

ANT 3930 - Junior Topics Class/AFA 3930 Special Topics:

Black Feminist Anthropology

Fall 2022

Wednesday: Period 4 - 6 (10:40 AM - 1:40 PM)

In-Person (100%) Little Hall 0125

Professor R. Barnes, M.S., Ph.D.

Associate Professor

Department of African American Studies and Anthropology

Office Hours: TBD. and by Appointment

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Course Description.

Those of us who see ourselves as Black Feminist Anthropologists believe that there is an enormous theoretical and methodological potential into bringing women authors to the discussions about the “classics” in anthropology and centering women’s experiences, particularly Black women, in ethnographic study and knowledge production. Instead of dedicating one week out of fifteen to the discussion and exploration of women of color, Black, and feminist anthropology, this course centers the voices and perspectives of women of color, Black, and feminist anthropology. The intentionality of centering these voices is not just for the purpose of inclusivity, but because the discipline, its theory, and methodological praxis has been shaped by these contributions. They are not add-ons, they are central, and have been heretofore silenced, erased, and side-lined. This course is an interventionist, corrective, and restorative measure and builds on the history of theoretical and praxis contributions developed by Black women anthropologists and Black feminist anthropologists. The course is designed for and directed towards students interested pursuing anthropology as a discipline, those pursuing Black women’s studies, and those seeking to utilize Black feminist ethnography as a methodology. This course is also for those interested in enriching their core education and embracing multiple viewpoints inherently engraved in ethnographies and anthropological theories.

The course integrates a survey of ethnographies written by Black women anthropologists who ground themselves in Black feminist theory and/or see themselves as Black feminist scholars. Students should leave the course with a significant grounding in Black feminist anthropology as a theory, praxis, and methodology.

Course Structure.

This course is designed as an upper-level seminar. However, there is an understanding that some students may be new to various aspects of the subject matter. Perhaps one is new to anthropology, or one is majoring in anthropology but new to Black feminisms. With this variation in base-line knowledge, the course includes some lecture for foundational purposes while encouraging discussion of key texts and ideas. Because the course meets once per week, students are typically expected to read the equivalent of a book length over two weeks. Given the broad scope of the course content and the limited time we actually have to engage a great deal of material, assessments, and development of skill sets, we will not be able to discuss every aspect of every assigned reading, nor should you expect to. Students should expect to spend time reading and thinking through the readings and come to class PREPARED to ask questions and

discuss. Lectures will emphasize knowledge production and discussions will expand and stimulate students' understanding. Students are expected to raise any questions they have about the readings in class and are also expected to come to office hours or arrange an appointment with the professor to gain greater clarification.

Course Work:

Assignments should be submitted to the course Canvas page. Late papers/assignments are discouraged. I will accept late papers/assignments, however assignments/papers submitted after the deadline will not be able to earn an A. This is due to the fact that students who submit papers late have more time to complete the assignment than those who submit on time. "A" papers are those who at the bare minimum meet all of the requirements and expectations on time.

Occasionally deadlines are extended due to changes in the syllabus. I reserve the right to extend deadlines when it is in the best interest of meeting the goals of the course and will give students notice verbally and in writing via email and/or Canvas post.

• *Class Participation:*

Student attendance is very important. When you are absent, your presence is sorely missed. Students are permitted a total of three missed class sessions. Each class session missed after the permitted three will result in no class participation points. When you are going to be absent you must email me (rj.danielbarnes@ufl.edu), not an excuse, but rather a note to say you will be absent. Course time is a scheduled meeting time and just like if you were missing a scheduled meeting, courtesy asks that you let the person who scheduled the meeting know you will be absent. Additionally, periodic in-class and/or take-home assignments and assessments will be given to support students' full engagement in the course and to assess student progress. These assignments are also a part of student participation. (Participation 15%)

• *Discussion Lead and Response Papers:*

Students will write a weekly response paper engaging the assigned readings. These are 2-3 double-spaced pages —devoted to analyzing the themes of the readings. Each student will choose on week of assigned readings to lead discussion. Guidelines will be provided in class and on canvas. (Discussion Lead 10%, Response Papers 20%)

