

New York University  
Gallatin School of Individualized Study  
Fall 2020  
**(De)Tangling the Business of Black Women's Hair**

**Course Number:** IDSEM-UG 2024

**Class Meeting Times:** Monday & Wednesday 11:00am-12:15pm

**Class Location:** Zoom

**Professor:** Dr. Shatima Jones

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**Office location & hours:** Tuesdays 10-12 noon and by appointment

**Course Description:** For many black women, their understanding of their race, gender, class and identity and notions of beauty are linked to hair. Divided into three sections, this course will first seek to understand the historical, structural, and economic dimensions of black women's hair. We will cover topics such as labor, the service industry, and how the black beauty salon presents a rare opportunity for black women to become entrepreneurs. We will also discuss the multi-billion dollar industry and economy founded on black women's hair, from dreadlocks and perms, to weaves and wigs. The second part of the course will examine how the beauty salon as a place presents the opportunity for intra-racial community building and networking, with predominately Asian-owned hair supply stores and the rise of African- and Dominican-owned hair salons. Third, we will explore how black women interpret the connections between their racial and gender identity and their hair; and we will examine how the politics of hair links to notions of racial authenticity, colorism, class, and attractiveness.

**Required Texts:** The required books listed below are available at the campus bookstore. All other readings are available on NYU Classes.

Harvey Wingfield, Adia. 2008. *Doing Business with Beauty: Black Women, Hair Salons, and the Racial Enclave Economy*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

Banks, Ingrid. 2000. *Hair Matters: Beauty, Power, and Black Women's Consciousness*. New York: New York University Press.

Battle-Walters, Kimberly. 2004. *Sheila's Shop: Working-Class African American Women Talk About Life, Love, Race, and Hair*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

**Academic Integrity:** "Academic honesty means that the work you submit — in whatever form — is original." This includes but is not limited to "cheating, plagiarism, falsification of data or sources, forgery of academic documents in attempt to defraud." In short, use your own words and ideas in the assignments and be sure to properly cite any sources that you may have used to arrive at those ideas.

If I find that you have plagiarized, you will receive an F on the assignment and I will notify the dean. If this occurs more than once, you will receive an F for the course. For more information on this policy, and sanctions, visit: [Gallatin's Academic Integrity Policy](#).

**Unusual Semester:** This course will be online but synchronous. We will try as hard as we can to capture the intimacy and back-and-forth of a traditional in-person seminar. Given this, ***I request that you do everything in your power to attend the class synchronously and turn on your cameras.***

That said, I recognize that this is a time of tremendous uncertainty and stress. My goal is to support you doing the best work you can do in spite of the challenges you face. I don't want anyone to worry about having to drop the class, or to obsess over their grade, if they face situations that make it harder for them to meet the expectations of the class. ***I will be as flexible as I can be.*** I just ask that you let me know if you are finding it hard to balance your health, wellbeing, and schedule with your work in this class. I will try my best to be responsive over email, and ***I am open to using portions of class for small group check-ins.*** Think of it as a kind of informal office hours, with several of your peers. I will also of course be able to hold virtual one on one meetings with you.

Last, I also ask that you be patient and flexible with me if I am forced to make changes as the semester goes on. I'll do my best to stick to the syllabus and communicate any changes.

**Grading:** There will be no midterm or final exam. Grades are based on performance in the following areas:

***Participation, Attendance, and Go to Student [20 points]:*** You are expected to keep up with the reading and be prepared to contribute to the class discussion. Each week, a couple of "go to" students will have two main responsibilities: (1) post 2-3 critical questions based on the reading; and (2) lead a discussion during class that distills the main ideas of the readings *and* pushes them further. *Your performance as the discussion leader and questions for that day are worth 10 points.* All other students will post a brief (i.e. one line) discussion question, comment, or point that they would like to discuss on the NYU Classes "Forums" thread. I expect all students to read and think about their peers' discussion questions and come to class prepared to enter into an intellectual dialogue about the issues raised. *These questions (when you are not the discussion leader), your overall participation in class, and attendance are worth 10 points.*

