

African American Women History
Examining Patterns of Leadership
Aderhold Learning Center 30
Spring Semester 2009

Office: 34 Peachtree Street; Suite 2016

Class: Thursdays: 1:00 – 4:20 pm

Office Hours: Tues: 12:00 – 2:00 pm

Thurs. 12:00 – 12:30pm

and by appointments

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Professor. Dr. J. A. Rouse

Required Texts

Darlene Clark Hine, et. al. (editors), **We Specialize in the Wholly Impossible, A Reader
In Black Women's History**

Lalita Tademy, **Cane River**

Bettye Collier Thomas & V.P.Franklin (editors), **Sisters in the Struggle, African American
Women in the Civil Rights- Black Power Movement**

Tera Hunter, **To 'Joy My Freedom, Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors after the
Civil War**

Janice Sumler Edmond, **The Secret Trust of Aspasia Cruvellier Mirault, The Life and Trials
of Free Women of Color in Antebellum Georgia**

Cynthia G. Fleming, **Soon We Will Not Cry, The Liberation of Ruby Doris Smith
Robinson**

Ula Taylor, **The Veiled Garvey, The Life and Times of Amy J. Garvey**

Assata Shakur, **Assata: An Autobiography**

Deborah Gray White, **Telling Histories, Black Women Historians in the Ivory Tower**

Paula Giddings, **When and Where I Enter, The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in
America**

Recommended Readings

Connie Curry, **Silver Rights**

Mississippi Harmony

Deep in Our Hearts, Nine White Women in the Freedom Movement

Elaine Brown, **A Taste of Power, One Woman's Story**

Deborah Gray White, **Ar'n't I a Woman? Female Slaves in the Plantation South**

Beverly Guy Sheftall (editor), **Words of Fire, An Anthology of African American Feminist
Thought**

Vicki Crawford, et.al. (editors), **Women in the Civil Rights Movement, Trailblazers and
Torchbearers, 1941-1965**

Patricia Collins, **Black Feminist Thought**

Chana K. Lee, **For Freedom Sake, Memoir of Fannie Lou Hamer**
 JoAnn Robinson, **The Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Women Who Started It**
 Joann Grant, **Freedom Bound: The Story of Ella Baker**
 Daisy Bates, **The Long Shadow of Little Rock**
 Charles Payne, **I've Got the Light of Freedom**
 Shirley Yee, **Black Women Abolitionists**
 Ann Moody, **Coming of Age in Mississippi**
 Christina Greene, **Our Separate Ways, Women and the Black Freedom Movement
 In Durham, North Carolina**
 Barbara Ransby, **Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement, A Radical Democratic
 Vision**
 Stephanie Shaw, **What a Woman Ought to Say, What a Woman Ought to Do**
 Pauli Murray, **The Autobiography of a Black Activist, Feminist, Lawyer, Priest, and Poet**
 Jacqueline A. Rouse, **Lugenia Burns Hope, Black Southern Reformer**
 Kay Mills, **This Little Light of Mines, The Story of Fannie Lou Hamer**
 Glenda E. Gilmore, **Gender and Jim Crow, Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in
 North Carolina, 1896-1920**
 Brenda L. Moore, **To Serve My Country, To Serve My Race, The Story of the Only African
 American WACs Stationed Overseas during World War II**

Reference Series (Library)

Dorothy Salem, general editor, **African American Woman, A Biographical Dictionary**
 Jessie Carney Smith, general editor, **Notable Black American Women**
 _____, general editor, **Powerful Black Women**
 Henry Louis Gates, general editor, **The Schomburg Library of Nineteenth Century Black
 Women Writers**
 Darlene Clark Hine, et.al. (general editors) **Black Women in American History**
 _____,et. al (general editors) **Black Women in America: An Historical
 Encyclopedia**

Course Description

Note: The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course: deviations may be necessary.

This course will seek to explore the varied styles and ideologies of African American women as leaders, organizers, community builders, and as general citizens. Mostly black women's quest for "simple justice and common decency" have been rooted and grounded in the tradition of race and gender protest. They have developed and designed agendas and forums for reform and "uplift" work for themselves, their families, their communities, their race, and the country at large. Yet so often, their activism is eclipsed by notable male voices who have lingered in historical memory as legitimate and authentic. Women, even the key figures in this narrative, have been defined as support systems for agendas of influential males, working as functionaries in implementing the plans of organizations, churches, associations, and committees they do not lead or direct. Because of their successful efforts in organizing, fundraising, recruiting, and networking, these campaigns have propelled many African American males into

the “first Negro” status. This status then furthered the careers and goals of the individual males, leaving the female activism as merely a footnote in the chronicles of public discourse. Hence, the objective of this course is to recognize and define leadership from the perspective of African American women and to examine how their essential issues have crossed class, educational, regional, religious and ideological barriers.

