Wanlov the Kubolor & Sister Deborah

Recommended:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/11/04/world/africa/ghana-transgender-musician-angel-maxine.html?searchResultPosition=1>

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April 6 Week Twelve

(Re) Imagining Different Futures/Black Joy

Maynard, R., and Simpson, L. (2020). "Towards Black and Indigenous Futures on Turtle Island: A Conversation." In R. Diverlus, S. Hudson and S.M. Ware (eds.), *Until We Free: Reflections on Black Lives Matter in Canada*. University of Regina Press, 75–84.

Johnson, J. (2015). "Black Joy in the Time of Ferguson." QED: A Journal in LGBTQ Worldmaking, 2(2): 177–183.

Black Boy Joy – Our Daily Routine (Terrell and Floyd)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F9vWplhg6NE>

Wrap up and Review

Poetry, facts, and
Commentary Corner

Desmond Cole: Black Like Me
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pMuyKPOCpPg>

Frederick Douglass (What to the Slave is the Fourth of July)
<https://edsitement.neh.gov/student-activities/frederick-douglass-what-slave-fourth-july>

James Baldwin discusses Racism – The Dick Cavett Show
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WWwOIl7WHpE>

How an FBI Poster Became a Black Power Symbol | The Bigger Picture with Vincent Brown | PBS
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jwZPghlo3jg>

Angela Davis on Running from the FBI, Lessons from Prison and How Aretha Franklin Got Her Free
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xnNq0zooUw>

Langston Hughes (Cross)
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/150889/cross>

Kyla Lacey – "White Privilege"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-fpNoLVlfi3o>

<https://news.uw.edu/2018/12/freedom-on-the-move/>

https://ca.images.search.yahoo.com/search/images?_ylt=AwrFGBHlumlPBORxYXrFAx;_ylu=Y29sbWNI2JEcG9zAzEdnRpZAMEc2VjA3BpdnM-?p=ads+to+recapture+runaway+slaves&fr=pliv-web&type=E210CA8B5G0&fr=mcafee

Life aboard a Slave Ship
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PmQvofAIZoA>

Rankine, C. (2015). "The Condition of Black Life is One of Mourning." *The New York Times*, "The Condition of Black Life is One of Mourning" – *The New York Times* (nytimes.com)

Black Boy Joy (Floyd and Terrell)
Most Likely to..
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t87lUkUHHo>

Okeow, A. (2020). "How Saidiya Hartman Retells the History of Mourning." *The New Yorker*, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/10/26/how-saidiya-hartman-retells-the-history-of-black-life>

Course Policies

(*Please note that minor adjustments or changes can be made to the course outline at any time*)

Contact Info

Please come by my office during office hours to address concerns or questions (Room – 1WH 3234). If this does not suit your schedule, please send me an email with a specific question that hasn't been addressed in the syllabus or with information posted in OWL. I will respond to your inquiry within 48 hours. You may also speak with MehnaZ Tabassum who is the TA for this course.

Support Services

Registrar Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>
Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/pspi/>
<https://www.uwo.ca/pspi/>
Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>
Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to [MentalHealth@Western](http://mentalhealth@western): <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocon/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Some advice to be aware of includes, but is not limited to, the following: write assignments yourself and in your own words; do not submit an assignment to this class that has previously been submitted elsewhere; cite both direct quotes as well as the paraphrased ideas of others. It is better to submit nothing than to submit something that has any amount of plagiarism in it. Save your academic record: consult with me for more time if you're feeling overwhelmed.

Deadlines, Submission Instructions, Illness Policies, Accommodation, Attendance Policies, etc.

Deadlines
Please consult the syllabus and assignment outlines for all due dates and times and record these in the planner or calendar of your choosing. Essays and papers should be submitted electronically only (no printed paper copy required) through the assignments tab in OWL/Turnitin. It is your responsibility to remember to load your paper to OWL/Turnitin on time, and to do so well enough in advance to account for any unforeseen technical difficulties. Essays not submitted to OWL/Turnitin will not be graded. Assignments will not be accepted by e-mail. Files should be submitted as Word documents (not .pages, not a link to your onedrive or google account, etc.).

File names should be: "Lastname Firstname – GSWS1030 [name of the assignment]"

Essays not submitted by the due date will begin accumulating late penalties at the rate of 2% per day, including weekends, unless you have made arrangements with the instructor prior to the deadline.

How to ask for an Accomodation or an Extension: Official Channels

Accommodation Policies

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](http://www.uwo.ca/academic/accessible-education/policies/)

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Late & Missed Assignments: Medical and Non-Medical Academic Accommodation

If an assignment is late due to illness or other legitimate reasons, students must provide supporting documentation to the Office of the Dean of the appropriate faculty. Please consult the relevant University policies to be updated on any processes following the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Regarding the University's medical policy, UWO Senate requires that students seeking academic accommodation on medical tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation.

Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. For UWO Policy on accommodation for Medical Illness see: http://www.uwo.ca/arts/counselling/procedures/medical_accommodation.html
<https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm>

Student Medical Certificate

PLEASE DO NOT GIVE ME (OR YOUR TA) ANY MEDICAL NOTES. THESE MUST BE SUBMITTED TO YOUR FACULTY ACADEMIC COUNSELLOR

If you must complete a Student Medical Certificate (SMC), see: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf. Academic Accommodation must be requested within 28 days of the missed assignment except in extenuating circumstances.

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Attendance Policy and/or Participation policy for final exams

Please note the attendance policy of the Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies and The University of Western Ontario: Students who have not engaged sufficiently in class and/or tutorials as determined by the instructor can be prevented from writing the final exam in the course, according to the procedures established under Examinations/Attendance in the Policy on Attendance Regulations for Examinations.

GSWS supports the following: In classes without final examinations, persistent absenteeism (defined by the Department as absent [3] weeks in half courses, and six [6] weeks in full courses) may be rendered grounds for failure in the course (after due warning is given).

You will be required to read for each class. Plan to read critically rather than just for content. You are expected to have read all assigned materials prior to each class period/prior to completing asynchronous lessons and to be prepared to participate in discussions.

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