Here are a couple examples of great discussion questions by former students:

1. *In Chapter Six of Doing Business with Beauty, Adia Wingfield interviews Mariane, a business owner who says "The customers say [the workers] don't know how to do customer service, that they don't respect the customers. So, that can be very hard." How do the differences in norms across cultures affect the social interactions between ethnic business owners and their customers? How do these interactions influence stereotypes about certain ethnic groups within certain industries (i.e. attitudes of Asian-American owned nail salons)?*
2. *In "Racialization of Space and the Spatialization of Race" George Lipsitz discusses the idea that "the national spatial imaginary is racial marked", he explores racism hidden*

*within architecture and landscape and how this idea plays a role in the construct of societies and neighborhoods. What effect does the racialization of space have on areas that later become gentrified? How does gentrification play a role in the reformation of these spaces?*

Note: Attendance and participation matters for your grade. If you are absent more than once, you will likely see this reflected in your grade. Likewise, if you never speak in class and do not post discussion questions, this will be reflected in your grade. **If you are absent more than twice, you cannot receive an A in the course.**

**Essays [30 points]:** Three 2-page essays will be assigned [10 points each]. The essays will require you to answer a question that shows you have critically engaged with the assigned readings. I will announce the essays at least one week before they are due. I will deduct two points for every day that a paper is late.

**Term Paper Proposal/Annotated Bibliography [10 points]:** Students must submit a description of their research topic, research question, data source, and annotated bibliography (3-4 pages).

**Final Paper Draft [10 points]:** You will write some portions of your final paper, most likely the Introduction, Literature Review, and Methods and Data.

**Presentation [10 points]:** You will make a ten to fifteen-minute presentation based on your preliminary findings. Everyone should be prepared to present on the first day of presentations.

**Final Paper [20 points]:** Students must write an 8-10 paged term paper. I will provide several options for general topics but you will be able to choose the case study you would like to analyze. “The scrutiny and representation of Black girls in popular culture” as a general topic, and you may choose the Olympic gold medalist Gabrielle Douglas as your case study. You will have to relate your case study to several themes that we will cover throughout the course (make those connections explicit in your paper). You are required to critically engage with the existing theories on the topic, analyze your selected case, and make an argument based on your findings. The paper must include a minimum of three citations from the course and at least four additional scholarly research articles that are not listed on the syllabus.

All assignments must be in the following format unless otherwise noted: Double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, and one-inch margins. I will deduct points from all late assignments.

**\*I will not grant a grade of “Incomplete” for this course.**

### **Tentative Course Schedule**

**\*\*Disclaimer:** I reserve the right to change any aspect of this syllabus, including readings, assignments, and due dates.

Wednesday, 9/2 Introduction

**PART I The Historical, Structural, and Economic Dimensions of Black Women's Hair**

Monday 9/7/20 NO CLASS—LABOR DAY

Wednesday 9/9 **The Entrepreneurship and Political Activism of African-American Women Beauticians**

*Short film/Documentary: "You Can Touch My Hair" (2013) by unruly.*

Gill, Tiffany M. 2010. *Beauty Shop Politics: African American Women's Activism in the Beauty Industry*. Illinois: University of Illinois Press. Pages 1-32.

[Introduction; Chapter 1: Beauty Pioneers: Racial Uplift and Gender in the Creation of a Black Business Community; and Chapter 2: "Link Up with Us": Black Beauty Culture, Racial Politics, and the Complexities of Modern Black Womanhood]

Monday 9/14 **Black Businesses and the Racial Enclave Economy**

Harvey Wingfield, Adia. 2008. *Doing Business with Beauty: Black Women, Hair Salons, and the Racial Enclave Economy*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Pages 1-55.

[Introduction; Chapter 1: Introducing the Racial Enclave Economy; Chapter 2: History of Black Entrepreneurship; Chapter 3: Business Decisions in the Racial Enclave Economy]

Wednesday 9/16 **The Intersection of Race, Gender, and Class in the Positioning of Black Women Beauticians in the Labor Market**

Harvey Wingfield, Adia. 2008. *Doing Business with Beauty: Black Women, Hair Salons, and the Racial Enclave Economy*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Pages 57-107.

