

Fall 2025
Dr. Anna L. Hinton
ENGL 4670 - 001 Gender and Sexuality in Literature
Black Erotics
Tuesdays and Thursdays 11 am -12:20 pm
Room: Lang 113



[Image Description: Mickalene Thomas's "A Little Taste Outside of Love," a nude Black woman looking over her shoulder laying on fabrics of various floral and animal prints]

Course Description:

I am so excited to have you here in this course where we will apply theories developed within Black Sexuality Studies to Black women's cultural endeavors at sexual self-determination. Black women's bodies have and continue to be hypersexualized and their sexual expression is labeled as deviant. Stereotypes such

as the Jezebel, Black Bitch, and Black Hoe persist. As a response, Black women have developed cultures of silence and dissemblance around their sexuality, participating in a politics of respectability that denounces performances of normative and so-called deviant sexuality. Representations of Black women in pornography have been especially attacked as animalistic and dehumanizing. In *The Black Body in Ecstasy*, however, Jennifer C. Nash asks, “What would it mean to read racialized pornography not for evidence of the wounds it inflicts on black women's flesh, but for moments of racialized excitement, for instances of surprising pleasures in racialization, and for hyperbolic performances of race that poke fun at the very project of race?” In this course, we will survey theory and literature of Black women's erotica to delve into this very question. We will read Nash's groundbreaking book, along with other interventions in how we think of Black women's sexuality, such as Adrienne Maree Brown's *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good*. In this class, we'll trace a geology of thought and debate.

Content Warning:

All content in this course is relevant to the established study of Black sexuality studies and therefore complies with UNT's Academic Freedom policy 06.035 section A.2 which states:

Faculty members are entitled to freedom in teaching and discussing their subject and in the selection of textbooks and other materials for their courses, but they should not introduce controversial matter that has no relation to their subject into the curriculum.

In this class, we will read, watch, and listen to material that contains explicit language, graphic depictions of violence, sex, and, possibly, sexual assault. Take breaks and step away if needed. If you have more specific needs, arrange to meet with me.

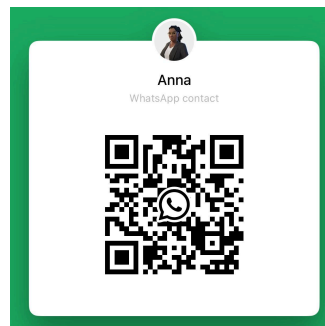
How to Reach Me:

Connect with me through email and/or by attending office hours. During busy times, my inbox becomes rather full, so if you contact me and do not receive a response within two business days, please send a follow up email. A gentle nudge is always appreciated.

Email Me: anna.hinton@unt.edu

Meet Me: Language Building Room 409G

Call/Text Me:



Course Learning Objectives:

4670 students will be able to:

- Identify and define key concepts and outline major theoretical turns in Black sexuality studies on their own (without assistance from me or classmates) to an extent that they can write a short genealogy paper on the ideas in this field.
- Analyze Black women's erotic writing and performance from a Black sexuality studies framework as a group and individually to the extent that they can develop an argument and support this argument with close reading and theory from the course in a short paper.

Additionally, 4670 students will develop the following:

- an arsenal of strategies to interpret complex writing by considering the historical, cultural, and formal dimensions and diversity out of which art emerges

- the ability to cite, use, and engage critical and theoretical terms, concepts, and methods in relation to a variety of textual forms and other media
- critical thinking and writing skills as well as skills of observation, synthesis, and connection
- ability to write persuasively and precisely in scholarly and creative forms

Required Reading:

- *Push The Button* by Feminista Jones
- *Confessions of a Video Vixen* by Karrine Steffans
- *Addicted* by Zane

These are available at the campus bookstore and Voertman's Bookstore; however, feel free to pick them up wherever you can find them affordably and in whatever format is most accessible to you, including audiobooks. Links to additional PDF readings and podcasts will be available on Canvas. All films will be shown during class.

