

**WS 210/ES 212–Race, Class, and Gender: The Construction of Political Consciousness
Block Seven 2002; 9:30am-12:00pm M-F, some afternoon films; ID House Classroom**

Beauty Bragg; ID House; x6081; bbragg@ColoradoCollege.edu
OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday and Friday, 1:30 to 3:00 pm, or by appointment.

Eileen Bresnahan; ID House; x6976; ebresnahan@ColoradoCollege.edu
OFFICE HOURS: Tuesday and Thursday, 2:00 to 3:30pm, or by appointment.

REQUIRED TEXTS: NOTE: Always bring the day's readings to class.

Dorothy Allison. 1992. Bastard Out of Carolina. New York: Plume/Penguin. 0452269571.

Elaine Brown. 1992. A Taste of Power: A Black Woman's Story. New York: Doubleday.
0385471076

José Gutiérrez. 1998. The Making of a Chicano Militant. Madison: University of Wisconsin
Press. 0299159841

Joy James. 1996. Resisting State Violence: Radicalism, Gender, and Races in U.S. Culture.
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 0816628130.

Audre Lorde. 1982. Zami: A New Spelling of My Name: A Biomythography. Freedom, CA: The
Crossing Press. 0895941228

All texts above are available in the CC Bookstore. Additional readings are available on-line and on
reserve in Tutt Library.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING:

Participation (15%) – Includes reading of and preparation on all assignments, participation in class
discussions.

Papers (4 @ 12.5% each; 50%) – Due 1st Wednesday at 5pm, 2nd Monday at 9:30am, 2nd Friday at 5pm,
and 3rd Wednesday at 5pm. See “Paper Guidelines” and “Grade Criteria,” below.

E-journal (20%) – See below.

Oral Final Examination (15%) – An oral final exam will be given on the fourth Tuesday and Wednesday
of the block.

NOTE: All work should observe the Honor Code as defined for this class (see below). This should be
indicated on the work. **No late work will be accepted unless at least one of the instructors
has previously agreed to other arrangements.**

NOTE: People whose disabilities require special accommodations to meet the expectations of this
course are encouraged to bring this to the attention of the instructors as soon as possible.

SPECIAL NOTE: More than one unexcused absence will result in a grade of N/C in the course!

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This course interweaves autobiographies of US activists with factual accounts
of the living conditions of people at home and abroad and with theoretical analyses of racism and
state violence to ask more questions than it can begin to answer. Among these questions: What
leads some individuals to become radical activists? How can state power and violence be
resisted? What would it take to create a world in which social justice was a reality? The course
will examine race, class, and gender as they shape the construction of political consciousness,
both our own and those of other individuals who have become political activists, or not. Topics of
concern include state power, politics, violence, consciousness, discrimination, sexism, racism,
social class, sexual orientation, law, social movements, and coalitions. Key theoretical concepts
include ideology, social construction, essentialism, “identity politics,” “othering,” scapegoating, and
stereotyping.

ASSIGNMENTS:Week One

Class 1 (Monday, 3/25) – General introduction to the course: Getting to know you; Syllabus and meeting times.

Exercises:

1. Interview introductions.
2. What does it take to have a good discussion?

No readings assigned

Class 2 (Tuesday, 3/26) – Beginning an examination of the construction of our own consciousness;

Scapegoating

Marilyn Frye, "Oppression," pp. 7-9 in Feminist Frontiers IV. **On-line and on reserve (#1).**

James, "Foreword" (Davis), "Introduction"; pp. vii-viii, 3-23.

Angela Y. Davis, "Rape, Racism, and the Myth of the Black Rapist," pp. 172-201 in Women, Race & Class. **On-line and on reserve (#2).**

James, Chapter 7, "Symbolic Rage" and Chapter 8, "Coalition Cross-Fire"; pp. 133-167.

Elizabeth Martinez. 1998. "Seeing More Than Black and White," pp. 4-20 in De Colores Means All of Us. **On-line and on reserve (#3).**

Winona LaDuke. 1999. "Introduction," pp. 1-6 (plus notes) in All Our Relations. **On-line and on reserve (#4).**

11:30am, Marla Gerein, ITS: presentation on e-journaling

Afternoon film, 1:30-3:30pm: "Tongues Untied"

Class 3 (Wednesday, 3/27)

Reading and writing day.

