

WMST 100(2): Representations of Women
Spring 2017
T/Th 3:00pm – 4:15pm
B220 Robinson Hall

Instructor:

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Office Hours:

Women & Gender Studies
239G Johnson Center
3-4pm MW

Read the syllabus before you contact me.

Course Description and Objectives:

This is an introductory course that seeks to examine the role of gender in various social institutions. We will begin by exploring the origins of sex differences as well as discuss the role of socialization in gender differences. Students will be provided with the terminology and tools to successfully engage in feminist dialogue about culture and society. We will learn about representations of race, sexuality, class, gender and sex in a variety of ways. We will discuss and analyze issues facing sexual and gender minorities, how these cultural forces are reproduced, and finally how they are creatively protested and challenged. This course primarily explores portrayals of transgender and cisgender women by using film, television, novels and ethnographic research, both in the US and globally.

- Student will gain an understanding of the concepts of sex, gender, sexuality and identity
- Students will be exposed to various portrayals of women and gender both in the US and globally
- Students will be exposed to feminist and intersectional theory as a framework for critical analysis of gender and sexuality and institutions as well as in the media
- Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the interconnectedness, difference, and diversity of a global society
- Apply awareness of global issues to a consideration of individual or collective responsibilities within a global society
- Devise analytical, practical, or creative responses to global problems or issues

Course Materials:

There will be a \$5 cover charge for a mandatory lecture by Janet Mock. Most materials are pdf files or links on Blackboard. You must purchase or rent one book:

- Mock, Janet. *Redefining Realness*. 2014.

Class Rules:

- **Respect privacy** – What happens in class stays in class. Unless you directly ask for and receive permission, do not share information you learn about your peers with anyone else. The classroom is a secure space where we will discuss personal experiences and attitudes. In addition, please refrain from sharing personal details about acquaintances and friends. Experiences shared in class must remain relevant to the course and have direct connections to the material.
- **Speak only for yourself** – No one in this class has the authority to speak for *all* straight people, gay people, people of color, women, men, GMU students, or even for *one* other person. Tell us what you believe and feel when talking about personal experience and viewpoint. If you are making an assertion that goes beyond that, find research-based evidence to support your assertions and cite the studies you are talking about. Always be clear about which of the two you are doing (talking about personal views or discussing research findings). Be careful to separate fact and opinion, using “I think” and “I feel” to introduce your own thoughts in discussion.

- **Use humanizing language** – If you take issue with something someone says, respond to the idea rather than attacking the person. Marginalized people have the latitude to use the terms they find empowering to talk about themselves and the groups they belong to, but all students will refrain from using racial, sexual or gender slurs, any word ending with “-ed” (eg. *transgendered*, *colored*, etc.), or any other similarly derogatory term in discussion or in written work. Repeatedly using inappropriate and incorrect terms throughout the semester will result in docked points on assignments.
- **Listen to what people say** – If someone shares a relevant experience or viewpoint, we can and will analyze it, think about its connection to broader social patterns, explore its ramifications, and link it to our course materials. We will not, however, openly disbelieve, discount, or discredit what others say about their own experiences. Sharing personal stories can be scary in a classroom full of strangers—so let’s give each other the benefit of the doubt and believe what people say about their own lives, even when subjecting our experiences to critical analysis. Students are encouraged to join the discussion at will, but only one person may speak at once. Refrain from interjecting, holding side conversations or giving live commentary.
- **Open technology** – Kindles, Nooks and other eReader or tablet devices are welcomed and encouraged. Laptops and smartphones are allowed if used responsibly for reading and note-taking. Use of headphones in class is strictly prohibited, in addition to any audio over speakers, phone calls, messaging or social media.