Course Policies:

Attendance

Regular in-person attendance is required to pass this course. Readiness and participation are aspects of attendance. I will check your attendance in the class by checking your postings, responses, activities, and assignments each week. If you do not submit your work for a week, you may be counted absent for that week. If you miss more than 30% of the class (3 weeks for a 10 week course), then I am authorized to keep you from passing the course. Please arrange any planned absences with me ahead of time in order to avoid penalization.

Late or Missed Assignments

All papers are due by class time on the due date (or by the date specified in Canvas). Late work may not be counted, or may be penalized severely for each day late. It is up to you as a student to make arrangements with me. Additionally, I will not grade subsequent assignments from any students until all previous assignments have been completed, and you cannot pass the course if you have not received a grade for all major assignments. Please meet with me as soon as possible if you miss a deadline for an assignment.

Communication

Please communicate with me formally through my UNT email address. When you write me, please include the subject of your email in the subject line, and write your email with appropriate salutations and grammatical language. Note that I am not able to discuss any information relating academic records through email. I ask that you also remember the following guidelines in your communications with me:

- Treat all communications professionally. Think about spelling and grammar and double-check your response before hitting send or reply. Consider the purpose of any uses of slang or other icons, graphics, or memes.
- Please use my title in all communications (i.e. “Dr. Hinton”)
- Think about your tone, and remember that email cannot convey nonverbal cues that provide clarity and context in face to face conversations.
- Take care to respect the personal identities and privacy of yourself, of me, and of others. Respect identities based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and/or culture. Also think carefully about what you reveal and do not reveal, particularly if this information involves your health and/or classroom performance.
- Please also check the syllabus before you ask me a question about an assignment or course schedule. It helps me if you can also let me know you checked the syllabus before writing, since I put significant time into creating the schedule and the syllabus.
- In your email subject line, it helps to be descriptive and not vague. Since I receive a lot of emails, I need to identify your question and problem as quickly as possible.
- If emailing about an absence, remember that I am not able to recreate the classroom discussion.

- Remember that if you disagree with anything in class, please refrain from making personal attacks or use language that discriminates based on gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and/or culture.

Canvas

Announcements, discussions, assignments, and grades for this course will all be handled within UNT's CANVAS Learning Management System. You must be able to access CANVAS regularly in order to succeed in this course.

All students have access to CANVAS through their UNT accounts. For more information on using CANVAS, see <https://community.canvaslms.com/docs/DOC-10701>. If you have any questions regarding your use of the Canvas learning management system, please contact the student help desk at: Email: helpdesk@unt.edu, Phone: 940-565-2324.

You also need to make plans to have a backup way to access the technology each week: another computer; the local library; or perhaps the UNT campus. Not having access to the course will not excuse you from the workload each week.

Syllabus Change Policy

I have made every attempt to provide this syllabus as an accurate overview of the course. However, unanticipated circumstances may make it necessary for me to modify the syllabus during the semester. These circumstances may arise in response to the progress, needs, and experiences of students. Advance notice will be given for any changes made to the syllabus.

More About This Course

Chosen Names

In this class, we refer to each other by our chosen names. A chosen name is a name that a person goes by that may or may not match their legal name. If you have a chosen name that is different from your legal name and would like that to be used in class, please let me know. Below is a list of resources for updating your chosen name at UNT:

- [UNT Records](#)
- [UNT ID Card](#)
- [UNT Email Address](#)
- [Legal Name](#)

UNT EUIDs cannot be changed at this time. The collaborating offices are working on a process to make this option accessible to UNT community members.

Pronouns

In this class, we refer to each other by our preferred pronouns. Pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/him, etc.) are a public way for people to address you, much like your name, and can be shared with a name when making an introduction, both virtually and in person. Just as we ask and don't assume someone's name, we should also ask and not assume someone's pronouns.

You can [add your pronouns to your Canvas account](#) so that they follow your name when posting to discussion boards, submitting assignments, etc.