Due by 5pm, a 3-5 page paper on the following questions: In her Foreword to James' book, Angela Davis suggests that "transformative struggles" become "complex...if we take seriously the challenge to consider how deeply our personal and political lives are shaped by myriad forms of racist, gendered, and class-inflected violence" (p. viii). What does she mean by this? In what ways has your own life and consciousness been shaped by such forces? Consider this in relation to scapegoating. What is scapegoating according to James and what are some examples of racial, gendered, sexual, and class scapegoating cited in the readings? How can progressive people resist scapegoating? How might this resistance differ according to one's own race, class, or gender?

Class 4 (Thursday, 3/28) – the contradictions of sex and race and class

First e-journal class exercise

James, Chapter 5, "Border-Crossing Alliances" and Chapter 6, "Anita Hill, Clarence Thomas, and Gender Abstractions"; pp. 106-125

Candra Mohanty. 1998. "Feminist Encounters: Locating the Politics of Experience," pp. 254-272. **On-line and on reserve (#5).**

Marge Piercy. 1970. "The Grand Coolie Damn," from Sisterhood is Powerful, pp. 473-492. **On-line and on reserve (#6).**

Ward Churchill. 1996. "White Studies," from From a Native Son, pp. 271-293. **On-line and on reserve (#7).**

Elizabeth Martinez. 1998. "Campus Racism: Tip of an Iceberg," pp. 130-141 in De Colores Means All of Us. **On-line and on reserve (#8).**

- Class 5 (Friday, 3/29)** – State violence, racism, terrorism, colonialism, neocolonialism (Beauty gone)
 James, Chapter 1, “Erasing the Spectacle” and Chapter 3, “Hunting Prey”; pp. 24-43 and 63-83.
 Sander L. Gilman, 1985. “Black Bodies, White Bodies: Toward an Iconography of Female Sexuality in Late 19th-Century...,” Critical Inquiry 12, pp. 204-242. **On-line and on reserve (#9).**
 Anne Fausto-Sterling. 2000. “Gender, Race, and Nation: The Comparative Anatomy of ‘Hottentot’ Women in Europe, 1815-1817,” pp. 203-233. **(Optional) On-line and on reserve (#10).**
 Warren Hedges. 1997. “If Uncle Tom is White, Should We Call Him ‘Auntie’?,” from Whiteness: A Critical Reader, pp. 226-247. **On-line and on reserve (#11).**
 Elizabeth Martínez. 1998. “It’s a Terrorist War On Immigrants,” pp. 68-80 in De Colores Means All of Us. **On-line and on reserve (#12).**

Afternoon film, 1:30-3:30pm: “The Life and Times of Sara Baartman: The Hottentot Venus”

Due Monday at 9:30am, a 3-5pg paper on the following question: Discuss the role of sexuality in the notion of racial difference, addressing the political function served by “racing” sexuality as well as class as a mediating category. You should also be sure to discuss why/how the black body has been mobilized in these discourses and the image of “whiteness” that emerges from racialized notions of sexuality.

Week Two

- Class 6 (Monday, 4/1)** – The construction of activist consciousness II: the autobiography of Chicano activist José Gutiérrez
 Gutiérrez, The Making of a Chicano Militant, entire
 Elizabeth Martínez. 1998. “Chingón Politics Die Hard,” pp. 172-181 in De Colores Means All of Us. **On-line and on reserve (#13).**

Class 7 (Tuesday, 4/2)

- Cherríe Moraga. 1993. “Queer Aztlán: the Re-formation of Chicano Tribe,” from The Last Generation, pp. 145-174. **On-line and on reserve (#14).**
 Ana Castillo. 1994. “The Watsonville Women’s Strike, 1986,” from Massacre of the Dreamers, pp. 43-62. **On-line and on reserve (#15).**
 James, Chapter 2, “Radicalizing Language and Law” and Chapter 4, “The Color(s) of Eros”; pp. 44-59 and 84-105
 Audre Lorde. 1984. “Uses of the Erotic,” from Sister Outsider, pp. 53-59. **On-line and on reserve (#16).**
 Winona LaDuke. 1999. “Buffalo Nations,” pp. 138-162 (plus notes) in All Our Relations. **On-line and on reserve (#17).**
Afternoon film, 1:30-3:30pm: “Salt of the Earth”

Class 8 (Wednesday, 4/3)

Reading day.

