**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES  
INTS 310/WMST 300**

**Violence and Gender**

**Semester:** Spring 2021  
**Course Day and Time:** Wednesdays, 7:20-10:00 pm   
**Course Location:** Virtual (On Zoom)

**INSTRUCTOR:** Courtney Diener   
**Email:** [cdiener@gmu.edu](mailto:cdiener@gmu.edu)

**Women and Gender Studies Diversity Statement**

Women and Gender Studies seeks to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences, including gender expression and identity, race, economic status, sex, sexuality, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and ability. We encourage all members of the learning environment to engage with the material personally, but to also be open to exploring and learning from experiences different than their own.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES**

Using nonfiction, research documentaries, oral histories, case studies, literature, feature films, music, dance, and visual arts, examines the dynamics of violence through different cultural lenses. Students work in university and community settings to integrate their academic experiences with practice.

**Course Objectives:**

* Student will gain an understanding of the concepts of consent, grounding, boundaries, and self-care.
* Students will be exposed to various types of gender-based violence including individual experiences of violence, collective stories and experienced of violence, and institutional and societal implications of violence.
* Students will be given opportunities to explore gender-based violence through feminist, intersectional, and interdisciplinary lens with an emphasis on a critical analysis of societal, personal, and culture norms around violence.
* Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of the impacts of violence with specific emphasis on the impact on survivors from marginalized identities.

**Required Course Materials**

We will not have a textbook in this course. You will be asked to view several pieces of media that may in occur a cost. Most of these can be found on Netflix. (And some can also be found on Amazon and YouTube TV). We will discuss this during class.

**Articles and Additional Materials**

\***All additional materials can be found on blackboard.**

**COURSE POLICIES & INFORMATION**

**Course Structure and Teaching Philosophy:**

As an instructor, I do not create my classroom around my lecture. Instead, I will often present information through readings, discussions, and active learning opportunities. With that being said, I expect students to come to class having both read the required reading, but also having spent time thinking critically about the reading and how it relates to class and the world around them.

I believe in what I call low-stakes high opportunity assessment meaning I often offer many ways to participate in the class and to earn points towards your final grade. I typically allow opportunities to revise assignments and assessments to allow you to demonstrate how you are growing your overall skills and competency. However, this is not guaranteed and I expected effort and attention to the first drafts. Participation in class is key to success and content mastery.

We will be covering dynamic and highly interpersonal topics is this course. Some of the materials may be emotional or personal for students. I encourage everyone to maintain respect in our discussions and to do what they can to help to maintain a safe environment for the course. If you are having difficulties with the sensitive nature of the content in the course, I encourage you that reach out to some of the many resources on campus. While I specialize in sexual and interpersonal violence, appropriate boundaries are essential to make this course work and therefore I cannot serve as your advocate or to work one on one with you around your own trauma. However, I would be happy to connect you to resources on campus to support you through this course if you are personally impacted. In addition, I will bring in a confidential advocate from the Student Support and Advocacy Center the first day of class. She is available should it be helpful to have someone to plan around course content and/or resources.

Allow respect to be central to every discussion we have in class and be open to disagreement and critical thinking as this is an important part of academic growth and freedom. As the instructor, I hold a lot of the power in the room and I have to acknowledge that power as power (and lack thereof) is central to many of our discussions. I will do my best to allow the conversation to lift up the voices of others. I hope you do the same if it is safe for you to do so. I try my best to also encourage and demonstrate consent in the classroom, as I believe consent is key in our society. With that being said, there are some assignments or tasks that are required. Should you need an accommodation or support around the class, please bring this to my attention and I would be happy to come up with a plan with you that allows you to engage in the material to your fullest ability while still respecting your needs and boundaries.

I treat my syllabus as a working document and agreement between my students and myself as an instructor. I use the syllabus as a guide, but often adjust to what makes sense for our class learning. I will never add more requirements, but I may make adjustments to reading schedule and assignments as needed and I will communicate this with you as soon as changes are made often with your feedback.

**Attendance and Participation:**

Regular class attendance is crucial for your learning in this class. I take attendance every single class. I also occasionally collect in-class and out of class materials to determine your participation and attendance grade. Our course meets only once a week which means that missing class is especially harmful as it is similar to missing two sessions of other classes that meet once a week.

If you believe you will miss multiple classes, please work with me to find a way to complete work and/or to come up with a plan for your success. Be proactive about this as it is much harder the more absences you have and the further we get into the semester.

You are responsible for all announcements, assignments, materials, and date changes covered or made in class while you are absent. I advise you to find a partner or two whom you can check in with if you miss a class.  **Please do not email me to ask “what did I miss?” or “did I miss anything important?” because I value every class.** Important information is found in the syllabus, on blackboard, and from your fellow classmates. If after using your resources you still have questions, feel free to ask me!