Grading:

Midterm Exam	25%	A+	97-99%	B-	80-82%	D	60-62%
Final Exam	25%	A	93-96%	C+	77-79%	D-	60-62%
Essay	25%	A-	90-92%	C	73-76%	F	0-60%
Engagement	25%	B+	87-89%	C-	70-72%		
		B	83-86%	D+	67-69%		

I do not discuss grades over e-mail or in class. If you would like to speak with me about an exam, assignment, final grade, or any other graded material you must come to my office and speak with me face-to-face. If you cannot come to my office hours, I will gladly schedule an appointment that works with your schedule. If you wish to appeal a grade on an assignment, you must submit a grade appeal **within 4 days** of receiving the grade, and you must follow these procedures:

- Wait at least 24 hours before setting up an appointment and submitting your written grade appeal to ensure you have carefully read and considered the feedback.
- After reading my feedback, submit a typed, written appeal that identifies the specific issue in question (e.g. quiz item, etc.) and explains the specific and well-supported reasons you believe the grade should be changed. Please refer to any class materials that support your rationale for a change. Focus less on explaining that you deserve a certain grade, and more on proving that you accomplished specific objectives that you were not given the appropriate credit for. Make sure to cite specific instances from your assignment to provide support for these claims.
- The written appeal should be submitted at least 24 hours prior to the appointment.
- When you arrive for the scheduled appointment, bring in your graded copy of the item in question (e.g., quiz, exam, etc.) and any additional evidence to support your claims and be ready to present them.
- After meeting with you, I will decide within two school days whether to change or uphold the grade.
- I will provide you with a written justification of my decision.
- If we cannot come to an agreement, you are welcome to contact the Women and Gender Studies program for a departmental appeal.

Exams:

The midterm (3/9) and final (5/11) exams will be in-class, featuring a mixture of short answer, definitions, identifications and essay questions. The exam content will be determined by review sessions in the preceding class sessions.

Essay:

A three to five page essay will be due on Blackboard by 5/2 at midnight. Essays submitted past midnight will receive 10% off, with an additional 5% off for every hour late - no exceptions. This essay is expected to be a complete and thought-out argument, using paragraphs, topic sentences and conclusions. For all written assignments, please use Times New Roman, 12pt, double-spaced with 1 inch margins, normal 8.5/11 sized paper and as a Microsoft Word file. I will distribute a sample document that you may use to format your essay. Please use a citation method, whether APA, MLA or Chicago, as long as it is consistent and legitimate with a works cited. Use at least two sources assigned in this course and three outside, scholarly sources.

Your essay will investigate any feminist issue, theory, history or idea that expands or complicates on topics discussed in class. Your paper must use the tools of cultural analysis explored within this course, building off the work of prominent figures within Women's Studies. The essay will be completed through a series of assignments:

March 7 – 300 word proposal with a thesis question, printed and brought to class

March 21 – Proposed bibliography with at least four sources (at least one must be outside class) and 100 word annotations summarizing the source and explaining its relevance to your paper, printed and brought to class

April 18 – Two page draft to be printed and brought to class, turned in and graded with comments. In-class workshoping

May 2 – Final paper with edits due by midnight on Blackboard

Engagement:

This grading category includes at-home assignments, in-class assignments and participation in class discussions. Assignments are added and assigned to this grade category throughout the semester as needed. Participation and engagement in class discussion is expected and required for successful understanding. This class does best when students have a dialogue on the material and share their interpretations and experiences. Any late at-home assignments or major in-class assignments will receive 10% off, with an additional 5% off for each additional day late.

The majority of this grade category is devoted to ten at-home Blackboard reading responses, of which you will choose eight to complete. Reflections should summarize the main arguments of the day's assigned readings, make connections to broader meanings, other course readings and broader contexts, ending with a provocative, academic question. Reflections should be posted on Blackboard by noon before class. Only certain days require reflections, which are designated in the course schedule using asterisks on the day of the week.

Missing Class/Assignments:

If you miss a class, you should first contact one of your classmates (Blackboard) to see what material you missed. Minor activities and grades issued in-class cannot be made up since they require engagement in discussion and are often worth a small amount of points. Credit will be given at discretion for only documented absences. Appointments scheduled during class time are not excused.