• *Midterm Short Essay: "Cite Black Women"*

Students will identify a Black woman anthropologist/ethnographer and write a short biography of their work and contribution to the field. This scholar can be US based or based in other parts of the globe. In addition to an exploration of their scholarly work, students should consider who their contemporaries might have been and why they may have been left out of the disciplinary record/canon. (Midterm essay 15%)

• *Final Project:*

Students will prepare a paper and presentation using Black feminist ethnographic methodologies. There are related assignments and checkpoints throughout. Details will be distributed in class and posted to Canvas. (Check-Points 10%, Presentation 10%, Final Paper 20%)

Course Evaluation:

Class Participation, In-Class & Take-Home Assignments: 10%

Discussion Lead: 10%

Response Papers 20%

Midterm Essay: 15%

Final Project: 30%

Total: 100%

Grading Scale:

Grade Range	Letter Grade	Grade Point
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96-100	A	4.00
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90-95.9	A-	3.67
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86.7-89.9	B+	3.33
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83.4-86.6	B	3.00
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80.0-83.3	B-	2.67
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76.7-79.9	C+	2.33
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73.4-76.6	C	2.00
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70.0-73.3	C-	1.67
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66.8-69.9	D+	1.33
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63.4-66.7	D	1.00
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60.0-63.3	D-	.67
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0-59.9	E	0.00
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More information on grades and grading policies here:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Classroom Policies Honor Code/Ethical Practice:

You are required to abide by the Student Honor Code. Any violation of the academic integrity expected of you will result in a minimum academic sanction of [faculty to insert their minimum academic penalty, for example: “failing grade on the assignment or assessment”] Any alleged violations of the Student Honor Code will result in a referral to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. Please review the Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code at sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/

Course Work Expectations:

All student assignments must be type-written, double-spaced, with pagination, your name on each page, and submitted via Canvas using docx or pdf files. This class requires a good deal of reading and writing. Writing assignments are given as an opportunity to build students’ research, critical thinking, and formal scholarship skills. Therefore, writing is assessed along with content and will result in deductions in grading if there are significant errors in grammar, punctuation and style and/or the writing impairs the reader’s ability to understand the content. With this in mind, please utilize the College of Arts and Sciences Writing Center.

I may occasionally recommend that students see me and/or a counselor for assistance in which case the student would be able to resubmit the assignment after having met with me and/or a

tutor. This is the only time I allow resubmissions.

Student Accessibility:

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with me and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester. <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/accommodations/>

Audio/Visual Policy:

To encourage active engagement and academic inquiry in the classroom, as well as to safeguard the privacy of students and faculty, no form of audio or visual recording in the classroom is permitted without explicit permission from the professor/instructor or without a letter from the Disability Resource Center, signed by the faculty member, authorizing the recording as an accommodation. Authorized recordings may only be used by a student who has obtained permission and may not be shared or distributed for any reason.

See the University of Florida Guidance for Recording a Class Lecture
<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/codechanges/>

Avoid Unauthorized Recordings:

A Student shall not make a video or audio Recording. A Recording must not be Published without the prior express written consent of the Faculty or guest lecturer.

A Student shall not make a Recording in class, through any means over any medium, of anything other than a Class Lecture, including but not limited to the Recording of any assessment, clinical activity, lab, or student presentation. The Recording of any meeting or conversation in class between Students or between Students and Faculty or guest lecturer is strictly prohibited.

Do Not Share or Publish Recordings:

A Student, independently or with another person or other people, must not without express written authorization take, give, Publish, post or submit, transmit, or receive materials, information, or resources in any manner, through any medium, for the purpose of gaining or providing an improper academic advantage to any Student.

Course Evaluation:

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/

Colleague Sensitivity:

We each come from a range of backgrounds and have had a host of experiences that may affect how we read, discuss, and experience various aspects of the course and our work together as colleagues. There may be information presented or statements made that cause various emotions during class, while reading, or even post class when one has had time to think about the material alone or with

others. I ask that we come to the readings, assignments, and discussions with compassion and empathy; for ourselves as individuals, and for others as colleagues in a community of learning. As your course instructor and facilitator, I will work to be attentive and to address concerns as sensitively as possible, however, I ask that if you experience something you would like to discuss, please make me aware after class, in office hours, or by appointment.

