History 471: Southern Women in Black and White
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Class Hours: M 1:10-4 p.m.
Office Hours: MWF 10-11 a.m. and by appointment

Black and white women in the American South share a common heritage shaped by slavery and its aftermath, yet the same past that connects these women has often held them apart. In this writing-intensive seminar we will examine the often-explosive intimacy that existed between black and white women in the American South. Focusing on the autobiographies and memoirs of women in the twentieth-century South, we will explore the importance of gender and race to racial segregation, the Civil Rights Movement, and interracial relationships.

Course Goals and Requirements

This course will introduce students to the linked histories of black and white women in an American region through a combination of thoughtful reading, informed discussion, and in-depth writing assignments. Students will learn to read historical sources carefully, to evaluate those sources critically and comparatively, and to write clearly and analytically.

You are expected to attend class regularly, to keep up with the reading, and to participate in class discussions. You should bring a discussion question or comment on the reading to each class period. These will be used as a starting point for class discussions and will also be used to calculate your attendance. Attendance is mandatory. You each will get one “free” absence; thereafter, your attendance grade will drop by one letter grade for each absence. Late arrivals and early departures will each count for one-half of an absence and will affect your grade accordingly.

Class meetings will be held seminar-style. This means that the quality of your preparation and your contributions are essential to the success of the course. Come prepared to speak, but be sensitive to others’ comments. Listening and posing questions, as well as offering insights, are important discussion skills. Listen to your peers, encourage them to expand on their points, offer supporting comments or alternative viewpoints, and above all, always connect your comments to the reading! Everybody brings a different perspective to the class, but the text is our common ground.

There will be three paper assignments during this class. Students will have the opportunity to rewrite each paper after receiving feedback. Each paper should be 7-10 typed, double-spaced pages long. Papers must address one of the questions posed on the course schedule below and must utilize at least two of the primary sources (memoirs and autobiographies) assigned in the class. For each paper, there will be two deadlines: one for the rough draft, and one for the final draft. Papers must be submitted by the first deadline to receive feedback and the opportunity to rewrite. Papers must be submitted (or resubmitted) by the second deadline to receive a grade. Later papers will not be accepted except in extraordinary circumstances, such as a family or personal emergency or serious illness. Prior arrangement and/or documentation are required in such instances; in their absence, later papers will receive a failing grade.

A portion of each class period will be devoted to discussions of or workshops on research, writing, and documentation. Short assignments in addition to those listed on the syllabus may be made at this time. In addition, students are encouraged to meet with the professor either during office hours or by appointment for individual assistance.
Grading:

Attendance and Participation: 25 percent
First Paper: 25 percent
Second Paper: 25 percent
Third Paper: 25 percent
Class Schedule

January 21, 2008: NO CLASS—MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY

January 28, 2008: Introduction to Class

February 4, 2008: Discuss *Growing Up Jim Crow*, Introduction and Chaps. 1, 2, and 3

February 11, 2008: Discuss *Growing Up Jim Crow*, Chaps. 4, 5, and Conclusion

February 18, 2008: NO CLASS—WASHINGTON-LINCOLN DAY

February 25, 2008: Discuss *Killers of the Dream*, Foreword and Part 1, Chaps. 1-4

March 3, 2008: Discuss *Killers of the Dream*, Part 2, Chaps. 1, 3, and 4

March 10, 2008: Discuss *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Parts 1 and 2

March 17, 2008: Discuss *Coming of Age in Mississippi*, Parts 3 and 4

***Rough Draft of First Paper Due***

Respond to one of the following questions, relying on KOD and COA:

Discuss women’s role in teaching race.

Compare black and white girls’ early experiences with race.

March 24, 2008: NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK

March 31, 2008: Discuss *Deep in Our Hearts*, pp. xiii-xv, 1-130

***Final Draft of First Paper Due***

April 7, 2008: Discuss *Deep in Our Hearts*, pp. 131-251

April 14, 2008: Discuss *Deep in Our Hearts*, pp. 253-75

April 21, 2008: Discuss *Telling Memories*, Preface and Parts 1 and 2

***Rough Draft of Second Paper Due***

Respond to one of the following questions, relying on COA and DIOH:

Discuss gender and/or sexuality in the Civil Rights Movement.

