

ENG 21:352:225:01

Good Trouble: Literature of Social Protest

Thursdays: 2:30 PM-5:20 PM

Room: Honors Living Learning Center 214 (second floor)

Address: 48 New Street

Newark, NJ 07102



Professor: Dr. Melanie R. Hill

Virtual Coffee Office Hours: Thursdays from 12:30 PM-2:00 PM

(Virtual Zoom Coffee Office Hours with Dr. Hill)

Location: HLLC Room 214

Phone: (973) 353-5182

Email: mrh197@english.rutgers.edu

Course Overview:

“Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get into good trouble, necessary trouble.”
-Congressman John R. Lewis

“Do not get lost in a sea of despair. Be hopeful; be optimistic. Our struggle is not the struggle of a day, a week, a month or a year. It is the struggle of a lifetime. Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get into good trouble, necessary trouble.” Remembering these words and paying homage to the late Congressman John R. Lewis, this course is designed to examine the “good trouble” work of Black writers, activists, artists, and preachers whose pens and lives assert social and political freedom for themselves, their communities, the nation, and the world. From James Baldwin and Claudia Rankin to Langston Hughes and Angela Y. Davis, this seminar examines the literary “good trouble” Black writers and activists implemented to help create a beloved community and a more perfect union. As both text and performance, memoir, autobiography, prose and poetry, the works of these authors offer an excellent resource for our investigation of black literary studies.

This seminar is designed to give students a profound examination of writing through the voices of black writers, activists, and involve students in the kinds of research that the discipline of literary studies currently demands, including: working with primary sources and archival materials; reviewing the critical literature; using online databases of historical newspapers, periodicals, and other cultural materials; exploring relevant contexts in literary, linguistic, and cultural history; studying the etymological history and changing meanings of words; experimenting with new methods of computational analysis of texts; and other methodologies. This course typically involves several main texts that are studied intensively from a variety of approaches. Research exercises throughout the semester will enable and culminate in a final quiz and final project in-class presentation during the final weeks of the semester (these dates are highlighted within the course calendar, below). The final project must emerge out of each student's intensive, *independent* research agenda. Students can choose any topic relevant to the course readings for their final project.

In-class presentation assignments, pop quizzes, and weekly discussion board posts (“Think Pieces”) throughout the semester will culminate in a final project presentation. Each student will sign up for a day during our Good Trouble 2023 Summit to present in April. Students will present their final paper project idea in a creative form (i.e. Power Point/Prezi presentation, video documentary, et al.). Make this final presentation *creative*!

Course Goals:

-  Comprehend how the canonical works of Black writers reflect the current cultures of African American literary studies.
-  Understand the concept of protest literature in African American literary theory and its application to Black literary studies.
-  Class discussions, reading responses (think pieces), formal essays, and in-class assignments will help carry students to a higher level of literary analyses of assigned texts.
-  Students will trace, through assigned literary and historical texts, the development of African American consciousness, attitudes, and ideals.
-  Recognize in literary and historical texts themes that continue to challenge America (i.e. class, gender and race consciousness, violence, religious values).

- ✚ Develop and express, formally and informally, perspectives on said African American themes to increase critical thinking.
- ✚ Use research to augment understanding and to develop analytical papers that demonstrate students' deep investment in assigned texts and writing responses over the course of the semester.

You can purchase the following required texts at the *Rutgers University—Newark Barnes and Nobles Bookstore* located at the **Hahne's Building 42 Halsey Street; Newark, NJ 07102.**

Bookstore Phone Number: (973) 353-2200

Required Texts:

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*

Toni Cade Bambara, *The Black Woman, An Anthology*

James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name*

Brittany Cooper, *Eloquent Rage*

Claudia Rankine, *Just Us*

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*

Langston Hughes, *The Ways of White Folks*

Ntozake Shange, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*

Angela Davis, *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*

Candice Benbow, *Red Lip Theology*

Imani Perry, *Breathe*

*(*any short stories that are assigned will be distributed in .pdf files via email to all students*)*

*(*some texts are recommended reading that will help you throughout the semester; recommended texts are not required texts*)*

(for texts that have an asterisk (), students will read excerpts Dr. Hill will assign, not the whole book)*

