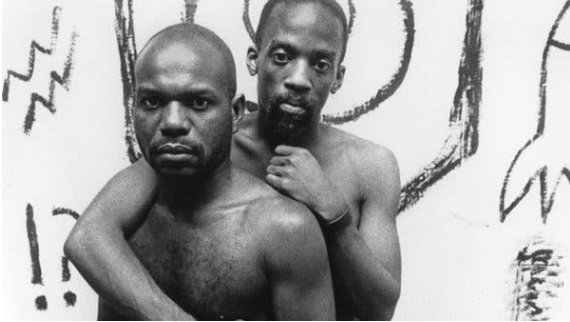


Gender and Sexualities in African American Literature

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Course Overview



This course will explore how African American authors have engaged in the politics of representing gender and sexualities from the mid-20th century to the present. During this class, we will explore the myriad ways that African American authors have constructed gender and asserted sexualities while establishing complex black identities at multiple intersections. We will

consider the following: How have African American authors treated gender and sexualities in their work? How do African American authors use conceptions of gender and sexualities as identities that can be both enslaving and liberating? How has literary criticism responded to these works? To narrow the scope of the course, we will direct our attention to both novels and memoirs written by African Americans that have had an impact on shaping the study of gender and sexualities in African American literary criticism. In an effort to increase the digital presence of these texts, we will work extensively on improving and/or creating Wikipedia articles dedicated to the study of gender and sexualities that lack depth, scholarly attention, or simply do not exist at all.



Required Texts



- + Ann Allen Shockley—*Loving Her* (1974)
- + Randall Keenan—*A Visitation of Spirits* (1989)
- + Pearl Cleage—*What Looks Like Crazy on an Ordinary Day* (1997)
- + Janet Mock—*Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love & So Much More* (2014)
- + Roxane Gay—*Hunger: A Memoir of (my) Body* (2017)
- + Secondary articles that will be available through Canvas

Course Requirements and Grade Distribution

Wikipedia Project—40%

- ✚ Editing/Creating an article (20%)
 - You will choose one article from the predetermined list to either edit or create. Your grade will focus not simply on the amount of material you create, but rather the quality of that material. There will be scheduled class time to work on some of the modules, but it is ultimately your responsibility to stay on task with that week's assignments, which are located on our shared Wikipedia dashboard.
- ✚ In-Class Presentation (10%)
 - On the final day of class, you will present an **8-10 minute** presentation addressing your experience during the Wikipedia process. You will consider your process with critiquing articles, peer review, feedback, Wikipedia generally, and you will summarize your contributions.
 - Your presentation should incorporate some form of creative medium.
- ✚ Critical Reflection Essay (10%) due Monday December 9th at 5pm
 - You will write a reflective essay assessing your Wikipedia contributions. Your reflective essay may consider the same topic of discussions from your presentation. Refer to the Wikipedia guidelines on our dashboard that offer questions to help guide you through your response. Minimum Four full pages.

Talk Back Assignments (4)—40%

Minimum of three full pages (Times New Roman 12 pt font double-spaced); due dates on Canvas

- ✚ You will write one response paper for four out of the five texts we discuss where you “talk back” to the readings. These responses should go beyond just saying how you feel about the text, but actually analyze the texts we’ve been reading. Perhaps you were struck by a specific comment made in class and you want to elaborate on that comment using the text and secondary materials to elaborate on your analysis. Maybe there was a specific passage, image, or concept you noticed and you want to explain its significance. You could also relate the readings to a specific event/moment that is happening today: How does this event relate to the reading? What does it mean in the context of gender and sexualities in African American literature? You should aim to develop one or two arguments in the response.
- ✚ For each response, find **TWO** sources (at least one of which is an academic source) that help to contextualize your response. List them at the end of your response in annotated bibliography form. Your annotated bibliography entry should include the MLA citation, a summary of the source (one paragraph) and how it connects to your response (one paragraph). We will compile a list of all of these entries to aid us in the Wikipedia Project.

Quizzes, In-Class Assignments, and Attendance and Participation—20%

- ✚ Be prepared to take a short reading comprehension quiz most days that I assign readings (5 points per quiz). In-class assignments will often serve as a place of departure

for our discussion and are usually in the form of handouts. You will work individually, with a partner, or with a group.

