

Advanced English: How African American Women Affect Policy: From Truman to the 2024 Election

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Academic year 2024-2025 - Language Department - Fall semester.

This course is meant for students of the advanced C1 and C2 levels. Theme-based language classes aim at developing written and oral skills through the study of a specific topic.

Course Objectives

This is a 12-week course that focuses on non-fiction narratives that black American women published about their lives – from 1945 forward. Each woman’s story is bolstered by research from renowned experts on sociology and economic development.

The main objectives of this course are:

- Introducing students to women, largely unheralded, whose actions shaped their country.
- Discussing who can participate in the “Land of Opportunity”, the nickname for the U.S.
- Evaluating U.S. society’s adherence to laws on voting rights, civil rights, fair housing, in short, the anti-discrimination protections.

Background

African American women in the post-World War II years influenced policy, practice, and law. Both notable and lesser-known women wrote about the conditions they confronted. More importantly, they published their stories about engineering a better situation for themselves. The resulting social revolution spread beyond their country’s borders. It breathes life into current issues, such as women’s bodily autonomy, workplace harassment, unhoused living, fair elections, and police brutality. In the 2024 election, a woman of black and South Asian heritage is seeking reelection to, arguably, the second most powerful position in the world, U.S. vice president.

We will concentrate on selected readings from books by female authors: *Don’t Let Them Bury My Story: The Oldest Living Survivor of the Tulsa Race Massacre In Her Own Words* - (Fletcher); *Alone Atop the Hill* - (Dunnigan); *Never in My Wildest Dreams* - (Davis); *The Double X Economy* - (Scott); *Becoming* - (Obama); and *The Truths We Hold: An American Journey* - (Harris). Video footage and current media coverage will complement the readings and offer a practice of comprehension skills. Learning specialty terms, such as zero-sum game, economic boycott, health equity, and government shutdown, will enrich the storytelling ability of the students.

Course Description

Students will do assigned readings outside of the class setting. The readings will flow chronologically in order to track the evolution of thought, custom, practice, and law. In-class discussions will be student-led. Speaking, listening, and reacting will produce energetic interactions and exchanges. Watching and comprehending videotaped speeches delivered by the women will complement the reading assignments. In oral expression, including terms of regular usage in the political and governmental sectors will show the student's deep understanding of the eras and the issues from 1945 forward.

Organization

Activities will cover five language skills:

- Speaking: in-class discussions incorporating industry and specialty vocabulary.
- Writing: essays.
- Reading: selected readings from books from female authors.
- Listening: video reports.
- Interacting/Exchanging.