Wellness:

We are currently experiencing particularly difficult times as a society. The University offers resources that you should feel welcome to utilize.

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the

University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Course Required Texts:

These texts are all required. Students do not have to get the edition listed. All are available via course reserves. Students will also have articles to read and films to watch. They will either be posted to Canvas or students will be provided with a link. PLEASE be in touch with me immediately if you are unable to access an assigned reading/activity, etc. Given our technological advancements, "I could not access the material" is not a sound excuse for not completing an assignment.

Barnes, Riché J. Daniel. 2015. *Raising the Race: Black Career Women Redefine Marriage, Motherhood, and Community*. Rutgers University Press

McClaurin, Irma. 2001. *Black Feminist Anthropology*. Rutgers University Press

Cox, Aimee. 2015. *Shapeshifters: Black Girls and the Choreography of Citizenship*. Duke University Press

Williams, Bianca. 2018. *The Pursuit of Happiness: Black Women, Diasporic Dreams and the Politics of Emotional Transnationalism*. Duke University Press

Smith, Christen. 2016. *Afro-Paradise: Blackness, Violence, and Performance in Brazil*. University of Illinois Press

Watkins-Hayes, Celeste. 2019. *Re-making a Life: How Women Living With HIV/AIDS Confront Inequality*. University of California Press

Johnson, E. Patrick. 2018. *Black Queer Southern Women*. University of North Carolina Press

Course Outline:

The Course Outline is provided to give students a guide through the course. Please keep in mind that it is made at the beginning of the semester, and I am not able to predict unforeseen disruptions. As a result, it is subject to changes that will only be made when absolutely necessary and with attention to the goals of the course. Any changes will be communicated and posted to Canvas. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Week One

Wednesday, August 24

Introductions

Week Two

Wednesday, August 31

Gender and Anthropology

This week we will problematize the introduction of the concept of gender in the discipline and how it disrupted old assumptions, allowing new connections between classic anthropological interests and new fields of inquiry.

- a. Problematizing the canon/provincializing the classics
- b. Why are so few texts written by female and of color authors recognized as classics/the canon?
- c. How did gender perspective influence anthropology?

Week Three

Wednesday, September 7

What is Black Feminist Anthropology

Early anthropological writing from non-white, North-American women reveals not only the feminine self as a gendered ethnographic subject but also as a defiant subject who is not satisfied with the methodology of “participant observation” prescribed by mainstream anthropology.

Week Four

Wednesday, September 14

The contributions of Black women anthropologists engage us with issues related to fieldwork partnerships, the self-recognition as part of the African or Indigenous ancestry, and the interest in the connection between gender, race, ethnicity, and class as pragmatic standpoints for existence.

- Pioneering female anthropologists and the courage for involvement.
- Afro and indigenous (North)American voices.
- Female authors in anthropology from the perspective of the intersections.
- Auto-ethnography and narrative ethnography

Week Five

Wednesday, September 21

African Legacies

This week focuses on discussions opened by Black and African women in the anthropological field. The decolonization of the African continent (1957-1994) and the emergence of African Feminisms (in the 1980's) unlocked new spaces and opportunities for African female writers and anthropologists. We will review specific national cases, such as African female anthropologists from Nigeria who provided a new frame for the reinterpretation of family structures and clan organization in their own society. This movement contested not only the traditional ways of doing anthropology in Africa but also the core of feminist social sciences: the gender concept. Also, we will examine some contributions from black South African women writing anthropology while dealing with body politics as gendered racialized beings in the landscape of apartheid/post-apartheid South Africa.

- Decentering the canon: she is no longer the “native informer”.
- The construction of a situated feminine self: emergences and polemics.
- Non-disciplinary voices at the crossroads between age, gender, race, and sexuality.

