

Women and Gender Studies Program, Georgetown University

Introduction to Gender Studies

WGST-253, Spring 2017

Mon / Wed, Time: _____ Room: _____

Professor: Dr. Siobhán McGuirk — sm3276@georgetown.edu

Office Hours: Mon/Wed, 12.30—1.30pm
Or by appointment via Skype

Response time: I will respond to brief emails within 36 hours
I will return coursework within one week

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

What is gender and how does it shape our lives? In this course, we will examine how gender— together with the closely related concepts of sex, and sexuality— informs questions of personhood, power, access, rights, identity, relationships, and norms in diverse social contexts. We will explore the broadly and critically defined “genealogies” of women’s and gender studies, and investigate the key concepts, theoretical debates, ideologies, and historical significance of the discipline. Over the semester, we will tackle the social construction of identity categories and difference, questions of privilege and access, the meaning and history of the feminist movement, and practices of activism and social movements with reference to a variety of historical moments and geographical locations. Adopting an interdisciplinary perspective, we will contextualize our investigation of these issues with reference to overlapping categories, including race, class, nationality, ethnicity, and sexuality.

Course Objectives

By the end of the semester, you will be able to:

- Understand and utilize key terms in the field of women's studies, including: gender, sex, sexuality, race, culture, ideology, identity, discourse, oppression, objectification, subjectivity, power, politics, intersectionality, patriarchy, feminism, and privilege.
- Be familiar with and have practice engaging with a range of interdisciplinary methods central to Women's Studies and feminist scholarship.
- Be able to apply the critical frameworks of Women's Studies to current events and cultural practices.
- Articulate the ways that gender, sexuality, race, class, and ability are circumscribed by power, politics, and cultural practice in both a national and transnational context.
- Develop and present arguments addressing a wide array of topics in Women’s Studies.
- Understand how historical rights movements inform the world we live in, and remain relevant for today.
- Use Women’s Studies and feminism to reimagine who we are, who we can be, and how we might live together in non-oppressive ways.

II. ASSESSMENTS

Active Participation (20%)

I expect you to come to class having read all assigned materials closely and carefully, and prepared to engage in lively discussion of the ideas, arguments, and evidence presented in the readings. We will have large and small group discussions during class time, so bring your marked up texts and notes with you each time. I encourage and expect active listening and respectful interactions between all students. To this end, I discourage the continuous use of computers and other electronic devices. If you must use a computer, you must only use it for relevant purposes. If I become aware that you are not doing this, I will ask you to leave. If you use your cell phone, I will ask you to leave. If you miss classes, are habitually late to class, or are asked to leave a class, you will be marked as absent.

Feminism in my World Essay (10%)

A personal essay in which you will reflect on your own “genealogy”—how have your relationships and contacts with people and places shaped your understanding of gender and/or relationship to feminism? You may choose to interview someone (friend or family or acquaintance); to reflect on your high school, a teacher you had, your neighborhood, a local sports team; to review one of your favorite authors’ texts. The aim is to uncover how close and in what ways feminism has been present or absent in your life and relations with others.

In-Class Quizzes (10%)

I will set occasional, 5-10 minute “quizzes” throughout the semester. These will consist of short answer questions, or short reflection prompts. Some will be graded, for others it is the reflective process that is important. Your best five results will be counted for your grade.

Take Home Mid-Term (20%)

You will have a week to complete the assignment. I will provide full details in advance.

Two-Minute Manifesto (10%)

Drawing upon the methods from feminist consciousness-raising (observation, analysis, and abstraction), you will write and deliver your own manifesto in class in a (strictly timed!) 2-minute performance (approx. one double-spaced page).

Final Project (30%)

A project on the topic of your choice that draws upon the readings and issues discussed in class. Your project could, for instance, explore a historical moment in feminist history, analyze a particular cultural phenomenon or recent event from a feminist lens, focus on a particular issue at Georgetown, etc. There are multiple format options: a formal research paper; a creative essay; a zine; a video; a podcast. I will provide further details about length etc. in a separate handout, as this will depend on the format chosen. You must submit a topic statement (two pages plus draft bibliography), which will be reviewed by two of your classmates as well as by me. Your grade will be based on the proposal (5%) and the final submission (25%).

Note: Assignments are due at the indicated deadline, in hard copy (not emailed). You must contact me at least 24-hours in advance if you must, for some reason, hand in an assignment late. I grant extensions only in exceptional circumstances. Put your name and page number on every page. Use pt. 12-font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, and staple pages together.

Review and Grading

Following Georgetown guidelines I will grade your work as:

A: Excellent // B: Good // C: Adequate // D: Unsatisfactory or incomplete // F: Fail.

III. POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Attendance: You are required to attend all classes, with exceptions only in the case of medical need, family emergency or observation of religious holidays. Email me in advance if you must miss a class, and arrange to catch up on readings, notes and discussions from a classmate. Unsanctioned absences will result in you dropping points from your Participation score.

