

The University of California, Los Angeles
African American Studies C191
Black Resistance in Trump's America: Power, Politics, and Protest
Antwann Michael, Instructor
Summer 2018

Mon/Wed 1pm-3:05pm
Bunche 2156
June 25, 2018-August 1, 2018

Email: antwanns@ucla.edu
Office Hours: Rolfe Hall 1320 Wednesday 3pm-5pm

Required Texts

Available as downloadable PDF from the course website

All readings and videos are to be completed before the class meeting in which they are to be discussed.

Course Overview

This class gives careful attention to Black resistance and protest efforts in contemporary America such as SayHerName, Black Lives Matter, and the Abolitionist Movement. Also examined is the historical contexts of these resistance efforts, their origins, and the points at which they diverge. Moreover, this class will delineate the purposes of protest and resistance, giving particular attention to experiences of race, gender, class, and sexuality along with the various approaches employed within each organization or movement effort. Students will track and map the current national political environment onto the local realities and history of Los Angeles, allowing for these histories and efforts of Los Angeles organizations, to be blended in such a way that students can critically engage and articulate the contemporary condition of African Americans in Los Angeles and, more broadly, the United States. Using Los Angeles the Los Angeles experience as a lens, exploration of various social inequalities (wealth, jobs, health, etc.) within the city of Angels becomes possible, as well as an understanding of how these phenomena come to exist. Because this class is grounded in the contemporary moment students should be advised that this course is dynamic—meaning that the readings and discussions in the course are subject to change based on current happenings. While readings and discussions may change, there are set themes which will guide the class and allow students to have a confident expectation as to what each week's readings and discussions will be geared toward.

Furthermore, students should note this class is grounded in critical thought and discussion. As such this course exposes students to a quasi-graduate school classroom experience—meaning students are expected to read and be fully prepared and ready to engage the course as participant-learners. With this in mind, this class is not wholly lecture, it thrives off of student's informed positions and participation to allow for spirited debate and dialogue. As such this class is **not** a safe space, **but** a respectful one in which all positions are engaged and given careful and

rigorous academic thought and response. Moreover, vital to this course is the concept of intersectionality along with engaging a multi-learning approach method. As a result, this class challenges patriarchy, white supremacy, capitalism, and heteronormativity as it progresses in an effort to encourage students to reflect beyond their present ideological-political positions.

Lastly, this course enjoins itself to the intervention of Black feminist sociological theorist Patricia Hill Collins. In her landmark work *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, Hill advances "...Black women intellectuals are neither all academics nor found primarily in the Black middle class. Instead, all U.S. Black women who somehow contribute to Black feminist thought as critical social theory are deemed to be 'intellectuals'."¹ Hill further asserts "Black feminist intellectual traditions involves much more than developing Black feminist analyses using standard epistemological criteria...this requires acknowledging not only how African American women outside of academia have long functioned as intellectuals...but [also] how this continues to be the case."² Following Patricia Hill Collins' insights, this class utilizes Black feminist thought as a pedagogical approach and, as a result, approaches ways of knowing via various means inclusive of activism, resistance efforts, standard texts, poems, music, videos, articles, technology, etc. Students should take these various intellectual contributions seriously, interrogating the materials (in whatever form it may appear) in like manner to the standard academic text.

Outcome Objectives

Develop and demonstrate critical thinking and collaboration skills
Sharpen academic writing prowess
Encourage thoughtful and supported articulation of ideas
Identify and analyze primary documents
Enhance public speaking acumen of students by way of the exchanging of ideas and presentations

Grading and Assignments

Presentation	25%
Response Papers	25%
Reading Notes	25%
Attendance	25%

¹ Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 17.

² *Ibid*, 18-19.

Presentations:

Everyone is responsible for presenting at least once. The week in which you present you will only be responsible for readings notes the next day. So, in example, if you present on Monday you will show your reading notes on Wednesday; and, vice versa, if you present on Wednesday you will show your reading notes on Monday. For more on presentations please see the handout titled "Presentation Guidelines."

Response Papers:

If you are not presenting in a given week you are responsible for a reading response and showing your reading notes. In example, if it is not your week to present and you decide to do turn in a response for Monday's readings, on Wednesday you will show your reading notes; similarly if you decide to do a reading response for Wednesday's readings, you will show your reading notes for Monday. Response papers should be 2 to 4 pages in length and should follow the paper guidelines provided below. Beyond paper guidelines, the response paper should be structured as follows:

1. Your response paper should begin by identifying the **major theme(s) or debate(s)** that this week's readings are addressing? In other words, if you think about an author and/or artist (or the authors/artists as a collective), what are (or is) **the major issue(s)** they are addressing.
2. You should also answer **both** of the following:
 - a. What is each author's/artist's primary argument?
 - In a brief, but thorough sketch (no more than a few sentences for each piece you decide to write on) clearly identify the author's/artist's primary argument, in other words their main point.
 - Some arguments may be harder to locate than others, but you need to work at identifying the argument and rewording the main point into accessible language
 - b. What are the stakes or implications of the arguments? In other words why is what is being offered for thought important? What will result if the argument is taken as truth? What can you conclude from the argument?
 - Every author/artist is contributing to, critiquing, or intervening in a larger discussion that is already in progress
 - The following questions will help you to effectively answer this: are the authors/artists expanding, adding to, or critiquing that which has already been argued? What assumptions or arguments is this author questioning or challenging? What has been said in the mainstream regarding what the author/artist is engaging?

