

**Black and White Women Writing About Race:
“The Trouble Between Us”**

Professor: Dr. Debra Walker King

Office hours: MWF 10:30-11:30 and by appointment

dwking@ufl.edu

Class Time: MWF 9:35-10:25

Place:

<https://ufl.zoom.us/j/94721913459?pwd=RnovRHZyd1Q3Ulh1bE9jUjI0dGRsQT09>

Meeting ID: 947 2191 3459

Passcode: 4t735b

Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back to and for use of enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Not using a profile image may limit my ability to recall you when necessary (participation grading and letters of recommendation, for instance). Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate verbally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your voice recorded during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

Description: This course surveys women’s writing during the mid 19th Century to the present, focusing on gendered Black and White race relations as presented in their literature and in American culture critiques. Students trace, analyze and discuss how Black and White women talk about each other, coop and reject each other, or, simply, ignore each other in literature as they and their characters negotiate gendered social, political, and personal challenges.

Goals: To discover how change and racial relations develop both in our culture and in the way writers and their readers respond to those changes and situations. Students discuss how Black and White women, as represented in literature, move through and solve challenging racial situations and bonding opportunities.

Format: The readings and teaching methods of this course are eclectic in pursuit of a variety of texts and experiences. The class sessions include lectures, discussions, and student reports. Our discussions focus on novels, short stories, poetry, and essays. As investigators and scholars, our inquiries play in the spaces between practice, method, and theory in order to address the commonalities, disruptions, gaps, absences, and silences that exist among the primary texts.

Primary Texts: (some texts are available as eBooks)

- o Diangelo, Robin. *White Fragility* (ISBN 9780807047415)
- o Golden, Marita and Susan Richards Shreve, Eds. *Skin Deep: Black and White Women Write about Race* (ISBN: 0-385-47409-1)
- o Williams, Sherley Anne, *Dessa Rose* (ISBN: 0-68-05113-8)
- o Douglas, Ellen, *Can't Quit You, Baby* (ISBN: 0140121021)

Other readings are available Under "Files" in Canvas or in Course Reserves.

Course Schedule

Week 1 -- 8/31-9/4

Mon.: Course Introduction, Purpose, and Goals

Wed.: Syllabus Review

Fri.: "Difficult Conversations"

*Assignment:

Review "Key Terms" listed on the last page of this syllabus.

Week 2 – 9/7-11

Mon.: NO CLASS—Labor Day

Wed.: Diangelo, Robin. *White Fragility* (2018)—Intro. and chapters 1-3

Fri.: Diangelo, Robin. *White Fragility* (2018)—chapters 4-6

Week 3 – 9/14-18

Mon.: Diangelo, Robin. *White Fragility* (2018)—**Discussion Board assignment (see "Discussions")**

Wed.: Diangelo, Robin. *White Fragility* (2018)—chapters 7-10

Fri.: Diangelo, Robin. *White Fragility* (2018)—chapters 11-12

Week 4 – 9/21-25

Mon.: Lecture / discussion – Begin **Discussion Group Assignment (see discussion week 4 under "Discussions")**

Suggested Readings:

- Glymph, Thaviola "A Makeshift Kind of Life": Free Women and Free Homes, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household*. NY: Cambridge University Press, 2008, 167-203. ("Course Reserves")

- Wilson, Midge and Kathy Russell, "Introduction" and "History: The Divisions Begin," *Divided Sisters: Bridging the Gap between Black Women and White Women*. New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1996. ("Course Reserves")

Wed.: **Discussion Groups share-out** on assigned readings:

- 1) Stowe, Harriet Beecher. Chapters 7-8 "The Mother's Struggle" and "Eliza's Escape," *Uncle Tom's Cabin*,
- 2) Jacobs, Harriet. "The Trials of Girlhood" & "The Jealous Mistress," *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, 25-33.

Fri.: **Discussion Group share-out** continued

Week 5 – 9/28-10/2--Required Readings available in *Skin Deep: Black and White Women Write about Race*.

Mon.: Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. NY: Alfred A. Knoff, 1987, 74-85. ("Course Reserves.")

Wed.: Naomi Wolf, "The Racism of Well-meaning White People" and Lisa Page, "High Yellow White Trash"

Fri.: Discussion continued

Week 6 – 10/5-9--Required Readings available in *Skin Deep: Black and White Women Write about Race*

Mon.: Retha Powers, "Overhand and Underhand" and Marita Golden, "whitegirls"

Wed.: Joyce Carol Oates, "Negative" and Toni Morrison "Recitatif."

