

WGS 101: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

July 1st - August 9th, 2019

M, T, W, TH 10-11:45am

Instructor: Laura Jaffee

Office: 314 Sims Hall

Email: ljjafee@syr.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 12:00-2:00pm, and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This is a writing-intensive course that will introduce the interdisciplinary field of women's and gender studies and the foundations of feminist theory. We focus on feminist theorizations of power, oppression, exploitation, agency, and social change. The course examines the social construction of gender as it intersects with race, disability, class, sexuality, and nationality to structure our world. Through course readings and discussion, we will engage with various feminist theorizations of gender and power, race and racism, sexualities, disability, and capitalism. We will explore how feminist theory shapes and is shaped by feminist practice by examining past and current feminist struggles for gender, racial, disability, and economic justice.

COURSE GOALS

- Understand intersectionality as a form of feminist analysis and practice
- Develop critical analyses of how gender intersects with multiple axes of identity to shape lived experiences
- Construct clear feminist arguments based on the ideas, concepts, and methods raised in readings and/or class discussions
- Make meaningful connections between the course materials and current political, cultural, and social events

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation 20%

Your thoughtful participation is critical to your and your classmates' learning in this course. Coming to class having carefully read assigned readings is crucial. I am interested in the *quality* of your participation and contributions to class discussions, not the *quantity*. Verbal speech is only one way of participating, and I recognize that it is not everybody's preferred way. You may also participate by leaving me a notecard or email at the end of class with your comments and questions from the class discussion and readings. Throughout the course, I may also use small in-class projects, presentations, or written reflections to allow additional means of participation.

Midterm Paper 20%

Simone de Beauvoir famously declared, “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.” For the midterm paper, you will be asked to write a **4-5 page** reflective paper in which you critically analyze how you have been gendered throughout your life. How have your social positionality and multiple axes of identity— including but not limited to race, religion, nationality, disability, class, language, sexuality, and gender identity— shaped your experiences of the world? What specific examples or encounters in your own life illustrate the social construction of gender? You are required to cite a minimum of 3 assigned course readings, making connections to authors’ main arguments and key concepts to support your claims. I am looking to see that you can apply an intersectional feminist analysis to critically reflect on your own lived experience.

Class Presentation 15%

You are responsible for presenting an assigned reading from the syllabus once during the course. Presentations should be 30 minutes. For the first 10-15 minutes, you will present the article. Questions to consider in presenting your article include: In what context was the article written? What is the author arguing? How do they support their argument? Feel free to incorporate a short video clip or visual to help you present key concepts and arguments from the reading. During the second half of your presentation, you are responsible for facilitating discussion among your classmates. It is up to you how you’d like to do this. You can lead a large group discussion, break the class into small groups, plan an activity, etc.

Film Analysis 15%

Throughout the course, we will watch a variety of films and documentaries. You will be required to provide a detailed review of a film of your choosing that is 2-3 pages in length. The aim of this assignment is not to summarize the film, but to explain how the themes of the film/documentary extend and/or limit, expand and/or collapse, undo and/or reify some of the main issues, ideas, and problems discussed in the course. Your film response can be submitted at any point throughout the course, but is due by **8/2 at midnight**.

Final Paper 30%

Your final is a **4-5 page** paper (double spaced, one-inch margins) that examines a recent political, social, economic or environmental event that has taken place over the past few years. Your paper should address how your chosen event raises questions or addresses some of the concerns that have been discussed in this course regarding location, positionality, unequal power and wealth distribution, structural inequalities, historical injustice, etc. You will familiarize yourself with the selected event and tease out some of the feminist (or anti-feminist) concerns, issues, themes, and ideas raised by the work. You should integrate a minimum of 3 course readings (demonstrating comprehension of the authors’ central claims and key concepts) to

substantiate your thesis. One example of an event is the #metoo movement. Your final paper is due by **8/12 at midnight**.

If an academic paper is not best way for you to demonstrate comprehension of the material, I'm happy to meet to discuss alternate final formats (e.g. creating a board game, making a short video, an open letter on a blog or in a newspaper, etc.). Please meet with me as soon as possible if you would like to discuss this possibility. Alternate final formats must be agreed upon by 8/1.

COURSE POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

Accessibility Statement

My goal is to support the full participation of all students and create a learning environment that is inclusive, accessible, and welcoming. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that impede your inclusion and participation, please communicate with me as soon as possible so we can discuss the best way to support your learning. If you have any kind of disability, whether visible or non-visible, learning, emotional, physical, or cognitive, and need accommodations or alternatives to lectures, assignments, or exams, please contact me so we can discuss reasonable accommodations.

