

Spring 2017 Course Descriptions

WGS 150 MULTICULTURAL AMERICA (3U; CD, HU)

LEC 001 TR 12:30pm-1:45pm Taught by Katie Witz

As its focus, this course examines gender at the intersections of sexuality, race, ethnicity, and class. In this class, we will examine how these social categories shape girls' and women's lives and how girls and women negotiate these categories to create their own identities. In this interdisciplinary service-learning course, affiliated with both the Women's and Gender Studies and Cultures and Communities programs, we will discuss cultural differences among girls and women, focusing mainly on how they are gendered and socialized across multiple communities in the United States. More specifically, we'll analyze structures of domination and privileges in the social construction of one's gender. We will read selections from feminist theory, women's studies, cultural studies, social psychology, popular culture, and memoir.

Along with reading about gendered, sexual, ethnic, and racial identities/experiences, students will also explore their own identities, through writing regular reflections on course readings and service learning experiences, as well as through writing their own autobiographical narratives.

Additionally, to deepen our knowledge of the course topic, students are required to complete a community-based service learning assignment as part of and in tandem with this course. The assignment will involve ~1.5/2 hours a week (15/20 total hours/semester) of civic engagement over the course of the semester in a community partner placement. You will pick one of three sites at which to volunteer this semester, and we will review the specifics of each site together in class. Students will have an opportunity to place curricular concepts in the context of real-life situations and to analyze and synthesize these concepts in service to the community.

WGS 200 INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES: A SOCIAL SCIENCE PERSPECTIVE (3U; SS)

LEC 001 MW 11:00am-12:15pm Taught by Candice Williams

This course is designed as an introduction to the interdisciplinary field of Women's Studies, an academic area of study focused on the ways that sex and gender manifest themselves in social, cultural, and political contexts. The primary goal of this course is to familiarize students with key issues, questions, and debates in Women's Studies scholarship, both historical and contemporary. We will become acquainted with many of the critical questions and concepts feminist scholars have developed as tools for thinking about gendered experience. In addition, we will study interconnections among systems of oppression (such as sexism, racism, classism, ethnocentrism, homophobia/heterosexism, transphobia, ableism, and others). We will also learn to "read" and analyze gender, exploring how it impacts one's understanding of and experiences in the world.

Together and with our course texts, we will analyze competing perspectives and integrate various bodies of knowledge across traditional academic boundaries. In addition, we will apply critical thinking skills to identify and assess gender-based assumptions and biases in order to recognize their consequences on an individual, social, and cultural level.

LEC 002 MW 9:30am-10:45am Taught by Rachel Skarsten

This course is designed as an introduction to the interdisciplinary field of Women's & Gender Studies (WGS), an academic area of study focused on the ways that sex and gender manifest themselves in social, cultural, and political contexts. The primary goal of this course is to familiarize students with key issues, questions, and debates in WGS scholarship - both historical and contemporary. We will study interconnections among systems of oppression (such as sexism, racism, classism, ethnocentrism, homophobia/heterosexism, transphobia, ableism, etc.) and will learn to "read" and analyze gender, exploring how it impacts one's understanding of and experiences in the world.

[LEC 003 TR 11:00am-12:15pm Taught by Julia Anderson-Ives](#)

This course is designed as an introduction to the interdisciplinary field of Women's and Gender Studies (WGS), an academic area of study focused on the ways that sex and gender manifest themselves in social, cultural, and political contexts. The primary goals of this course are to familiarize students with key issues, questions, and debates in WGS, and to develop a feminist lens for scholarly analysis. This semester, we will become acquainted with the history and influential members of the women's rights movements in the United States. We will also look at the critical questions and concepts feminist scholars have developed as tools for thinking about gendered experience. In addition, we will study intersections among systems of oppression (such as sexism, racism, classism, ethnocentrism, homophobia/heterosexism, transphobia, ableism, and others). We will also learn to analyze gender, exploring how it impacts one's understanding of and experiences in the world. Together and with our course texts, we will analyze competing perspectives and integrate various bodies of knowledge across traditional academic boundaries. In addition, we will apply critical thinking skills to identify and assess gender-based assumptions and biases in order to recognize their consequences on an individual, social, and cultural level. Topics include feminist histories, gender development, body images/representations in media, violence against women, health and reproductive justice, the family, women's labor and activism.

