

John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York
Master's Degree in Economics Program
POLITICAL ECONOMY OF GENDER IN THE U.S.: CENTERING BLACK
WOMEN
Professor Michelle Holder
Fall 2020

Course Description:

The goal of this course is to introduce students to feminist economics as well as expose them to economic and other social science theories including Historical Womanist theory, stratification economic theory, intersectional theory, and the Black Political Economy framework in order to provide students with tools to understand how both sexism and racism interact to place black women in the U.S. at the nexus of multiple forms of oppression and disenfranchisement. Students will also learn about the ways in which black women have organized and resisted marginalization by gender and race.

Course Type:

This will be a “synchronous-flexible” course for the fall 2020 semester.

Course Goal:

By the end of this course students will be capable of employing economic theories to explain, thoughtfully and in a knowledgeable way, the current socio-political and economic status and position of black women in America.

Course Requirements:

- Bi-weekly Essay Assignments 20 percent
- Midterm Paper 10-12 pages 25 percent
- Final Exam 20 percent
- In-Class Presentation 10 percent
- Participation 15 percent
- Attendance 10 percent

Course Texts and Reading Materials:

There will be two main course texts: (1) Angela Y. Davis’ “Women, Race and Class” and; (2) Jacqueline Jones’ “ Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work, and the Family from Slavery to the Present“ (1985). There will also be several journal articles to supplement and complement the main course texts, all of which available online through John Jay College’s library, via publicly available links, or provided by me.

If you have readings you think would have made a great addition to this syllabus please use these readings in your papers and assignments. In putting together a

reading list for a course like this it is impossible to include every great thinker on the subject. However, in developing the reading list I conferred with a leading economic expert on black women, Dr. Nina Banks of Bucknell University. Therefore, while I appreciate your thoughts, instead of offering recommendations to add to the texts and articles for this course instead please use and cite these recommendations in your papers and assignments for the course.

Grading:

The grading scale is as follows (rounded to the nearest whole number):

A	93-100 %	A-	90-92 %	B+	87-89 %	B	83-86 %
B-	80-82 %	C+	77-79 %	C	73-76 %	C-	70-72 %
D+	67-69 %	D	63-66 %	D-	60-62 %		
F	Less than 60 %						

Academic Integrity

For John Jay College's policy on academic integrity, including plagiarism, please go to:

<https://www.jjay.cuny.edu/academic-integrity-0>

Disability Policy

Students with disabilities will be provided reasonable accommodations if they are determined eligible by the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS). Prior to granting disability accommodations in this course, the instructor must receive written verification of a student's eligibility from the OAS. It is the student's responsibility to initiate contact with that office and to follow the established procedures for having the accommodation notice sent to the instructor.

Friendly Expectations:

I expect students to attend class on time, stay for the duration, and maintain a respectful space as we learn about and discuss some of the most challenging issues in America.

Schedule of Classes, Topics to be Covered, and Take-Home Assignments

NOTE: The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus during the semester due to changes in curriculum and timing or class scheduling.

Week 1 - Week of August 24th - Introduction

Readings:

- Jones- Introduction
- Roberts, Dorothy. 2014. "Complicating the Triangle of Race, Class and State: The Insights of Black Feminists." *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol 37, no. 10: 1776-1782.
- Williams, Rhonda. 1993. "Race, Deconstruction, and the Emergent Agenda of Feminist Economic Theory," in *Beyond Economic Man: Feminist Theory and*

Economics edited by Marianne A. Ferber and Julie A. Nelson Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

- *A Primer on Black Political Economy*

Week 2 - Week of August 31st - Theories

Readings:

- Crenshaw, Kimberle, 1991 “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43 No. 6 (July 1991): 1241-1299.
- Darity, William A. 2005. “Stratification Economics: The Role of Intergroup Inequality.” *Journal of Economics and Finance* 29, no. 2 (Summer): 144-153.
- Hartmann, Heidi. 1981. “The unhappy marriage of Marxism and feminism: Towards a more progressive union,” in Lydia Sargent (ed), *Women and Revolution*, Boston: South End Press, pp. 1-41
- Rousseau, Nicole. 2013. “Social Rhetoric and the Construction of Black Motherhood.” *Journal of Black Studies* 44(5) 451-471.

Week 3 - Week of September 7th (Labor Day!) - Slavery

READINGS:

- Davis Chapter 1
- Jones Chapter 1
- Sojourner Truth “Ain’t I a Woman?” (1851)

ASSIGNMENT #1 POSTED

Week 4 - Week of September 14th - Civil War and Reconstruction

READINGS:

- Davis Chapter 2
- Jones Chapter 2
- W.E.B. DuBois “On the Dawn of Freedom” in “The Souls of Black Folk”

ASSIGNMENT #1 DUE

Week 5 - Week of September 21st - Post-Bellum Period

READINGS:

- Davis Chapters 3 and 4
- Jones Chapter 3
- Goldin, Claudia. 1977. Female labor force participation: The origin of black and white differences, 1870 and 1880. *Journal of Economic History* 37(1): 87-108.