If you will be unable to do an assignment because of a circumstance outside your control, please email me ahead of time so we can discuss your options. Any consecutive absences will impact your grade and will need to be addressed. I understand life circumstances and personal duties may affect your student responsibilities, but you *must* speak with me beforehand. No excuses will be given for incomplete, late or missing work past the assignment's due date and time.

Technological issues will *not* be excused for any missing or late assignments. Any file that is corrupt or unreadable will not receive credit and cannot be made up. Fenwick Library is an expansive and accessible resource for printing and Internet access.

Trigger Warning/Resources:

We will discuss a variety of sensitive topics in this course, including but not limited to violence, rape, abuse, prejudice, sexuality and anatomy. Some of the terms we use in class may be striking. We will also be critical of society and institutions, challenging ideas that many people hold as firm beliefs and truths. The classroom is a safe space, so if you feel uncomfortable or need assistance please let me know as soon as possible or visit my office hours.

Counseling and Psychological Services offers a range of mental health and other support services for Mason students. I encourage you to contact them at (703) 993-2380 or go to <http://caps.gmu.edu/> for online crisis chat and other supportive services. The Student Support and Advocacy Center's Sexual and Intimate Partner Violence Crisis Line is open 24/7 for support, information and referrals for sexual trauma at (703) 380-1434. Visit their website at <http://ssac.gmu.edu/> for more. Queer, trans and questioning students may find assistance through Mason's LGBTQ Resources, <http://lgbtq.gmu.edu/>.

Please send me an email, visit me after class or at office hours to discuss any problematic behaviors, actions or content in the classroom.

Women and Gender Studies at George Mason:

The Women and Gender Studies Program offers an interdisciplinary minor to undergraduate students. This is a 21-credit minor that works well with most majors and can be structured to fit your interests. Feminist scholarship has influenced many disciplines and the minor provides students with the tools necessary to engage with issues of gender, race, sexuality and class in various texts and contexts.

The Women and Gender Studies Center is located in the Johnson Center, Room 240K. The Women and Gender Studies Center organizes a variety of lectures, workshops, and activities relevant to campus life throughout the academic year. They also have a collection of over 1000 books relevant to Gender Studies, which students may check out with their George Mason ID card. All students are welcome to hang out, seek resources and study at the center.

Academic Integrity:

George Mason University has an Honor Code, which requires all members of this community to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity. Cheating, plagiarism, lying, and stealing are all prohibited. All violations of the Honor Code will be reported to the Honor Committee.

Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving that person credit: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm#plagiarism>

Please familiarize yourself with the Honor System and Code, as stated in the George Mason University *Undergraduate Catalog*. When you are given an assignment as an individual, the work must be your own. Some of your work may be collaborative; source material for group projects and work of individual group members must be carefully documented for individual contributions: <http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm>

Disability Services:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Resources at 703-993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

The need for accommodations should be identified at the beginning of the semester and the specific accommodation has to be arranged through the Office of Disability Resources. Faculty cannot provide accommodations to students on their own (e.g. allowing a student extra time to complete an exam because the student reports having a disability).

Course Schedule:

NOTE: Assignments, readings, and due dates are subject to change. The schedule lists what we will be doing in class that day, readings must be done prior to the listed class session.

