

**Black and White Women Writing About Race:  
“The Trouble Between Us”  
Fall 2022**

Professor: Dr. Debra Walker King

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Class Time: T 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> (12:50 – 3:50)

Place: TUR 2303

Office hours: TR (by appointment only due to COVID)

**COVID-19 Policy**

In response to COVID-19, the following recommendations are in place to maintain your learning environment, to enhance the safety of our in-classroom interactions, and to further the health and safety of ourselves, our neighbors, and our loved ones.

- If you are not vaccinated, get vaccinated. Vaccines are readily available and have been demonstrated to be safe and effective against the COVID-19 virus. Visit ONE.UF for screening / testing and vaccination opportunities.
- If you are sick, stay home. Please call your primary care provider if you are ill and need immediate care or the UF Student Health Care Center at 352-392-1161 to be evaluated.
- As with any excused absence, you will be given a reasonable amount of time to make up missed work.

**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:** Our primary goal is 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 commonalties, disruptions, gaps, absences, and silences that exist among the primary texts.

**Primary Texts:** (some texts are available as eBooks)

- Diangelo, Robin. *White Fragility* (ISBN 9780807047415)
- Golden, Marita and Susan Richards Shreve, Eds. *Skin Deep: Black and White Women Write about Race* (ISBN: 0-385-47409-1)
  - Williams, Sherley Anne, *Dessa Rose* (ISBN: 0-68-05113-8)
- Williams, Sherley Anne, *Dessa Rose* (ISBN: 0-68-05113-8)
- Douglas, Ellen, *Can't Quit You, Baby* (ISBN: 0140121021)
- Harris, Zakya Dalilla, *The Other Black Girl* (ISBN 97819821601135)

Other readings are available Under "Files" in Canvas.

**Course Schedule**

Week 1 – 8/ 30

- Course Introduction, Purpose, and Goals
- Syllabus Review
- "Difficult Conversations"-- --Red Table Talk— (FB below and in “Files”)
  - "The Racial Divide Women of Color and White Women"
- Review “Key Terms” listed on the last page of this syllabus.

Week 2 – 9/6

Impromptus **this week**

- Diangelo, Robin. *White Fragility* (2018)—Intro. and chapters 1-6

Week 3 – 9/13

Impromptus **this week**

- Diangelo, Robin. *White Fragility* (2018)— chapters 7-12

Week 4 – 9/20

Impromptus **this week**

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

Week 5 – 9/27

Impromptus **this week**

- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. Excerpt. NY: Alfred A. Knoff, 1987, 74-85. (in "Files")

- Naomi Wolf, “The Racism of Well-meaning White People” and Lisa Page, “High Yellow White Trash” in *Skin Deep: Black and White Women Write about Race*.

Week 6 – 10/4

**Please note: Exam #1 opens today and must be submitted in Canvas by Friday, Oct. 19<sup>th</sup> by 11:59 pm.**

Impromptus **this week**

- Retha Powers, “Overhand and Underhand” and Marita Golden, “whitegirls,” Joyce Carol Oates, “Negative” and Toni Morrison “Recitatif,” Jewelle Gomez, “Across the Glittering Sea” and Ann Filemyr, “Loving Across the Boundary” in *Skin Deep: Black and White Women Write about Race*.

Week 7 – 10/11

Impromptus **this week**

- Beverly Lowry, “What Tina Has to Do with It,” Patricia Browning Griffith “Legacies and Ghosts,” Susan Straight, “Tulsa, 1921” in *Skin Deep: Black and White Women Write about Race*.

Week 8 – 10/18 **Exam # 1 "Identity Politics" is due tomorrow, Friday, Oct. 19th by 11:59 pm**

Impromptus **this week**

- Alice Walker, “The Revenge of Hanna Kemhuff,” Eudora Welty “A Worn Path,” Gayle Pemberton “Hello Stranger” in *Skin Deep: Black and White Women Write about Race*.

Week 9 -- 10/25

**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. You may meet face-to-face or via ZOOM. If you use Zoom, you must set it up. My zoom address will not be available. **(Note to groups: include your research and analysis of how the text speaks to us today).**

Week 10— 11/1

Impromptus **this week**

- Morrison, Toni. “What Black Women Think about Women’s Lib,” (1971), *What Moves at the Margin*, 18-30. (in "Files")
- hooks, bell. “Holding My Sister’s Hand,” *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*. NY: Routledge, 1994. 93-110. (in "Files")
- Gilliam, Dorothy. “Reaching Across the Feminist Racial Divide,” *Skin Deep*, 258-264.

- 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. (in "Files")

Week 11 – 11/6

**Group I** *Dessa Rose*, "Prologue" and "The Darky"

**Group II** *Dessa Rose*, "The Wench"

**Group III** *Dessa Rose*, "The Negress" and "Epilogue"

Week 12 – 11/15

- Full discussion of *Dessa Rose*

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

Week 13 – 11/22

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

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

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

Week 14 – 11/29

- Full text Discussion of *Can't Quit You Baby*

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

Week 15 – 12/6

Last Day of Class

- Harris, Zakya Dalilla, *The Other Black Girl*

## Grade Distribution

### **200 total points:** Response Papers (i.e., final paper)

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:** Please see "Assignments" in Canvas for details. 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 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 or 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 or instructions.

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 (see policy below).
- 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 are available in Canvas indicating your current status in the class. These reports offer information on all graded aspects of the course, including attendance. 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 (if applicable): 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

### **In-Class Recording**

• Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A

class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student.

## **Campus Resources**

### ***Health and Wellness***

- *U Matter, We Care*: If you or a friend is in distress, please contact [umatter@ufl.edu](mailto: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.](#)).
- *UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center*: For immediate medical care call 352-733-0111 or go to the emergency room at 1515 SW Archer Road, Gainesville, FL 32608; Visit the UF Health Emergency Room and Trauma Center website. GatorWell Health Promotion Services: For prevention services focused on optimal wellbeing, including Wellness Coaching for Academic Success, visit the GatorWell website or call 352-273-4450.

### **Academic Resources**

- E-learning technical support, 352-392-4357 (select option 2) or e-mail to [Learning-support@ufl.edu](mailto: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](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.”