

Introduction to Women's Studies: Women, Art and Culture Fall 2014

WMST 250: FC01

M/W 7:30-8:45 pm, WDS 1130

Instructor: Jessica Ann Vooris

Department of Women's Studies, Woods Hall

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Office hours: Wednesday, 6 pm-7:15 pm; Thursday 9 am-10 am.

Office: WMST Department Lounge, 2nd Floor of WDS

Course Description

This course will explore the connections among feminisms, art activism, and women's cultural production. We will be asking questions about power, difference, and inequality and will explore issues of race, gender, sexuality, class, abilities and disabilities, religion, privilege, and oppression. The course will help students understand how our experiences shape our knowledge and the realities of everyday life, and we will explore how art, fiction and poetry can be mobilized to create change. Importantly we will be examining how we tell stories, whose stories get told, and how to tell our own stories. The course will meet two times a week for a discussion-based class, and requires active participation from students.

Please visit me during my office hours, as I would love to learn more about what you are thinking and learning, as well as how your work is progressing. Be sure to let me know during office hours or after class if you need any help, or any special accommodations, the sooner the better. Students with disabilities or who need time from class to observe religious holidays, please contact me ASAP to make any arrangements necessary.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester students will be able to:

- explain key concepts from the interdisciplinary field of Women's Studies, including, but not limited to: feminism, sexism, gender, intersectionality, racism, classism, heterosexism, privilege, oppression.
- identify different creative forms— poetry, fiction, autobiographical essays, art—and explain how women have used these to create change in their own lives, and to combat different forms of oppression.
- read, write and critically engage with a variety of texts and media forms, analyzing what they tell us about women, gender, and feminism.
- engage in discussion and debate with their classmates in a critical but respectful manner.

About Women's Studies at the University of Maryland:

Women's Studies at the University of Maryland offers a B.A. degree for undergraduate students that prepare them for positions in a wide range of fields: for example, in government and in policy, research, and service organizations that focus on women's issues. Women's Studies also provides excellent preparation for a variety of humanities and social science graduate programs, as well as professional schools. Some students may choose to double major in Women's studies with another discipline. Another option for students who wish to undertake an interdisciplinary program of study on women to complement and supplement another degree program is our undergraduate certificate and our minor in Black Women's Studies. I am happy to speak to anyone who wants to discuss these options. You might also wish to talk with the Women's Studies Academic Advisor, JV Sapinoso, (sapinoso@umd.edu).

Core Requirement:

This course fulfills a CORE distributive requirement in the Humanities and Arts, and satisfies the Human Cultural Diversity requirement. In GENERAL EDUCATION, this course fulfills the DSHU requirement. GENERAL EDUCATION and CORE courses are designed to expose students to the ideas and methods of different academic disciplines and fields, and the ways in which they produce and analyze knowledge. Analytic reading and writing and collaborative learning are central the course. Accordingly, its success and the success of your learning experience in it depend on your informed and thoughtful preparation for class and your participation in class and small group discussions and in writing and group project activities.

Readings**Required:**

Allison, Dorothy. 1996. Two Or Three Things I Know For Sure. Plume. 978-0452273405

hooks, bell. 2000. Feminism is for Everybody. South End. 0896086283

McCallum, Shara. 2011. This Strange Land. Alice James Books. 9781882295869 (make sure you get a copy with the CD).

Any additional readings will be included as links within the syllabus on Canvas.

Recommended:

Kaufman and Kimmel. 2011. The Guy's Guide to Feminism. Seal Press. 1580053629 (also kindle)

Seely. 2007. How to Be a Fearless Feminist. NYU Press. 978-0814740026 (also on kindle)

How the course will be organized

We will meet two times a week for a discussion-based class. In order to have a productive learning environment students need to come to class having read the material, and be prepared to talk and share with others. It is important for you to bring copies of class readings to support discussion. Creating a community of learning means that we must be respectful of each other and create a space where each member of the class feels comfortable about sharing their thoughts. This does not mean that we will always agree, and in fact we may often disagree with each other, but we must always be open to hearing each other and treating each other kindly and with respect. Together we can have a classroom where dialogue is encouraged, we know that mistakes happen, and that communication and understanding can be difficult across differences. Learning means taking risks, trying new things, putting forward our best guess, and recognizing that we won't always get it right the first time.

Communications with the Instructor

For any immediate concerns, I am available after class and during my office hours. For something less urgent, or which occurs to you at a later date, you can send a message through CANVAS or you can email me at jvooris@umd.edu.

If you email me, please make sure to include "WMST 250: FC01 [Last Name] [topic/question]" in your subject heading. I receive a lot of email without adequate subject headings your email may get lost in my inbox. I am not responsible for emails getting lost if they are incorrectly labeled. Also, please make sure that you include a greeting in your email that does not include "hey." You are not writing to a close friend. Dear Jessica, Ms Vooris or Good morning/

Hello/Good afternoon, are more professional and respectful. Signing off with your name is also appreciated—especially in an initial email communication. I will attempt to answer all emails within 24 hours, although this may not be feasible at particularly busy times of the semester.

