African American Women, Freedom, and Identity  
Afro American Studies 631 [45308]/History 901 [44010]  
Fall 2018  
University of Wisconsin-Madison  
5245 Humanities Building, 455 N. Park Street  
Monday 3:30 p.m. - 5:25 p.m.

Professor: Ashley Brown, Ph.D.  
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Office Address: 5105 Humanities Building, 455 N. Park Street  
Office Hours: Monday 2:15 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. and Tuesday 2:15 p.m. - 3:15 p.m  
Canvas Link: [https://it.wisc.edu/services/canvas/](https://it.wisc.edu/services/canvas/)  
Click on the blue button on the right side of the screen. Insert your NetID and password when prompted on the next page.  
Course Instructional Mode: Face to face

Course Description  
According to scholar and activist Pauli Murray, “If anyone should ask a Negro woman what is her greatest achievement, her honest answer would be, ‘I survived.’” This graduate seminar explores the quests of African American women from a variety of communities to achieve social equality and recognition throughout the twentieth century. Focusing on social movements, professional engagements, and private lives, we will interrogate the opposition and opportunities that black women faced in their efforts for individual as well as group advancement. We will study intra-racial support and conflict as well as alliances across racial and class lines. Overall, this course will examine the social, political, cultural, and economic hurdles that stymied black women’s efforts to thrive in the United States and locate their diverse and dynamic strategies for survival, resistance, and growth.

Learning Outcomes  
1. Define important historical questions in the field of about African American women’s history.  
2. Analyze and assess scholarly arguments and interventions.  
3. Identify areas for further investigation and future research.

Workload  
The credit standard for this 3-credit course is met by an expectation of a total of 135 hours of student engagement with the course’s learning activities (at least 45 hours per credit or 9 hours per week), which include regularly scheduled meeting times (group seminar meetings of 115 minutes per week), dedicated online time, reading, writing, field trips, individual consultations with the instructor, and other student work as described in the syllabus.

Assigned Texts  

**Assignments and Grading**

**All paper assignments are due via e-mail at 3:00 p.m. on the day when the assigned text is discussed in class.**

- **25%**: 5 Weekly Response Papers (Graded as check-plus, check, or check-minus--and not accepted late)
- **25%**: 1 State-of-the-Field Essay [Due December 17]
- **25%**: Film Review of 1,200 words [Due December 10]
- **25%**: Participation, including Leading/Facilitating Discussions during Selected Weeks

**Grading Scale**

- **A**: 92.5-100
- **AB**: 87.5-92.4
- **B**: 82.5-87.4
- **BC**: 77.5-82.4
- **C**: 70-77.4
- **D**: 60-69
- **F**: Below 60

**Participation**

As a graduate-level seminar, this course carries high expectations for consistent and mature in-class participation. Students are expected to attend class. Formulate clear and thought-provoking questions as you read and engage deeply with the selected texts. Come to class prepared to contribute to rich and intellectually stimulating discussions with your colleagues.

**Late Papers**

Papers should be submitted on the day they are due and at the designated time (3:00 p.m.). The state-of-the-field essay will be penalized by a full letter grade for each late day. For example, an A will become an AB. *Late Weekly Response Papers* are **not** accepted.

**Religious Holidays**

Students should notify Professor Brown within the first two weeks of class of the specific days or dates on which they request relief for religious holidays. Make-ups may be scheduled before or after the regularly scheduled requirements. The professor may set reasonable limits on the total number of days claimed by any one student.
Academic Integrity
By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison’s community of scholars in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

University Health Services
The no-cost mental health services at UHS include individual, couple/partner, group counseling, campus-based programming, stress management, and psychiatry services. UHS offers crisis services, which are available 24/7. Visit https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health/ or call 608-265-5600 for more information. Mental Health Services can be accessed at 333 East Campus Mall (M, T, W, F: 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., and Th: 9:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities
McBurney Disability Resource Center syllabus statement: “The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student’s educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.” http://mcburney.wisc.edu/facstaffother/faculty/syllabus.php

Institutional Statement on Diversity and Inclusion
“Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world.” https://diversity.wisc.edu/

Our Learning Environment—A Note from Professor Brown
Civility, courteousness, and respect are expected of everyone involved in this course. Our classroom is intended to be a space in which people of all gender identities and expressions,
races, religions, national origins, immigration statuses, sexual orientations, classes, ages, abilities, and veteran and military statuses can thrive, participate, and exist without interference. Our collective goal is to strive for an educational setting in which those categories and markers of social status are not employed to create a hierarchy or assert dominance.

Course Schedule

Week 1
September 10
Introductions

Week 2
September 17  **These readings are available on Canvas.**

Weeks 3 and 4
September 24 [Preface-Chapter 10] and October 1 [Chapter 11-Chapter 20]
Paula J. Giddings, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*

Week 5
October 8 [All]
Treva B. Lindsey, *Colored No More: Reinventing Black Womanhood in Washington, DC*


Weeks 6 and 7
October 15 [Introduction-Chapter 3] and October 22 [Chapter 4-Conclusion]
Erik S. McDuffie, *Sojourning for Freedom: Black Women, American Communism, and the Making of Black Left Feminism*

Weeks 8 and 9
October 29 [Introduction-Chapter 6] and November 5 [Chapter 7-Chapter 12]
Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision*

Weeks 10 and 11
November 12 [Prologue-Chapter 4] and 19 [Chapter 5-Epilogue]
Danielle M. McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street: Black Women, Rape, and Resistance—A New History of the Civil Rights Movement from Rosa Parks to the Rise of Black Power*


Weeks 12 and 13
November 26 [Introduction-Chapter 3] and December 3 [Chapter 4-Epilogue]
Ruth Feldstein, *How It Feels to Be Free: Black Women Entertainers and the Civil Rights Movement*

Week 14
December 10 **These films will be available on Canvas.**
- Closing reflections on African American Women, freedom, and identity in the past and present

Week 15
December 17 at 3:00 p.m. State-of-the-Field Essay is Due