[Chapter 4: A Pathway to Financial Security; Chapter 5: Stereotypes and Social Support; Chapter 6: Ethnic Divisions in the Racial Enclave]

Monday 9/21 **The Commodification and Moralization of Black Women's Hair**

*Film/Documentary: "Good Hair" (2009) by Chris Rock (watch before coming to class)*

Wednesday 9/23 **Beauty Culture**

Blackwelder, Julia Kirk. 2003. *Styling Jim Crow African American Beauty Training During Segregation*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press. Pages 14-33.

[Chapter 1: The Legacy of Beauty Culture]

Rooks, Noliwe. 1996. *Hair Raising: Beauty, Culture, and African American Women*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press. [Chapter 2: Beauty, Race, and Black Pride, pages 23-50.]

Monday 9/28 **Religion, Hair & Beauty**

Frisina, A and Camilla Hawthorne. 2018. "Italians with veils and Afros: gender, beauty, and the everyday anti-racism of the daughters of immigrants in Italy." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 44(5):718-735.

(skim) Bronner, Leila. 1993. "From Veil to Wig: Jewish Women's Hair Covering." *Judaism* 42(4):465.

Wednesday 9/30 **The Politics of Color**

Peiss Kathy Lee. 1999. *Hope in a Jar: The Making of America's Beauty Culture*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. Pages 203-237. [Chapter 7: Shades of Difference]

2001. Thompson, Maxine. Keith, Verna. "The Blacker the Berry: Gender, Skin Tone, Self-Esteem, and Self-Efficacy" *Gender & Society* 15(3): 336-357.

Monday 10/5 **"Black is Beautiful"**

Walker, Susannah. 2007. *Style and Status: Selling Beauty to African American Women, 1920-1975*. Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky. Pages 169-203.

[Chapter 6: Black is Beautiful: Redefining Beauty in the 1960s and 1970s]

Craig, Maxine Leeds. 2002. *Ain't I a Beauty Queen? Black Women, Beauty, and the Politics of Race*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pages 23-44.

[Chapter 2: Contexts for the Emergence of "Black is Beautiful"]

Wednesday 10/7 **Black Girls' Hair Under Scrutiny; Children's Perception of Beauty and Morality**

*Short film/Documentary: "A Girl Like Me" (2005) by Davis, Kiri.*

Byrd, Ayana D. and Lori L. Tharps. 2014. *Hair Story: Untangling the Roots of Black Hair in America*. New York: St. Martin's Press. Pages 177-204. [Chapter 8: The Divided Decade: The Early 2000s]

Monday 10/12 In Class Workshop on Writing Your Term Paper Proposal

Wednesday 10/14 **\*Class will meet at 4-5:30pm instead** to attend a talk by Professor Wendy Greene, titled #FreeTheHair: How Black Hair is Transforming Civil Rights Laws and Movements. Please register [here](#) in advance.

Monday 10/19 **The Service Industry: Emotional Labor and Body Work**

Kang, Miliann. 2003. "The Managed Hand: The Commercialization of Bodies and Emotions in Korean Immigrant-owned Nail Salons." *Gender and Society* 17(6): 820-39.

Cohen, Rachel Lara. 2010. "When it Pays to be Friendly: Employment Relationship and Emotional Labour in Hairstyling." *The Sociological Review* 58(2): 197-218.

Wednesday 10/21                    **Power and Negotiation in the Hair Salon**  
Gimlin, Debra. 1996. "Pamela's Place: Power and Negotiation in the Hair Salon." *Gender and Society* 10(5): 505-526.

Jacobs-Huey, Lanita. 2006. *From the Kitchen to the Parlor: Language and Becoming in African-American Women's Hair Care*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pages 17-27. [Chapter 1: Negotiating Expert and Novice Identities through Client-Stylists Interactions]

## **PART II: The Beauty Salon as a Place and Its Relationship to the Talk Therein**

Monday 10/26                    **Conceptualizations of Race, Place, and Space**  
Lipsitz, George. 2007. "The Racialization of Space and the Spatialization of Race." *Landscape Journal* 26:1-07.