Code of Honor and Academic Integrity: You must comply with the Georgetown University honor code, which you can find at: <http://www.georgetown.edu/honor/sanctionguide.html>. Georgetown treats plagiarism as a serious offense. If you are worried about your understanding of plagiarism, talk to me before submitting your first assignment.

Classroom Environment: I expect universally respectful interactions in classroom discussions. When examining our texts, we can expect many differing perspectives, disagreements, and debates. This is great, and necessary: such dialogue increases understanding. When challenging someone else's perspective, however, you must refrain from personal attacks and always be respectful in responding. Failure to abide by these rules may result in a lowered course grade and, if necessary, a request to leave the classroom. We will discuss classroom policies further during our first session.

Course Content: Some of the texts for course are explicit in their treatment of sex, of bodies, of violence. Readings and discussions may be demanding in ways that are unexpected, may challenge deeply held beliefs and may be upsetting, at points. Engagement in these materials demands an open and even approach. If you are not inclined to work with explicit material, I encourage you to find a course that better suits.

TEXTS AND SYLLABUS

There are no required textbooks for this course. Assigned texts and media are from diverse sources, providing you with interdisciplinary perspectives on course themes. I have placed readings on electronic reserve (send me an e-mail if you encounter any problems with the electronic reserves during the semester) or in the "Readings & Media" listing on Blackboard. Should I need to make any changes to the syllabus, I will announce them in class and via Blackboard.

Ensure that you have access to this course on Blackboard and that you check your Georgetown e-mail regularly.

IV. CLASS SCHEDULE

All assignments and readings are due on the date indicated.

1: Setting the Scene

W Jan 11 Introduction

- Adrienne Rich (1977) "Claiming an Education"

M Jan 16 No class: MLK Day

- *Listen*: Premilla Nadasen (2010) Rethinking the Civil Rights Movement [LINK]

W Jan 18 Perspectives on Gender

- Judith Lorber (1994) "The Social Construction of Gender"
- Alma Gottlieb (2002) "Interpreting Gender and Sexuality: Approaches from Cultural Anthropology"

M Jan 23 Introducing Feminism

- Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards (2000) "A Day Without Feminism"
- hooks, bell (2000) "Come Closer to Feminism" & "Where We Stand"
- Roxanne Gay (2014) "Feminism: Plural"

W Jan 25 Gender Studies, Feminism and Our Present Political Moment

- Three short articles on President Trump—see Bb folder

M Jan 30 Studying Gender at Georgetown

- Michele Tracy Berger and Cheryl Radeloff (2011) "Transform Yourself: An Invitation to Explore Women and Gender Studies"
- Ross Wantland (2005) "Feminist Frat Boys? Fraternity Men in the (Women's Studies) House"
- Ian Scoville (2016) "Sexual Assault Survey Results Published" *The Hoya*

*** *Feminism In My World due in class (hard copy), Monday 1/30* ***

2: Science, Knowledge, & Social Norms

W Feb 1 Science, Sex, & Gender I

- Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000) "Dueling Dualisms" In *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*

M Feb 6 Science, Sex, & Gender II

- Suzanne Kessler (1990) "The Medical Construction of Gender: Case Management of Intersexual Infants"

W Feb 8 Science, History, Race and Gender

- Anne Fausto-Sterling (1995) "Gender, Race and Nation: The Comparative Anatomy of 'Hottentot' Women in Europe, 1815–1817." In *Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture*.
- Timothy Juang (2014) "On Feminine, Desexualized Asian Men: Beyond Emasculation, Toward Re-appropriation" [plus comments section]

M Feb 13 Medicalizing the Gendered Body

- Helen Meekosha (2002) "Gender and Disability"
- Meika Loe (2004) "The Rise of Erectile Dysfunction." In *The Rise of Viagra: How the Little Blue Pill Changed Sex in America*.
- *Optional*: Elizabeth Sheehan (1981) "Victorian Clitoridectomy: Isaac Baker Brown and His Harmless Operative Procedure"

W Feb 15 Science & Sexuality

- Emily Martin (1991) "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles"

M Feb 20 No Class: President's Day

- Uri Friedman (2016) "Why It's So Hard for a Woman to Become President of the United States"

W Feb 22 Gender, Sexuality and Childhood

- Karin Martin and Emily Kazyak (2009) "Hetero-Romantic Love and Heterosexiness in Children's G-Rated Films"
- Lisa Selin Davis (n.d.) "My Daughter Wants to be a Boy!" and Nancy Kalish (n.d.) "My Son Doesn't Act Like a Boy!" both from *Parenting.com*

NOTE: Mid-term take home exam handed will be posted on Blackboard Friday February 24

M Feb 27 Buying Into Gender

- Strate, Lance (1992). "Beer Commercials: A Manual on Masculinity" In *Men, Masculinity, and the Media*
- Maglaty, Jeanne (2011) "When Did Girls Start Wearing Pink?" In *Smithsonian Magazine*
- Bloomberg (2012) "Toymakers See Profit in Going 'Gender Neutral'"

3: Waves of Feminist Analyses

W Mar 1 The First Wave

- Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1848) "The Declaration of Sentiments"
- Sojourner Truth (1851) "Aint I a Woman?"
- Charlotte Perkins Gillman (1892) "The Yellow Wallpaper"

***** Mid-term exam due Friday March 3, by 5pm, via Blackboard submission *****

NO CLASS MARCH 6 & 8 – ENJOY YOUR SPRING BREAK!