ASSIGNMENT #2 POSTED

Week 6 - Week of September 28 - Dawn of a New Century

READINGS:

- Davis Chapters 5 and 6
- Jones Chapter 4

- Hartmann, Heidi. 1976. "Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex." *Signs* 1, no.3 (Spring): 137-169

ASSIGNMENT #2 DUE

Week 7 - Week of October 5 - The Great Migration

READINGS:

- Davis Chapter 7
- Jones Chapter 5
- Banks, Nina. 2019b. "The Black Woman Economist Who Pioneered a Federal Jobs Guarantee," *Institute for New Economic Thinking*. Feb. 22. Accessed at: <https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/blog/the-black-woman-economist-who-pioneered-a-federal-jobs-guarantee>

ASSIGNMENT #3 POSTED

Week 8 - Week of October 12 - The Great Depression

READINGS:

- Davis Chapter 8
- Jones Chapter 6
- Mutari, Ellen, Power, Marilyn, and Deborah M. Figart (2002). "Neither Mothers Nor Breadwinners: African-American Women's Exclusion From US Minimum Wage Policies," 1912-1938, *Feminist Economics*, 8:2, 37-61.

ASSIGNMENT #3 DUE

Week 9 - Week of October 19th - World War II

READINGS:

- Davis Chapter 9
- Jones Chapter 7

PAPERS DUE!

Week 10 - Week of October 26 - Post-War Period

READINGS:

- Davis Chapter 10
- Albelda, Randy. 1985. "'Nice Work If You Can Get It': Segmentation of White and Black Women Workers in the Post-War Period." *Review of Radical Political Economics* Vol. 17, No. 3 (September): 72-85.

ASSIGNMENT #4 POSTED

Week 11 - Week of November 2nd

READINGS:

- Davis Chapters 11
- Power, Marilyn. 1983. "From Home Production to Wage Labor: Women as Reserve Army of Labor." *Review of Radical Political Economics* 15, no.1 (Spring): 71-91.

ASSIGNMENT #4 DUE

Week 12- Week of November 9 - Civil Rights Era and Second Wave of Feminism

READINGS:

- Davis Chapter 12
- Jones Chapter 8
- Conrad, Cecilia A. 2005 “Changes in the Labor Market Status of Black Women, 1960-2000.” In *African Americans in the U.S. Economy*, edited by Cecilia A. Conrad, John Whitehead, Patrick Mason and James Stewart, 157-162. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

ASSIGNMENT #5 POSTED

Week 13 - Week of November 16 - Post Civil Rights

READINGS:

- Davis Chapter 13
- Jones Epilogue
- Conrad, Cecilia A. and Mary C. King. 2005 “Single Mother Families in the Black Community: Economic Context and Policies” In *African Americans in the U.S. Economy*, edited by Cecilia A. Conrad, John Whitehead, Patrick Mason and James Stewart, 157-162. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Cotton, Jeremiah. “Discrimination and Favoritism in the U.S. Labor Market: The Cost to a Wage Earner of Being Female and Black and the Benefit of Being Male and White.” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, 47 (1): 15-28.
- Gilens, Martin “How the Poor Became Black: The Racialization of American Poverty in the Mass Media” in Sanford F. Schram, Joe Soss, and Richard C. Fording, eds. *Race and the Politics of Welfare Reform*, University of Michigan Press, 2003, pp. 101-130.

ASSIGNMENT #5 DUE

Week 14 - Week of November 3

READINGS:

- Banks, Nina. 2015. “Black Women on the Verge: Revolutionary Transformation or Super Exploitation? Missing Black Men and Its Impact on Black Women.” Presentation at the *2nd Annual National Economic Association-American Society of Hispanic Economists Freedom and Justice Conference*, Howard University, Washington D.C.
- Holder, Michelle. 2020. *The Double Gap and the Bottom Line: African American Women’s Wage Gap and Corporate Profits*. Report for The Roosevelt Institute, New York, NY.
- Kim, Marlene. 2009. “Race and Gender Differences in the Earnings of Black Workers.” *Industrial Relations* 48, no. 3 (July): 466-488.
- Sharpe, Rhonda V. 2020. “Black women economists: At the intersection of race and gender” in *Women in Economics*, edited by Shelley Lundberg, Center for Economic Policy Research (CEPR) Press, London: 31-35.

Week 15 - Week of December 7th
FINAL EXAM!