Anderson, Elijah. 2011. *The Cosmopolitan Canopy*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company. Pages 189-215. [Chapter 6: Ethnos and Cosmos]

Wednesday 10/28                    **Doing Race, Gender, and Class**  
West, Candace and Don Zimmerman. 1987. "Doing Gender." *Gender and Society* 1:125-151.

Monday 11/2                    **The Black Barbershop: Networks and the Underground Economy**  
Wood, Patricia Burke and Rod T. Brunson. 2010. "Geographies of Resilient Social Networks: The role of African American Barbershops." *Urban Geography* 31:228-243.

Wright II, Earl and Thomas C. Calhoun. 2001. "From the Common Thug to the Local Businessman: An Exploration into an Urban African American Barbershop." *Deviant Behavior: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 22:267-288.

Wednesday 11/4                    **Barbershop Talk**  
Harris-Lacewell, Melissa. 2004. *Barbershops, Bibles, and BET*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Pages 162-203. [Chapter 5: Truth and Soul: Black Talk in the Barbershop—written with Quincy T. Mills]

Monday 11/9                    **Salon Talk: Black Womanhood**  
Battle-Walters, Kimberly. 2004. *Sheila's Shop: Working-Class African American Women Talk About Life, Love, Race, and Hair*. Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. Pages 13-55. [Chapters 1: Sheila's Shop; Chapter 2: The Realities of Being Black and Female]

Wednesday 11/11 **Salon Talk: Family and Community**

Battle-Walters, Kimberly. 2004. *Sheila's Shop: Working-Class African American Women Talk About Life, Love, Race, and Hair* Rowman and Littlefield Publishers. Pages 57-74. [Chapter 3: African-American Families and Communities]

(skim) Collins, Patricia Hill. 2000. Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment. [Chapter 7: Black Women's Love Relationships, pages 161-186.]

### **PART III: Identity Work and Degrees of Consciousness**

Monday 11/16 **Doing Race, Gender, and Class**

Lawson, Helene M. 1999. Working on Hair. *Qualitative Sociology* 22(3): 235-257.

Wednesday 11/18 **Masculinity/Femininity and the Politics of Hair**

Craig, Maxine Leeds. 2002. *Ain't I a Beauty Queen? Black Women, Beauty, and the Politics of Race*. New York: Oxford University Press. Pages 109-128.

[Chapter 6: Yvonne's Wig: Gender and the Racialized Body]

Barber, Kristen. 2008. "The Well-Coiffed Man: Class, Race, and Heterosexual Masculinity in the Hair Salon." *Gender and Society* 22(4): 455-476.

Monday 11/23 **Black Women's Consciousness**

Banks, Ingrid. 2000. *Hair Matters: Beauty, Power, and Black Women's Consciousness*. New York: New York University Press. Pages 1-68. [Introduction: Unhappy to be Nappy; Chapter 1: Why Hair Matters: Getting to the Roots; Chapter 2: The Hair Do's and Don'ts of Black Womanhood]

#### **Black Women on their Agency; Black Girls & Beauty**

Banks, Ingrid. 2000. *Hair Matters: Beauty, Power, and Black Women's Consciousness*. New York: New York University Press. Pages 69-138. [Chapter 3: Splitting Hairs-Power, Choice, and Femininity; Chapter 4: Women and Girls Speak Out-Five Hair-Raising Sessions]

Wednesday 11/25 **Racial Identification, Hair, and Community in Dominican Salons**

Candelario, Ginetta E. B. 2007. *Black Behind the Ears: Dominican Racial Identity From Museums to Beauty Shops*. Duke University Press. Pages 177-222.

[Chapter 4: Making Community and Displaying Identity at a Dominican Beauty Shop in New York City]

Monday 11/30 PRESENTATIONS

Wednesday 12/2 PRESENTATIONS

Monday 12/7 PRESENTATIONS

Wednesday 12/9 PRESENTATIONS

Your final paper is due Wednesday, December 16, 2020 at 11am.