WGS 201 INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES: A HUMANITIES PERSPECTIVE (3U; HU)

[LEC 001 TR 9:30am-10:45am Taught by Krista Grensavitch](#)

[LEC 002 TR 11:00am-12:15pm Taught by Jill Hoffman](#)

[LEC 203 Online Section Taught by Krista Grensavitch](#)

This course is designed as an introduction to the interdisciplinary field of Women's Studies, an academic area of study focused on the ways that sex and gender manifest themselves in social, cultural, and political contexts. The primary goal of this course is to familiarize students with key issues, questions, and debates in Women's Studies scholarship, both historical and contemporary. We will become acquainted with many of the critical questions and concepts feminist scholars have developed as tools for thinking about gendered experience. In addition, we will study interconnections among systems of oppression (such as sexism, racism, classism, ethnocentrism, homophobia/heterosexism, transphobia, ableism, and others). We will also learn to "read" and analyze gender, exploring how it impacts one's understanding of and experiences in the world.

Together and with our course texts, we will analyze competing perspectives and integrate various bodies of knowledge across traditional academic boundaries. In addition, we will apply critical thinking skills to identify and assess gender-based assumptions and biases in order to recognize their consequences on an individual, social, and cultural level.

WGS 211 FOUNDATIONS OF WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES WRITING AND RESEARCH (3U)

[LEC 001 TR 2:00pm-3:15pm Taught by Casey O'Brien](#)

This course will explore what is meant by feminist research, how it is practiced, and how feminist research methods affect and influence scholarship. We begin by examining the current issues and debates regarding feminist research methods, methodology and epistemology. Further, we will examine and practice critical writing and thinking skills necessary to do, produce, and understand feminist research. Since research is a craft best learned through practice, and since the ideas and concepts we discuss in our readings and class discussions will be better understood by doing feminist research, a significant portion of the course will be devoted to engaging in the research process ourselves. In the form of carefully research personal narrative, students will be asked to research their own histories and the ways in which their experiences are informed by the intersections of class, race, gender, and sexuality. Research projects will examine ways in which scholarship in women's studies has influenced areas of interest specific to the student. Additionally, these research projects will serve as an additional text in our class.

WGS 290 SELECTED TOPICS IN WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES: *Black Feminisms* (3U)

LEC 001 MW 2:00pm-3:15pm Taught by Charmaine Lang

The aim of this course is to examine Black women's lived experiences via literature, theory, and activism. Section one of the course explores Black feminist theory's use and relationship to standpoint theory, womanism and intersectionality. Section two of the course explores the text of Black feminist literature for topics of Black women's realities, intersecting identities and activism. Some questions we will analyze during the semester include: What is the relationship between Black feminism, womanism, and Black Nationalism? What is the connection between gender, racism, and homophobia in the lives of Black women? What is the connection between pop culture and Black feminism? Where is Black feminism now? We will draw on multiple texts, current events and films to situate Black feminist theory not only as an intellectual project but as a personal and activist one.

WGS 301 QUEER THEORY (3U)

LEC 001 TR 12:30pm-1:45pm Taught by Cheryl Kader

In the 1970s, feminists of color, among others, began to interrogate the concept of a unified gender identity, calling for a feminist theory and practice that would take into account the intersections of gender, race, class and sexuality. In a comparable move, the critical theory and practice engendered by the term "queer" problematizes unitary lesbian and gay identities in favor of critique and resistance. "Queer," however, has not simply replaced older conceptualizations of lesbian and gay identities; it exists, alongside those identity categories, opening up new possibilities and problems for inquiry and activism. Consequently, queer theory works to investigate the norms of identity, disturbing our most cherished preconceptions about the relations of sex, gender, sexuality and desire.

Furthermore, queer theorists take issue with the marginalization of lesbian and gay lives within a binary model of identity. Pointing to ways of knowing and being that naturalize heterosexuality, and homosexuality, they subject sexual and gender relations to critical analysis. Queer theory defies rigid definitional limits, exploring, in the words of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "the multiple, unstable ways in which people may be like and different from each other."

"To queer" means to quiz, to spoil, to bend and to displace, a set of actions rather than a specific category of sexuality or gender. In this class, we shall approach queer theory as a perspective or critique from which to challenge regimes of the normal and to destabilize identity categories. In the process, we shall look at the "body" as a mode of queer practice by means of which identity is performatively generated and organized, and conclude by discussing the political efficacy of "queer" and its possibilities for social change.

WGS 381 HONORS SEMINAR IN THE HUMANITIES: *Milton and Gender*

SEM 001 MW 2:00pm-3:15pm Taught by Gwynne Kennedy

John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost* is one of the most important literary works in English. For Milton, the fall of Adam and Eve is *the* original epic event. His portrayals of Adam, Eve, Satan, God, Eden, and Hell have influenced later writers from Mary Shelley to Philip Pullman. *Paradise Lost* addresses many pressing issues in Milton's time, including the basis of a ruler's authority and the limits of a subject's obedience, the nature of the world and universe, and gender. What do pre-fall gender relations look like? Is there a gendered division of labor before the fall? What motivates Eve and Adam to disobey God? How can we reconcile the spiritual equality of men and women with their social inequality?