Course Schedule

January 8	Introduction African American Women’s History African and Southern Heritages Hine, Chpts. 4, 5
January 15	Women as Cultural Carriers- Colonial Experiences-through the New Republic Hine, Chpts. 12-14 Giddings, Chpt. 2
January 22	Slavery, A Question of Gender Hine, Chpt. 10; Giddings, Chpt. 2 Tademy, Cane River
January 29	Free Women: Suffrage, Abolition, Feminism, Racism Case Studies: Frances Harper, Maria Stewart, Mary Shadd Cary, Sojourner Truth Hine, Chpt. 22; Giddings, Chpts. 3,4 Edmonds, The Secret Trust of Aspasia C. Mirault
February 5	Freedom and Liberation Institutional Building- Civil War Amendments and the Status of Women Giddings, Chpts. 3-5 Hine, Chpts. 15, 18, 20
February 12	African American Women and Working Consciousness Labor, Self Images, Cult of True Womanhood Hunter, To Joy My Freedom Hine, Chpt. 2
February 19	Class Examination- Essays
February 26	Community Organizing, Club and Race Work

April 23

Submissions of Papers/Oral Presentations

Course Requirements

This course will include one class examination, a generational biographical essay or an activism essay on a local prominent African American woman, essay reviews, class discussions, and research opportunities. One should consider a variety of research resources in developing general discussions and your semester project, including oral histories, personal and organizational papers, church and club histories, school histories, exhibits, catalogs, popular magazines, especially African American ones, and documentaries. Hence, class attendance is mandatory.

Assignment Options: Biographical Essay or An Activism Essay on Local Individual

Generational Essay- Students selecting this option must prepare a biographical generational essay on two different women in the twentieth and/or twentieth-first centuries.. The lives and activism of these two women, one of national renown and the other a family member or community activist, should reflect how they came of age on the issues of class, education, leadership, employment, race, sexism, sexuality, etc. Using the two different generations, the student should explore the cultural, social, political, economic heritage/history of these two women. The research design should explore all of the human forces that shaped the women's beliefs, choices, personal and public, work experience, place of residency, education, leadership experience, or lack of such, etc. How did segregation and or discrimination affect your participants? Were there laws that restricted choices due to race or gender? What impact did female friends, relatives and faith and faith leaders have on the women's growth and maturity? Are they feminists? Womanists? Are they radicals, conservatives, moderates in their political and class views? How were they trained to view male leadership and authority? How is this training apparent in their activism or actions?

Oral interviews may help in developing the life story of one or both of the participants. Seek to interview family members, colleagues, or associates in compiling the varied and diverse lives of your subjects. Keep in mind that one individual may have traveled through a variety of ideological camps across a lifetime. One essential issue should be to determine how these women came to a sense of self worth, self determination, self identity, and self reliance.

The above sources may be used, augmented by original or primary research through personal papers, interviews, letters, diaries, minutes and journals. Note: many older African American women wrote their activities for the day on calendars: there were comments on the outcome of daily activities and events. Reading such calendars is similar to walking through one's diary.

Local Activist- Prominent Female Organizer, Leader

Local female activists may include politicians, educators, community builders/activists,

fundraisers, news persons, labor organizers, theologians, civil rights activists, writers, etc. This project is an essay on the activism of a local prominent person, particularly one in a leadership or influential role. The general questions and objectives for this project should be the same of those in the previous choice, but one should be able to ascertain the significance of this person's activism on the city of Atlanta or their metropolitan area. These local activists may have a long history in social justice reform that moves beyond the actual site of their activism. Many may have become prominent due to civil rights activism of previous eras. How do these activists handle leadership and their responsibilities to their constituents, especially other African American women? Who mentored them? Are they members of generational leadership? What forces influenced or shepherd their choices? What are successes? Failures? This person must be placed in a historical context in developing the coming of age of the leadership saga. Local suggestions: Leila Sears, first Black woman on Georgia's Supreme Court; Juanita Abernathy, SCLC Women, Ellen Lowery, leader of SCLC women, Juanita Barranco, businesswoman, first black female on the Board of Regents, University of Georgia System, first black chair of Board; Barbara King, founder and pastor of Hillside Truth Center; Cynthia Hale, founder/pastor, community activist; Johnetta Cole, former president of Spelman College and Bennett College in North Carolina; Coretta Scott King, founder of King Center, or Mayor Shirley Franklin, first female mayor of Atlanta. Some may not consent to an interview but associates and contemporaries or other family members or local published accounts could serve as alternates.

Due Dates: Topic and Outline of Approach, Working Bibliography

On or before February 26, 2009

Final Paper:

Due on or before April 23, 2009

The exact format will be discussed later in the semester. Length 15-20 pages, double-spaced, well documented, varied bibliography, including at least one primary source.

Grading Percentage

Semester Project	50%
Class Discussions/Presentations	25%
Class Examination	25%

Grading Scale

100 - 95	A	94 - 90	A-	89 - 87	B+
86 - 84	B	83 - 80	B-	79 - 77	C+

76 - 74 C

73 - 70 C
Below 60 -- Failure

69 - 60 D