

Introduction to Women's Studies **WSTU 120.10**

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classroom: 2020 K Street, Rm. 7
meeting times: T, R 11:10-12:25
office hours: T, R 10:00-11:00am & by appointment
CRN: 92564

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Course description and goals

This class introduces some key concepts, theories, and perspectives in women's studies, placing women's experiences at the center of interpretation. Looking at both historical and contemporary issues, we will examine women's lives, experiences, and thoughts with an emphasis on how gender interacts with race, class, religion, sexual orientation, culture, and politics. The central objectives are to foster critical reading and thinking about women's lives and the ways in which systems of dominance, discrimination, and control; institutionalized inequalities; and related systems of colonialism, globalization, racism, gender bias, differences of social class, and heterosexism shape women's and men's lives. Of equal importance is understanding how women have responded to these inequalities and worked to create new systems of change, not least of all by engaging in local, national, and global transformational politics.

The most important goals of this class are as follows:

1. To understand some of the major themes and points of view that have emerged in the study of women as an academic discipline
2. To facilitate understanding of some of the social and institutional pressures and interests that maintain gender inequity.
3. To expand our worldview by considering the lives of women from a diverse array of backgrounds, in their similarities and their differences.
4. To sharpen writing and thinking skills: description, comparison, interpretation, and critical inquiry

Course Structure

Except for the first few weeks, which will be primarily lecture-driven with time for questions, the class will combine lecture and discussion, with expectations that student performance and participation will increase and improve. The last twenty minutes of class (more as needed) will be devoted to in-class discussion, and *everyone* is expected to participate in discussions during the semester. If you have a fear of speaking in class, it is important that you come see me as soon as possible, since non-participation in discussions will adversely affect your grade. All students should feel free to speak their minds, but be sensitive to the opinions and beliefs of others.


Required texts for purchase

1. Kolmar, Wendy, and Frances Bartkowski, *Feminist Theory: a Reader* (2005) – **FT**
2. Hernández, Daisy, and Bushra Rehman, *Colonize This! Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism* (2002) – **CT**
3. Nagel, *Race, Ethnicity, and Sexuality* -- **RES**
4. Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck, and John Esposito, *Daughters of Abraham* (2001) - **DA**

Optional texts for purchase

1. Mayer, *Gender Ironies of Nationalism* (this is also available as an e-book through the Gelman library website)

****Please note****

- There are also other required readings on our course website on Blackboard. Some of these readings are listed under “files,” (noted by the symbol **Bb**) while others are on the “**Electronic reserves**” page (noted by the symbol ).
- The book by Tamar Mayer, *Gender Ironies of Nationalism*, is available free as an e-book through the Gelman library website. Just search the catalog by title and click on the link at the bottom of the entry. You may have to download the ebrary reader software and an Active X control in order to view the book if you are using your own computer.

Course requirements and grades

Participation and attendance are *essential*. Missing more than 3 classes will lower your attendance and participation grade by one grade (for example from A to A-); there will be no excused absences except in cases of severe illness and **ONLY** with a doctor's note. Emailing or telling me that you will be missing class does not excuse you from attendance, and it is your responsibility to schedule work/internships, book plane tickets, or make other travel plans in accordance with the academic calendar. Missing a significant number of classes will lower your overall grade. Grades will be based on the following criteria:

| % | Assignment/exam | Due dates |
|----------|--|---|
| 40% | 4 “reflection” papers. (10% each) | Feb 14; April 1; April 22; May 5 |
| 20% | Journal | Twice a month: mid-month and end of month |
| 15% | Mid-term exam | March 11 |
| 10% | Presentation (as presenter and primary respondent) | various |
| 15% | attendance and participation | |

Papers:

Three short (2-3 page) papers and one longer (5-6 page) “reflection” paper worth 10% each; you have a choice between topics I will provide, or you may choose your own, subject to the instructor's approval. These papers are intended to get you to engage the texts we will be reading in an analytical, comparative way. For this reason, no outside research is involved. Although you may pose questions as part of your analysis, the papers are not intended for you to simply ask questions. They should be carefully thought-out statements of opinion and observation, in dialogue with the texts we read and the views they offer.

Presentations:

Presenter:

Your presentation should be posted to Blackboard *at least one day* (24 hours) before the scheduled readings. For example, a presentation on the readings for February 7th must be posted to Blackboard by 11:10 am on February 6th. We will discuss the ideas brought up in these presentations in class on the day of the readings, but they will also provide ongoing material for discussion in relation to other readings in the class. Presentations may be made on any of the materials *except* for the readings that are due on those days that papers are also due.