Below is a list of additional resources regarding pronouns and their usage:

- [What are pronouns and why are they important?](#)
- [How do I use pronouns?](#)
- [How do I share my pronouns?](#)
- [How do I ask for another person's pronouns?](#)
- [How do I correct myself or others when the wrong pronoun is used?](#)

Engaging Course Material

This is a reading, writing, and discussion-intensive course. The following practices will increase your likeliness for success:¹

- Read the assigned material before each class session. Ideally, give yourself some time with the materials prior to the session; allow yourself to sit with it.
- Take notes as you read, think about, and reflect on the content.
- Practice self- and other-awareness in our discussions. Think about how you can both take and make space in the conversation. Expect that participants will be coming with different backgrounds, experiences, and areas and levels of expertise.
- Recognize that the systems of oppression that we are engaging with in this class are present within and between us. There will be power differentials in the room that cannot be erased but, especially for those in positions of power, can be thoughtfully attended to.
- Center and uplift voices with lived experiences of oppression, especially in relation to the axes of oppression being discussed. However, no one is expected to speak for or represent a minoritized group; people can choose to speak from experience but should not be expected to do so.
- As we learn and grow, we mess up. If someone says something hurtful, harmful, or problematic, our hope is that anyone in the space will feel the agency and empowerment necessary to speak up. Whether you are addressing a concern or hearing a concern, a spirit of curiosity, education, and humility can help build community and accountability.
- We are all responsible for our learning. While others may offer us gifts of education and insight, they are not obligated to. But these are not scarce resources – there are many paths to get the information and support that we need in order to learn and grow.

Student Resources

Academic

- Apply for [disability accommodations](#)
- UNT [Learning Center](#)

¹ Many of these points were adapted from Dr. Shemeka Thorpe's "Black Feminisms & Sex/uality Studies 2024 Summer Session in Gender/Sex/uality In/Justice" syllabus

- UNT [Writing Center](#)
- [UNT Libraries](#) can help with all your research
- Use a computer at any of UNT's [Computer Labs](#)
- Check your UNT email on [EagleConnect](#)

In addition to supporting your academic achievement, I highly encourage you to monitor your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health. There are so many obstacles to our well-being, such as the ongoing pandemic, overwork, personal or family illness, traumatic events, financial precarity, and the list goes on. Yet, WE DESERVE TO CARE FOR OUR WHOLE BEING.

If you are having a difficult time in any of the above areas, please, please, please reach out to me or someone else you trust. Let me/us help you find resources. UNT has resources for mental health care, medical care, food insecurity, and more. However, I must disclose that, depending on what you share with me, I can guarantee privacy but not confidentiality. I am mandated to report sexual assault, suicide ideation/attempts, etc. But, I have personally looked into the resources UNT offers and can say that our CARE team is AMAZING. If I or one of your other professors or colleagues have to report to CARE, it is your choice whether or not you want to accept their help. I highly encourage that you do.

- To learn more about [CARE](#)
- Sick? Get well at the [Health and Wellness Center](#)
- Connect, engage and get involved through the [Center for Belonging and Engagement](#)
- Find support at the [Substance Abuse Resource Center](#)
- Talk to a counselor at the [Counseling Center](#)
- Need legal help? Reach out to [Student Legal Services](#)

And because I take pleasure seriously, remember that UNT regularly hosts events and provides opportunities for extracurricular engagement

- Check out the UNT [Event Calendar](#)
- Cheer on the [Mean Green Sports Teams](#)

- Chill out at [The Syndicate](#)
- Play [Sports](#)
- Get in [shape](#)
- Join a [student organization](#)
- Get involved with the [Center for Leadership and Service](#)

Using the UNT Writing Center

In this class, I suggest that you utilize the writing center. All writers can benefit from sharing and discussing their work with a trained peer tutor, early and often. A writing tutor can help you get started on a paper or help you decide what to revise on an existing draft. In order to make an appointment with a writing tutor, visit <https://writingcenter.unt.edu/online-tutoring>. The Writing Center also offers online tutoring through UNT's Zoom portal.

Library skills

In this class, we are all (University) “library kids.” Please make yourself familiar with the UNT Library and its resources before you get too far in this course. You can make an appointment with a reference librarian in order to get one-on-one help using this link: <https://library.unt.edu/forms/reference-appointment/>

University Policies:

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences

According to UNT Policy 06.003, Student Academic Integrity, academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to cheating, fabrication, facilitating academic dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A

finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University.

Academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to:

- Cheating--submitting work that is not your own (**This includes using ChatGPT and other AI sources**)
- Fabrication--pretending you are writing about a real interview when you really made it up
- Facilitating academic dishonesty--helping someone else cheat
- Forgery--pretending your work is someone else's
- Plagiarism--using someone else's published work without citing it correctly
- Sabotage--setting someone else up to fail

A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions, ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. I am obligated to report any academic dishonesty.

ADA Accommodation Statement

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For additional information see the ODA website at disability.unt.edu.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to quickly notify students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to the UNT Learning Management System (LMS) for contingency plans for covering course materials.

Survivor Advocacy

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. Federal laws (Title IX and the Violence Against Women Act) and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, and therefore prohibit sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking, and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. UNT's Survivor Advocates can assist a student who has been impacted by violence by filing protective orders, completing crime victim's compensation applications, contacting professors for absences related to an assault, working with housing to facilitate a room change where appropriate, and connecting students to other resources available both on and off campus. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu or by calling the Dean of Students Office at 940-565-2648. Additionally, alleged sexual misconduct can be non-confidentially reported to the Title IX Coordinator at oeo@unt.edu or at (940) 565 2759.

Calendar of Readings			
Week	Date	Topic	Assignment
1	Aug 19 & 21	Introduction to the Course	Read the Syllabus Patton, Stacy, "Who's Afraid of Black Sexuality?"; Morgan, Joan, "Why We Get Off"
2	Aug 26 & 28	28th is a Virtual Class. That Jezebel: Controlling Images, an Introduction to Black Sexuality Studies	Collins, Patricia Hill, "The Sexual Politics of Black Womanhood"; Hammonds, Evelyn M, "Toward a Genealogy of Black Female Sexuality: The Problematic of Silence"; <i>Optional:</i> Hill Collins, Patricia, "Get Your Freak On: Sex, Babies, and Images of Black Femininity"
3	Sept 2 & 4	Reimagining Traumatic Histories: Sex and Slavery	Hine, Darlene Clark, "Rape and the Inner Lives of Black Women in the Middle West"; Foster, Thomas, "The Sexual Abuse of Black Men under American Slavery"; "Query 14," from <i>Notes on the State of Virginia</i> by Thomas Jefferson; <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> by Harriet Jacobs; <i>Dessa Rose</i> by Sherley A. Williams <i>Optional:</i> Higginbotham, Evelyn Brooks, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race"

Calendar of Readings			
4	Sept 9 & 11	On My THOT Sh*t: The Erotica of Women MC's	<p>Miller-Young, Mireille, "Ho Theory: Black Female Sexuality at the Convergence of Hip Hop and Pornography" from <i>A Taste for Brown Sugar</i></p> <p>Selected Music Videos (watch in class)</p> <p><i>Optional:</i></p> <p>hooks, bell, "Selling Hot Pussy: Representations of Black Female Sexuality in the Cultural Marketplace" from <i>Black Looks</i></p>
5	Sept 16 & 18	The Pornography Wars and the Black Sexual Labor Economy pt. 1	<p><i>The Price of Pleasure: Pornography, Sexuality & Relationships</i> (documentary film, watch in class);</p> <p>Miller-Young, Mireille, "Introduction. Brown Sugar: Theorizing Black Women's Sexual Labor in Photography" from <i>A Taste for Brown Sugar</i>; Nash, Jennifer C., "Introduction. Reading Race, Reading Pornography" from <i>The Black Body in Ecstasy</i></p> <p><i>Optional:</i></p> <p>Nash, Jennifer C., "Chapter 1. Archives of Pain: Reading the Black Feminist Theoretic Archive" from <i>The Black Body in Ecstasy</i></p>
6	September 23 & 25	The Pornography Wars and the Black Sexual Labor Economy pt. 2.	<p>Love, Sinnamon, "Transforming Pornography: Black Porn for Black Women"; in <i>Pleasure Activism</i></p> <p>"Feelmore: A Conversation with</p>

