This course examines black women’s participation in American politics as citizens, residents, voters, activists, candidates, and elected officials. Topics include traditional political action such as voting, campaigning, and protesting and less traditional engagement such as education, research, media, sports and art. We will consider the intersections of race, gender, class, and sexual orientation and identity.

The format for our class will be a combination of lecture, discussion, and small group work. Please come to class prepared to discuss the assigned readings. The course also seeks to develop the critical questioning, writing, and engagement skills of students.

Course Objectives

Students will critically engage a wide range of scholarly and popular texts focused on social constructions of politics, race, and gender.

Students will become familiar with broad themes and approaches to social science research and contemporary writing by and about black women political actors.

Students will develop skills of critical analysis and practical problem solving.

Students will be introduced to multiple, contested ideas for understanding gender, race, and politics.
Assessment

Papers (60%): Students must write two papers for this course. Each paper should be 5-7 pages. The first paper must be submitted on or before Friday, March 1 at 7pm. The second paper must be submitted on or before Friday April 19 at 7pm. Each paper will account for 30% of your grade. Prof MHP and Prof Stewart will each grade one of your papers. Rubrics for assessing papers will be posted on Sakai. Each paper must address a key theme by tying together assigned readings from TWO (2) or more weeks. Paper should be submitted via Sakai on the Assignments link.

Final Project (30%): In groups of three to four (3-4), students will collaboratively develop a final project. Details regarding the final project are forthcoming. Due dates for steps in final project are below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Groups chosen/ Assigned:</td>
<td>January 30, 5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal for Group Topic:</td>
<td>February 18, 5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Outline:</td>
<td>April 15, 5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project Due:</td>
<td>May 6, noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Project Presentation in Class</td>
<td>To Be Scheduled for Week 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Class Leadership (10%): Students will be expected to take on the task of developing discussion questions (in pairs) for one class during the semester and leading the discussion portion of class. This class leadership counts as 10% of the final grade. Students will sign up for which classes they will lead on the first day.

Extra Credit: Extra credit opportunities will be made available throughout the semester.

Attendance: More than three unexcused absences will result in 1/3 letter grade reduction from the final grade of the course.

Late Assignment Policy: All students have one Free Pass to be used on any *individual* written assignment. One assignment can be turned in up to 48 hours late with no questions asked and no negative consequences for the grade. After the Free Pass is used, any assignment submitted late will be subject to the late assignment policy. Assignments submitted late will lose 1/3 letter grade for any late submission within the first 48 hours. Each additional 24 hours results in another 1/3 letter grade reduction. Exceptions to this policy will only be made for emergencies or health challenges that are documented by a physician or university administrator. GROUP assignments do not have a free pass.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is a serious violation of ethical conduct and academic integrity. Plagiarism need not be intentional. All cases of plagiarism – the theft of words, ideas, sources, and conclusions whether from written, audio, oral, or digital materials – will not be tolerated and will be reported to appropriate departmental and dean leadership.
How We Are With One Another

We acknowledge that racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, and other forms of interpersonal and institutionalized forms of inequality exist in society. This does not mean we all agree on the causes, consequences, or solutions for these forms of inequality. It does mean we agree to do our best to better understand them, refrain from repeating misinformation, and refrain from personal attack. No student is expected to have all the answers. Mistakes and questions are welcomed in the spirit of cooperative learning.

We will work to create an atmosphere where:
- We keep an open mind and listen;
- Everyone is valued and respected;
- Everyone can work and learn in a safe and caring environment;
- Everyone engages in the thoughtful presentation of ideas, shares the floor, and can critically assess each other’s ideas;
- No individual is ridiculed or demeaned for sharing their personal experiences and ideas;
- Personal experiences shared in the context of the classroom remain confidential unless otherwise agreed upon;
- No individual is expected to be a representative spokesperson for a given group of people, given there is intra-group diversity of skills, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors.

Email Policy

Professor Harris-Perry typically responds to all necessary and appropriate emails directly related to course matters within 5 business days. Professor Harris-Perry does not respond to unsolicited student emails from Friday at 12:00 noon until Monday at 12:00 noon unless specifically designated.