Some of our Featured Music for the Music-Making Section of our seminar:

Jill Scott, *Woman (2015)*

Jill Scott, *The Light of the Sun (2011)*

Beyoncé, *Lemonade (2016)*

Solange Knowles, *A Seat at the Table* (2016)
Ms. Lauryn Hill, *MTV Unplugged* (2001)
Ms. Lauryn Hill, *The Mis-education of Lauryn Hill* (1998)
India Arie, *Acoustic Soul* (2001)
India Arie, *Songversation* (2013)
India Arie, *Testimony Vol. 1, Life and Relationship* (2006)
India Arie, *Testimony Vol. 2, Love and Politics* (2009)
Albums by:

Sade
Abbey Lincoln
Nina Simone
Aretha Franklin

Some of our Featured Films and Documentaries:

Nina Simone (A Documentary) (1998) (Duration: 2 hours and 52 minutes) (on Netflix)
Toni Morrison: The Pieces I Am (2019) (Duration: 2 hours) (link will be provided)
James Baldwin: *I Am Not Your Negro* (2016) (Duration: 1 hour and 35 minutes)

Recommended Texts:

Claudia Rankine, *Citizen: An American Lyric* *(supplemental text)*
Cheryl A. Wall, Ph.D., *On Freedom and the Will to Adorn: The Art of the African American Essay*
William L. Andrews: *Sisters of the Spirit: Three Black Women's Autobiographies of the Nineteenth Century*
Meri Nana-Ama Danquah, *Shaking the Tree: A Collection of New Fiction and Memoir by Black Women* (2003)
Zora N. Hurston, *The Sanctified Church: The Folklore Writings of Zora Neale Hurston*
Gerald L. Thomas, *African-American Preaching: The Contribution of Dr. Gardner C. Taylor*
Dolan Hubbard, *The Sermon and the African-American Literary Imagination*
Richard J. Douglass-Chin, *Preacher Woman Sings the Blues*
Kelly Brown Douglass, *Stand Your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God*
Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*
Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Theory*
Angela Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminisms: Gertrude "Ma" Rainey, Bessie Smith, and Billie Holiday*
Toni Cade Bambara, *The Black Woman: An Anthology*
Imani Perry, *May We Forever Stand: A History of the Black National Anthem*
Houston A. Baker, *Blues, Ideology, and Afro-American Literature*
Beverly Guy-Sheftall, Editor—*Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*
Toni Cade Bambara, *The Black Woman*
Hayes and Williams, *Black Women and Music*
Ntozake Shange, *Lost in Language and Sound*
Trudier Harris—*Saints, Sinners, Saviors: Strong Black Women in African-American Literature*

Thomas F. DeFrantz and Anita Gonzalez, Editors—*Black Performance Theory* Aisha Durham, *Home with Hip Hop Feminism: Performances in Communication and Culture*
Brittany Cooper, Susanna M. Morris, Robin M. Boylorn, *The Crunk Feminist Collection*
Edwidge Danticat, *Brother, I'm Dying*

Rutgers University–Newark, Faculty of Arts & Sciences, Spring 2023

Academic Honesty: Any student who violates basic codes of academic conduct—through plagiarism, cheating on exams or assignments, double submission of papers, or any other means, can expect to fail the course and face disciplinary action from Rutgers University.

 **Academic Integrity:** As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University's educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community.

 **Academic Integrity Policy:**
 <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

Email: Please check your email regularly. For mass communication messages, I will communicate with all of you via Canvas. Feel free to discuss any questions you have regarding the material we flesh out during class with me after class or virtual Coffee Office Hours.

Virtual Class Attendance Policy: I expect all students to attend *each* in-class meeting **on time**.

Assignments: You are expected to read all of the texts and attend class prepared. Class attendance and participation are **essential** to each student's full development in this course. Please come to class **on time!** I expect each student to attend class ready to delve into each text and discuss the materials in an engaging manner. Attendance is **mandatory**. **Any unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your final grade by 1/3 of a grade for each unexcused absence (e.g. from A- to B+).** If you cannot attend class due to an illness or *extreme* emergency, it is *important* that you email me in advance.

