

LESSON PLAN

All Skinfolk, Ain't Kinfolk

A film by Angela Tucker



After a contentious race, the 2017 runoff for mayor of New Orleans came down to two candidates: **Desirée Charbonnet** and **LaToya Cantrell**, two very different black women. The winner of this election would take office as the first female mayor of New Orleans and the city's fourth black mayor. Through news footage, campaign advertisements and archival audio and video, *All Skinfolk Ain't Kinfolk* is the unprecedented story of this mayoral runoff told through the eyes of black women living in this city.

This lesson plan is authored by Vivett Dukes, English teacher at School of the Future in Manhattan, NY.

Lesson Overview: In one of the oldest cities in America, only men have been elected mayor. In 2015, that changed when voters got to choose between two Black women.

Essential Question: Why are Black women so significantly underrepresented in the American political landscape? What factors impact this marginalization?

Guiding Questions

- What role do gender normative roles play in the election campaigns of Black female candidates?

- Why, can you infer, have there not been any Black female mayors or female mayors period in New Orleans?
- How do Black, female politicians have to negotiate life and move through their campaigns and society in ways that are different from their non-BIPOC counterparts? What does this “negotiation” look like in practice? In theory?

Preparatory Notes

0: 049 - 1:15 - Research Fannie Lou Hamer. Who was she and what is her significance to the Civil Rights movement where voting and Black women are concerned? Compare and contrast her journey as a Black, female, politician to that of Mary McLeod Bethune, Shirley Chisholm, and/or Kamala Harris.

01:38 - 02:03 - What do you admire about your opponents both personally and professionally? Why is this a “loaded” question and what can we infer from the then incumbent mayor of New Orleans’ remarks about the relationship between these three mayoral candidates? What role, if any, does gender play in this dialogue?

02:32 - 02:58 - “Y’know I thought that having two Black female candidates would be this transformative moment where I felt like I was really sort’ve seen in a way I hadn’t been but somehow it didn’t feel that way.” If representation matters, how can the aforementioned statement be true?

03:03 - 03:08 - This voice consists entirely of voices of Black women who live in New Orleans. Why is this relevant? Why did the filmmaker make this intentional choice? Tie this back into “representation matters.”

Interpret the title: *All Skinfolk Ain’t Kinfolk*.

How do aesthetics, optics, diction and physical appearance of candidates factor into the political campaign landscape when the candidates are women compared to when they are men? Why is there a specific nuance when those candidates are Black? Black women? Explain.

08:27 - 08:39 - Is the vote still considered our most promising means of establishing equality? Explain.

08:47 - 09:55 - Research Black women’s historic loyalty to the Democratic party in the United States over the past 50 years. Create a timeline to illustrate your findings. Note specific trends/nuances identified. Prepare an analysis of photos included in *All Skinfolk Ain’t Kinfolk* during this 1 minute segment.

10:43 - 11:09 - “Historically, we’ve always had a Black Mayor...we just knew we’d have a Black mayor.” Is this fact of Black Mayorship in New Orleans, Louisiana, typical or atypical of most cities in the United States? Research the mayoral tenures of former New Orleans’ Mayor Marc

Morial, Dutch Morial, Ray Nagin, and Sidney Barthelemey. Why have there not been any Black female mayors or female mayors period in New Orleans?

12:53 - How does the framing by the media of accusations of political misgivings of candidates differ according to the gender and race of the candidate in question?

15:48 - "If we can't even state who we are, how can we talk about anything else?"

*Pause to have a class discussion. This is more than half-way through the documentary. Teachers are recommended to elect to have cohorts of students have a watch party for the remainder of this documentary, taking time-stamped notes, asking questions of the text, etc. just like it's been modeled here. Seasoned teachers are encouraged to make a template to scaffold students' note-taking.

Lesson Objectives

Students will be able to exemplify their analysis of gender and racial discrimination and other oppressive tactics used in political campaigns as it relates to them and the world around them, by creating a WebQuest.

Grade Levels: 9th through 12th

Subject Areas: Gender and Women's Studies, Contemporary U.S. History, Film Studies

Materials Needed: Internet access, computer / tablet, *All Skinfolk Ain't Kinfolk* documentary, as per social commentary format selected by student

Estimated Time Needed: This activity is designed to be 2 class periods (45-60 minutes each), including a homework period. There is room to extend or abbreviate this lesson according to the needs of your student population.

Activity: Web Quest

Use the following steps as a guide to engage your students in a lesson that introduces WebQuests prior to assigning them the task of creating their own WebQuest about *All Skinfolk Ain't Kinfolk*. Teacher divides the documentary into four segments/clips.