M Mar 13 The Second Wave

- Betty Friedan (1963) *The Feminine Mystique* [Excerpts]
- The National Organization for Women Statement of Purpose (1966)
- Jo Freeman (1971) “The Women’s Liberation Movement: Its Origins, Structures, and Ideals”

W Mar 15 Manifest This!

- Selection of Feminist Manifestos (see Bb folder)

M Mar 20 The Two Minute Manifestos of WGST-140-Spring 2017!

***** Two-Minute Manifestos due to be performed in class. Bring hard copy to hand in. *****

4: Difference, Privilege, and Possibility: Intersectional Feminist Analyses

W Mar 22 Oppressions & Oppressors

- Audre Lorde (1984) “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House”
- Kimberlé Crenshaw (2003) “Traffic at the Crossroads: Multiple Oppressions”
- Michael Kimmel (2002) “Toward a Pedagogy of the Oppressor”

M Mar 27 “Victims” & “Saviors”

- Abu Lughod, Lila (2002) “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others”
- Teju Cole (2012) “The White Savior Industrial Complex”
- Lauren Chief Elk (2014) “There is no ‘We:’ V-Day, Indigenous Women, and the Myth of Shared Gender Oppression”

W Mar 29 Gender, Sexuality & Social Regulation I

- Weeks, Jeffrey (2003) “The Invention of Sexuality”
- Susan Pharr (1997) “Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism”

***** Two-page Research Project proposal due in class (hard copy), Wednesday 3/29 *****

M Apr 3 Gender, Sexuality & Social Regulation II

- Mogul, Ritchie, and Whitlock (2012) “Introduction” In *Queer Injustice: The Criminalization of LGBT People in the United States*
- Kristen Schilt and Laurel Westbrook (2015) “Bathroom Battlegrounds and Penis Panics”

5: Rethinking Gender: International perspectives

W Apr 5 Defining Transgender

- National Center for Transgender Equality (2014) “Transgender Terminology”
- David Valentine (2007) “Introduction.” In *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category*.
- Janet Mock (2014) “Introduction” In *Redefining Realness*

M Apr 10 Female Masculinities

- Megan Sinnott (2004). “Gender Ambivalence in Tom and Dee Identities”. In *Toms and Dees: Transgender Identity and Female Same-sex Relationships in Thailand*.
- BUTCH (2015) a photo project from Meg Allen Studio.

W Apr 12 Travesti, Hijra, and Other Global Genders

- Kulick, Don (1997) “The Gender of Brazilian Transgendered Prostitutes.” *American Anthropologist*.
- *Podcast*: BBC World Have Your Say (2014), “Indian Court Recognizes Third Gender” (excerpt 31:50mins—end).

M Apr 17 NO CLASS: EASTER BREAK

6: Topics in Gender Studies—Analysis in Action

W Apr 19 Labor

- Barbara Ehrenreich (2000) “Maid to Order: The Politics of Other Women’s Work”
- Mimi Abromowitz (2012) “The Feminization of Austerity”

M Apr 24 Body Image

- Sandra Lee Bartky (1988) “Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power”
- Excerpts from *Fat: The Anthropology of an Obsession* (2005): Rebecca Popenoe, “Ideal”; Fanny Ambjornsson, “Talk”
- Mychal Denzel Smith (2014) “Nikki Minaj’s Butt and the Politics of Black Women’s Sexuality”
- *Podcast*: “Dreaded “Otherness”: Heteronormative Patrolling in Women’s Body Hair Rebellions”

W Apr 26 Gender Goes Viral

- Felicity Schaeffer-Grabiel (2006) “Planet-Love.com: Cyberbrides in the Americas and the Transnational Routes of U.S. Masculinity”
- Amanda Hess (2014) “Why Women Aren’t Welcome on the Internet”
- Holten, Emma (2014) “Consent: An Objection” In *HYSTERIA #5*.

M May 1 Student's Choice: Topic & Readings TBC

***** Final Paper due on your final exam date: _____ *****

VI. Life Resources

Georgetown University provides numerous services that help students maximize their academic success and social and emotional wellbeing, from the Writing Center to an array of counseling services. I encourage you to make use of them as needed, and to communicate with me if you are experiencing any difficulties in meeting course expectations.