Attendance and Participation

- ✚ It should go without saying that attendance and participation are mandatory for your success in this class. It is imperative that you are present and on time.

Accommodations Statement

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the UF Disability Resource Center (352.392.8565) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodations. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Schedule of Readings

Week 1 8/20	Introductions, Syllabus
8/22	Stacey Patton—"Who's Afraid of Black Sexuality" https://www.chronicle.com/article/Whos-Afraid-of-Black/135960 "Sexuality" in <i>Keywords for African American Studies</i> https://keywords.nyupress.org/african-american-studies/essay/sexuality/ "Gender" in <i>Keywords for African American Studies</i> https://keywords.nyupress.org/african-american-studies/essay/gender/
Week 2 8/27	Richard Bruce Nugent—"Smoke, Lilies, and Jade" (1926) Selection from <i>Gay Rebel of the Harlem Renaissance: Selections from the Work of Richard Bruce Nugent</i> (2002)—Introduction pages 40-50
8/29	Evelyn Hammonds—"Toward a Genealogy of Black Female Sexuality: The Problematic of Silence" (1997) Audre Lorde—"The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action" (1977)
Week 3 9/3	Ann Allen Shockley— <i>Loving Her</i> (1974) Ch. 1-4 Ann Allen Shockley—"The Black Lesbian in American Literature: An Overview" (1979)

- 9/5 *Loving Her* Ch. 5-8
- Week 4**
9/10 *Loving Her* Ch. 9-13
Trimiko C. Melancon—"Towards An Aesthetic of Transgression: Ann Allen Shockley's *Loving Her* and the Politics of Same-Gender Loving" (2008)
- 9/12 *Loving Her* Ch. 14-end
- Week 5**
9/17 Randall Kenan—*A Visitation of Spirits* Pg. 1-44
Cheryl Clarke—"The Failure to transform homophobia in the Black Community" (1983)
- 9/19 *A Visitation of Spirits* Pg.45-103
- Week 6**
9/24 *A Visitation of Spirits* Pg. 104-189
Charles Nero—"Toward a Black Gay Aesthetic: Signifying in Contemporary Black Gay Literature" (1991)
- 9/26 *A Visitation of Spirits* Pg. 190-end
- Week 7**
10/1 Library Research Day
Meet in Library West Room 211
- 10/3 Marlon Riggs—*Tongues Untied* (1989) in class
Marlon Riggs—"Black Macho Revisited: Reflections of a Snap! Queen" (1991)
- Week 8**
10/8 Pearl Cleage—*What Looks like Crazy on An Ordinary Day* (1997) Pg. 1-96
- 10/10 Cathy Cohen—*Boundaries of Blackness* Ch3—"Enter AIDS: Context and Confrontation (1999)
- Week 9**
10/15 *What Looks like Crazy on An Ordinary Day* pg. 97-178

- 10/17 Library Research Day—Finding Sources
Meet in Library West Room 211
- Week 10**
10/22 *What Looks like Crazy on An Ordinary Day* pg. 179-end
Timothy Lyle—“Tryin’ to Scrub that *Death Pussy* Clean Again” (2017)
- 10/24 No Class—Dr. Dee out of town
- Week 11**
10/29 Library Research Day—Crafting your article
Meet in Library West Room 211
- 10/31 Roxane Gay—*Hunger: A Memoir of (my) Body* (2017) pg. 1-149
- Week 12**
11/5 *Hunger* pg. 150-end
Melissa Harris Perry—“Shame” in *Sister Citizen* (2011)
- 11/7 In-Class—respond to peer review
- Week 13**
11/12 Janet Mock—*Redefining Realness* (2014) Part One, pg 1-83
Susan Stryker—“(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies” (2006)
- 11/14 *Redefining Realness* Part Two pg. 84-140
- Week 14**
11/19 *Redefining Realness* Part Three, pg 141-192
C. Riley Snorton—“A New Hope”: The Psychic Life of Passing”
- 11/21 *Redefining Realness* pg 192-end
- Week 15**
11/26 Preparations for In-Class Presentations
Reading TBD
- 11/28 NO CLASS Holiday

Week 16
12/3

In-Class Presentations

Reflection papers due Monday December 9th at 5pm via Canvas