Fri.: Jewelle Gomez, "Across the Glittering Sea" and Ann Filemyr, "Loving Across the Boundary."

Week 7 – 10/12-16--Required Reading: Readings available in *Skin Deep*.

Mon.: Beverly Lowry, "What Tina Has to Do with It"

Wed.: Patricia Browning Griffith, "Legacies and Ghosts"

Fri.: Susan Straight, "Tulsa, 1921"

Week 8 – 10/19-23

Mon.: Alice Walker, "The Revenge of Hanna Kemhuff"

Wed.: Eudora Welty, "A Worn Path"

Fri.: Gayle Pemberton, "Hello Stranger"

Week 9 -- 10/26-30

Required Group Preparation Sessions:

This week's class sessions are for the benefit of group panel preparations. Please be prepared to work with your group. Attendance is mandatory. **All class members:** please read the daily sections of the text as assigned to each group for discussion and preparation grading purposes. **(Note to groups: include your research and analysis of how the text speaks to us today).**

Week 10— 11/2-6

Mon.: Morrison, Toni. "What Black Women Think about Women's Lib," (1971), *What Moves at the Margin*, 18-30. ("Course Reserves")

Wed.: hooks, bell. "Holding My Sister's Hand," *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. NY: Routledge, 1994. 93-110. ("Course Reserves")

Fri.: Gilliam, Dorothy. "Reaching Across the Feminist Racial Divide," *Skin Deep*, 258-264.

Week 11 – 11/9-13

Monday: Mane, Rebecca L. Clark. "Transmuting Grammars of Whiteness in Third- Wave Feminism: Interrogating Postrace Histories, Postmodern Abstraction, and the Proliferation of Difference in Third-Wave Texts," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society*. 38.1 (2012): 71-97. ("Course Reserves")

Wed. Veterans Day--NO CLASS

Friday: Group Prep Day (Group reports begin Monday)

Week 12 –11/16-20

Mon.: Group I Dessa Rose, "Prologue" and "The Darky"

Wed.: Group II Dessa Rose, "The Wench"

Fri.: Group III Dessa Rose, "The Negress" and "Epilogue"

Week 13 –11/23-27

Mon.: Discussion of Dessa Rose

Wed.: TBD

Fri.: Thanksgiving Holiday -- NO CLASS

Week 14 –11/30-12/4

Mon.: Group IV - *Can't Quit You, Baby*, Chapters 1-2

Wed.: Group V - *Can't Quit You, Baby*, Chapters 3-4

Fri.: Group VI-*Can't Quit You, Baby*, Chapters 5-6

Assignment: *Dessa Rose* Group members only: 6-page response papers due today

Week 15 –12/7-11

Mon.: Comparative Analysis / Discussion of *Dessa Rose* and *Can't Quite You, Baby*

Wed.: Last day of class

Assignment: *Can't Quit You...* Group members of **only**: 6-page response papers due today

Grade Distribution

200 total points: Response Papers

During the second half of the semester we will have panel presentations. You should focus your response paper on your group presentation text and readings. You can develop an idea presented in the group report, but you must go beyond it by using additional research and analysis. Your response paper must be no more than six (6) pages long and are due a week after your group's presentation.

Demonstrate your knowledge, compare theories, and engage the text -- the more original your contemplations and assessments, the better your grade. Keep the course objectives in mind when writing (but you may also expand your comments beyond this boundary). Research the text or topic you are considering and share your thoughts. Research is a requirement of the response papers. Without presenting evidence of outside research and its consideration in the paper, you will earn no more than 187.5 points (or 75%). Submit your paper via Canvas (see upload site under "Assignments"). If you run into problems, see me.

50 points: Panel Sessions

These forty-minute, panel sessions probe previously discussed questions and explore new ones. Be creative in your presentations. Do not line up and give reports. I repeat: DO NOT. Have fun with this project! Present your analysis and interpretations through narration while acting out a scene or revising a scene; stage a debate or a trial; juxtapose the novel with artwork, music, or poems. Be sure to involve the class. Only your imagination limits the possibilities! One week is dedicated to panel planning so there should be no excuse for any member's lack of participation. From the final in-class planning period, the panel is expected to produce a one-paragraph abstract of the proposed presentation and submit it to me before the next class period. In addition, each panel member is asked to assist in writing a brief summary of the group's work, individual effort, and the panel's contribution to the class objectives. This two-three-page summary is due the day of the panel presentation (Canvas submission only, please). Group grades are assigned for these papers; so, please make this a group effort--use Google Docs for editing and contributing.