- Divide the class into four (4) groups with the goal of each group becoming an expert on their assigned clip.
- Teacher chooses one (1) clip to assign to each group. Each group is to focus on a different clip.
- Have each group of students screen their clip twice, the first time just to watch it and the second time, watching and taking notes about what they found impactful about that clip.
- Next, have the students identify the clip name and have each student in the group create one (1) digital slide that answers a **guided question** asked about the documentary. The information that should be included on the slide is the clip name, the student's name, the

essential question, their response to that question, and a digital image that illustrates their response. The slide can utilize different fonts and colors as the student feels necessary.

- Using the guiding question for the clip assigned to each group as a thought activator, have each student create **one slide for each of the following** bullet points:
 - Three (3) facts they learned from the clip;
 - Two (2) questions the clip raised for them;
 - One (1) graphic or video from the Internet that illustrates their understanding of a key issue revealed in *All Skinfolk Ain't Kinfolk*.
- Next, have each student create additional slides that include the following; create one slide per type of text and one slide for the sentence and accompanying image:
 - A visual representation that illuminates or reflects their response in some way:
 - A *text-to-self*, *text-to-text*, and *text-to-world* connection on each slide:
 - Text-to-self: Connections can be personal connecting lived experiences to the text of the film.
 - Text-to-text: Connections can connect to past class readings, films, songs, etc, from other courses that they've seen outside of school, and remind them that "text" is not limited to the printed word.
 - Text-to-world: This is a broader category that invites students to connect the film to current events, news, and international issues.
 - One sentence and an image of how this connection deepens their understanding and ability to convey what they understand about the intersection of what it means to be a Black woman campaigning to be an elected official.
- After students have completed their slides, guide them to add their completed slides to a class digital presentation. (Google Slides or Prezi will work best as they are online platforms that can be collectively edited.)
- Tell students that these slides will be viewed and discussed by the whole class upon completion as a gallery walk and give students the option (at your discretion) to submit slides with their names on them and/or submit anonymously.
- Invite students to add music to their slides if they think that will deepen the messages they are trying to convey. This will add another layer to this multimodal assignment.
- After reviewing each slide as a class, ask students to write anonymous gratitude letters beginning with the statement "I really appreciated..." and to do it for two slides that stood out to them. Remind them the more specific they can be in what they celebrate, the better. Share out as a classroom celebration.

Extensions (Research-based writing prompts. Teachers can scaffold this according to their students' needs, scope and sequence, etc.)

- Research Fannie Lou Hamer. Who was she and what is her significance to the Civil Rights movement where voting and Black women are concerned? Compare and contrast her journey as a Black, female, politician to that of Mary McLeod Bethune, Shirley Chisholm, and/or Kamala Harris.

- Research Black women's historic loyalty to the Democratic party in the United States over the past 50 years. Create a timeline to illustrate your findings. Note specific trends / nuances identified. Prepare an analysis of photos included in *All Skinfolk Ain't Kinfolk* during this 1 minute segment.
- Research the mayoral tenures of former New Orleans' Mayor Marc Morial, Dutch Morial, Ray Nagin, and Sidney Barthelemey. Why have there not been any Black female mayors or female mayors period in New Orleans?

Group Conversation: Go around asking: Who do we vote for and why? What are the things that are important to you? You can have students break into groups and create their own candidate for mayor of their city. What things do they care about? Have them be specific about the kind of person. What do they do? Where are they from? Have them present their candidates back to the group and have an in class election.

Resources for Further Learning

One Drop: Shifting the Lens on Race by Yaba Blay

This book challenges narrow perceptions of Blackness as both an identity and lived reality to understand the diversity of what it means to be Black in the US and around the world. What exactly is Blackness and what does it mean to be Black? Is Blackness a matter of biology or consciousness? Who determines who is Black and who is not? Who's Black, who's not, and who cares?

Rutgers University Center for American Women and Politics: History of Women of Color in U.S. Politics

This extensive database of information regarding the history of women of color in U.S. politics is a rich resource for research and further learning. The Center also maintains a list of "firsts" as well as information on upcoming Elections.

And She Could Be Next (Lesson Plans)

And She Could Be Next tells the story of a defiant movement of women of color transforming American politics from the ground up. Filmed during the historic 2018 midterm elections, the series follows organizers and candidates as they fight for a truly reflective government, asking whether democracy can be preserved—and made stronger—by those most marginalized. These digital resources focus on the importance of civic engagement, the critical issues of identity in politics, and the power of individuals to impact electoral politics as we strive for a more inclusive democracy. For more information visit [And She Could Be Next](#).

Black Women in Politics

This is a director and database of Black women candidates for office, run by the organization [Higher Heights](#).

High School ELA-LITERACY Standards

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1/CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.4

Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.6 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.7 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9 / CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.11-12.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.