Compare black and white women’s experiences in the Civil Rights Movement.

April 28, 2008: Discuss *Telling Memories*, Parts 3, 4, 5, and Epilogue

May 5, 2008: Discuss *Telling Memories*, Photo Essay
Thinking Toward a Thesis, Part I: Making Connections

Writing a paper with a strong argument will come more naturally if you are thinking as a writer from the very beginning. This means that, as a reader, you should be alert for intriguing insights, striking quotations, mystifying contradictions, and the like. For your first paper for this class, it obviously is important for you to take note of material addressing the two potential paper topics listed on the syllabus. It also will be useful for you to identify points of convergence between the memoirs (KOD and COA) and GUJC. Your “homework” for this week is to make connections between KOD and GUJC. Use the rest of this page to create two columns. In one column, write down three to five observations/arguments found in GUJC. In the other column, record a passage or quote from KOD that demonstrates (or contradicts) those from GUJC. Be sure to record page numbers so that you can document these passage when it comes time to write your paper!
Thinking Toward a Thesis, Part II: Comparative Analysis

Last week you worked on making connections between a primary source (KOD) and a secondary source (GUJC). This week your task is to analyze primary sources comparatively. Specifically, you should compare material from KOD and COA. You’ll notice that this is required for one of the assigned paper topics, and is easily incorporated into the next. Choose one of the topics (women’s role in teaching race; black and white girls’ early experiences with race) and find at least one passage from each memoir dealing with it. Now compare them. N.B.: “Compare” means to note both the similarities and the differences; you may have encountered this instruction before as “compare and contrast.” Finally, write a declarative sentence indicating how/why the passages are similar/different. Congratulations! You now have a potential thesis statement for your first paper!
Thinking Toward a Thesis, Part III: Identifying Common Themes

Last week you read a black woman’s account of the Civil Rights Movement. This week you read three white women’s account of the same era. In preparation for the second essay, your writing task is to identify common themes across the readings. Specifically, you should record a passage from both COA and DIOH for each of the themes listed below. For each theme, you may choose passages that suggest commonalities across racial lines, or passages that suggest differences across racial lines. Make a note of what you’ve done (mark each section “similar” or “different”). This should help you decide whether you want to discuss the experience of CRM women as a group (the first option for the essay) or differentiate among them by race (the second option for the essay). Be sure to provide page numbers so that you have them for reference when you are working on the essay!

CR women’s experiences with segregation, racial etiquette, and/or racial violence

CR workers’ sources of inspiration and motivation

See reverse side of sheet for more themes!!!
Women's role(s) in the CRM

CR workers' relationships with their families
Writing Introductions, Part I: Drawing the Reader In

An introduction should do several things. First, it should draw the reader in and make the topic appealing. There are several ways you might do this. You can begin with an intriguing quote or anecdote, either from your own source material or perhaps from a work of literature or music that captures the important theme(s) of your paper. Once you've begun this way, you need to explain why this quote or anecdote is important to the material to follow. Take a look at the opening pages of the chapters in Ritterhouse's book, and pay attention to how she utilizes this strategy. You might also begin by referring to an important historical debate, and then explain how your paper enters into this discussion by taking sides or offering a new perspective altogether. If, for instance, you were discussing African American middle-class parents' childrearing strategies in the Jim Crow South, you might point out that historians disagree about how to interpret "respectability"—as accommodating or challenging racism. You might then proceed to explain that your analysis sheds new light on this question by looking at it from a new angle—from the standpoint of white middle-class parents, or black working-class parents, for instance—or using a particular source. Look for a place in Ritterhouse's book where she follows up a discussion of a historiographical debate (a disagreement among historians) with her own interpretation. You could also begin with a straightforward statement of your thesis. Such thesis statements should follow last week's guidelines for strong sentence structure (S-V-O). Whether you begin your introduction with the thesis or not, you should include such a statement in the introduction; think of this as the "take-away" message of your introduction. Look for an example of a strong thesis statement in Ritterhouse's book.
Second, your introduction needs to tell the reader your thesis; that is, explain what you are going to say. Your thesis should be an argument, not an opinion or a mere statement of fact. While both opinion (interpretation) and fact (evidence) may be involved in your argument, your thesis statement should be more than either of these: it should explain what conclusion you have reached based on your interpretation of the evidence. It is important to state your thesis as clearly and succinctly as possible. This is not the place for long, elaborate sentences or for rambling reflections. Avoid multiple phrases and clauses. Be brief and to the point. Your reader should not have to guess at your thesis.