Attendance

You are allowed 2 unexcused absences. Each successive absence will result in a 2.5% reduction in your final grade per class missed, and your participation grade will also be adversely affected. An excessive amount of absences may result in your needing to retake the course.

Email Policy

Your questions are welcome. I will strive to respond to emails within 48 hours on weekdays. Please email me from your syr.edu email address and *include WGS 101 in the email subject line*.

Technology in the Classroom

You may use laptops or cell phones to take notes in class or for other class-related purposes. While technology can enhance learning, it can also distract you and your classmates. Your engagement and participation are critical to the learning of you and your peers in this class, and as such emailing, internet browsing, and other recreational use of technology is prohibited.

Academic Honesty

As in all academic settings, students in this course must ensure that their work conforms to principles of academic integrity (honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility). Students should therefore familiarize themselves with the Syracuse University Academic Integrity Policy which holds students accountable for the integrity of the work they submit. Syracuse University

sets high standards for academic integrity. Those standards are supported and enforced by students, including those who serve as academic integrity hearing panel members and hearing officers. Students should review the Center for Learning and Student Success's 1 page online resource "What Students Need to Know About Academic Integrity" (available at <http://class.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/What-Students-Need-to-Know-About-Academic-Integrity-8.6.18.pdf>) and confer with instructors about course-specific citation methods, permitted collaboration (if any), and rules for examinations. The Academic Integrity Policy (http://class.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Academic-Integrity-Policy_final.pdf/) also governs the veracity of signatures on attendance sheets and other verification of participation in class activities. If you have any questions about the policy, please ask me.

The Writing Center

The writing Center is a free service open to all Syracuse University students. It is a place where students and faculty can find support for their writing. Staffed by writing specialists, the Center can offer you help with developing, organizing, revising or editing your work. For more information about the Writing Center's hours of operation and contacts, visit <http://wc.syr.edu/>.

COURSE SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be communicated in class and via email.

Week 1 Defining Intersectionality

- 7/1 Welcome, Review Syllabus and Policies, Introductions (no reading)
- 7/2 The Combahee River Collective. (1977). A Black Feminist Statement. In C. Moraga and G. Anzaldúa (Eds.), *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (pp. 210-218). New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press.
In class: Kimberlé Crenshaw "The Urgency of Intersectionality"
- 7/3 Lorde, A. (1983). There is No Hierarchy of Oppression. (pp. 76-77).
[Davis, A. \(1998\). Masked Racism: Reflections on the Prison Industrial Complex. \(pp. 178-181\).](#)
- 7/4 Listen to Disability Visibility Project Episode 34, Intersectionality:
<https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/2018/09/24/ep-34-intersectionality/>
Transcript available here:
<https://disabilityvisibilityproject.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Intersectionality.pdf>

Week 2 White Supremacy, Settler-Colonialism, and Women of Color Feminisms

- 7/8 hooks, b. (1984). Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory. In *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (pp. 1-15). Boston: South End Press.
- 7/9 Simpson, A. (Kahnawake Mohawk). (2016). The State is a Man: Theresa Spence, Loretta Saunders and the Gender of Settler Sovereignty. *Theory & Event* 19(4).
- 7/10 Davis, A. (2016). "Chapter One: Progressive Struggles Against Capitalist Individualism" and "Chapter Two: Ferguson Reminds Us of the Importance of Global Context." In *Freedom is a Constant Struggle: Ferguson, Palestine, and the Foundations of a Movement*. Chicago, IL: Haymarket Books.
- 7/11 Walia, H. (2014). Decolonizing together: Moving Beyond a Politics of Solidarity: Toward a Practice of Decolonization, in *The Winter we Danced: Voices From the Past, The Future, and the Idle No More Movement*, 44-50. The Kino-nda-niimi Collective.
- In class:
<https://unsettlingamerica.wordpress.com/2017/12/11/settler-colonialism-and-the-struggle-for-abolition/>

Week 3 The Social Construction of Gender and Sexuality

- 7/15 Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. (2013/1996). "The Social Construction and Institutionalization of Gender and Race: An Integrative Framework." In S. J. Ferguson (Ed.), *Race, Gender, Sexuality, and Social Class: Dimensions of Inequality* (pp. 125-39). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- 7/16 Wilson, A. (2016, January 28). Two-Spirit People, Body Sovereignty and Gender Self-Determination. *Two Spirit Journal*. <https://twospiritjournal.com/?p=179>
- 7/17 Clarke, C. (1981). Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance. In C. Moraga and G. Anzaldúa (Eds.), *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (pp. 128-137). New York: Kitchen Table: Women of Color Press.
- 7/18 Mock, J. (2018). From Redefining Realness: My Path to Womanhood, Identity, Love & So Much More (pp. 365-371). In L.A. Suraswati, B. Shaw, & H. Rellihan