Electronic Policy

Students are permitted to use laptops or digital devices for notes and reading pdfs, links, etc. These can be useful tools for looking up information, googling something referenced in class, etc. However, unless the student has a documented accommodation which requires the use of a typing device, remember that the use of these devices is a privilege, not a right. If you are using an electronic device for readings and notes, it is your responsibility to show that you are engaged in class discussion and are not distracted by IMs, facebook, etc. I reserve the right to ask you to put them away if they are disrupting class, and will revise this policy if need be. Also--it may be worth noting that [a recent study \(Links to an external site.\)](#) shows that students learn more when taking notes by hand, rather than through electronic means. I would also encourage you to print out your readings and bring them to class, rather than trying to read them off a computer screen.

Graded Assignments

15% Participation: This is a discussion based course, and your participation is important. You are expected to come to class having read and taken notes on the material, and to be ready to discuss the material. The success of the class will depend on everyone sharing their ideas and perspectives. If you are someone who has a hard time speaking up in class, you may also use Canvas as a place to write comments, post links, and otherwise contribute to the class. Visiting me during my office hours is another way to show me that you are engaged in the class and the material.

If you are not in class, you cannot receive participation points. Likewise, if you are in class, but asleep, you will not receive participation points. I understand that people get sick, family emergencies happen, or you have an unforeseen circumstance that prevents your attendance. You may have one unexcused absence during the course of the semester, all others must be discussed ahead of time with me, or be accompanied by a doctor's note. In case of any absence you are responsible for the work that you have missed. Check your syllabus and connect up with classmates for notes and any information you need to know.

15 % Reading Responses: Throughout the semester you will be required to turn in 3 reading responses. You can decide which days/weeks these will be submitted, but you must submit one for the month of September, one for the month of October and one for the month of November. These must be handed in during class, I will not accept them through email, and they must be done the day that the reading is assigned, not after. One of them will be a written assignment, the other a visual, and the third one will be an audio response.

20% Museum Project due September 29th: You will visit a museum in DC, and answer a set of questions about the experience which will be re-written into a 4-5 page paper analyzing this what you learned.

20 % Feminist Art Activism Project due November 12th: In groups (at least 5 and no more than 10) you will work to create a feminist art activist event.

30% Learning Analysis due in December: 5-6 pages. This will be a synthesis of the course, how you understand it to be constructed, what you see the argument of the course to be, what you learned from your readings, how you place yourself in the course, and overall what you have gained from taking this class. You will be given a hand-out detailing the information you must

cover, but the format of the assignment does not have to be a traditional paper, you can turn in a creative story, a poem, or something of your own choosing, as long as it includes the analysis of the course and answers all the questions required.

Participation = 20 points

Reading Responses = 3 X 5 points = 15 points

Museum Project = 20 points

Feminist Activist Project = 20 points

Learning Analysis = 25 points

Total = 100 points

Academic Integrity:

“The student-administered Honor Code and Honor Pledge prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without authorization, buying papers, submitting fraudulent documents and forging signatures.” (see<http://faculty.umd.edu/teach/integrity.html>).

If you are unsure of how to properly cite your information and how to avoid plagiarism please refer to online guides on MLA, APA and Chicago Style formatting. I do not have a preference for which one you use, but please pick one and use that consistently throughout an assignment. If you still need help with citations, please set up an appointment to meet with me. An assignment that includes plagiarized work will receive a zero.

Grades:

A work is excellent, unusually creative and/or analytically striking

B is fine work of high quality, though not as skilled, ambitious, or carefully presented as A

C is average or usual work fulfilling the assignment; should not be hasty, or insufficiently collaborated

D work is below average or incomplete; shows many difficulties or cannot follow instructions

F work is not sufficient to pass; unwillingness to do the work, or so many difficulties unable to complete

I will explain in more detail what the expectations are for each assignment in the handouts and on the website.

Scale

A 94 – 100% A- 90 – 93%

B+ 87 – 89% B 83 – 86% B- 80 – 82%

C+ 77 – 79% C 73 – 76% C- 70 – 72%

D+ 67 – 69% D 63 – 66% D- 60 – 62%

Course Outline

Instructor reserves the right to change course outline at any time, with prior warning. An updated syllabus will be maintained on canvas

Week 1: Introduction to the Class

First day of class: Wednesday, September 3rd 2014

-read through the syllabus.

-David Chioni Moore’s “How to Read.” (handed out and read in class)

– Kimmel/Kaufman “Listening” pg 198 (read in class)

--Adrienne Rich “Claiming an Education” (read in class)

- discussion about feminism
- fill out info sheet

Week 2: Introduction to Feminism

Monday, September 8th:

Speak with a friend or family member (or two) about what feminism is. Do they know what it is? What comes up during this conversation? Be prepared to share what you discuss in class. Also, read hooks, introduction-chapter 4; Michael Kaufman and Kimmel, from [The Guy's Guide to Feminism](#): "Ally" pg 10, "Anger" pg 11, "Autonomy" pg 14, "Chivalry" pg 23, "Feminazi" pg 43, "Equality, Equity, and Liberation" pg 42, "Guilt" pg 61, "Inequality" pg 73, "Patriarchy" pg 112, "Personal is Political" pg 114 "Sexism" pg 144, "Women's Studies" 178.