T	1/24	Syllabus Day
Th*	1/26	<i>Feminism is for Everybody</i> , Intro through Chap 3, hooks “You’re a Hardcore Feminist, I Swear,” Valenti
T*	1/31	“Ain’t I a Woman?,” Truth “Toward a New Vision,” Hill Collins “Why Intersectionality can’t wait,” Crenshaw
Th	2/2	“Night to His Day,” Lorber “#YesAllWomen, But Not Really,” Heideman “Being a Woman: Who Gets to Decide,” King
T	2/7	“Masculinity as Homophobia,” Kimmel “Why Men Should Support Gender Equality,” Kimmel
Th*	2/9	“Becoming 100% Straight,” Michael Messner “Sexual Fluidity Before Sex,” Rupp “Heterosexual Questionnaire,” Martin Rochlin
T	2/14	“The Five Sexes,” Fausto-Sterling “NYC issues first US 'intersex' birth certificate,” Scutti In-class film: <i>XXY</i> (2007, 86 min)
Th*	2/16	“XXY Offers a New View of Life in an Intersex Body,” Tamar-Mattis “The Five Sexes, Revisited,” Fausto-Sterling In-class film: <i>XXY</i>
T	2/21	<i>Redefining Realness</i> , Author’s Note through Chapter 4
Th*	2/23	<i>Redefining Realness</i> , Chapter 5 through Chapter 8 In-class film: <i>Kumu Hina</i> (2014, 55 min)
T	2/28	<i>Redefining Realness</i> , Chapter 9 through Chapter 12 Attend “Annual Sojourner Truth Lecture” with Janet Mock 7pm to 10pm, GMU Center for the Arts, \$5 (Alternative: 3 page essay due by 3/7)
Th*	3/2	“Trans Woman Manifesto,” Serano “Trans Identities and Contingent Masculinities,” Blackwood
T	3/7	Midterm Review Session 300 word essay proposals with a thesis question, brought to class Turn in five example exam questions on Blackboard by 3/6 at 7pm
Th	3/9	Midterm
T	3/14	Spring Break
Th	3/16	Spring Break

T	3/21	<p>“Objectification,” Nussbaum “Body Projects,” Brumberg</p> <p>Proposed bibliography with at least four sources and 100 word annotations summarizing the source and explaining its relevance to your paper, brought to class In-class film: <i>Miss Representation</i> (2011, 85 min)</p>
Th	3/23	<p>“Fat Monica, Fat Suits, and Friends,” Gullage “Breasted Experience,” Young</p> <p>In-class film: <i>Miss Representation</i></p>
T	4/4	<p>“The Politics of Housework,” Mainardi “The First (Black) Lady,” Williams</p> <p>In-class viewing: <i>Parks and Recreation</i>, “Pie-Mary” (22 min)</p>
Th*	4/6	<p>“The Lost Generation,” Carpio “Patriarchal Colonialism and Indigenism,” Jaimes-Guerrero</p> <p>In-class film: <i>Miss Navajo</i> (2007, 60 min)</p>
T*	4/11	<p>“Up Against the Wall Miss America,” Welch “Performing Culture,” Dowell</p> <p>In-class film: <i>Miss Navajo</i></p>
Th*	4/13	<p>“Vampires, Postmodernity and Postfeminism,” Owen “The Relationship between Rape Myths and Sexual Scripts,” Ryan</p> <p>In-class viewing: <i>Buffy the Vampire Slayer</i>, “Welcome to the Hellmouth” (43 min)</p>
T	4/18	<p>“Counseling Older Women for Vitality,” Choate</p> <p>In-class viewing: <i>Grace and Frankie</i>, “The Sex” (28 min) Two page essay draft, brought to class</p>
Th	4/20	<p>“Girls Gone Anti-Feminist,” Douglas “Mammy, Jezebel, Sapphire and their Homegirls,” West</p> <p>In-class film: <i>Lemonade</i> (2016, 65 min)</p>
T*	4/25	<p>“Moving Beyond Pain,” hooks “Who Runs the World...Girls,” Machokoto</p> <p>In-class film: <i>Lemonade</i></p>
Th	4/27	<p>“Feminist Online Identity,” Dixon “Four Women Who Fled Syria,” Bohn</p> <p>In-class film: <i>#chicagoGirl</i> (2013, 74 min)</p>
T	5/2	<p>“The Activist Survivors of <i>The Hunting Ground</i>,” Kort “Women Pioneers of the Louisiana Environmental Movement,” Frankland and Tucker “The Women Behind Black Lives Matter,” Pierre-Louis</p> <p>In-class film: <i>#chicagoGirl</i> Essay Due by midnight on Blackboard</p>
Th	5/4	<p>Final Review Session Turn in five example questions on Blackboard by 5/3 at 7pm</p>
Th	5/11	<p>Final Exam, 1:30pm – 4:15pm</p>