Calendar of Readings			
		25th is a Library Research Tutorial	Nenna Joiner"
7	Sept 30 & Oct 2	All Hail The Queen Of Black Women's Erotica: Zane and the Urban Erotic Novel	<i>Addicted</i> by Zane; Lee, Shayne, "Zane's Urban Erotica" from <i>Erotic Revolutionaries</i> Optional: Darden, Jenee D., "Under the Covers: The Popularity and Debate over Black Erotic Literature"
8	Oct 7 & 9	"Church Girls Acting Loose": The Black Church, Spirituality, and Black Sexual Politics Joint Discussion w/Jo Conjure Pussy	Cooper, Brittney, "How Sarah Got Her Groove Back, Or Notes Toward A Black Feminist Theology Of Pleasure"; "Eula" and "Instructions for Married Christian Husbands" from <i>The Secret Lives of Church Ladies</i> by Deesha Philyaw; "The Voice of Experience" and "Masturbation" from <i>No More Sheets</i> by Juanita Bynum
9	Oct 14 & 16	Airing the Dirty Laundry: Confessions of a Video Vixen	<i>Confessions of a Video Vixen</i> by Karrine Steffans; Lee, Shayne, "Confessions of a Video Vixen" from <i>Erotic Revolutionaries</i> Optional: Amber Johnson, "Confessions of a Video Vixen: My Autocritography of Sexuality, Desire, and Memory"
10	Oct 21 & 23	Crip Kink: Sex and Disability	"Triple Cripples: On Blackness, Sexuality, Disability, and Autonomy"; from <i>Sex and Disability</i> , "Introduction"; Dr. Danielle Sheypuk, "Every body: glamour, dateability, sexuality & disability"

Calendar of Readings			
			<p>TEDxBarnardCollege (Watch in class)</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> from <i>Sex and Disability</i>, “Dismembering The Lynch Mob: Intersecting Narratives of Disability, Race, and Sexual Menace”</p>
11	Oct 28 & 30	Quare Desire pt. 1	<i>Pariah</i> (film, watch in class)
12	Nov 4 & 6	Quare Desire pt. 2	Green, K. M., & Bey, M. “Where Black feminist thought and trans feminism meet: A conversation”; Story, Kaila Adia. “(Re)Presenting Shug Avery and Afrekete: The Search for a Black, Queer, and Feminist Pleasure Praxis”
14	Nov 11 & 13	Fifty Shades of Black: Black Women and BDSM	<i>Push The Button</i> by Feminista Jones; Cruz, Ariane., “Beyond Black and Blue: BDSM, Internet Pornography, and Black Female Sexuality”; “Yes, Master: The Complicated Life of a Black Woman Who Gets Off on Being a Sex Slave”
13	Nov 18 & 20	Raunchy and Ratchet: Erotic in Black Women’s Comedy Performance	<i>Queens of Comedy</i> (film, watch in class); Lee, Shayne, “Erotic Queens of Comedy” from <i>Erotic Revolutionaries</i>
15	Nov 25 & 27	Fall Break, No Class	Rest and keep revising!
16	Dec 2 & 4	Final Project Presentations	Final Draft of Video Essay and Script

Grade Breakdown and Assignments

10% Attendance and Participation

In-class assignments: These assignments can only be completed by those present in class and must be turned in via Canvas by the end of the class period.

Class Lead: Each student will be required to co-lead a class session. As the class lead, it is your job to read and synthesize all of the material for the week. You should come prepared with at least five questions that will stimulate a deeper understanding of the weekly topic and texts. The questions should also challenge the class to assess our understanding of the author's central argument, to critically assess the adequacy of that argument, and/or compare the author's position with that of another author we will have read. I highly encourage you to incorporate current events and audio/video resources. Discussion facilitators are NOT required to write reading responses for the week of their facilitation.

30% Weekly Response Papers

Each week, students will post a 500-word response on Canvas to the upcoming week's readings by 11:59 pm on the Sunday before class. These responses are meant to demonstrate engaged reading and to provoke conversation. Each response paper must perform an analysis of the primary/creative material through the lens of one of the critical/theoretical readings for the week.

60% Video Essay Project

- Research proposal
- Annotated bibliography
- Detailed outline of your script
- First draft of your script

- Peer review of your script
- The revised and submitted final copy of both your script and video