

WS 200 Introduction to Women's Studies Fall 2006

**Tuesdays & Thursdays
12:10—1:30**

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Course Description

This course is designed to introduce students to gender as an important analytical tool in all fields of inquiry, with a special emphasis on the social sciences. We begin with the premise that gender is a social construct, not a biological category. Therefore, gender differences are not “natural,” but socially constructed and therefore subject to change. Along these lines, we will examine constructions of femininity, masculinity, and gender relations as they are shaped by different historical, political and socioeconomic contexts. We will pay particular attention to the intersections between gender, race, class, and sexuality as well as other modalities of identities such as culture, age and physical ability. To underscore the importance of gender as an analytical tool, we will examine its contribution to understanding the phenomenon of militarization, the politics of immigration in the United States and the interplay between gender and politics in the Middle East.

My background and teaching philosophy

We teach who we are

The courage to teach is the courage to keep one's heart open in those very moments when the heart is asked to hold more than it is able so that teacher and students and subject can be woven into the fabric of community that learning, and living, require.

*--Parker Palmer *The Courage to Teach**

Teaching for me entails more than the mere transmission of knowledge from teacher to student. I am committed to a type of pedagogy that focuses not only on the presentation of content, facts, and information, but also on the ways in which particular theories and topics could be taught so they resonate with your every day lives and experiences. I see academic institutions as sites for personal growth and social transformation, and teaching, mentoring, and supervising as the means to bring about this transformation. My professional training as a teacher, which includes a Masters of Arts degree in Education and Counseling, a doctorate in Conflict Analysis and Resolution and over two decades of teaching experience, has provided me with a strong theoretical and practical basis in critical pedagogy and in experiential teaching.

Texts and other Required Materials

Julia Alvarez, How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents

Cynthia Enloe, The Curious Feminist: Searching for Women in a New Age of Empire

bell hooks, The Will To Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love

Selected articles in reading packet and online and class handouts

Course Expectations, Requirements, and Grading

The requirements and assignments are designed to maximize your learning. They will help you integrate theoretical concepts and reading material with your own thinking and life experiences. In addition to prompting you to think about certain issues and questions in preparation for in-class workshops or discussions, assignments were designed to improve your critical thinking, writing and research skills. Because of the volume of material covered, it is very important that you don't fall behind and submit ALL your assignments on time.

You will have the option to re-write ALL your assignments and re-submit them with your final portfolio.

- ***Regular Attendance, participation & self-evaluation***

Because this class involves experiential learning in the classroom, which cannot be reproduced if missed, students are expected to attend ALL class sessions, arrive on-time and leave when class ends. You should notify me before class if an illness or emergency requires you to miss class. You should come to class prepared and bring with you notes you have taken while reading the assigned materials. Occasionally I will ask you to do a brief writing exercise at the beginning of class to get a sense of your reactions to the readings and enable students who are more comfortable expressing themselves in writing to participate in that manner. These in-class assignments will not be graded but will be factored into your final grade. On the first day of class you will be asked to reflect on your expectations from and learning objectives in this class as they relate to your personal and intellectual journey. On the last day of class, you will have to submit a one-page self-evaluation detailing what they have learned during the quarter and providing input as to what grade you expect to get. We will discuss this assignment and the process of self-evaluation as the semester progresses. **(20%)**.

Due: August 31 & Dec. 5

- ***Media & popular culture Journal***

The journal should include at least one entry per week, examining conventional and alternative media items as well as music and other aspects of popular culture related to class themes. You should keep your journal up to date and bring it with you to class every week, as we will make an attempt to integrate your journals into our class discussions. You can also integrate relevant “findings” from your media and popular

culture exploration into your synthesis papers. A summary of your journal entries should be submitted three times during the semester. **(3 X 10% =30%)**

Length: -1-2 double-spaced paragraphs per week.

Due dates: Sep. 28, Oct. 26 & Nov. 21

- **Review of a film or novel**

Choose a film (documentary or feature film), a novel or a short story that addresses class themes and critically examine it in relation to class readings and discussions. The review should contain a brief description of the film's content but consist mostly of your ORIGINAL analysis of how the film or the novel addresses issues and questions that we have explored in class readings and discussion

You will receive more instructions on how to write a film/book review in class. **(20%)**

Length: 2-3 double-spaced and typed pages.

Due: Oct. 10

- **2 Synthesis Papers**

In a synthesis paper you are expected to analyze in a cohesive, unified essay, material you have read, discussed, viewed, and heard during a particular period in the course. You may consider such questions as what seems to be a common thread throughout the readings you have done in the course? What are the common issues and themes you have noticed across the material? You will receive assignment sheets with more details for each one of these papers.

