

## **Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies**

WGSS 100-01

Fall 2019, MWF: 9:30 am

### **Jessica Ann Vooris**

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Office hours: Monday/Wednesday: 10:30-noon,  
Tuesday 1:15-3 pm; and by appointment

### **Course Description:**

This course offers an introduction to central concepts, questions and debates in gender and sexuality studies from US, Women of Color, queer and transnational perspectives. Throughout the semester we will explore the construction and maintenance of norms governing sex, gender, and sexuality, with an emphasis on how opportunity and inequality operate through categories of race, ethnicity, class, ability and nationality. After an introduction to some of the main concepts guiding scholarship in the field of feminist studies (the centrality of difference; social and political constructions of gender and sex; representation; privilege and power; intersectionality; globalization; transnationalism), we will consider how power inequalities attached to interlocking categories of difference shape key feminist areas of inquiry, including questions of: work, resource allocation, sexuality, queerness, reproduction, marriage, gendered violence, militarization, consumerism, resistance and community sustainability.

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.

### **Required Readings**

Saraswati, L Ayu, Heather Rellihan, and Barbara Shaw. Eds. *Introduction to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies*. Oxford University Press, 2017. ISBN-13: 978-0190266066.

Butler, Octavia. *Parable of the Sower*. Hachette/Grand Central Publishing, 2019. ISBN-13: 978-1538732182.

You do not need to buy these books, but you do need to read the material. You can borrow a copy from the library, or share the text with a friend. If you are borrowing, please team-up with a classmate during close readings of the text during class.

Any additional readings will be included on Moodle.

### **How the course will be organized**

We will meet three times a week. Most Monday/Wednesday classes will be a mix of lecture and discussion, and most Fridays will be interactive activity days. 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.

## **Communication for the Course**

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 email me at [voorisj@dickinson.edu](mailto:voorisj@dickinson.edu).

*Moodle:* An updated syllabus, and course assignments will be kept on Moodle. Most of the readings will be from your textbook with the exception of some additional texts.

*Email:* Please send email to [voorisj@dickinson.edu](mailto:voorisj@dickinson.edu) if you have questions/comments about the course, readings, or want to make an appointment with me. Please only email me using your Dickinson email address. It will be helpful if you include the course number and a relevant subject heading with your email. **Example:** WGSS 100, question about Fausto-Sterling reading

Note that email sent after 7 pm may not be responded to until the morning, and I will not be checking email frequently on the weekends. Please give me at least 24 hours to respond, however, **if you don't hear from me in 48 hours, do send a reminder email!** (Note: if you email after 7 pm on Friday, I may not reply until Monday morning).

## **Electronic Policy—Let's Have a Conversation About It**

Laptops/phones/tablets can be useful for taking notes, especially for students with difficulty writing by hand. They can also be used to look up information on google during class discussions. However, they are also a source of distraction, and it is worth noting that some studies (<http://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2014/05/to-remember-a-lecture-better-take-notes-by-hand/361478/>) shows that many students learn more when taking notes by hand, rather than through electronic means. Other studies have shown that a student who chooses to dis-engage with class via facebook, etc, will distract and affect the learning of other students.

For these reasons, I ask that students think carefully about their use of laptops/electronics in class. It is easier for us all to be present in the room with each other if we do not have screens distracting us. However, I understand that laptops can be a necessary, even vital, part of learning for students, and I am open to their presence. If you plan to use a laptop or tablet in class, you must come talk to me about how you will use them and incorporate them into the classroom space. (Note this does not mean that you need to have a diagnosis or disclose a disability).

## **Graded Assignments**

15 % Class Attendance/Participation  
5% Active Engagement Points  
20 % Weekly Reading Journal  
20 % Analytical Essay  
20% Group Feminist Project  
20% Learning Analysis

### **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 Moodle.

## **Graded Assignments**

**15 % Class Attendance/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, note that you can show that you are actively participating through your listening, your reactions to what your classmates are saying, and through note-taking. Please visit me in my office hours if you are concerned about your participation due to anxiety, neurodivergence, or any other reason. If you are not in class, you cannot receive participation points. Likewise, if you are in class, but are asleep or otherwise not paying attention, 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, meaning you do not have to even let me know why you have missed and it will not affect your participation grade. Otherwise, please let me know in writing why you are missing class (sickness, family emergency, and religious holidays are excused). If you miss three or more classes, you must set up a meeting with me to discuss how you will catch up. If you miss 7 or more classes you will be at risk of failing the class. 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. Please do not email me asking what you missed unless you have already talked to a classmate and still have questions.