The presentation should NOT simply be a summary of the author's or authors' work, but rather, an analysis of the work(s) being read. The responsibility of the presenter is to provide a critical evaluation of the assigned readings for the day. This evaluation may include but is not limited to, a) posing a set of questions that interrogates the authors' key ideas and arguments b) extracting the author's thesis idea or key ideas and comparing and contrasting this (these) with ideas that have emerged from our other readings c) offering suggestions for questions or avenues of inquiry that will push the boundaries of what the author has already presented, or d) comparing and contrasting key ideas expressed by the author(s) for that day with other works we have already read in class. **The presenter must upload a copy of the presentation** to the discussion board on Blackboard, but will need to confer with the primary respondent earlier so that s/he may have enough time to formulate her or his response.

Primary Respondent:

The responsibility of the primary respondent is to provide a direct response to the presenter's material: this may include, but should not be limited to one of the following: rebuttal, critical inquiries, point(s) of agreement and/or disagreement, suggestions for further inquiries. **The primary respondent is also required to upload a copy of the response** to the discussion board on Blackboard. The response may be uploaded *up to one day after* (24 hours) the presentation has been given.

Journal:

These journal entries are intended to encourage you to reflect and think further on class readings, lectures, and discussions, and to help you retain more knowledge about the topics and material we explore. They will also help you articulate your thoughts and improve your writing over the course of the semester.

Beginning the week of Feb. 5th, you should keep a bi-monthly journal, writing at least 2 double-spaced pages for each entry using the "journals" links in Blackboard, located in the "Discussions" folder. **Not submitting a journal entry will detract** from your total journal grade, though you are allowed a "free pass" to miss one entry this semester without harming your grade. You may submit your entries earlier than mid-month and the end of the month as you finish the readings. At least once a month (and probably twice) I will comment on your journal entries. There is no precise formula for these entries, but they should demonstrate critical thinking as much as possible. The grades for these journal entries will be visible through the "gradebook" link in Blackboard.

The journal entry should not simply be a summary of the readings, lectures, or class discussions, but a forum for you to make connections between the readings, lectures, and discussions on the one hand, and between this class and your other academic and extra-academic interests, activities, and experiences on the other. Be attentive to the readings and their possible applications in real-life situations. The entries should reflect your opinions, questions, observations, doubts, points of agreement and disagreement, et al. You don't need to worry about format or style considerations (you don't need to formally cite texts, but do take care to mention any text and/or author you cite, especially if it's a direct quote). Your writing should be informal but concise, with complete, coherent sentences (for the most part).

Please **save a copy** of all your journal entries. I can't emphasize this enough, as Blackboard's technology is not perfect, and sometimes your papers don't get posted correctly (meaning, I can't read them on my end – I will let you know if this is the case).

COURSE OUTLINE

I. Introductory remarks; overview of course

Tuesday, January 22

II. Knowledge production: women's studies then and now (1st, 2nd, and 3rd wave feminisms)

Thursday, January 24

* FT readings can be found in Part I (most of the reading in FT is short, except as noted)

1. FT: Kolmar and Bartkowski, "Lexicon" pp. 42-60
2. Bb: Adrienne Rich, "Taking Women Students Seriously"
3. FT: Treichler and Kramarare, "Feminism"
4. FT: Alice Walker, "Womanist"
5. FT: Lugones and Spelman, "Have We Got a Theory for You!"
6. Bb: Ellen du Bois: Feminism Old Wave and New Wave

Tuesday, January 29

* FT readings can be found in Part II

1. FT: Mary Wollstonecraft, from "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman"
2. FT: Sarah Grimké, fr, "Letters on the Equality of the Sexes..."
3. FT: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Declaration of Sentiments"
4. FT: Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I a Woman" and "Keep the Thing Going While Things are Stirring"
5. FT: Mary Church Terrell, "The Progress of Colored Women"
6. FT: Emma Goldman, "The Traffic in Women"
7. FT: Alexandra Kollontai, "Working Woman & Mother"

Thursday, January 31

** FT readings can be found in Parts IV & V (aside from de Beauvoir)**


1. FT: Simone de Beauvoir, "from the Second Sex" pp. 175-86
2. FT: Betty Freidan, "The Problem that Has no Name"
3. FT: National Organization for Women (NOW) Statement of Purpose
4. FT: Shulamith Firestone, from "The Dialectic of Sex"
5. FT: Fatima Mernissi, "Women's Liberation in Muslim Countries..."
6. FT: Mary Daly, "The Metapatriarchal Journey of Exorcism and Ecstasy"

Tuesday, February 5

** FT readings can be found in Parts IV & V (aside from Anzaldúa)**

1. FT: Gloria Anzaldúa, "La Conciencia de la Mestiza..." pp. 420-26.
2. FT: Radicalesbians, "The Woman-Identified Woman"
3. FT: Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence"
4. FT: Jo Freeman, "The BITCH Manifesto"
5. Bb: Jo Freeman, "Trashing: the Dark Side of Sisterhood"

