WGST 120: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN’S AND GENDER STUDIES

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 12:30-1:45, Wednesday 11-12, and by appointment

Course Description and Goals:

This course introduces students to the discipline of Women's and Gender Studies by analyzing women's roles and women's contributions to culture from the perspective of the recent scholarship on women; we will also explore developments in the field of masculinity studies. We will be primarily concerned with the complex interactions between gender and other social divisions such as race, class, and sexual orientation, both in the assigned readings and in our own writing and discussion. We will address the following issues, among others: the politics of women's work, the representation of women's bodies in the media, male violence and violence against women, healthcare and reproductive rights, and global feminism. We will look briefly at the history of feminist movements in the U.S., and will explore different theoretical perspectives that feminists have used to understand women's experience. The objective of the course is to allow students to demonstrate the skills of feminist critical analysis through clear discussion, written response papers, two exams, and a final paper.

Required Texts:

Barbara Ehrenreich, Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America (Henry Holt and Co., 2001)
bell hooks, Feminism is for Everybody (Cambridge: South End Press, 2000)
Kris Holloway, Monique and the Mango Rains (Waveland Press, 2007)

Additional readings available over eRes (Password = WGST 120)

Course Format:

Classes will be conducted primarily as discussions, dependent upon your active interest and participation. It is your responsibility to:

- be in class regularly and on time
- come to class prepared (i.e., read material when due, bring materials to class, be ready to discuss, etc.)
- submit assignments on time
- participate in a positive manner (i.e., don’t dominate discussion, don’t interrupt others, be clear and to the point, involve others in discussion, listen actively to others)

Course Requirements:

- **Films and Events:** In addition to assigned readings, you are also responsible for **watching films outside of class.** If you cannot attend the scheduled screenings, you are responsible for arranging to view the film **before the class discussion.** A screening schedule is attached to this syllabus. There will also be **required co-curricular activities,** which will be announced in class.

- **Response Papers:** For the first part of the course, you will write your own definition of feminism and seven informal papers responding to the materials assigned for that class or week (as well as to any events that might be relevant). This response paper should be similar to a journal entry, in which you reflect on what struck you about the readings, what questions you might have, what connections you can make with your own experience, other readings, current events, etc. Your papers should be typed and double-spaced; they should be at least a page, but can be as long as you wish. **You must discuss at least two of the assigned readings and, if appropriate, the week’s film, in each response.** You may also be asked to post a synopsis of your response on the class discussion board.
• **Group Presentation:** For the theory section of the course, we will do something a little different. The class will be divided into six groups: each group will be responsible for presenting one strand of feminist theory (liberal, radical, cultural, Marxist/socialist, multicultural, and gender-inclusive) on the date given on the syllabus. For your presentation, your group will first summarize the theory's basic precepts and then assess what you believe to be its strengths and weaknesses. You will also be responsible for identifying important proponents of, and/or organizations related to, your particular theory, and writing two questions related to your theory for class discussion. Each presentation should also be accompanied by a handout, which should contain an outline of the main points, any relevant bibliographic information (i.e., if you have done additional research), your discussion questions, and anything else your group considers significant. Please note that your presentation should be just that—a presentation. Do not, therefore, simply read from your handout. Instead, try to present your information to the class in the most engaging way possible.

• **Midterm and Final Examinations:** These will be given as take-home examinations.

• **Final Paper Project:** For your final paper, you will be required to design, implement, and evaluate a Community-Based Learning project, in which you will put into practice many of the issues discussed in class. Details of this project will be provided in class.

• To receive full credit for each assignment, you must submit it on the date indicated on the syllabus.

**Evaluation:**

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Response papers</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group theory presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm exam</td>
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<td>Final exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>CBL project and paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Attendance and participation</td>
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SCHEDULE OF READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS
Unless otherwise noted, all films will be for out-of-class viewing.

I. INTRODUCTION: What is feminism? What is Women’s and Gender Studies?

1/17  R  Introduction to course
Adrienne Rich, “Claiming an Education” (handout)
Jean Kilbourne, Killing Us Softly 3 (1999): in-class viewing
Margaret Post to class to discuss Community-Based Learning

1/22  T  Issues: Ch. 1, “Women’s Studies, Feminism, and the Women’s Movement” (1-20, 28-32)
        Howe, “Promises to Keep: Trends in Women’s Studies Worldwide” (46-56)
        Gillespie, “Get Out of the Kitchen” (57-58)
Cahill, Women on the Hill: Preface and Chs. 1, 2, 3: The Decision, The Transition, Academics
Response due: Defining feminism/what feminism means to me