**ONLY AFTER YOU HAVE DONE STEPS ONE AND TWO PROCEED TO STEPS
THREE AND FOUR**

3. Provide an analysis of the author's/artist's arguments. Engage their work by addressing the following:
 - a. Carefully explain *how* each piece you decide to engage focuses attention on a different part of the theme in question, or *how* it highlights a new voice or perspective within the discourse.
 - b. What is it about the author's/artist's arguments or methodological approaches did you find to be most useful, compelling, or innovative? What aspects of the material did you find most convincing? In each instance, carefully *explain why*?
 - c. Or...how would you offer a respectful and productive critique of this person's work? You may do this *AFTER* you have first explained what is useful about the material and what it accomplishes. *THEN* you may discuss the reading's inconsistencies or contradictions, its silences or gaps; what further questions or issues does the material raise for you?
4. Place the material we have seen thus far in conversation with one another; think on:
 - a. *How* does this week's materials challenge, rethink, or complicate the material from previous weeks?
 - b. *How* does the perspective of the author/artist shift or expand the dialogue or solutions regarding the topic in question? What new ways of thinking does the author/artist present their audience with?
5. End your response paper by offering questions of interest to you that promote deeper, critical thinking regarding the topic. These questions will generate naturally as you write your response paper. You should have at least two questions prepared. The questions must not summarize the material or restate the main argument; the questions, instead, will assist in the facilitation of each class. As such, the question aspect of the response paper is both critical and vital.

An example response paper is provided; this paper is not to be copied or redistributed.

Reading Notes:

Reading notes are your proof that you have engaged the material. This can be done in many ways: taking notes as you read/listen/observe in a separate notebook, writing/highlighting in the margins or within the text, electronically tracking via computer as you engage the material. Whichever way you decide, bring this with you to class. Notes will be checked every class. Please remember—if you present on Monday, you are to provide reading notes on Wednesday of the same week (and vice versa); if you do a reading response on Wednesday, then you are to provide reading notes on Monday of that same week (and vice versa).

Attendance:

Attendance for each class is mandatory unless stated otherwise. Summer session is quick and requires your full engagement and attentiveness. It is easy to fall behind, you can prevent falling behind by making sure you are present in each class and that you are staying on top of your work.

Materials & Class Schedule**Week 1: A Memo from LeBron: Foundations & Gendered Memory**

June 25

Syllabus Walk Through

A Memo from LeBron, an audio experience

“Apehit” The Carters

“This is America” Childish Gambino

June 27*

“The Meaning and Impact of Racism” Camara Jules P. Harrell

“From DuBois to Black Lives Matter” Aldon D. Morris

“Slow Death: Is the trauma of police violence killing Black women?” Christen A. Smith

“Non-Black People of Color Perpetuate Anti-Blackness Too” Sean Dajour Smith

On Anti-Blackness

Week 2: That’s the Way of the World: Where We’ve Been, Where We Are: Black Precarity & Affective Labor

July 2

“What’s Going On” Marvin Gaye

“How Does it Feel” Kamaiyah

“Chicago: A Land of Wilderness and Oasis” Eva Lewis

“Revitalization (or Gentrification) of Inglewood” Cinthya Hernandez

“The Story of Declining Livability” Denzel Caldwell and Ron Stubblefield

“The Case for Reparations” Ta-Nehisi Coates

“In Defense of Black Rage” Brittney Cooper

“The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” Audre Lorde

July 4

No Class

Week 3: Our Politics and the Power of Seeing: From High-tech Lynchings to Fuck the Police

July 9

“The Contours of Black Political Thought” Michael C. Dawson
“Fuck the Police” N.W.A
“Black People Shouldn’t Be Fooled by Hillary Clinton” Crystal Wright
“Hip-Hop Trump Voter Destroys Black Lives Matter” Resistance News
“Black Feminism, Queer Rights & Ferguson” Umar Johnson
“Young Black Democrats, Eager to Lead from the Left, Eye Runs in 2018” Alexander Burns
“High-tech Lynching: Clarence Thomas Speaks on Anita Hill – Confirmation Controversy (1991)”

July 11

“Learning from the 60s” Audre Lorde
“A Black Feminist Statement” The Combahee River Collective
“Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics” Cathy Cohen
“The Urgency of Intersectionality” Kimberlé Crenshaw
“Politically Re-Activate—Rosa Clemente on Third Parties in a Broken System” Rosa Clemente