- Class 9 (Thursday, 4/4)** (Eileen gone) – The construction of activist consciousness III: the autobiography of Black Panther Elaine Brown
 Brown, A Taste of Power, entire

Afternoon film, 1:30-3:30pm: “Veterans of Hope: Gwendolyn Zoharah Simmons, Islamic Scholar and SNCC Organizer” (40 minutes)

Class 10 (Friday, 4/5) – the contradictions of sex and race II (Eileen gone)

Malcolm X. 1965. "The Ballot or the Bullet," pp. 548-560. **On-line and on reserve (#18).**

bell hooks. 1994. "Spike Lee Doing Malcolm X," in Outlaw Culture, pp. 155-164. **On-line and on reserve (#19).**

bell hooks. 1994. "Malcolm X: The Longed-for Feminist Manhood," in Outlaw Culture, pp. 183-196. **On-line and on reserve (#20).**

Kochiyama, "The Impact of Malcolm X on Asian-American Politics and Activism," pp. 129-141. **On-line and on reserve (#21).**

Winona LaDuke. 1999. "Nuclear Waste," pp. 97-111 (plus notes) in All Our Relations. **On-line and on reserve (#22).**

Due by 9:30am Monday, a 3-5 page paper on the following questions: Based on insights you have gained from both the autobiographical and theoretical readings, discuss why it is so difficult even for participants in social movements to "let go" of their own sexism, racism, homophobia, etc. Are we justified in expecting activists in social movements to be better than "ordinary" people in combating their own sexism, racism, homophobia, etc. Why or why not?

Week Three

Class 11 (Monday, 4/8) –What makes activist consciousness?: the autobiography of black lesbian feminist Audre Lorde
Lorde, Zami, pp. 3-183

Afternoon film, 1:30-3:30pm: "The Watermelon Woman"

Class 12 (Tuesday, 4/9)

Lorde, Zami, pp. 184-256

Audre Lorde. 1970. "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," pp. 284-291.

On-line and on reserve (#23).

Kennette Crockett. 1997. "Putting Down Roots," in Queerly Classed, pp. 191-200. **On-line and on reserve (#24).**

Class 13 (Wednesday, 4/10)

Reading and writing day.

Due by 5pm, a 3-5 page paper on the following question: Discuss some of the ways that Audre Lorde's life was shaped by the state violence James writes about. How did she resist that state violence and how did that resistance shape her political consciousness?

Class 14 (Thursday 4/11) – The construction of activist consciousness IV: an autobiographical novel by working-class white lesbian Dorothy Allison

Allison, Bastard Out of Carolina, entire

Dorothy Allison. 1994. Piece from Skin TBA.

Afternoon film, 1:30-3:30pm: "Tough Guise"

Class 15 (Friday, 4/12) – class

- Newitz & Wray, “What Is ‘White Trash’? Stereotypes and Economic Conditions of Poor Whites in the United States,” pp. 168-184 in Whiteness: A Critical Reader. **On-line and on reserve (#25).**
- Susan Raffo. 1997. “Queerly Classed Questions,” in Queerly Classed, pp. 9-11. **On-line and on reserve (#26).**
- Victoria A. Brownworth. 1997. “Life in the Passing Lane: Exposing the Class Closet,” in Queerly Classed, pp. 67-78. **On-line and on reserve (#27).**
- Joanna Kadi. 1997. “Homophobic Workers or Elitist Queers?” in Queerly Classed, pp. 29-42. **On-line and on reserve (#28).**
- Tova. 1997. “mir zayen do!we are here!: some notes on being a working-class jewish lesbian,” in Queerly Classed, pp. 151-161. **On-line and on reserve (#29).**
- Alicia Gaspar de Alba. 1998. “A Theoretical Introduction: Alter-native a lo rasquache,” pp. 1-28. **On-line and on reserve (#30)**
- Robin Kelly. 1997. “Looking Backward: The Limits of Self-Help Ideology,” pp. 78-102 (plus notes) in Yo’ Mama’s Disfunktional! **On-line and on reserve (#31)**

Week Four**Class 16 (Monday, 4/15) – resistance**

- John Garvey and Noel Ignatiev, 1997. “Toward a New Abolitionism: A Race Traitor Manifesto,” in Whiteness: A Critical Reader, pp. 346-349. **On-line and on reserve (#32).**
- Ruthann Robson. 1997. “To Market, To Market: Considering Class in the Context of Lesbian Legal Theories and Reforms,” in Queerly Classed, pp. 165-178. **On-line and on reserve (#33).**
- James, Chapter 9, “‘Discredited Knowledge’ in the Nonfiction of Toni Morrison”; Chapter 10, “Teaching, Intersections, and the Integration of Multiculturalism”; Chapter 11, “Gender, Race, and Radicalism”; and “Conclusion”; pp. 171-243.