250 points—Other

Points breakdown is available in Canvas under "Assignments"

Attendance: I take attendance very seriously and expect you to come to class every day on time. After entering the ZOOM environment, please go to the chat room and announce yourself as present. I will records attendance based on the chat announcements.

You are allowed up to three unexcused absences, your grade will automatically drop a half letter grade after the third unexcused absence. If you reach nine (totaling three weeks of class) absences, you will automatically fail the course and should withdraw from the class or you will receive an "E" for the semester. No Incomplete grades are given for this course.

Caveat: Excused absences are permitted if you provide a typewritten letter documenting an illness, a family crisis, or participation in a university sponsored event. All students should consult with me to make up material missed during an excused absence. For additional information, please see our University guidelines cited in the “Course Policies” section of this syllabus.

Preparation: All readings and take-home assignments must be prepared and ready for each class session. Take notes concerning the reading assignment. Prepare a discussion question just in case you are called on to do an impromptu discussion. Poorly constructed, irrelevant or perfunctory comments will result in point reductions in this area of grading. I do not want you to tell me you liked a particular reading, for instance. Your response to assigned readings must be intelligent, thoughtful and scholarly. Identify why the material is valuable to our class discussion (or objectives) or how the material engages themes and topics under survey.

IMPROMPTU Discussions

I will select several students (during class) to enter into discussions guided by issues raised in your notes or issues assigned for responses. If you are selected to engage in an impromptu discussion, you are required to extend your entrance card to a one to two-page paper and submit it via Canvas under “Impromptu Discussions.” You must bring depth to the idea on the floor for discussion as well as offer your own remarks for consideration. Discussions will proceed as follows:

1st Speaker—offers commentary on the assigned reading

2nd Speaker—responds with reflections on the opening statement

You may agree with the opening speaker or disagree, but you must discuss why.

1st Speaker—responds to the reflections of speaker #2 with depth of insight

2nd Speaker—adds additional information from his or her own notes

1st Speaker—responds to the additional information

You may agree with the opening speaker or disagree, but you must discuss why.

2nd Speaker—responds to the reflections of speaker #1 with depth of insight

Speaker #2—concluding statements

Speaker #1—concluding statements

Speaker #3—Summary of the issues raised

Summary participants review what was argued or discussed and offer insights overlooked or not fully considered. The selected summary speaker must summarize highlights of the conversation--do not repeat everything--and should introduce related information from additional texts read that week, texts read in previous weeks, or his/her own entry pass.

Open Class Discussion—volunteers from the class and professor offer insights

This pattern will repeat with new speakers. Be prepared for participation without prior notice.

After you engage in an impromptu "Table Talk" discussion, you are required to extend your comments to a one to two-page paper and submit it in Canvas before the beginning of the next class session.

Participation: Students should complete all readings and assignments prior to the class meeting and participate fully in class discussion. Assessment for participation is made in the areas of attendance, engagement, leadership, teamwork, and originality.

Strong participation includes:

1. only excused absences with no recorded tardiness
2. adherence to course policies, assignments and guidelines
3. evidence that readings are completed and ready for class discussions
4. outside research done and shared with class on multiple occasions
5. clear and respectful exchanges with other students and the professor
6. volunteering to enter or begin discussions (brief presentations included)
7. leadership within small group activities noted by reporting out for the group or taking a guiding role
8. an understanding of teamwork and one's responsibility to advancing positive class or group dynamics
9. originality in thought, discussion and response paper information and sharing
10. encouraging others' ability to enter or sustain participation in discussions
11. engaging questions from the professor or other students without hesitation or persuasion

Rubric

"A" level participation is strong in all key areas and earns 100-90 points.

"B" level participation, albeit promising, is notably weak in two key areas and earns from 89-80 points.

"C" level participation is notably weak in three key areas and earns from 79-70 points.

"D" level participation is significantly weak in Three or more of the key areas and earns from 69-60 points below 59 points. is failing level participation

Exams, Quizzes and Other Assignments: There may be a few pop quizzes—no makeup quizzes. Your performance during class, progress evaluations (tests and quizzes) and in-class discussions will determine if a final exam is necessary. I will inform you of my decision.