II. THE SEX-GENDER SYSTEM

1/24  R  Patriarchy
Issues: Ch. 2, “Patriarchy, Sexism, and Masculinity” (61-74)
        “Religion” (454-58)
        Daly, “The Church and the Second Sex” (150-155)
Women on the Hill, Ch. 4: Spirituality
Read: John McKnight, “Services are Bad for People” (handout)
In-class discussion of CBL projects

1/29  T  Sex-Role Socialization (Response No. 1 due)
Issues: Ch. 3, “The Portrayal of Women in Patriarchy: Ideals, Stereotypes, and Roles” (124-37)
FP:       Renzetti and Curran, “Gender Socialization” (4-25)
        Gould, “X: A Fabulous Child’s Story” (26-31)
Issues: Freedman, “Myth America Grows Up” (138-47)
Women on the Hill, Ch. 6: Sports
Film: Mary Mazzio, A Hero for Daisy (1999)

1/31  R  Masculinities
Issues: Kimmel, “What Are Little Boys Made Of?” (75-78)
        Easlea, “Patriarchy, Scientists, and Nuclear Warriors” (79-91)
        Mantilla, “Child Violence: It’s a Male Thing” (92-93)
        Connell, “Masculinities and Globalization” (117-23)
In-class clips from Jackson Katz, Tough Guise

2/5   T  Popular Culture: Language, Mass Media, & Body Image (Response No. 2 due)
eRes:   Richardson, “Gender Stereotyping in the English Language”
        August, “Anti-Male Bias in English”
FP:     Baker, “Pricks’ and ‘Chicks’: A Plea for ‘Persons’” (34-45)
Issues: hooks, “Teaching Resistance: The Racial Politics of Mass Media” (483-87)
        Chernik, “The Body Politic” (289-93)
        http://www.holycross.edu/departments/publicaffairs/hcm/03fa/features/feature1.html
Film: Chyng Feng Sun, Mickey Mouse Monopoly (2001)

Community-Based Learning project proposal due
III. INSTITUTIONS PART I: Work and Economics

2/7  R  Women, Work, and the Feminization of Poverty
FP:  Segura, “Inside the Work Worlds of Chicana and Mexican Immigrant Women” (180-89)
Kaufman, “Professional Women: How Real Are the Recent Gains?” (189-202)
eRes:  Brady, “I Want a Wife”
Barbara Ehrenreich, Nickel and Dimed, pp. 1-49
Film:  Connie Field, The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter (1980)

2/12  T  Nickel and Dimed, pp. 51-end.  (Response No. 3 due)
•  Lisa Belkin, “The Feminine Critique” (NY Times 11/1/2007)
•  Sara Rimer, “Elite Colleges Open New Door to Low-Income Youths” (NY Times 5/27/2007)

IV. THE BODY & SEXUALITY PART I

2/14  R  Social Constructions of Biology, Gender, Sexuality
Issues:  In Ch. 6, “Sexuality” (273-74)
  Martin, “The Egg and the Sperm” (473-82)
eRes:  Anne Fausto-Sterling, “The Five Sexes, Revisited”
  Betsy Lucal, “What It Means to Be Gendered Me”
  Michael A. Messner, “Becoming 100% Straight”
Women on the Hill, Ch. 5: Social Life

2/19  T  Violence Against Women  (Response No. 4 due)
Issues:  In Ch. 6, “Violence” and “Protection” (274-78)
FP:  Sheffield, “Sexual Terrorism” (45-60)
Issues:  Unknown, “The Rape of Mr. Smith” (340)
  Hill, “Sexual Harassment” (405-407)
eRes:  Medea and Thompson, “The Little Rapes”
  Steinem, “Erotica and Pornography”
Women on the Hill, Ch. 7: Security
Film:  Niki Caro, North Country (2005)

2/19 or 2/20  Required attendance at The Vagina Monologues

2/21  R  Violence Against Women, continued
Discussion of The Vagina Monologues
Hand out midterm exam

V. INSTITUTIONS PART II: Health Care and Global Women’s Health

2/26  T  Health Care/Reproductive Rights  (Response No. 5 due)
Issues:  In Ch. 6, “Health” and “Abortion” (266-73)
  Salk, et al., “The Politics of Women and Medical Care” (355-73)
  Chesler, “Letters to a Young Feminist on Sex and Reproductive Freedom” (320-24)
  Hoffman, “Twenty Seven Years … Thoughts on Yet Another Roe v. Wade” (325-28)
FP:  Davis, “Racism, Birth Control, and Reproductive Rights” (81-91)
  Castonguay, “Pro-Life Feminism” (92-95)
Kris Holloway, Monique and the Mango Rains, pp. 1-45.

Midterm Exam due

Spring Break

3/11 T Monique and the Mango Rains, 46-end.