Week 4: Getting Political: Protest in Black America

July 16

“A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement” Alicia Garza
“How a Hashtag Defined a Movement” EmergingUS
“Say Her Name: Resisting Police Brutality Against Black Women” African American Policy Forum
“Becoming an Activist” David S. Meyer
“Explaining Cycles of Protest” & “Protest and Political Opportunities” David S. Meyer

July 18

“A Year of Black Lives Matter” Clare Foran
“What Happened to Black Lives Matter?” Darren Sands
“Black Lives Matter Responds to Claims of a Dying Movement” NewsOne
“Choreographies of Protest” Susan Leigh Foster

Week 5: All ya Skinfolk Ain’t ya Kinfolk: Black faces in High Places & Unearthing Truth

July 23

“Slippin” Lil’ Kim
“A Thick Fog of Unreality” Eddie S. Glaude, Jr.
“Representatives of Their Race: The Rise of African American Police, 1948-78” James Forman, Jr.
“Black Faces in High Places” Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

July 25* *bring laptops, cellphones, and earphones to class particularly on this day*
Memory and Unearthing Truth: Lessons from Baltimore

Week 6: God Damn America: Black Resistance in Trump's America

July 30

“Are You Ready?” Nina Simone

“God Damn America” Rev. Jeremiah Wright

“Bull. Muthafuckin. Shit” Valerie Castille

“Black Lives Matter and Resistance as the New Normal” Melina Abdullah

Negroes with Guns Robert F. Williams

“Against Carceral Feminism” Victoria Law

“Abolish the Police. Instead, Let's Have Full Social, Economic, and Political Equality” Mychal Denzel Smith

“Abolition Alternatives” Angela Davis

“Introduction” (from *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class*) Robin D.G. Kelley

August 1* *bring all of your notes for class to this meeting*

What is Black, Who is Black? What Do We Do Now? A Conversation for Solutions

Paper Guidelines

Assigned papers must be formatted using Chicago/Turabian. Make sure your formatting is correct. Proper formatting for Chicago/Turabian may be located here:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/717/01/>. If your paper exceeds one (1) page, you are to paginate your work as well as reference your last name in the header beginning on the second page. Your name, followed by the date, the professor's name, the course title, and title of the assignment are to be typed (single spaced) in the upper right hand corner of the first page. The body of ALL submitted work is to be double spaced. ALL papers are to utilize 12 point Times New Roman Font, 1 inch margins. If your paper is not in the correct format it will be returned to you, which will result in a late paper (which will impact your grade). Be sure to refer to this section of the syllabus before submitting all assignments.

Class Guidelines

Section Guidelines:

Discussion Decorum: Participation is always encouraged, however abusive and disparaging comments disrupt and detract from meaningful and productive learning; as such, racist, sexist, homophobic, ableist, nationalist, and other marginalizing/degrading language will not be tolerated—more than two offenses will result in your removal from the course. While I do not support the notion of safe spaces, I fully support the notion of respectful and ethical responsive learning environments.

Email Messaging: You are more than welcome to email me with questions. Please allow me 24 to 36 hours to respond. While I will answer all questions to the best of my ability, please use class/section time as your initial point of inquiry (especially when it is related

to class material as other students more than likely have similar concerns). I strongly encourage you to utilize my office hours or make an appointment for any additional assistance if my office hours are not conducive to your schedule. **I do not accept assignments via email.**

Food: Small silent snacks and drinks are permitted. Please clean up after yourselves. Foods should not give off a strong scent.

Technology: Please silence all cell phones during class/section. Laptops, iPads, etc are permitted in class as long as it is being used toward the production of thought in the classroom. If you are found to be using technology in any other way you will be asked to discontinue use and not to bring electronic devices for the remainder of the course.

Completing Assignments: I intentionally placed lengthy readings and non-traditional material within the course. For lengthy readings I encourage you to read for an understanding look for key phrases such as: “this texts discuss”, “this work concerns”, “most importantly”, “in example”, “firstly”, “it is important that.” Paying attention to these key phrases like these will allow you to navigate lengthy texts quickly—do not try to read every word; highlight only critical and important passages. Look for the thesis (the point of the text), why the author is writing it (the text’s importance), main points, and examples; in other words effectively scan. However, if you are the presenter(s) for a particular class you will want to have read the assigned material in its entirety, as you will be the ‘subject matter expert’ for the day, and you will want to be able to respond to your class mates. Lastly, this class meets Monday and Wednesday; this means you have Thursday through Sunday (four days) to prepare. Please be prepared.

Academic Dishonesty: The University of California, Los Angeles prohibits using, copying or reproducing any and all work that is not your own. Cheating on both course/section work and exams is impermissible and can result in a failing grade and disciplinary action. All instances will be forwarded to the Dean of Students office. See UCLA Student Conduct Code: <http://www.deanofstudents.ucla.edu/students/integrity>.

Disclaimer:

The syllabus is not a fixed and/or binding contract between the student and instructor. The syllabus is in place to make known the expectations of the course/section. As such, the syllabus may be amended as the quarter proceeds based upon the progression of the class or as needs and/or proficiencies are identified by the instructor.

*these assignments will be primarily led by the instructor