Class 17 (Tuesday, 4/16)

Oral Final

Class 18 (Wednesday, 4/17)

Oral Final

Safe Place Policy

This class will not be a “comfortable” class if we deal rigorously and frankly with issues related to “race,” class, and gender. The historical tensions between ideologies of white supremacy and democratic ideals, the myth that the United States is a classless society, and the economic, cultural, and psychological legacies of patriarchy all combine to make “race,” class, and gender “touchy” subjects. We are all heavily invested in the very social structures and ideologies we are examining and critiquing in this class. In this class, as much or even more than in any class you take (seriously), real learning will involve an intellectual and emotional re-orientation of ideas you perhaps have taken for granted. Therefore, making students “comfortable” will not be a pedagogical priority for us. If you do not feel “comfortable” asking question of both your professors and your peers, sharing your thoughts in both large and small groups, thinking rigorously, entertain new and potentially threatening ideas, reading a lot and writing daily, this class is not for you. So the “Safe Place Policy” for this class is this: This class will not be “safe.” We will develop ground rules for class discussion on the first day of class.

A Few Words About the Honor Code

We encourage students to work together on all assignments for the class. However, by “work together” we do not mean any sense of “copying” one another’s work. Though we encourage a collective **process** in accomplishing the work, we expect the final **product** to be your own. You are encouraged to discuss the assignments and the readings, even to work together on developing ideas and outlines. However, when it comes time to write the final papers to be turned in, we expect this work to be your own, the outcome of your own synthesis of whatever process you have gone through with the unique perspective that only you can bring to the material. The goal is always to develop critical thinking in an atmosphere enriched and informed by the experiences, knowledge, and talents of one another. This is not to be confused with group-think, conformity, or intellectual laziness.

A Few Words About Required Reading and Class Discussion

When you were in high school, you probably expected to discuss in class everything that you read for the class. In college, we expect you to make the transition from teacher-dependent learning to the sort of independent learning that will be required for the rest of your academic, work, and personal lives. So, make no mistake about this: **everything we read will not necessarily be discussed in class**. Whether a given reading is in fact discussed in class will depend to some extent on us and to some extent on you. Even though we think all the readings are necessary—or we would not have put them on the syllabus—given our finite class time and the inevitability that we have to begin somewhere, whoever is leading the class a given day will have to make some selection. But it is also always incumbent on **you**, as a class member and an active learner, to see to it that any reading that troubled you or confused you is discussed to your satisfaction. We cannot—and will not—do this for you. What you are supposed to be learning here is to think critically, to ask your own questions, to direct your own learning, and to assess your own needs in those regards. **You are responsible for everything on the syllabus, whether we specifically discuss it in class or not.** Therefore, be certain to take an active role in the direction that each class period takes. You are not here to learn passively, but are required to take an active role in every step of your education in this class and at this college. If you sleep or drift through class, please do not complain to us that we have not discussed something that you thought we should. We are regularly available and more than willing to help you and to guide you. That does not, however, include doing your thinking for you. That’s your job.

Guidelines for the E-journals

1) For each of the first three weeks of the block, you are responsible for **a minimum of three e-journal entries a week (9 total)**. **Two of these entries per week** should reflect some active evidence of scholarship/intellectual rigor on your part. They should be completed **before** the class for which the reading was assigned. Any additional entries may take whatever tone you feel inspired to bring to the ‘page’ (e.g., they may reflect your personal reactions to the readings or to in-class discussions and/or they may raise important issues not addressed in either the class discussion or course readings).

2) In addition to these nine posts, you must also **respond to someone else’s entry at least once each week (4 responses in total)**.

3) **Starting on Thursday of the first week of the block (3/28)**, we will ask that two of you take responsibility to **read your fellow classmates' posts and select two, preferably related to that days' readings, to bring to class to facilitate discussion**. These selections may be from either category of post (scholarly or personal reaction), but it's a good idea to have **at least one from the scholarly category**.

Please **compose** your entries in Word (or another word processing program) and **paste** your entries into your e-mail posts. **Back-up all** your entries onto a separate floppy disk.

