

ENGL 7327/8327: Form & Genre: African American Literature

“Black Women’s Autobiography”

Literary critic Joanne M. Braxton posits that black women “autobiographers incorporate communal values into the performance of the autobiographical act, sometimes rising to the function as the ‘point of consciousness’ of her people” (5). In this course we will examine and think through the following questions: what does it mean to be a point of consciousness? What do these biographies expose about their writers, the communities they come from, and, ultimately, the body politic?

Tentative Reading List:

*Dust Tracks on the Road*—Zora Neale Hurston

*I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*—Maya Angelou

*Zami*—Audre Lorde

*Bone Black*—bell hooks

*Leaving Pipershop*—Deborah McDowell

*Speaking Truth to Power*—Anita Hill

*Taste of Power*—Elaine Brown

*Assata*—Assata Shakur

*Extraordinary, Ordinary People: A Memoir of Family*—Condoleezza Rice

*No Disrespect*—Sister Souljah