Extra Credit (5 bonus points): This is an optional assignment. You may present a ten-slide PowerPoint presentation to me on an issue or author under discussion. These reports must be approved prior to credit submission. Email to me a short proposal describing what you plan to do. The assignment will earn scores ranging from 1/2 to 5 points (added to your overall course score). Reports might cover issues such as "Black and White Mothers on Welfare," "Interracial Marriage," "Race and 'The View'," "Sunshine Laws," or "Black and White Women in Prison." The choice as well as the presentation design is yours but do not exceed ten slides. Each slide must contain a narrative in the notes section, explaining the slide or developing your points on the selected topic. Any PowerPoint presentation, however, must follow the 1-1-5 rule. By that, I mean one image, used one time with

no more than five words per slide-excluding notes commentary. This assignment is due at any point during the semester, but not after the last day of class.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION AND GRADING METHOD

All papers and short essay quizzes are evaluated on content, originality, creativity, connections to course objectives, and form (grammar, spelling, bibliography, etc.). Grades will be calculated in terms of possible score percentages with no curve. You are guaranteed an A if you earn 450 points or more out of 500 possible points (90 %+).

435 to 449 (87% +) B+	385 to 399 (77 % +) C+	335 to 363 (67 %+) D+
415 to 434 (83% +) B	365 to 384 (73 %+) C	315 to 334 (63 %+) D
400 to 414 (80 %+) B-	350 to 364 (70 %+) C-	300 to 314 (60 %+) D-

Grading Criteria

Assignments will be graded on how proficiently they meet expectations in the key areas of content, organization, and grammar/mechanics and prose style.

Strong content includes:

- A clearly delineated and/ or interpreted topic
- A strong, clear, and logically developed thesis that is supported by fully developed ideas in the form of relevant textual evidence and research
- Ideas that show evidence of independent thinking
- Commentary that explains how the concrete details support the thesis. Commentary may include interpretation, analysis, argument, insight, and/or reflection.
- research supporting materials (note: Google searches are fine for starters, but please use academic journals and books for strong research effort)

Strong organization includes:

- The effective arrangement of points that reveals itself in very good incorporation of evidence (use of summary, paraphrase) and the sparing and judicious use of quotations
- Rounded and well-connected paragraphs
- The use of appropriate transitions

Strong grammar, mechanics, and prose style is characterized by:

- Mature sentence structure, syntax, and diction
- Strong audience awareness as evidenced in the use of appropriate style, register, tone, and vocabulary
- Little to no errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation as well as less than three fatal errors in the entire document
- The formatting of document in keeping with prescribed guidelines—including length of response submissions

Rubric

The “A” (or A-) submission has strong content, strong organization, AND strong grammar/mechanics and prose style. To receive an “A” or “A-” work needs to offer support in the form of textual evidence and secondary research materials (using direct quotes and paraphrase), present original insight in argumentation, and be organized clearly and logically with sources documented using MLA style guidelines.

A “B” submission is notably weak in ONE of the above key areas.

A “C” submission, albeit promising, is notably weak in TWO or more of the above key areas.

A “D” submission is significantly weak in TWO or more of the above key areas.

Additional information concerning UF grading policies may be found on the undergraduate catalog web page <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Course Policies

- *“Fatal Errors” Policy:* Students must meet high standards in writing. To this end, all written assignments must meet minimal presentation criteria to be acceptable. These standards address spelling, punctuation, format and basic grammar. The term *Fatal Errors* refers to formal writing errors of form. Specifically, they include the following and will be identified in evaluated written assignments by error number:
 1. Each different word misspelled,
 2. Each sentence fragment,
 3. Each run-on sentence or comma splice,
 4. Each mistake in capitalization (capitalize Black and White when referring to individuals, communities, or ideas),
 5. Each serious error in punctuation that obscures meaning, including errors in the use or failure to use italics and quotation marks,
 6. Each error in verb tense or subject/verb agreement,
 7. Each instance of ending a sentence with a preposition,
 8. Each improper citation, or lack of citation, where one is needed
 9. Each misuse of words (*who* for *that* or unwarranted use of clichés, for instance) and reference problems,
 10. Poor Paragraphing or lack of paragraphing,
 11. Lack of conformity with assignment format.

Papers with more than **three (3) fatal errors on any one page** or more than **seven (7) for the entire document** will be returned to the student and will suffer a half letter grade deduction. Only one resubmission is allowed. Penalties for final course papers (where there is no time for a resubmission) will be based on the relative importance of the assignment to the determination of the final course grade. This policy applies to all assignments, excluding entrance cards and portfolio progress grading.

