Fall 8-15-2015

ENG 2009G-001: Literature & Human Values: Race, Age, & Gender

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Dr. Jamila D. Smith  
ENG 2009G  
Literature and Human Values: Race, Age, Gender  
The Black Woman  
Fall 2015  
Office: Coleman Hall 3775  
Office Hours: MWF Noon-1:00 pm & Wednesdays 10:00-11:00am & by appointment  
Email: jdsmith9@eiu.edu  
**Please don’t contact me via D2L, as I often don’t receive those emails.

Course Description:
This course offers a critical examination and creative exploration of the intersections of race, age, and gender in the lives and literacies of the Black woman. Through course readings of multimodal texts (film, oral and written narrative, music, online clips, young adult literature) and lively discussion, we will discuss and critique the ways the Black woman gets re-presented in the word and world.

Learning Goals:
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:
• Describe the theoretical and social applications and implications of intersectionality
• Explore and critique their own race, age, and gender narratives
• Discuss the historical trajectory of the Black woman in relation to these intersections
• Explore the role of power and privilege in maintaining dominance and oppression
• Examine the role of popular culture in current definitions/perceptions of race, age, and gender
• Read and analyze texts widely
• Develop plans of action to combat intersectional oppression and challenge inequalities

Required Texts:
The Thing Around Your Neck, Adichie  
The Black Woman: An Anthology, Bambara  
Women, Race and Class, Davis  
The Bluest Eye, Morrison  
One Crazy Summer, Williams-Garcia

**Handouts will be distributed throughout the semester. In addition to reading these, you will also be required to print and read articles that are uploaded to D2L.

Special Needs:
Students with documented disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services (581.6583) as soon as possible so we can work out appropriate accommodations.
Cell Phones:
Please put your cell phone on silent or vibrate during class time.

Plagiarism:
Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—“The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s original work” (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignments of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.

The Student Success Center:
Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center (www.eiu.edu/~success) for assistance with time management, test taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

The Writing Center:
I encourage you to use EIU’s Writing Center located at 3110 Coleman Hall. This free service provides one-to-one conferences with writing center consultants who can help you with brainstorming, organizing, developing support, and documenting your papers.

The writing center is open to help any student from any major at any stage of his or her writing process, and its system of one-to-one conferences demonstrates value and respect for individual writers, all of whom can benefit from feedback about their works in progress.

To schedule an appointment, you can drop by the center (3110 Coleman Hall) or you can call 581-5929. The writing center is open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. On Friday hours of operation are 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Course Guidelines and Expectations:
1. As this is an interactive course, participation is required. You help create this atmosphere by making an effort to answer and ask questions during class discussion and group work, and by responding thoughtfully and respectfully to other people’s comments and responses. Disrespect of me and/or your fellow classmates, along with coming to class unprepared will not be tolerated. You will be asked to leave AND marked absent for the class period. Participation is worth 40 points of your grade and includes self-directed discussion, questions posed during class, ability to answer questions indicative of close textual reading, and being alert during class sessions (i.e., no cell phone activity, sleeping, disruptive conversations, or use of laptops/lpads/tablets, etc for anything other than work for
my class). Points will be deducted for behaviors indicative of anything other than full participation. This is a collaborative learning experience, so constructive criticism and open discussion is encouraged. When essays, journals, team teaching, and in-class assignments are considered together you will be doing some kind of writing assignment every week. Be prepared to spend much time carefully reading, considering, discussing, and writing about the texts in the course. If you cannot devote the time necessary to keep up with the assignments, and to do so in a critical manner, you will not do well in this class and may want to consider if this is the right class for you. Attendance is obviously a prerequisite for participation, so if you have more than three (3) un-excused absences, you will lose 5 points per class session you miss.

2. Absences will only be excused when the following conditions are met: a) Circumstances that can be documented on paper (illness, police accident report, university events, etc) b) I receive notification PRIOR to the class that you will be unable to attend. If there is an assignment due the day you will be absent, please email it to me Prior to the start of class. In the same manner, I expect each student to be on time to class. If you happen to be tardy, please do not disrupt the class. If you are over 10 minutes late to class with no prior notification, you will be marked absent.

3. You are expected to have ALL assignments prepared to turn in on the due date. All assignments should be typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 pt. font and citations should use current MLA format. Please proofread and edit all papers. NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS ACCEPTED OR MAKE-UP WORK PROVIDED unless you are in compliance with the extreme circumstances section above. Do not put extra space between paragraphs. Student information (name, class title, assignment) is single-spaced, in the top left-hand corner of your paper. Additionally, you are expected to bring the proper supplies with you to class each session, including the text we’re reading.

Caveat:
In the event that class participation begins to fade, I reserve the right to distribute a pop quiz over the readings and/or class lectures. The quiz will be worth 10 points and will be taken from the final project.

Assignments:

1. **Reading Reflections (3 points a piece/30 points total)** As this is a discussion-centered course, for the first 10 weeks of the semester you will need to submit a Full 1 page typed paper. The purpose of these brief papers is twofold: to make critical connections with the readings and for me to ensure that you are keeping up with the assignments. These papers will also help to make our conversations more lively and informed. Each paper should include the following: a reflection on the main theses/themes of the texts, 3–4 central questions that you have about the texts, and most importantly, connections that you are seeing between the texts and
your growing intersectional awareness. Most often, these papers will be due every Monday for the first 10 weeks and will be used to generate lively discussion throughout the week. I will inform you each time a paper is due. Remember, participation is a large portion of your grade, so you will be called upon to facilitate the discussion of your questions.