Week Six

Wednesday, September 28

Brazil in Black Transatlantic Feminisms

Contemporary Brazil stands out as an important global center for the production of Anthropology. However, female anthropologists - as well as naturalists, medical doctors and novelists who wrote with an anthropological perspective - are little known. During this week, we will discuss some Brazilian intellectual contributions of female writers along a timeline, with three main objectives: a) localizing their discourse into a wider political scenario, identifying anti-abolitionist, indigenist, suffragist, and feminist contemplations in their texts; b) analyzing the reasons for their strapping invisibility, and c) identifying inverse ethnographies and dialogues with intellectual traditions from Europe and North America.

- Much more than tropical: female Brazilian anthropologists.
- Written from furtive places: voices from the past.
- Fighting for space: contemporary voices.
- Non-disciplinary voices at the crossroads between age, gender, race, and sexuality.

Week Seven

Wednesday, October 5

Health and Sexuality

The sexual and reproductive health of Black women has been compromised due to multiple experiences of racism, including discriminatory healthcare practices from slavery through the post-Civil Rights era. However, studies rarely consider how the historical underpinnings of racism negatively influence the present-day health outcomes of African American women. Although some improvements to ensure equitable healthcare have been made, these historical influences provide an unexplored context for illuminating present-day epidemiology of sexual and reproductive health disparities among African American women.

Week Eight

Wednesday October 12

Colonizing Black Female Bodies Within Patriarchal Capitalism

Strategies for survival are influenced by the dynamics underlying the fundamental gendered/raced/sexual relationships that were created under colonialism and global patriarchal capitalism. This section explores both the history and the contemporary Black feminist literature that critiques foundational Black feminist thought which often views individual examples of “empowered” (wealthy, marketed/marketable) women of color as evidence of Black female liberation. We discuss representations of the Black female body in the context of family structures without minimizing the agency of those whose bodies have historically been exploited for profit. Viewing the history and contemporary imagery provides a theoretic framework for understanding the negative mental, physical, and sexual health consequences of degrading imagery and can aid in realizing positive sexual health outcomes for Black women and women of color.

Week Nine

Wednesday, October 19

Black Feminist Performance Ethnography

A spirited space of resistance to the white/masculine/heterosexual canon exists at the theoretical and political intersection between feminisms, visual and performance anthropology, and post-colonialism. From this standpoint, the prior element to the hegemonic representations is a ubiquitous construction of the Other as a mirror. Sexuality, race, and ethnicity appear as diacritics performed by bodies, eyes, and sights from a particular location in the structures of society. We are going to study performance and embodied anthropology made by feminist women, allowing the emergence of novel female representations and subjectivities.

Week Ten

Wednesday, October 26

Performance and Embodiment continued

- Theoretical contributions to inverse qualitative research.
- Methodological contributions of a viewpoint located at the intersections.
- Female bodies, female sexualities, and the politics of representation.

Week Eleven

Wednesday, November 2

Performance and Embodiment continued, again...

- Theoretical contributions to inverse qualitative research.
- Methodological contributions of a viewpoint located at the intersections.
- Female bodies, female sexualities, and the politics of representation.

Week Twelve

Wednesday, November 9

The canon of classics in Anthropology

During these last few weeks of the course, we will discuss some key articles concerning the importance of concepts and perspectives in the politics of knowledge. Therefore, this topic is introduced through considerations about an anthropology made from a native's point of view aimed to debase the hegemonic voices and create the necessary space for an authoritative female space to do research and write. Regarding concepts as 'family', 'culture' and the canon of classics itself, the facilitators will keep a single open question during all the activities of the week: *'rewriting the canon to be more "inclusive" or abandoning it?'*

- The Canon of Classics in Anthropology: between reforms and revolutions.
- Old concepts: should they be discarded?
- Reframing 'being native'.

Week Thirteen

Wednesday, November 16

Research

Week Fourteen

Wednesday, November 23

University Break/Research

Week Fifteen

Wednesday, November 30

Final Project Presentations

Week Sixteen

Wednesday, December 7

Final Project Presentations

Last Day of Fall Classes