WGST 200.502
Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies
Fall 2014

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Course Description:
This course is designed to introduce you to key concepts, themes, and ideas in Women’s and Gender Studies. Our goal will be to explore these ideas with an eye toward investigating the influences—biological and cultural—that shape gender and sexuality. Our exploration will take into account the intersection of gender and race, age, sexuality, disability, religious commitment, and class. As a result, our exploration will include discussions of sexuality, politics, violence, reproduction, globalization, families, and work. These issues reflect the variety of experiences in women’s lives and thus the success of our class and of your education in this class is dependent on your presence and participation. First and foremost, you must attend class but you must attend class having read the material and prepared to discuss it.

A note about class discussion: This class will cover provocative and controversial material. We will discuss these themes and ideas critically but respectfully. If you are not prepared or willing to do either, this might not be the right class for you. Disagreement does not mean disrespect—but name-calling, yelling, or dismissive behaviors do and will not be tolerated.

Learning outcomes:
Understand what intersectionality is and why it is important in the discussion of gender
Understand the history and significance of the sex-gender distinction
Identify and discuss the major historical events that have led to women’s political equality
Discuss the concept of social construction with regard to sex and gender
Understand how Women’s and Gender Studies developed as a discipline
Read, discuss, and analyze essays that posit different reviews on political issues pertaining to sex and gender
Consider the importance of and differences regarding sex and gender in a global context

Books
Shaw and Lee, Women’s Voices/Feminist Visions
Marilyn Frye, The Politics of Reality
Course Packet
Atwood, The Handmaid’s Tale

Course Requirements:
Midterm 25%
Final 25%
Book Review and presentation 25% 5 pages typed double-spaced in 11 or 12 pt. font. I will provide more details about this assignment.
Weekly Journal Entries 25% (See below)

For the journal assignment you will write a 2 page entry each week. I will give you one “free pass” to skip a weekly entry without harming your grade. After that free pass, any missed entries will have a negative impact on your grade for this journal. For example, for each missed entry after the free pass, your grade will be lowered one step: B+ to a B. I will periodically, though not always, comment on your journals. Significant improvement in the journal entries will be reflected in the final journal grade.
The journal is a space and place for you to think and reflect without the constraints of formal writing—grammar, spelling, style, and so forth. Although I do expect your entries to be coherent and articulate—certainly enough for me to read and understand. This is your place to ask questions, give opinions, offer reflections, and use your voice, especially for issues, themes, and ideas that provoke you, worry you, excite you, or just generally keep you awake at night. The primary requirement is that you must keep your entries tied to class material. Make connections—to things you hear, see, experience—at work, on campus, in your other classes, with friends, family, partners, and so forth. Use the journal entries to further your own learning and express your ideas to indicate that you are making these connections. Save a hard copy of your entries such that you can keep all entries together and read them in their entirety at the end of the semester.

Your journal will also include responses to directed assignments that I give throughout the semester. The first, which must completed by the fourth week of class is a “Do something” assignment. For this assignment, I am asking you to do something that pertains to the issues that will be discussing in this course: violence, sexuality, families, etc. You may visit—a women’s shelter, rape crisis center, Planned Parenthood. You may do an experiment—walk around with a romance novel for a week and take note of the reactions. Interview men and women of different ages and different backgrounds about one or two of the themes we are discussing and write up the response. You may do an analysis of something in popular culture—current movies, children’s books. But the point is to do something—to participate in the world in which you live and reflect on that experience with regard to the themes in this course.

Due Dates for Journals
Last Name Initial:
A-L  9/18  10/23  12/4
M-Z  9/25  10/30  12/4

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy Statement
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, the legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities, in Cain Hall or call 845-1637.

Academic Integrity Statement
"An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do."
http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor

Please include the following on all work:
"On my honor, as an Aggie, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work."

________________________________________
Signature of student
Religious observance
http://def.tamu.edu/faculty/policies/religiousobservance.php
Attendance
http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule7.htm
Authorized and Sponsored events
http://studentactivities.tamu.edu/online/sponsauth/
Absences related to Injury or Illness
http://attendance.tamu.edu/
Reading Schedule—subject to change!

Week 1
Introduction, http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~elk/feminismquotes.html
Genesis—And God Created Woman

Unit 1 Systems of Privilege and Inequality in Women’s Lives

Week 2
Beauvoir, Introduction to The Second Sex
Frye, The Politics of Reality, (1-17)
Introduction, pp 1-21 (VV)
Rich, “Claiming an Education” (1)
Baumgardner and Richards, “A Day Without Feminism” (4)

Week 3
Frye, The Politics of Reality (17-40; 84-94))
Ch 2, pp. 60-75
Quindlen, “Still Needing the F Word” (7)
Collins, “Toward a New Vision” (9)
Hogeland, “Fear of Feminism,” (101)
Kimmel, “Real Men Join the Movement” (103)
Pharr, “Homophobia: A weapon of Sexism” (12)

Week 4
Frye, The Politics of Reality (110-127)
McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege” (13)
Moraña, “What’s Race Gotta Do With It?” (14)
Wong, “When I was Growing Up” (24)

Week 5
Ch 3, .05-120
Faust-Sterling, “Two Sexes are Not Enough” (19)
Lorde, “The Social Construction of Gender” (20)
Steinem, “If Men Could Menstruate” (37)
p. 112; Learning activity, p. 110; 115; 118

Film: Free to be you and me (streamed)
Wendell, “The Social Construction of Disability” (17)
Learning Activity, p. 219; p. 228
http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/peoplefirstlanguage.htm

Week 6
Bruggink, “Don’t Give Up Your Day Job: Leslie Bennetts on The Feminine Mistake” (55)
Ehrenreich, excerpts from Nickel and Dimed (blackboard)
Website: http://www.classmatters.org/working_definitions.php

Week 7
Review and Exam

Week 8
Unit II: Sex, Power and Violence
Ch 4, 165-179
Other readings, TBA
Ch 10 554-577
Davis, “Betrayed by the Angel” (80)
Bridges, “Lisa’s Ritual (age 10) (83)

Week 9
Women and War
Roy, et al “Rape and War” (84)
Benedict, “The Plight of Women Soldiers” (89)
Violence and the media
Readings TBA

Week 10

Unit II: Health and Reproduction
Discussion of the film: The Education of Shelby Knox—streamed.
Ch 6, pp 301-329
Cooney, "The Way It Was" (47)
Sanger, "My Fight For Birth Control" (46)
**Flanagan, "The Sanguine Sex" (WEB CT)

***Last day to Q-Drop

Unit IV: State and Family
Week 11
Anthony, "The Constitutional Argument" (85)
Ch 7
Goldman, "Marriage and Love" (53)
Ehrenreich, "Maid to Order: The Politics of Other Women's Work" (62)
Sander and Moltz, Title IX update (87)
Gomes, "Partners as Parents" (56)

Unit V: Women, Religion and Spirituality
Week 12
Ch 12
Stanton, "Introduction to The Women's Bible" (92)
Plaskow, "Standing Again at Sinai" (97)
Riswood, "Feminist Questions of Christianity" (99)
Ch 11; Atwood, Handmaid's Tale

Week 13
Student presentations
THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 14
Student presentations
Student presentations

Week 15
Review
Final Exam 3pm-5pm