Thursday, February 7

1. Bb: Howie and Tauchert, "Feminist Dissonance: The Logic of Late Feminism"
2.  Heywood and Drake, "It's all About the Benjamins,"
3. Bb: Garrison, "Contests for the Meaning of Third Wave Feminism..."
4. CT: Rehman and Hernández, "Introduction"


Tuesday, February 12

1. CT: Cristina Tzintzún, “Colonize This!”
2. CT: Susan Muaddi Darraj, “It’s Not an Oxymoron: the Search for an Arab Feminism”
3. CT: Darice Jones, “Falling off the Tightrope onto a Bed of Feathers”


III. Borders and Border Crossings

Thursday, February 14

**** 1st reflection paper due****

1. FT: Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference” pp. 338-42
2. FT: Charlotte Bunch, “Not for Lesbians Only” pp. 252-56
3. FT: bell hooks, “Feminism: a Transformational Politic” pp. 464-66
4. CT: Lisa Weiner-Mahfuz, “Organizing 101”
5.  Veronica Chambers, “Betrayal Feminism”

Tuesday, February 19


1.  Chandra Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes,” pp. 61-74
(please read the full text on Blackboard, not the excerpt in FT)
2. Bb: CEDAW: text of the convention

Thursday, February 21

1.  Chandra Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes,” pp. 74-87

IV: Religion and Women


Tuesday, February 26

1. DA: Leila Berner, “Hearing Hannah’s Voice”
2. FT: Judith Plaskow, “Jewish Memory from a Feminist Perspective” pp. 413-20
3.  Robin M. Neidorf, “Two Jews, Three Opinions”

Thursday, February 28

1. DA: Alice Laffey, “The Influence of Feminism on Christianity”
2. DA: Rosemary Radford Ruether, “Christian Feminist Theology: History and Future”
3. FT: Elaine H. Pagels, “What Became of God the Mother?” pp. 305-11

Tuesday, March 4

1.  Salma Ahmed Nageeb, “Hiba”
2. DA: Amira Sonbol, “Rethinking Women and Islam”

V: Race, Ethnicity, and Culture

Thursday, March 6

1. CT: Juleykha Lantigua, “Man of the House”
2. CT: Siobhan Brooks, “Black Feminism in Everyday Life”
3. CT: Tanmeet Sethi, “Ladies Only”

Tuesday, March 11

*****Mid-term exam*****

Thursday, March 13

1. RES: "Introduction" and "Ethnosexual Frontiers" pp. 1-36

No Classes: Spring Break March 17-21


Tuesday, March 25

1. Chiu, *Troublemaker and Other Saints* ("Doctor", "Trader", "Beauty", "Mama")

Thursday, March 27
(pickup handout in class)


1. Bb: Sonia Shah: The Co-optation of Asian American Feminism
2. CT: Pandora Leong, "Living Outside the Box"
FT: Mitsuye Yamada, "Asian Pacific American Women and Feminism" pp. 365-68

Tuesday, April 1
**** 2nd reflection paper due****

1.  film: "Transnational Tradeswomen"
1. UN statistics on women and work


VI: Violence against Women, Violence and Women

Thursday, April 3


1.  UNIFEM Report "Not a Minute More: Ending Violence against Women", (read "Outlawing Violence", "An Agenda for Moving Forward", and "Recommendations")
2. FT: The Beijing Declaration pp. 521-25

VII: Gender, Patriarchy, Privilege on a Global Scale

Tuesday, April 8

1.  Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes Revisited" pp. 499-516

Thursday, April 10


1.  Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes Revisited" pp. 516-35

Tuesday, April 15



1. Bb: Peggy Mc Intosh, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies" (1988)

VIII. The Body and Sexuality

Thursday, April 17

1.  (and e-book/Gelman) Mayer, "Death of a Nation/Ireland" and "Gender, Sexuality, and the Military Model of US National Community," pp. 65-88, 309-28

Tuesday, April 22
**** 3rd reflection paper due****

1. FT: Judith Butler from *Gender Trouble* pp. 496-504
2.  Rebecca Walker, "Lusting for Freedom"
3.  Alisa L. Valdés, "Ruminations of a Feminist Aerobics Instructor"
4. CT: Serena J. Riley "The Black Beauty Myth"

Thursday, April 24

1. RES: "Sex and Tourism" and "Sex and Globalization" pp. 200-54

Tuesday, April 29

Make-up classes

May 5th: **** 4th reflection paper due: turn in to religion dept. office****