

POWERFUL & DANGEROUS: THE LIFE, TIMES, AND THEORY OF AUDRE LORDE

GNDR_ST 382

WINTER
2024



This course will explore the life, words, and work of the extraordinary “Black Lesbian Feminist Mother Warrior Poet,” Audre Lorde. One of the most important figures in Black Feminism, Lorde’s work continues to influence feminist activism and scholarship today. She teaches us that poetry is the “skeleton architecture of our lives,” that the erotic is a source of female power, “that the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house,” and that “our silence will not protect us.” But what does all that mean?

Over the course of the quarter, we will engage with Lorde

as a lens for thinking through some of the foundational questions in Women’s, Feminist, and Gender Studies.

We will ask – and start to answer – the following questions: What is theory? (i.e. Can it be poetry?) What is

a scholarly text? Does form matter? How does Audre Lorde’s work push on the boundaries of how feminists

and feminist studies conceptualizes theory? What is identity? (i.e. Are identity and the erotic related?)

Is it concrete or fluid? Can we have more than one identity? If so, how do we negotiate those different

identities? Why does Lorde call herself a “Black Lesbian Feminist Mother Warrior Poet”? What does it mean

to use these descriptors alongside one another? Does it change their meanings? What is activism? (i.e. How

do we dismantle the master’s house?) How does Lorde change the ways we might think about activist work

in the world and in our own lives?

Courtney Rabada

TTh 3:30-4:50pm
Kresge 2-440