Wednesday, September 10th: [A Day Without Feminism](#); Preface and Chapter Two—"Catch a Wave" from Seely's *Fight Like a Girl* (available through worldcat)

Week 3: Introduction to Feminist Art

Monday, September 15th: [Chapter 3, from TV Reed's The Art of Protest](#), Audre Lorde's "[Poetry is Not a Luxury](#)"

Wednesday, September 17th: Freeland's "[Gender, Genius and Guerrilla Girls](#)" "[Money, Markets, Museums](#)"

Week 4: The Feminist Art Movement

Monday, September 22nd: !Women, Art, Revolution movie—viewed in class

Wednesday, September 24th: Finish !W.A.R movie, discussion

Week 5: Museum Assignment and Introduction to Privilege

Monday, September 29th: Museum Assignment Due. Discussion of your papers.

Wednesday, October 1st: -Sindeloke's [Of Dogs and Lizards](#) (blog post), -Kaufman and Kimmel "Privilege" pg 125, and "Intersectionality" pg 75, McIntosh's "[Unpacking the White Knapsack](#)", Gina Crosley-Corcoran's [Explaining White Privilege](#). In class: Intersectionality Fictional Biography Writing Exercise

Week 6: Intersectionality, Privilege, Language

Monday, October 6th: "[Michigan in Color: Our Sacrifice, Our Shame \(Blog post\)](#)," [Spoon Theory](#), Elsa Barkley Brown's "What Has Happened Here."

Wednesday, October 8th: [Anzaldua's "Letter to Third World Women Writers"](#), "Majoring In English," and [The Ubiquitous Use of "Crazy" on Raising My Boychick](#).

Week 7: Representation, Bodies and the Media

Monday, October 13th: "[We have always fought](#)" [Racist Hunger Game Tweets](#). (recommended: [White Until Proven Minority](#))

In class: Privilege walk activity

Wednesday, October 15th: read [Seely, Chapter Five from “Fight Like a Girl”](#) , “Let’s Talk About Thin Privilege”

Week 8: Bodies and Public Spaces (note this week we will be discussing sexual harassment)

Monday, October 20th: Samantha Kwan’s “Navigating Public Spaces: Gender, Race, and Body Privilege in Everyday Life, Vivian Adair’s “Branded With Infamy” both found through worldcat.

Wednesday, October 22nd: If you haven't watched Miss Representation yet, make sure you do so! “[Cat-Caller Form](#)” , “[The Kissing Sailor](#)” “[A Letter to The Guy Who Harassed Me](#)” , “[TransGirlNextDoor](#)”

Week 9: Reproductive Rights and Sexuality

Monday, October 27th: hooks, Chapter 5, Chapter 6 in Seely’s “Fight Like a Girl,” (Recommended: [Abortion ministry article](#))

Wednesday, October 29th: excerpts from the Essential Dykes to Watch Out For. Handed out in class and emailed in pdf form. Note that there are a lot of characters, and this spans a lot of years in their lives. For a handy guide to characters and the comic, see the Dykes to Watch Out For website: <http://dykestowatchoutfor.com/> ([Links to an external site.](#)). In particular: [Cast Biographies](#). ([Links to an external site.](#))

Week 10: A Narrative of Survival

Monday, November 3rd: Part one of Two or Three Things I Know for Sure by Dorothy Allison (note there is discussion of family abuse and rape—pages 36-48 discuss it the most, the rape is not described, but is referred to).

Wednesday, November 5th: Finish 2 or 3 Things I Know for Sure

Week 11: Emma Watson's Feminism

Monday, November 10th: [Watch Emma Watson's speech to the UN](#) , read [Black Girl Dangerous' critique of "He for She."](#)

Wednesday, November 12th: **No class-work on your group projects**

Week 12: Activist Projects

Monday, November 17th: Activist Projects Due

Wednesday, November 20th: Excerpts from *That Takes Ovaries*, class activities

Week 13: Women, Art, and The Environment

Monday, November 24th: -Alice Walker: “[In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens](#)”
-“Space to Grow: Women, Art and the Urban Agriculture Movement”
(<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/0740770X.2011.625715> ([Links to an external site.](#)))

“Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species” by Anna Tsing

Wednesday, November 26th: NO CLASS--Online assignment—read Howard Zinn’s Thanksgiving

Week 14: Motherhood, Immigration and Identity

Monday, December 1st: Please read this [interview with Shara McCallum](#). Both Part One and Two. Also part one of her book: This Strange Land” by Shara McCallum

Wednesday, December 3rd: Finish reading Shara McCallum's "This Strange Land"

Week 15:

Monday, December 8th: TBD

Wednesday, December 10th: LAST CLASS. hooks, “Visionary Feminism,” create concept web, final class discussions

Last day of exams: Saturday, December 20th