Class Percentages:

Think Piece Discussion Board posts/In-Class Participation: 20%

Attendance: 20%

In-Class Presentations/Quizzes/Assignments: 20%

Final Paper/Project Presentation: 40%

Assignments this Semester:

- **In-class presentations/assignments will involve one-two students per week submitting a *creative* Power Point/digital presentation that includes 4-5 discussion questions and several sentences/bullet points concerning what scholarly concepts you believed to be most engaging about the readings for that week. Students may also work in group of two or three for their in-class presentations. In-class presentations will occur during the second half of class. This work will be submitted online via Canvas. All in-class assignments must be submitted to Canvas before our scheduled class (Thursday) no later than 8:00 AM.**
- **After each student has implemented an in-class presentation, Dr. Hill gives students the option to complete an extra credit in-class presentation for up to five bonus points added to their final grade.**
- **Think Piece discussion board posts are succinct, thorough, and thought-provoking reflections recapitulating in formal prose your thoughts on a particular theme or idea from any of the readings assigned for the week. Think Piece discussion board posts can (though they do not have to) define the foundation for your final project presentation, if implemented well. Examples of excellently-structured papers/thoughts are available under the "Files" tab on Canvas.**
- **The writing assignment rubric is also available on Canvas under the "Files" tab.**

- **Every Wednesday by 5:00 pm, students will submit short reflections (succinct thoughts) of at least two paragraphs on the readings for the week on the Discussion Board. These posts will serve as weekly writing practice for "Good Trouble." All Think Piece discussion board posts must be submitted to Canvas no later than the designated day and time noted on the course calendar.**
- **Not only will students' posts reflect their brief thoughts on an idea they found the most engaging based on the readings, students will also choose a song that reflects each Good Trouble reading. This will build our Good Trouble Playlist. Each post should briefly evince your thoughts (at two paragraphs) on a particular theme for the week. Those who are presenting in-class presentations on Thursday will not have to post to the Discussion Board on Thursday (the week of the presentation). Each student should post their short reflections each Wednesday by 5:00 pm. Posts will count towards each student's participation grade.**

In-Class Work: You should come to class **prepared to participate** in small and large group discussions. Please be respectful of everyone's opinions, presence, and person in this course. A primary purpose of our discussions is to give you the opportunity to practice developing interpretations of the texts. While you are encouraged to offer differing interpretations, you should do so in a respectful and thoughtful manner.

Rutgers University-Newark Policies

Rutgers University–Newark, Faculty of Arts & Sciences, Spring 2023

- **Academic Integrity:** As an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, Rutgers University is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University's educational and research missions, and violations of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community.

- **Academic Integrity Policy:** <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/>

- **Disability Services:** Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, you must complete and submit the Registration Form, schedule and complete an intake meeting, and submit appropriate documentation. If your request for reasonable accommodations is approved, you will receive a Letter of Accommodations (LOA), which you should present privately to the instructor as early in the semester as possible. Accommodations are not retroactive and are effective only upon submission of the LOA to the instructor. Please begin the process by completing and submitting the Registration Form, Applying for Services, available at the website below.

- Applying for Services: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/applying-for-services>

- **Documentation Guidelines:** <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>

- **Letter of Accommodations (LOA):** <https://ods.rutgers.edu/my-accommodations/letter-of-accommodations>

- Office of Disability Services (ODS)
Suite 219, Paul Robeson Campus Center
(973) 353-5315
odsnewark@rutgers.edu

- **Religious Holiday Policy:** Students are advised to provide timely notification to instructors about necessary absences for religious observances and are responsible for making up the work or exams according to an agreed-upon schedule.

Learning Resources:

- Rutgers Learning Center (tutoring services)
Room 140, Bradley Hall
(973) 353-5608
<http://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/rlc>
- Writing Center (tutoring and writing workshops)
Room 126, Conklin Hall
(973) 353-5847
nwc@rutgers.edu

Rutgers University–Newark, Faculty of Arts & Sciences, Spring 2023

<https://www.ncas.rutgers.edu/writingcenter>

Course Calendar (*the Professor reserves the right to change the course calendar at her discretion*):

Tues. Jan. 19th:

First Day of Class

What is Social Protest Literature?