Length: 4-5 double spaced and typed pages each. **(15% X 2 = 30%)**

Due dates: Oct. 19 & Nov. 16

Week 1 The Personal is Political: Women's Studies in Context

August 29: Consciousness Raising and Situated Knowledge

August 31 Women's studies and women's movements

Read:

Florence Howe, "Women's Studies in the United States: Growth and Institutionalization" (reading packet)

Due:

Autobiographical reflection on your relationship to class themes

Week 2 What is Feminism?

Sep. 5 Gender as an Analytical Category

Read:

Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis" (reading packet)

R.W. Connell, "Gender as a Structure of Social Practice" (reading packet)

Sep. 7 Linking Feminist Theory and Practice

Read:

Cynthia Kaufman, "Theorizing and Fighting Gender-Based Oppressions" (reading packet)

Week 3 Girls to Women: The Social Construction of Femininities

Sep. 12 Identity and body image

Read:

Linda Phelps, Mirror, Mirror (reading packet)

Naomi Wolf, An excerpt from *The Beauty Myth* (reading packet)

Sep. 14 The body under assault

Read:

Sara Shandler, *Ophelia Speaks*, pp. 3-61 (reading packet)

Week 4 Boys to Men: The Social Construction of Masculinities

Sep.19

Read:

hooks, pp. xi-54,

Sep. 21 Rape and violence against women

Read:

hooks, pp. 55-90

Week 5 Intersections: Gender, Race, Class & Sexuality

Sep. 26

Read:

hooks, pp. 91-105

Sep. 28

Read:

Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies," (reading packet)

Due:

Media and popular culture summary 1

Week 6 Intersections: Gender, Race, Class & Sexuality

Oct. 3

Read:

June Jordan, "Report from the Bahamas" (reading packet)

Read:

Oct. 5

Read:

Ronald Takaki, "A Different Mirror" (reading packet)

Week 7 Intersections: Gender, Race, Class & Sexuality

Oct. 10

Read:

Judith Ortiz Cofer, "The Myth of the Latin Woman: I Just Met a Girl Named Maria" (reading packet)

Due:

Review of film/novel

Oct. 12 – NO CLASS Mid-term break

Week 8 Gender and the Politics of Immigration

Oct. 17

Read:

Alvarez, *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*

Oct. 19

Read:

C. Matthew Snipp, "The First Americans: American Indians" (reading packet)

Ward Churchill, *Crimes Against Humanity* (reading packet)

Due:
Synthesis paper 1

Week 9 Gender and the Politics of immigration (Continued)

Oct. 24

Read:

Gendering Migration

<http://cmd.princeton.edu/papers/wp0502f.pdf#search=%22gender%20and%20immigration%22>

Oct. 26

Read:

MILITARIZED ZONES: GENDER, RACE, IMMIGRATION, ENVIRONMENT

A Special Issue of *Political Environments* (PE No.10)

http://popdev.hampshire.edu/projects/militarized_zones.pdf#search=%22gender%20and%20immigration%22

Due:

Media and popular culture summary 2

Week 10 Gender & Militarization

Oct. 31

Read:

Enloe, pp. 99-144

Nov. 2

Read:

Enloe, pp.145-155

Week 11 Gender & Militarization

Nov. 7

Read:

Enloe, pp. 193-305

Nov. 9

Read:

Enloe, pp. 309--end

Week 12 Case Study: Gender & Middle East Politics

Nov. 14

Read:

Deniz Kandiyoti, "Contemporary Feminist Scholarship and Middle East Politics" (reading packet)

Nov 16

Read:

Simona Sharoni, "Middle East Politics through Feminist Lenses: Toward Theorizing International Relations from Women's Struggles" in Linda McDowell and Joanne Sharp, eds. *Space, Gender, Knowledge: Feminist Readings* (London: Arnold 1997), pp. 425-445 (reading packet)

Due:

Synthesis paper 2

Week 13 Case Study: Gender & Middle East Politics

Nov 21

Read:

Women's Role in Post-Conflict Iraq, Conference Report, April 2003

<http://www.womenwagingpeace.net/content/articles/WinningThePeaceReport.pdf>

Due:

Media and popular culture summary 3

Nov 23 – NO CLASS thanksgiving break

Week 14 Gender & the politics of change

Nov. 28

Read:

hooks, pp. 135-end

Nov.30

Read:

Simona Sharoni, Gender and Political Change in Israel, Palestine, and the North of Ireland May 2006

http://www.glow-boell.de/media/de/txt_rubrik_2/Sharoni.pdf

Week 15 New Directions in Women's Studies

Dec. 5 Compassionate resistance as a feminist practice

Read:

Simona Sharoni, "Compassionate Resistance: A Personal/Political Journey to Israel/Palestine" (reading packet)

Due:

Final autobiographical reflection

Dec. 7 Reflection & evaluation