**5 % Active Engagement Points:** These are gained through a variety of ways—coming to talk with me during my office hours, attending feminist/gender-related events on campus, in Carlisle, or in Harrisburg, writing a short review of a book, blog, or youtube video, etc. Please see Moodle for complete assignment description, as well as a list of possible events to attend. Must complete by **December 17<sup>th</sup>**

**20 % Weekly Reading Journal:** Throughout the semester you are expected to keep a reading journal, with at least 10 entries (2 points per entry). Entries can be in written form (~400-500 words, typed or handwritten), audio/video form (~3 mins), or in a visual/artististic form (comics/collage/drawing). You may use the “critical thinking questions” in your textbook as prompts, but you are not required to do so. Entries are due by Wednesday of each week, by class time, and will be graded based on evidence that you understand the main ideas of the reading, and show evidence of your own thoughts. Your first **5 entries** must be turned in before Wednesday of week six (**October 9<sup>th</sup>**), the rest are due by Wednesday, **December 11<sup>th</sup>**. These can be hand-written/physical journals, or electronic ones. See Moodle for more assignment details.

**20% Analytical Essay:** You will choose a piece of media, literature, or art and analyze it for feminist themes. See Moodle for more details. 4-5 pages. **Due October 11<sup>th</sup> in class.**

**20% Group Project:** In groups of 4-5 you will create an end of the semester project that showcases a feminist issue. You will be required to create an “educational object” (brochure, website, podcast, pamphlet, art-piece, children’s book, zine, etc) that addresses the feminist issue that you have chosen, show/explain this object to your classmates (10 minute presentation) and write a 1-2 page analysis of the research that you conducted. You will receive a group grade, plus an individual grade. Presentations: **November 22<sup>nd</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>**. All Project materials due: **November 25<sup>th</sup>.**

**20 % Learning Analysis:** 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. The assignment with full details and requirements will be posted on Moodle, but I will note here that 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. 4-5 pages. Due 11:30 am **December 17<sup>th</sup>.**

#### COURSE SCHEDULE:

\*professor reserves the right to make changes with advance notice\*

#### **Week One: Introduction to WGSS and Key Concepts**

Monday, September 2<sup>nd</sup>

- introduction to syllabus
- “How to Read” (handed out in class)
- concept map exercise

Wednesday, September 4<sup>th</sup>

- Required: textbook pg 1-31 (Intro, hooks, Johnson)
  - Recommended: Claire Moses (190-196)
- hw exercise due:** talk to a friend or family member about feminism. Take some notes about what you discuss, and bring it to class on September 4<sup>th</sup>.

Friday, September 6<sup>th</sup>:

- Textbook pg 32-52 (Fausto-Sterling, Ijeoma A., CJ Pascoe)
- “The Gender Planet” (handed out in class)

## **Week Two: Historical Perspectives**

Monday, September 9<sup>th</sup>

- Textbook: pg 98-110, 120-124, 127-137 (Intro, Grimke, Seneca Falls, Truth, Wells, Malkiel),

Wednesday, September 11<sup>th</sup>

- Textbook: 111-119 (intro), 140-146, 156-157, 165-172 (DOB, Rivera, Mainardi, GLF, hooks)

Friday, September 13<sup>th</sup>

Timeline Game

## **Week Three: Exploring Intersectionality**

Monday, September 16<sup>th</sup>

- Textbook: 72-76, 157-163 (McIntosh, Lorde, Combahee River Collective)
- [Explaining White Privilege to a Broke White Person](#), Cocoran (Link and Moodle)

Wednesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>

- Textbook: 164 (Carrillo), 173-178 (Anzaldua), 197-200 (Vasquez)
- Eli Clare “Queerness and Disability” (Moodle)

Friday, September 20<sup>th</sup>: NO CLASS (WGSS Fieldtrip to Philly)

## **Week Four: Rethinking the Family**

Monday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>

- Intro 201-208
- Rebecca Barrett-Fox “Constraints on Freedom” (230-234)
- Jessica E. Birch “Love, Labor, and Lorde” (234-238)
- Monisha Das Gupta, “Broken Hearts, Broken Families” (239-243)

Wednesday, September 25<sup>th</sup>

- Beyondmarriage.org, “Beyond Same-Sex Marriage” (244-249)
- Dykes to Watch Out For (DTWOF) by Alison Bechdel (moodle)

Friday, September 27<sup>th</sup>

Class activities: Current News and Comics Exercise

## **Week Five: Epistemologies of Bodies**

Monday, September 30<sup>th</sup>

Intro, 346-363

Janet Mock, *Redefining Realness* (365-371)

Riki Wilchins, “Angry Intersex People with Signs” (372-373)

Brueggemann, et al “What Her Body Taught” (377-382)

Williams, “Too Latina to be Black, Too Black to be Latina” (383)

Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>

Eunjung Kim, “How Much Sex is Healthy” (391-399)

Don Sabo, “Doing Time, Doing Masculinity” (408-412)

L. Ayu Saraswati, “Cosmopolitan Whiteness” (413-421)

Kimberly Dark, “Big Yoga Student” (428-429)

Friday, October 4<sup>th</sup>

Agree/Disagree Exercise

## **Week Six: Reproductive Justice**

Monday, October 7<sup>th</sup>

Intro: 214-219

Kathy E. Ferguson, “Birth Control” (Textbook, 282-286)

France Widdance Twine, “The Industrial Womb” (Textbook, 286-294)

Wednesday, October 9<sup>th</sup>

DTWOF (Moodle)

Friday, October 11<sup>th</sup>

First Essay due in class. Class discussion of papers.