- ✚ Popcorn Introductions/Icebreaker
- ✚ Overview of Syllabus
- ✚ What is Social Protest Literature?
- ✚ Amiri Baraka poem, "An Agony. As Now."
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52777/an-agony-as-now>
- ✚ Black Protest Writing: From W.E.B. DuBois to Kendrick Lamar:
- ✚ Read link: <https://lithub.com/black-protest-writing-from-w-e-b-dubois-to-kendrick-lamar/>
- ✚ View MSNBC video link in Canvas Announcements (John Lewis's words narrated by Morgan Freeman)
- ✚ "Good Trouble": John R. Lewis (film)

Thurs. Jan. 26th:

Black Protest Writing and the Sounds of Protest

Film and Literature Week Part I

Good Trouble Discussion Board Post Day 1

All Posts Due by 5:00 pm (Wednesday)

Continue discussion protest material from January 19th

Read the article above on "Black Protest Writing: From W.E.B. DuBois to Kendrick Lamar" and post your succinct comments about the article and Baraka's poem in the discussion board on Canvas.

Also, for Thursday's class, choose a song that conveys what you think defines the sound of protest. We will add to this list as the semester progresses. By the end of the semester, this seminar will have compiled a Good Trouble Protest Playlist.

- ✚ Read link: <https://lithub.com/black-protest-writing-from-w-e-b-dubois-to-kendrick-lamar/>

Toni Morrison, *Source of Self-Regard*

Good Trouble: John R. Lewis (Film Discussion)

SisterFire: Black Womanist Fiction and Poetry (readings are under **Files** on Canvas)

February 2nd:

Black Protest Writing: Who Will Revere the Black Woman?

- ✚ Read link: <https://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/lincolnrevereblackwoman.html>

- ✚ Triptych: Prayer/Protest Peace by Max Roach and Abbey Lincoln (song can be found on YouTube)

✚ Read the following essays in Toni Cade Bambara, *The Black Woman, An Anthology*

✚ 1) *Re-Calling the Black Woman*

✚ 2) *Two Poems* by Audre Lorde

✚ 3) *Ebony Minds, Black Voices* by Adele Jones and Group

✚ 4) *The Black Woman as a Woman* by Kay Lindsey

February 9th:

In Search of James Baldwin

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*

February 16th:

In Search of James Baldwin continued

Film and Literature Week Part II

James Baldwin, *Nobody Knows My Name*

James Baldwin, *I Am Not Your Negro* (film) (2016)

February 23rd:

Progressive Theology

Candice Benbow, *Red Lip Theology*

March 2nd:

Black Souls, Black Bodies

Imani Perry, *Breathe*

March 9th:

Black Citizenship

Sawyer Seminar Week

Claudia Rankine, *Just Us*

Dr. Hill requires all students to attend at least one Sawyer Seminar session Wednesday, March 8th. There is a screening of **Wakanda Forever** convening Tuesday, March 7th. As we are reading Claudia Rankine's book, *Just Us* this week, it seems most appropriate to attend the conversation convening March 8th between Dr. Tillet and Dr. Rankine. Each student will write his or her reflections of the Sawyer Seminar on Black Citizenship and submit to the discussion board via Canvas by **Thursday at 9:00 am**.

SPRING BREAK: NO CLASSES MARCH 11th-MARCH 19th, 2023

March 23rd:

The World and Me

Ta-Nehisi Coates, *Between the World and Me*

Langston Hughes, *Home* (short story located in the book, *The Ways of White Folks*)

Discussion Board Post

March 30th:

Lost in Language and Sound

Ntozake Shange, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf*

Ntozake Shange, *My Pen is a Machete*

April 6th:

Eloquent Rage

Brittany Cooper, *Eloquent Rage*

Thursday Discussion Board Post

April 13th:

