SYLLABUS

English 4420/Black Studies—Contemporary Africana Womanist Writers
Class: Tuesdays/Thursdays, 11:00-12:15
Instructor: Dr. Clenora Hudson-Weems, Professor of English
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Websites:
   http://missouri.edu/~engchw/
   www.africanawomanism.com

Course Description, Rationale, Goals and Objectives:

English 4420, Africana Womanism, is an undergraduate and graduate course specifically designed to broaden one's scope from a family-centered perspective in the area of issues, recurring themes and/or trends in modern Africana women fiction, highlighting its applicability to our everyday lives worldwide. An in-depth study of the lives and selected works by five (5) leading Africana women writers—Noted Pre-Africana Womanist, Zora Neale Hurston (Their Eyes Were Watching God); African American/Caribbean Novelist, Paule Marshall (Praisesong for the Widow); Nobel Prize Winning author, Toni Morrison (Beloved); Popular Cultural Novelist, Terry McMillan (Disappearing Acts); and Former Rap Star Artist, Sister Souljah (No Disrespect)—will be enhanced by critical readings of two (2) books from the Africana Womanism Trilogy, as well as scholarly articles by and about the various authors. Methodologically, we will be highlighting the prioritization of Race, Class & Gender, a key feature in this powerful paradigm, committed to the empowerment and equality of all, rather than a gender exclusive agenda (female-centered, female-empowerment) so characteristic of other female-based constructs. Students will be introduced to an authentic theoretical concept and methodology, Africana Womanism, and will be applying Africana Womanist theory to the five Africana womanist novels, which clearly reflect our daily lives throughout the world.

Meshed together, the primary and secondary reading materials, as well as other media materials, will aid students in refining their own individual
concepts about not only the writings of the individual authors, but about critical current issues, particularly as they relate to Africana women and their families and communities. The ultimate objective of the course, then, is to enhance one's knowledge and appreciation of Africana women and their interconnection with their families (men and children) in particular and Africana life and culture (historically and currently) in general.

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to yet another theoretical construct, in addition to the widely known female-based theory—Feminism,” which is referenced in the Africana Womanism books. Africana Womanism is an authentic paradigm designed specifically for all women of African descent, and by extension for all men and women in general. It demonstrates that we are all—men, women and children--In It Together!

Textbooks and Course Materials:

Primary Sources (Required)


______________________________—*Africana Womanism & Race & Gender in the Presidential Candidacy of Barack Obama* (AH, 2008; 2016)

Hurston, Zora Neale--*Their Eyes Were Watching God* (University of Illinois Press)

Marshall, Paule—*Parisesong for the Widow* (Dutton)

McMillan, Terry—*Disappearing Acts* (Knopf)

Morrison, Toni --*Beloved* (Alfred A. Knopf)

Souljah, Sister--*No Disrespect* (Vintage Books)
Secondary Sources (Selections from these Pieces are required)

Bonetti, Kay--*The American Audio Prose Library*--Interviews with Toni Morrison, and Clenora Hudson-Weems


Samuels, Wilfred D. and Clenora Hudson-Weems--*Toni Morrison* (Prentice-Hall, 1990)

Web Page Materials—Articles on Africana Womanism

Videos of presentations, including *You Tube*, on Africana Womanism (Bowdoin College, 2015) & Video *The Issus Is* (St. Thomas, U.S. Virgin Islands, 1990s)

Media Coverage (Newspaper, TV, etc.) on Africana Womanism

Grade Determination

3 or more unexcused absences will result in lowering class grade a minimum of 1 grade level.*

--Class Participation 10 %
--Oral Report 10 %
--Pop Quizzes 15 %
--Mid-Term 30 %
--Final Research Paper/Annotated Bibliography (7-10 pages): 35 %

Schedule

Weeks:

1. Course Overview Course Requirements, the Research Paper/Annotated Bibliography--Documentation, etc.

   Web Page Materials/Articles on Africana Womanism--“Africana Womanism and the Critical Need for Africana Theory and Thought”
2. *Africana Womanist Literary Theory*—Preliminaries; Chapter I, pp. 1-21; Chapter II, pp. 23-32; Chapter III, pp. 33-50