2. **Critical Essay (40 points)** You will produce a 5-7 page critical essay on the covered readings, using academic research resources as supplemental material. The writing prompt will be shared within the first few weeks of the semester. **DUE October 21st**

3. **Team Teaching (20 points)** Students will divide into pairs and “teach” the class about the particular readings for the given day. Each teaching lesson should take 15-30 minutes and should be interactive, yet critical, while simultaneously highlighting main points of the readings. You can be as creative as you’d like. The use of outside materials is certainly permissible. You might break the class into pairs, or groups, and ask us to talk about certain thought-provoking questions. You might bring in a film or music clip that relates to the topic and/or your lives. You might conduct a role-playing activity for the class, or you might organize a structured debate. All pairs are required to meet with me during office hours at least two class periods before your presentation in order to go over your plans. Your grade is based on intersectional connections you make between the readings and outside material, detailed plans that you will turn in to me, and level of engagement with material and class. I will provide a sign-up sheet.

4. **Reflexive Journal (20 points)** Reflexivity involves thinking about what has happened so far in order to plan for the next step. It is a means of systematizing your thoughts to improve practice. As such, your task is to journal about the process of reading, writing, and discussing the intersections of race, age, and gender. Focus should center on the following questions: 1) What personal connections am I making through class discussions, readings, and/or research that has or will enhance my intersectional awareness and action? 2) What areas of my critical reading, writing, and/or thinking need additional work? 3) What am I learning about oppression, power, and privilege and how will this knowledge best serve me and those around me? You do not have to stick to these questions for each entry. They are merely meant to help guide your thinking. You will, however, need to write throughout the course (during/after reading and writing, class discussions, etc), sharing your journal at times with peers for their evaluation and feedback. **Minimum of 15 entries. DUE November 18th**

5. **Final Project (50 points)** In lieu of a final exam, you will have the opportunity to choose between producing an original 8-10 page research paper or developing a creative research project. Specific guidelines for this assignment will be explained during the semester. **DUE December 11th**
Tentative Schedule of Readings and Assignments:

* I want you all to get the most out of these readings. Thus, I am flexible with altering the schedule as long as you are keeping up with the material and actively participating in small and large group discussions.

**Please be aware that homework (reading and writing) is distributed at my discretion and its completion is a requirement for the next class session.

Week One: Introduction to course, history of Black women, and Intersectionality

- Read and discuss Nash article and Davis readings
- Read “Imitation” (Adichie)

Week Two: Beginning to unpack our Intersectional Narratives

- Discussion of short stories
- “Woman Poem” by Nikki Giovanni (Bambara)
- 1st Reading Reflection DUE (8/31) Continue each week unless redirected by Dr. Smith
- Adichie Clip

Week Three: More on intersectionality introduction

- 9/7: Labor Day-NO SCHOOL
- “Double Jeopardy: To be Black and female” by Frances Beale (Bambara)
- “Tomorrow is Too Far” (Adichie)

Week Four: Unpacking the Intersections through fiction

- Intro and “Autumn” *The Bluest Eye* (Morrison)
- 1 group of Team Teachers present

Week Five: Morrison, cont.

- “Winter” *The Bluest Eye* (Morrison)
- 2 groups of Team Teachers present

Week Six: Morrison, cont.

- “Spring” *The Bluest Eye* (Morrison)
- 2 groups of Team Teachers present
- Begin discussion of Critical Essay

Week Seven:

- No Team Teaching
- Discussion of Critical Essay, cont.
- No class 10/7 or 10/9
- Continue reading “Summer” *The Bluest Eye*

Week Eight: Finalize Morrison

- 2 groups of Team Teachers present “Summer” on 10/14
- FALL BREAK October 16th
Week Nine: Race, Age, Gender in Pop Culture
- Essay DUE 10/21
- The politics of intersectionality and commodification
- 2 groups of Team Teachers present

Week Ten: Race, Age, Gender in Pop Culture, cont
- “The Thing Around Your Neck” (Adichie)
- Selected readings
- 1 group of Team Teachers present

Week Eleven: Introduction to Black Feminism
- Selected readings (handouts and articles on D2L)
- Combahee River Collective
- Discussion of Final Project

Week Twelve: Discussion of Final Project, cont
- Complete One Crazy Summer (Garcia)

Week Thirteen: More on Black Fem/Strong Black Woman
- Discuss One Crazy Summer (Garcia)
- Selected readings (handouts and articles on D2L)
- 2 groups of Team Teachers present
- Reflexive Journal DUE 11/18

Week Fourteen: Thanksgiving Break

Week Fifteen: Individual Conferences with Dr. Smith to discuss final projects

Week Sixteen: Final Review of Semester
- Final questions/class discussions
- Final projects DUE December 11th

Evaluation:
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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Reflections</td>
<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflexive Journal</td>
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<td>Team Teaching</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Essay</td>
<td>40</td>
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<td>Final Project</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>200</strong></td>
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Grading:
**Dr. Smith’s Advice**
If at any point throughout the semester you are confused or unclear about the expectations of the course, course material, a grade you’ve received, or any other matters, I strongly encourage you to come talk with me during office hours. It is my hope that all students succeed in this course, but I can only help if I’m aware of a problem.