You are most cordially invited, and definitely encouraged, to write and react more often than the minimum requirements. Remember, these are merely basic requirements for a passing grade. **Doing the minimum, even well, is usually the equivalent of a grade of "C."**

In general, your scholarly posts should contain the following:

1. **What the author really said.** – This should include some brief summary of the section(s) of the text on which you are going to focus in your writing. Be specific about the author's points (even providing a properly cited quote if necessary) before you begin your analysis.
2. **What you think about it.** – The focus here is on integrating this author's ideas with your own, and with your understanding of other material you may have encountered on the subject. How does this point/essay relate to other course material? How does it contribute to basic questions of women's madness? To our understanding of psychological, historical, social or feminist aspects of women's madness? To other ideas?
3. **Your evaluation of the reading.** – Is this reading clear? Consistent? Is there adequate data to back up the points? Is the author's analysis adequate or did he/she miss basic elements? Did the author consider multiple perspectives, alternative hypotheses? Does this text raise skepticism or answer questions? Do you see gaps in the reading? If so, locate them, specifically, citing passages and/or quoting. Challenge your peers to think about a specific part of the work that may be problematic.
4. **Your own position in relation to the reading.** – Which ideas did you accept or reject and why? What was the reading's impact on you? Why did you choose to comment specifically on this reading?

Oral Final

The oral final will ask students, in groups of three, to look back over all the material of the course to attempt to provide answers to the following questions:

- What are some of the factors that led each of the autobiography authors to become political activist?
- What are some of the factors that have gone into shaping your own consciousness about the world and your place in it? Should any of these factors be resisted?
- How have you personally, and those with whom you share a social location, benefitted from, and/or suffered due to racism?
- How can racism and other state violence be resisted? What strategies have political activist adopted to work to advance social justice? Which of these seem to work better than the others?
- What is the responsibility of each of us toward the oppressed of the world?

Paper Guidelines

1) Papers must be typed, double-spaced, with pages numbered and with the student's name and the date in the upper left-hand corner of the first page. No covers of any kind are to be used. The top sheet of the paper should be the Grade Criteria sheet (below). Light copy, documents on disk, and handwritten papers will not be accepted.

2) If a question has been posed, it is not a suggestion. We want it answered, fully and thoughtfully.

3) We are looking for critical thinking and analysis, serious consideration of the issues being raised in a given set of readings, and thoughtful questioning and complication of the material from your own informed point of view. We expect a persuasive argument, referencing the relevant counter-evidence, and coming to a definite conclusion.

4) We are not looking for uninformed and unsubstantiated opinion. When you reflect on the readings, evaluate, and critique them, you must give reasons for any positions that you take regarding them. If the readings stir up any feelings that you want to express, you are free to do so provided that you explore and interrogate those feelings in a matter that is intellectually interesting and rigorous. Remember, we never require that you share any of your own feelings with us, but if you choose to do so, you must tell us why you feel a given way—i.e. give reasons—and not simply that you feel the way in question.

5) Grammar, spelling, sentence structure, punctuation, organization, and expression all count. We expect proper paragraphs, complete sentences, and fully developed points.

6) There is no page limit, either upper or lower, for the papers, though about 3-5 pages will probably be the norm.

7) Papers will be graded A, B, C, D (with all the familiar pluses and minuses) or NC (no credit). A Grade Criteria Sheet, outlining the considerations relevant to grading and evaluating the paper, will be returned with the papers. A grade of NC will be given when it is obvious that little effort and/or thought went into a given paper, **or when a paper is presented late**.

Grade Criteria
Bragg and Bresnahan, Women's Studies 210/Ethnic Studies 212

Name: _____

Written work must

1. Employ readings that are
 - a) relevant and
 poor fair good excellent
 - b) employ them effectively
 poor fair good excellent

2. Present information in a manner that
 - a) is clear
 poor fair good excellent
 - b) is well-organized
 poor fair good excellent
 - c) is thoughtful
 poor fair good excellent
 - d) is free of grammar, spelling, punctuation, and/or sentence structure errors
 poor fair good excellent
 - e) follows specified format requirements
 poor fair good excellent

3. Demonstrate that you can
 - a) summarize and
 poor fair good excellent
 - b) analyze
 poor fair good excellent
 - c) significant quantities of material
 poor fair good excellent

4. Demonstrate that you are able to develop an argument logically and to defend it with evidence, i.e. that you can construct a persuasive argument
 poor fair good excellent

5. Display a conscientious consistency toward crediting the sources of information and ideas
 poor fair good excellent

6. Fully answer the question asked or fully develop the thesis posed
 poor fair good excellent