- **Cell phones and computers:** Cell phones must be muted during the class session. If an emergency occurs and you have to respond to calls or texts, please leave the classroom. Computers (iPads or other

electronics) are allowed for note taking, access to eBooks and presentations only. Anyone using a computer for any other purpose will be asked to deliver the device to me for retrieval after class. You may record the class (presentations, for instance) with my permission only.

- Papers / Journals: All papers must be typed and double spaced using the 8 1/2 x 11 page layout with one inch margins all around. Use Courier or Times font at 12 point size. Documentation and form should follow the MLA style manual. Number all pages after the first within the upper right margin.
- Grade Disputes: Questions about assigned grades are acceptable during my office hours only. If my written responses do not address your concerns, I will explain why a grade was earned. With the exception of miscalculation or oversight, I will not consider grade changes. **Please do not ask; I consider it harassment.** You may consult the English Department Associate Chair, for grade appeals, however. Please note: appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.
- Midterm assessment Report: Individual grades will be available after midterm indicating your current status in the class. These reports will offer information on all graded aspects of the course, including attendance, as recorded in the e-learning grade book. You should consider these performance tracking reports carefully and govern yourself accordingly.
- Missed class sessions: Make up work for approved absences must be addressed within one week of your return. See me for submission deadlines for missed work within this time frame.
- Journal Submission guidelines: This assignment **must be submitted electronically**. Microsoft Word compatible documents only please. Unreadable documents will be returned ungraded. Submit your project via Canvas upload by 1:30 p.m. on the due date. Late submissions will suffer a half letter grade reduction.
- “Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx> (Links to an external site).”

University Policies

Campus Resources

Health and Wellness

- *U Matter, We Care*: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu or 352 392-1575 so that a team member can reach out to the student.
- *Counseling and Wellness Center*: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc>, and 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.
- *Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS)*
Student Health Care Center, 392-1161.
- *University Police Department* at 392-1111 (or 9-1-1 for emergencies), or <http://www.police.ufl.edu/> (Links to an external site.).

Academic Resources

- E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to Learning-support@ufl.edu. <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/help.shtml>.
- Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601. Career assistance and counseling. <https://www.crc.ufl.edu/>.
- Library Support, <http://cms.uflib.ufl.edu/ask>. Various ways to receive assistance with respect to using the libraries or finding resources.
- Teaching Center, Broward Hall, 392-2010 or 392-6420. General study skills and tutoring. <https://teachingcenter.ufl.edu/>.
- Writing Studio, 302 Tigert Hall, 846-1138. Help brainstorming, formatting, and writing papers. <https://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/>.
- Student Complaints Campus: https://www.dso.ufl.edu/documents/UF_Complaints_policy.pdf.
- On-Line Students Complaints: <http://www.distance.ufl.edu/student-complaint-process>.

List of Key Terms

We will use and define these terms as the semester progresses. Be mindful of them.

1. Unctuousness: "...a feistiness about life that nobody can wipe out, no matter how hard they try" Katie Cannon (Katie's Canon)—a construction of Black Womanist ethics.
2. Escape: not just physical escape, but other types of escape. What are we running from when we run from each other? How are we escaping and at what costs?
3. Double consciousness: being black and American
4. Double Jeopardy: race and gender oppression (Frances Beal)
5. Triple Jeopardy: race, gender and class oppression
6. Codes of Silence
7. Emotional Distance: Institutional or public behavior change without personal or private attitudinal change.
8. Friendship
9. Outsider Within: living and working with someone of the opposite race (usually White) but not being considered or respected as an equal partner within such relationships
10. Surveillance: A strategy of controlling blacks who enter "white spaces of the public and private spheres"—enforced by violence or the threat of violence and loss (economic, for instance). It "highlights individuality by making the individual hypervisible and on display" (Patricia Hill Collins).
11. Truth
12. Stereotypes: particularly how they are used
13. Guilt
14. Racial identities
15. Racial instruction

16. Memory

17. Victim

18. Cultural Reference

19. Understanding

20. Cultural Lag: "a situation in which the old norms no longer fit new social realities" (Cathleen Gray and Shirley Bryant)

21. White nostalgia (Winifred Breines)

22. Life Script (as defined in, transactional analysis professional, Dave Spenceley's "101 Notes") "A personal life plan which an individual decides early in life and is based upon his or her interpretation of the external and internal events which affect them. The script is a decisional model - this is very important - if I chose my own script then at any time given the right circumstances, I can choose to make a change in my script. (When this change takes place in therapy the client is said to have made a Redecision.) ... People follow their script because of the pay off, a familiar feeling, attempting to avoid the loss of love and in an attempt to gain love."