--*Africana Womanism on You Tube*, Bowdoin College, 2015

3. *Africana Womanist Literary Theory*—Chapter IV, pp. 51-63; Chapter V, pp. 65-77; Chapter VI, pp. 79-97; Conclusion; Afterword

--Southern Utah U. Conversation Address on Africana Womanism

4. *Call & Response (C & R)*—Women's Voices of Self-Definitions, pp. 1376-1381

Video-Television Interview with Dr. Barbara Christian and Dr. Clenora Hudson-Weems on Black Feminism versus Africana Womanism (1995)

Oral Reports:

Hudson-Weems—“Africana Womanism: An Historical, Global Perspective for Women of African Descent,” p. 1812

Barbara Smith—“Toward a Black Feminist Criticism,” p. 1816

bell hooks—“Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory,” p. 1844

5. Bonetti, Kay—*American Audio Prose Library*—Interview—Hudson-Weems

*Africana Womanism & Race & Gender in the Presidential Candidacy of Barack Obama*—Foreword, Preface & Introduction; Chapters 2, 3, 6

6. *The Issue Is*—Video on Africana Womanism

*Africana Womanism & Race & Gender in the Presidential Candidacy of Barack Obama*—Chapters 7 & 8; Chapter 10/11; Conclusion; Afterword

7. Oral Reports on Theory and Application and in *AW-Barack Obama*
Zora Neale Hurston (*Call and Response*-pp. 942-946)

8. Quiz on Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God*

Hurston’s *Their Eyes Were Watching God*: Seeking Wholeness in *Africana Womanism*, pp. 81-91 (or Web Page)

Oral Reports

Library Class on Internet Source Documentation—Dr. Paula Roper

9. Quiz on Paule Marshall’s *Praisesong for the Widow*

Marshall’s *Praisesong for the Widow*: Authentic Existence in *Africana Womanism*, pp. 105-117 (or Web Page)

Oral Reports

10. Toni Morrison (*Call and Response*, pp. 1694-1699)

Quiz on *Beloved*

From Samuels & Hudson-Weems in *Toni Morrison*, pp. 1-30; pp. 94-138

Oral Reports

11. Morrison’s *Beloved*: All Parts Equal in *Africana Womanist Literary Theory*, pp. 115-126

*Africana Womanist Literary Theory*. Movie Review, Chapter IX, 127-130

Oral Reports

Bonetti, Kay—*American Audio Prose Library*—Interview—T. Morrison

12. Terry McMillan (*Call and Response*, pp. 1852-1855)
Quiz on *Disappearing Acts*

McMillan’s *Disappearing Acts*: In It Together in *Africana Womanism & Race & Gender in the Presidential Candidacy of Barack Obama* (Appendix IV)

Oral Reports


Quiz on Sister Souljah’s *No Disrespect*

Sister Souljah’s *No Disrespect*: The Africana Womanist Dilemma in *Africana Womanist Literary Theory*, p. 99-113

Oral Reports


Other Africana Womanist Scholars

15. --Wrap Up

--Research Paper or Annotated Bibliography Due

*Africana Womanism: “I Got Your Back, Boo”*
Don’t you know by now, girl, we’re all In It Together? 
Family-Centrality--that’s it; we’re going nowhere without the other. 
That means the men, the women, and children, too, 
Truly collectively working—“I got your back, Boo.”

_Racism_ means the violation of our constitutional rights, 
Which creates on-going legal and even physical fights; 
This 1st priority for humankind is doing what it must do, 
Echoing our 1st lady, Michelle—“I got your back, Boo.”

_Classism_ is the hoarding of financial privileges, 
Privileges we must all have now in pursuit of happiness. 
Without a piece of the financial pie, we’re doomed to have a coup, 
Remember--protect the other—“I got your back, Boo.”

_Sexism_, the final abominable sin of female subjugation, 
A battle we must wage to restore our family relations. 
All forms of sin inevitably fall under 1 of the 3 offenses. 
Africana Womanism—“I got your back, Boo”—corrects our common senses.

_By Clenora Hudson-Weems, PhD_ 
_Conceptualizer of African Womanism_