Freedom's Highway

Angela Davis, *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*

Supplemental Article: *Strange Fruit (Music and Social Consciousness)*

Final Quiz

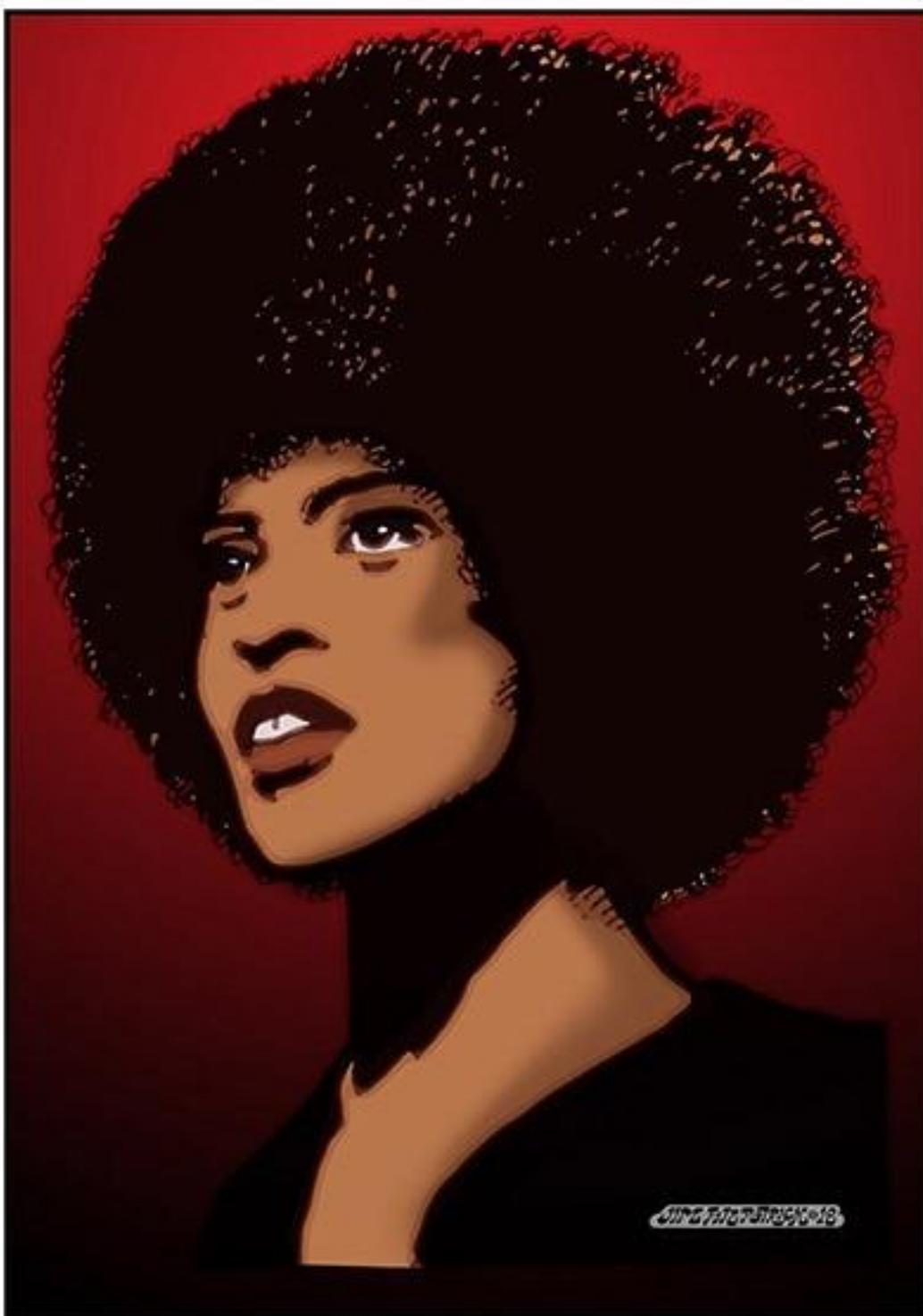
April 20th:

Final Projects/Presentations: GOOD TROUBLE 2023 SUMMIT

April 27th: GOOD TROUBLE 2023 SUMMIT

Reading Days: May 2nd- May 3rd, 2023

Final Exam Period: May 4th-May 10th, 2023



ANGELA DAVIS. AMERICAN REVOLUTIONARY

JIM FITZPATRICK 1969 ©2019