Please be aware that your instructors will provide regular updates to the syllabus and various course materials on Sakai but students who rely on excessive use of email communications may experience a negative effective in their course grade. Professor Harris-Perry considers more than one email interaction a week to be excessive unless there is a legitimate and documented emergency.
Required Texts

Most readings marked with a * are available as links from the course Sakai site. You will find them under the Resources link, organized by week. Others are available via the Course Reserves link on the Sakai site, organized by title. You are responsible for ALL readings, even if there is a broken link. Please note we have provided sufficient citations for you to identify the correct article to prepare for class.


Michelle Obama, *Becoming.* Random House. 2018


*Please Note Professors Harris-Perry and Stewart reserve the right to make changes to the assigned readings and course schedule throughout the semester as necessary for to achieve an optimal course of study.*
INTRODUCTION

Week 1: January 15 Introduction


CONSTRUCTING BLACK GIRLHOOD and WOMANHOOD

Week 2 January 22 Constructing Black Girlhood/Womanhood through Narrative

Camille Acker, Training School for Negro Girls


Week 3, January 29 Constructing Black Girlhood/Womanhood - Law and Politics


*Harris-Perry, Sister Citizen: Shame, Stereotypes and Black Women in America. Introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 4


*Watch Video of Assata Shakur linked to Sakai
LEADERSHIP

Week 4, February 1-3

No class on Tuesday, February 5. Instead students are REQUIRED to take part in at least ONE session of the Leadership and Character conference. This includes any session of the conference and/or the Keynote Interview and Performance by Renée Elise Goldsberry.

All information regarding conference and keynote are available on Sakai under Resources Week 4.

All students must submit a 750-1000 word response to their participation in the Leadership Conference by February 9. Details regarding the response are on Sakai under Assignments.

HOME

Week 5, February 12

Michelle Obama, *Becoming*, Chapters 1-15


*Some Did Choose to Return to Slavery Because They Chose Family Over Everything. Tera Hunter, The Root.com 2018


WORK

Week 6, February 19


*“We Are Literally Slaves”: An Early Twentieth-Century Black Nanny Sets the Record Straight

*Vanessa Tait. “Workers Just Like Anyone Else: Organizing Workfare Unions in New York City” Still Lifting, Still Climbing. 297-325

SCHOOL

Week 7, February 26

Monique W Morris, Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in America


*Let Her Learn Toolkit- National Women’s Law Center

Week 8, March 5


**SPRING BREAK**
MEDIA

Week 9, March 19

*Surviving R Kelly. More details TBA


*Ruth Nicole Brown, Hear our Truths: The Creative Potential of Black Girlhood. Chapter 5, “More than Sass and Silence” (Course Reserves link)

VIOLENCE

Week 10, March 26   Interpersonal Violence

*Surviving R Kelly continued


Week 11, April 2   State Violence


*Black Girls Matter: Pushed Out, Overpoliced, and Underprotected”


**POLITICS**

**Week 12, April 9  Black Feminist Thought and Practice**

All of Section I of *Still Brave: The Evolution of Black Women’s Studies*
Awkward, “A Black Man’s Place in Black Feminist Criticism,” 47-64.

From Section IV of *Still Brave*
Griffin, “That the Mothers May Soar and the Daughters May Know Their Names: A Retrospective of Black Feminist Literary Criticism,” 336-358.
James, Resting in the gardens, battling in the deserts : black women's activism
June Jordan, Some of us did not die / June Jordan --
Stanlie M. James, Racialized gender/gendered racism : reflections on black feminist human rights theorizing
Barriteau, "Con-di-fi-cation" : black women, leadership, and political power
Relevance of black feminist scholarship : a Caribbean perspective
Cheryl A. Wall, On dolls, presidents, and little black girls

**Week 13, April 16  Government and Elections**

Michelle Obama, *Becoming*, Chapter 16-End

Shirley Chisholm, *Unbought and Unbossed*, Chapters 5-14


FLEX WEEK

Week 14, April 23

On advice of the university registrar, instructors are encouraged to build in a “flex week” to account for snow, illness, or other unforeseen circumstances. This week can be used to make-up lost time or, if all goes well it can be used to make room for a guest speaker or special event. Due to unpredictable weather and course cancellations in recent semesters we are including a “Flex Week” in the overall course planning.

CLASS PRESENTATIONS of GROUP PROJECTS

Week 15 April 30

Each group will prepare a presentation of their final project (10-12 minutes) and Respond to questions from their peers - (5-10) minutes