**In addition, participation in this course is key.** I will do my best to structure many different types of learning to engage all types of learning styles for our group. However, you are expected to challenge yourself to participate and engage in every class session.

**Office Hours:** By appointment only as my office is in the Student Support and Advocacy Center to respect privacy of service users. I am available every day of the week and many nights. Please do not hesitate to send an email to set up an appointment and do your best to communicate when you have an issue or need clarification from me. For the Spring 2021 semester, all office hours and class interactions will be held virtually over Zoom..

**Email Policy:**

In compliance with a University-wide initiative, our correspondence will be only through GMU assigned email accounts. Please check your email account regularly for updates and important announcements. I will not accept excuses based on not checking your email.

**Weekly Reading:**

Reading is a core part of this course. Given that this is a one day a week class, anticipate more reading than you would have for a two-three time a week class due on each class session. It is recommended that you do not wait until the night before to read as each week you will be a lot of reading in this course.These readings will be a combination of scholarly journals, book chapters, and popular/newsworthy pieces of writing. In addition, there will be videos or other content at times.

**Late and Missing Assignments:**

You are responsible for completing assignments on time. Due dates are clearly indicated throughout the syllabus. I am not required to accept late assignments. I want all of my students to be successful in this course and I am always happy to talk about extensions or alternative options before an assignment is due.

**Disability Services:**

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to upholding the letter and spirit of the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities.  Under the administration of University Life, Disability Services implements and coordinates reasonable accommodations and disability-related services that afford equal access to university programs and activities.  Students can begin the registration process with Disability Services at any time during their enrollment at George Mason University.  If you are seeking accommodations, please visit <http://ds.gmu.edu/> for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process.  Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: [ods@gmu.edu](mailto:ods@gmu.edu) | Phone: (703) 993-2474

Please communicate your accommodations to your instructor as soon as you can as they cannot be administered retroactively.

**George Mason University Honor Code:**

It is expected that students adhere to the George Mason University Honor Code as it relates to integrity regarding coursework and grades.  The Honor Code reads as follows:” To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the University Community have set forth this: Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal and/or lie in matters related to academic work.”  More information about the Honor Code, including definitions of cheating, lying, and plagiarism, can be found at the Office of Academic Integrity website at [http://oai.gmu.edu](http://oai.gmu.edu/honor-code/).

While collaboration and learning from others, especially established scholars in the field is not only encouraged but required, using someone else’s words or ideas without giving them credit is plagiarism a violation of University policy. If you want to know more about resources to assist with citation, please visit the **University’s Writing Center** at <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu/>.

**Classroom and Audio/Visual**

Given that this is a virtual class, it is important that you are able to access WiFi to join our classroom. Please email me ASAP if you are unable to do so, so we can brainstorm resources that can help to get you connected. Given the delivery of this class is virtual and a lot of the activities require groupwork, it is my expectation that you use your camera and audio/mic during class with your camera on. Occasionally, a student who is a parent or caregiver may need to step away to attend to their child/dependent. If this happens, simply mute and/or turn off your camera as necessary, and rejoin as soon as you are able to do so. In addition, I recognize that many students may be accessing their virtual classrooms in households or places where there are other people or distractions. Do your best to minimize distractions and to turn off your camera when others are creating a distraction. I understand that this can be sometimes difficult given our virtual classroom and just encourage you to do your best. In addition, sometimes for some students it may be necessary to turn your camera off for a few minutes if you are feeling triggered or activated by the content. This is totally understandable and welcome. It is important for us as a class to practice consent and respect each other boundaries as well as to have space to emotionally support ourselves. With that being said, I do expect that students keep their cameras on for the majority of time if at all possible as this is helpful in the virtual setting. This course shall not be recorded without the consent of all participants and the instructor. While I totally understand that many of us are taking classes in our homes, it is key that you are in class and present. Please do not participate in my class while driving. In addition, please make every effort to be in class and do not spend your time doing other assignments, watching tv, shopping, etc. Our time together is important to our class goals.

**Here is a list of some of the many campus resources available to you:** <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/knowing-mason-students/student-support-resources-on-campus/>

**Notice of mandatory reporting of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking:**  As a faculty member in this class, I am designated as a “Non-Confidential Employee,” and must report all disclosures of sexual assault, interpersonal violence, and stalking to Mason’s Title IX Coordinator per University Policy 1202. If you wish to speak with someone confidentially, please contact one of Mason’s confidential resources, such as Student Support and Advocacy Center (SSAC) at 703-993-3686 or Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at 703-993-2380. You may also seek assistance from Mason’s Title IX Coordinator by calling 703-993-8730, or emailing [titleix@gmu.edu](mailto:titleix@gmu.edu) for non-confidential support and resources.