## **Week Seven- Gendered Violence**

Monday, October 14<sup>th</sup>

Intro: 219-223

Victoria Banyard et al, “Friends of Survivors” (textbook 294-303)

Brad Perry, “Hooking Up with Healthy Sexuality” (textbook 303-309)

C. Helliwell, “It’s Only a Penis” (Moodle)

Wednesday, October 16<sup>th</sup>

Beth Richie, “A Black Feminist Reflection” (textbook, 310-313)

Mogul et al, “False Promises” (textbook, 313-324)

Isis Nusair, “Making Feminist Sense of Torture at Abu-Ghraib” (textbook, 324-327)

Friday, October 18<sup>th</sup>

Feminist Art Activism in class (exploring “don’t call me baby” and “mattress protest”)

### **Week Eight: Media Representations**

Monday, October 21<sup>st</sup>:

FALL PAUSE

Wednesday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>:

Textbook intro: 223-227

Miss Representation: The Movie (watch over Fall Break)

Friday, October 25<sup>th</sup>

Ozcan, “Who is a Muslim Woman” (327-331)

Chesney-Lind, “Mean Girls, Bad Girls, Or Just Girls (332-335)

Ian Capulet, “With Reps Like These” (336-343)

### **Week Nine: Gender and Sexuality in the Labor Market**

Monday, October 28<sup>th</sup>

Intro (208-214)

Marlene Kim, “Policies to End the Wage Gap” (249-253)

Dean Spade, “Compliance is Gendered” (263-267)

Denise Brennan, “Women Work, Men Sponge” (267-277)

Wednesday, October 30<sup>th</sup>

Janet Mock, *Redefining Realness*, chapter 15 (Moodle)

Aren Aizura. “The Romance of the Amazing Scalpel: ‘Race’, labour and affect in Thai gender reassignment clinics.” In Peter A. Jackson (ed), Queer Bangkok, (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2011), 142—162. (moodle)

Friday, November 1<sup>st</sup>

Class Writing Activities or Agree/Disagree Exercise

### **Week Ten: Gender and the Environment**

Monday, November 4<sup>th</sup>

Joni Seager, “Rachel Carson Died of Breast Cancer” (textbook, 480-489)

Alice Walker, “In Search of Our Mothers Gardens” (Moodle)

Ame Gilbert and Yael Raviv “Space to Grow” (Moodle)

Beenash Jafri, “Not Your Indian Eco-Princess” (559-564)

Wednesday, November 6<sup>th</sup>

Anna Tsing, "Unruly Edges: Mushrooms as Companion Species" (Moodle)  
Eli Clare poetry (moodle)

Friday, November 8<sup>th</sup>

Weather permitting: Nature Walk and Talk (or visit to the Greenhouse)

### **Week Eleven: Science and Technology**

Monday, November 11<sup>th</sup>

Intro, 442-449  
Sandra Harding, "Feminism Confronts the Sciences" (451-461)  
Emily Martin, "Egg and Sperm" (462-469)

Wednesday, November 13<sup>th</sup>

Clare Jen, "Feminist Hactivisms" (474-480)  
Kimberly Williams, "Women@Web" (496-500)  
Jason Whitesel, "Gay Men's Use of Online Pictures in Fat-Affirming Groups" (500-508)

Friday, November 15<sup>th</sup>

NO CLASS: Traveling for NWSA conference. Use time to work on group projects.

### **Week Twelve: Activist Frontiers**

Monday, November 18<sup>th</sup>

Intro, 526-547  
Elizabeth R. Cole and Zakiya T. Luna "Making Coalitions Work" (564-571)

Recommended: Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?" (548-559)

Wednesday, November 20<sup>th</sup>

Adrienne Maree Brown, *Emergent Strategy* Intro & Ch 1, (Moodle)

Friday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>

GROUP PRESENTATIONS

### **Week Thirteen: Group Presentations Continued and Thanksgiving**

Monday, November 25<sup>th</sup>

GROUP PRESENTATIONS

Wednesday, November 27<sup>th</sup>: Thanksgiving

Recommended: Melanie Fey, et al "Empower Yoself Before you Wreck Yoself" (576-586)

Friday, November 29<sup>th</sup>: Thanksgiving

**Week Fourteen: Parable of the Sower**

Monday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>

Parable, pgs TBA

Wednesday, December 4<sup>th</sup>

Parable, pgs TBA

Friday, December 6<sup>th</sup>

Speculative Writing Activities

**Week Fifteen: Parable of the Sower**

Monday, December 9<sup>th</sup>

Parable, pgs TBA

Wednesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>

Parable, pgs TBA

Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup>:

Last day of class: Wrap Up

Reading Days: December 14 and 15<sup>th</sup>

Learning Analysis DUE: 11:30 am Tuesday, December 17<sup>th</sup>