(Eds.), *Introduction to Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies: Interdisciplinary and Intersectional Approaches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**** Midterm due Friday, 7/19 by midnight**

Week 4 Gendered Labor, Anti-Capitalist, and Anti-Imperialist Feminisms

7/22 Mills, M. Gendered Divisions of Labor. (2016). In L. Disch & M. Hawkesworth (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory* (pp. 1-26). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

7/23 TFS Team. (2017, April 28). Fashion is a Feminist Issue. *The Fabric Social*.
<https://thefabricsocial.com/blogs/the-fabric-social-journal/fashion-is-a-feminist-issue>.

Rottenberg, C. (2018, May 23). How Neoliberalism Colonized Feminism – and what you can do about it. *The Conversation*.
<http://theconversation.com/how-neoliberalism-colonised-feminism-and-what-you-can-do-about-it-94856>.

In class: In class: *Made in Bangladesh: Behind the Factory Fire – REWIND*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtLrdfiHdQA>

7/24 Mohanty, C.T., Pratt, M.B., & Riley, R. (2008). Introduction: Feminism and US Wars - Mapping the Ground. In R.L. Riley, C.T. Mohanty, & M.B. Pratt (Eds.), *Feminism and War: Confronting U.S. Imperialism* (pp.1-16). Zed Books.

7/25 Abu Lughod, L. (2002). Do Muslim Women really Need Saving? *American Anthropologist*, 104(3): 783-790.

Week 5 Disability Justice, Reproductive Justice, and Environmental Justice

7/29 Berne, P. (2015, June 10). Disability Justice— A Working Draft by Patty Berne. *Sins Invalid*.
<http://sinsinvalid.org/blog/disability-justice-a-working-draft-by-patty-berne>

Mingus, M. (2011, February 12). Changing the Framework: Disability Justice. *Leaving Evidence*.
<https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2011/02/12/changing-the-framework-disability-justice/>

- 7/30 Davis, A. (2003). Racism, Birth Control, and Reproductive Justice. In R. Lewis & S. Mills (Eds.), *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader* (pp. 353-367). New York: Routledge.
- 7/31 Jafri, B. (2017). Not Your Indian Eco-Princess: Indigenous Women's Resistance to Environmental Degradation. In L.A. Suraswati, B. Shaw, & H. Rellihan (Eds.), *Introduction to Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies: Interdisciplinary and Intersectional Approaches* (pp. 559-563). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 8/1 Tallbear, Kim. (2016, December 22). "Badass (Indigenous) Women Caretake Relations: #NoDAPL, #IdleNoMore, #BlackLivesMatter." *Hot Spots, Cultural Anthropology*.
<https://culanth.org/fieldsights/badass-indigenous-women-caretake-relations-no-dapl-idle-no-more-black-lives-matter>
****Film Analysis due 8/2 by midnight**

Week 6 Social Movements and Solidarities

- 8/5 BLM Chicago and Lifted Voices. (2016, September 5). #NODAPL Solidarity with Standing Rock.
https://issuu.com/aislinnsolbutterflyborsini/docs/no_dapl_zine_color.docx
- Feinberg, Leslie, interview with Sylvia Rivera. "I am Glad I was in the Stonewall Riots." 141-142.
- 8/6 Kelley, Robin. D. G. (2016, March 7). Black Study, Black Struggle. *Boston Review*. Retrieved from
<http://bostonreview.net/forum/robin-d-g-kelley-black-study-black-struggle>
- 8/7 Dancing the World into Being: A Conversation with Idle No More's Leanne Simpson. *Yes! Magazine*. (2013, March 5).
<https://www.yesmagazine.org/peace-justice/dancing-the-world-into-being-a-conversation-with-idle-no-more-leanne-simpson>
- 8/8 Ahmed, S. (2017). Introduction and Chapter 1. In *Living a Feminist Life*. Durham: Duke University Press.
**** Final Paper due 8/12 by midnight**

*I am grateful for the pedagogical acumen and collective labor of multiple individuals and organizations that informed the development of this syllabus. I have especially benefited from the insights of Dr. Dana Olwan, Dr. Mario Perez, Lydia X.Z. Brown, and the NYC Stands with Standing Rock Collective.