The major work in this class will be a close reading of *Paradise Lost* with attention to gender construction, norms of masculinity and femininity, and sexual difference. Some secondary readings will be drawn from Milton's prose, particularly his arguments for divorce and statements about the epic he will later write. Others will provide historical context or suggest the importance of the Fall narrative for political theory and action. In addition, we will read accounts of the Fall that would have been available to Milton, a number of them by women. These will better help us see the choices Milton makes in his epic. No prior knowledge of the period or the Bible is required

WGS 411 / 711 WGS RESEARCH METHODS / ADVANCED WGS RESEARCH METHODS (3U / 3G)

Undergraduate and Graduate levels jointly offered

LEC / SEM 001 MW 12:30pm-1:45pm Taught by Xin Huang

What is feminist research? What makes a research project feminist and how does it differ from other kinds of researches? What kinds of ideas and purposes inform and drive a feminist research project? This course covers a wide range of qualitative and quantitative research methods that has been instrumental for feminist research. Attentive to the intersectionality of gender, race, class, sex and other social identities, students will survey feminist debates, choices, and dilemmas around research motivations and processes, ethics, voice and subjectivity, ethnography, fieldwork, participant observation, interviewing, analysis, representation and presentation. The course considers the kinds of opportunities and challenges presented by diverse methods while emphasizing the link between the development of a research question and the selection of methodological approaches. It also explores how feminist research, carried out with self reflexivity, could contribute to the construction of knowledge of emancipation and bring about positive social changes.

WGS 500 ADVANCED SOCIAL SCIENCE SEMINAR IN WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES: *Gender in Global Asia* (3U/G)

SEM 001 Mon 3:30pm-6:10pm Taught by Xin Huang

This interdisciplinary course will provide an overview of Global Asia from a gender perspective. We will begin by discussing key concepts, analytical tools, and theoretical frameworks for understanding gender issues that occur throughout Asia. Some central concepts to be looked at include "gender" ((in relation to sexual difference and sexuality as socio-political cultural constructs), contemporary globalization and transnationalism, and the historical context of imperialism, colonialism, and nationalism. A range of theories will be drawn from Third World and transnational feminism, post-colonial studies, gender and development, and globalization studies. We will situate our understanding of the intersections of gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, and class in Asia in a global context, and discuss some important current topics related to gender and family structures in Asia. We will address the ways in which understandings of gender differences and roles are mediated through specific experiences of colonialism (including inter-Asian colonialism) and Orientalism, and reflect upon on-going interactive processes taking place between "Asia" and "the West" as well as within Asia and between Asian countries and regions.

WGS 799 ADV. TOPICS IN WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES: *Gender, Religion, and Sexuality in Global Perspective* (3G)

SEM 001 Wed 6:00pm-8:40pm Taught by Merry Wiesner-Hanks

This seminar explores ways in which gender, sexuality, and religion intersected in the past and present around the world, and, in particular, ways gender, sexuality, and religion were and are used to create distinctions between self and other. This process, sometimes called "Othering," is a way of defining and securing one's own positive identity through the stigmatization of or separation from an "other." The idea of "the Other" emerged in feminist, psychoanalytical, and social theory to discuss the ways in which markers of social differentiation shape the meaning of "us" and "them." These categories of distinction can be based on race, geography, ethnicity, economic class, or ideology as well as gender, religion, and sexuality, but we will pay particular attention to the latter three in this seminar. Theologians also sometimes use notions of "the Other" to talk about divine forces and beings, and about relations between the material and the spiritual. These various understandings of otherness have intersected in complex ways in different situations, and religious ideas and practices have been central to debates about cultural relativism, "sisterhood," and the different meanings of feminism around the world.

The course will be organized topically, with material for each topic from several different religious and spiritual traditions to allow comparative analysis. Topics will include gender and sexuality in creation accounts; relations between body and spirit; witchcraft and possession; religion and same-sex relations; gender reversals, gender transcendence and third genders; gender and religion in the context of colonialism and post-colonialism; feminist critiques, theology, and spirituality. Readings will include general surveys of specific issues and theoretical perspectives, written original source materials from local and world religions, and case studies that will also serve as models for research papers. We will also be examining religious imagery and viewing several films that present these issues in historical and contemporary cultures.