3/13 R CBL midterm reflection due
In-class discussion of CBL projects

VI. THE BODY & SEXUALITY PART II: LGBTQ Issues

3/18 T Lesbian Ideology and Gay Rights
Penelope, “The Lesbian Perspective” (299-307)
eRes: Bawer, “Homophobia”
Panel Presentation: ABiGaLe (Association of bisexual, gay, and lesbian students)

3/20 R Easter Break

Discussion of articles, film, panel
Response No. 6 due
Assign Groups for Theory Presentation

VII. HISTORY OF U.S. FEMINISM

3/27 R No class [In-class showing of Iron Jawed Angels]

4/1 T Issues: Ch. 9: “Our Feminist Foremothers: Events and Arguments” (505-515)
“Rediscovering American Women: A Chronology…” (516-33)
Seneca Falls Declaration (541-43)
Sojourner Truth, “Ain’t I A Woman?” (544-45)
NOW Bill of Rights (575-77)
The Beijing Declaration (584-89)
“The ERA: What Is It, Why Do We Need It, and Why Don’t We Have It Yet?” (424-27)

VIII. THEORIES OF FEMINISM

4/3 R Issues: from Ch. 1, “Women’s Studies and Feminist Theory” (20-28)
bell hooks, Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics
eRes: Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”
Response No. 7 due

4/8 T FP: “Liberal Feminism” (310-12)
Okin, “Justice, Gender and the Family” (313-31)
Steinem, “Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions” (345-49)
“Radical Feminism” (350-53)
Frye, “Some Reflections on Separatism and Power” (359-66)

Issues: MacKinnon, “Consciousness Raising” (459-66)

4/10  R  FP: “Cultural Feminism” (381-83)
Gilligan, “Visions of Maturity” (384-98)
Noddings, “Women and Caring” (398-404)

“Marxist/Socialist Feminism” (413-15)
Reed, “Women: Caste, Class or Oppressed Sex?” (415-24)
Hartmann, “Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism” (424-433)

4/15  T  FP: “Toward Multicultural Feminism” (473-74)
hooks, “Sisterhood: Solidarity between Women” (487-500)

Issues: Lee, “Beyond Bean Counting” (42-45)
Smith, “Myths to Divert Black Women from Freedom” (191-99)

Women on the Hill, Ch. 8: Politics of Race and Gender
Revisit: Anzaldua, “Strength of My Rebellion” and bell hooks, Feminism is for Everybody

FP: “Toward Gender-Inclusive Feminism” (501-503)
Brod, “The Protofeminist Men’s Movement: Fraternity, Equality, Liberty” (504-10)

IX. THEORY INTO PRACTICE

4/17  R  Women on Hill, Ch. 9: Standing Up, Speaking Out
Issues: Lorde, “The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action” (188-90)
eRes: Bernice Johnson Reagon, “Coalition Politics: Turning the Century”

Discussion of CBL presentations and final papers

4/22  T  Presentation and Discussion of CBL projects

4/24  R  Presentation and Discussion of CBL projects

4/29  T  Presentation and Discussion continued
CBL Final Paper due
Hand out final exam

5/6  T  Final exam due by 3 p.m. in my office (Fenwick 229)
Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies: Film Screening Schedule
Spring 2008
Prof. Maurer

Please note that the course materials include seven films. These films are **required** for the course, and will form an integral part of class discussion, your weekly response papers, as well as the midterm and final exams. Two out-of-class screening times have been set for each film on the date and times noted below. All films are on also reserve in the MRC (3rd floor Stein). Students unable to attend the screenings are responsible for watching the films on their own in the MRC **prior to class discussion**.

MRC hours are Monday to Thursday 9 a.m. to 10 p.m.; Friday 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.; Sunday 4 to 10 p.m.

**Screening dates and times** (all films will be shown in Stein 102 unless otherwise noted):

1. *A Hero for Daisy* (45 minutes): Wed. Jan 23 at 4 and 7 p.m.
2. *Mickey Mouse Monopoly* (60 minutes): Wed. Jan. 30 at 4 and 7 p.m.
3. *Rosie the Riveter* (65 minutes): Wed. Feb. 6 at 4 and 7 p.m.
5. *Vera Drake* (125 minutes): Wed. Feb. 27 at 4 and 7 p.m.
6. *Normal* (110 minutes): Wed. March 12 at 4 and 7 p.m.
7. *Iron Jawed Angels* (125 minutes): In-class screening on March 27, 2 to 3:15 p.m.
   Screening in Stein 102 at 7 p.m.

In addition, students will be required to attend one on-campus performance of *The Vagina Monologues* (Feb. 19 or 20)

**Additional co-curricular events will be added as they arise.**


Brady, “I Want a Wife” in Complements, 145-146.


Michael A. Messner, “Becoming 100% Straight” in Gender through the Prism of Difference, 227-232.


Steinem, “Erotica and Pornography” in Complements, 410-413.

Bawer, “Homophobia” in Complements, 394-402.