Third, your introduction should lay out the major parts of your argument (the major points you want to make in support of your thesis). While your paper should have only one thesis, you may wish to make several sub-points that, taken together, demonstrate your argument. For instance, perhaps you have decided to begin your paper by quoting Harriet Jacobs: “Slavery is terrible for men, but it is far more terrible for women. Superadded to the burden common to all, they have wrongs, and sufferings, and mortifications peculiarly their own.” (p. 77) Your thesis is that Jacobs is correct; while women suffered many of the same ways that men did under slavery, they also experienced difficulties that were unique to slave women. Thus, your paper will have to demonstrate at least two main points: that women and men suffered in similar ways in slavery; and that women also suffered in unique ways. Each of these main points might be further broken down into sub-points. For instance, women and men might have shared in work load and pace; housing, food, and clothing; and physical punishment. But women also might have suffered from sexual overtures or sexual abuse from white men; jealousy and mistreatment from white women; and the primary responsibility for protecting their children from the worst elements of slavery. Whatever points you wish to make, your introduction should state each of them. Think of this as a roadmap for your reader: the thesis statement tells them the destination, but the explanation of the main points tells them how they will get there. Once you've laid out your main points, you need to remind the reader, once again, why all this matters; that is, where you are going with this information. In other words, you need to restate your thesis. Your thesis statement should be repeated in the very last sentence of your introduction. This will make it clear to the reader that although you have many points to make, they all lead toward the same main argument: your thesis.
Using the Web for Research

The World Wide Web has a lot of great resources for historical research, but it also has a vast amount of useless material. Therefore, you need to use good judgment in selecting internet source material. You also need to provide citations for your work. Here are some good websites for historical research. For proper documentation, consult Xia Li and Nancy Crane, *Electronic Style: A Guide to Citing Electronic Information* (1993).

**Thomas Jefferson Papers** (records of the Virginia president and slaveholder)
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/mtjhtml/mtjhome.html

**Documenting the American South** (slave narratives and Civil War materials)
http://metalab.unc.edu/docsouth

**Virginia and the Civil War** (antebellum and Civil War records)

**Slavery and Race Relations** (oral histories with former slaves conducted in the 1930s)
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html

**Equal Rights Party** (papers of a group dedicated to full political rights for both blacks and women)
http://www.utoledo.edu/www/erp/

**Civil War Women** (archival collections from Duke University)
http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/collections/civil-war-women.html

**Victorian Women Writers** (information on women in nineteenth-century America)
http://www.indiana.edu/lettrs/vwwp/

**Emma Goldman** (papers of the socialist, anarchist, and feminist)
http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman/

**Godey’s Ladies Book** (on-line version of a popular magazine for women in antebellum America)
http://www.history.rochester.edu/godeys

**Suffragist Oral History Project** (interviews with women who fought for the vote)
http://libhistory.berkeley.edu/BANC/ROHO/ohonline/suffragists.html

**Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers** (materials pertaining to women’s rights)

**Margaret Sanger and the Woman Rebel** (materials on the birth control movement)
http://adh.cs.duke.edu/ms/ms-table.html

**Women and Social Movements, 1830-1930** (materials on women and reform)
http://womhist.binghamton.edu

**Women of the West Museum** (materials on western women)
http://www.wowmuseum.org/stories

**Japanese-American Internment at Manzanar** (photos of WWII internment camp)
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/aamhtml/
Frederick Douglass Papers (escaped slave and abolitionist speaker)
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/doughtml/

Native American Affairs (government records)
http://www.nara.gov/nara/nail.html