\*Please note that I provide confidential support to students experiencing sexual and interpersonal violence through my job in the Student Support and Advocacy Center. However, when I am acting as your professor I am required to follow the University 1202 policy regarding reporting of sexual and interpersonal violence. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially about these topics, you can do so by reaching out to the Student Support and Advocacy Center at any time. If you decide to work with SSAC, I will likely be aware of your involvement with the center, but I will not be your advocate/case manager to respect the needed boundaries of the class.

**Course Grading Scale:**

You are responsible for keeping track of your grade throughout the semester. I use blackboard as a container for grades, but suggest you track along with the course. This allows you to be proactive in any discrepancies and for you to be aware where you stand throughout the class instead of just at the end. I am not required to submit midterm grades for this course, but will use the midterm as a check-in on grades and the class progress as a whole.

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| **Points** | **Letter Grade** |  | **Points** | **Letter Grade** |
| 97-100+ | A+ |  |
| 93-96 | A |  | C | 73-76 |
| 90-92 | A- |  | C- | 70-72 |
| 87-89 | B+ |
| 83-86 | B |  | D | 67-60 |
| 80-82 | B- |  |
| 77-79 | C+ |  | F | Below 60 |

**Class Grading Structure**

**Participation *110 points total or 55% of your total grade***

* In-class participation and attendance
* Weekly content grids
* Discussion groups

**Research Paper Midterm *50 points total or 25% of your total grade***

* Topic Submission
* Thesis Statement
* Two Sources
* Introduction
* Research Lightening Talk

**Creative Project *40 points total or 20% of your total grade***

* Project Proposal
* Event Participation (or alternative)
* Creative Project Final Reflection

*Please see the* ***class grading worksheet*** *to assist in keeping track of your grade. Please note that while I use BlackBoard to assist in the tracking of grades, I also expect my students to follow along and to make me aware of any discrepancies they see in their reported blackboard grades and what they believe the should have in the class.*

**Grading/Assignment Brief Descriptions:**

**Participation:** This is calculated based on your overall attendance, your participation in the class, your in-class and out of class assignments that are turned in, and your participation in any and all blackboard assignments.

Your participation will be graded on:

* Class Attendance and Participation (weekly)
* Blackboard Introduction (one time)
* Self-Care Plan (one time)
* Weekly Content Grids (weekly)
* Group Discussions (weekly)

**Research Paper or Media Critique**

Instead of a midterm in this course, you will have a midterm research paper (argumentative or informative) or a media critique that will be due. This will be an 8-9 page paper with a minimum of 6 peer-reviewed sources written in either MLA or APA style. This paper will allow you the opportunity to more deeply explore a topic related to gender and violence that is of interest to you. If you select to write a research paper you may choose to write an argumentative paper that advocates for a particular change or concept or you may choose an informative paper that explores your topic with depth and the goal of better understanding the topic. A final option is to select a piece of media that explores violence (a book, television show, piece of art, documentary, etc.) and overview and critique the piece. This project will be divided into sections of the paper which you will write throughout the first half of the semester. You will also complete a topic “lightening talk” where you overview your topic in 2-3 minutes for your classmates to learn more.

**Final/Creative Project** I utilize project-based learning as a way to engage in our class content. Our final project in this class will be a creative project connected to an event called Take Back the Night which will occur during class time on 4/21. You will complete a creative project in this course that will either assist in the promotion of the event as a whole or in the content provided at the event. This is an opportunity to engage in a project that directly promotes support of survivors of violence. This project can be done individually or with a partner and will serve as the final assessment in this class. Your project grade will include a project proposal, attendance at the event (or an alternative for students who feel the event will be too triggering), submission of the actual project, and a reflection on the process. More information will be shared about this project throughout the course leading up to the project.

**Course Schedule**

**Blue= Scholarly Journals/Chapters**

**Orange = News Journal/Website Articles**

**Green= Video/Audio**

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| **1/27- Week 1: Course Introduction Week** | |
| **Readings & content due at start of class:** | * From Safe Spaces to Brave Spaces * Why Your Brave Space Sucks * Talking When Talking is Tough |
| **Homework and assignments:** | * Review the syllabus * Weekly content grid *(will accept until: 2/1 by 11:59 pm)* * Introduction Blog Post *(will accept until 1/29 by 11:59 pm)* * Introduction Blog Post Response *(will accept until 2/1 by 11:59 pm)* |

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| **2/3- Intersectionality** | |
| **Readings & content due at start of class:** | * The Urgency of Intersectionality * Mapping the Margins |
| **Homework and assignments due at start of class:** | * Weekly content grid * Idea Scan |

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| **2/10- Gender** | |
| **Readings & content due at start of class:** | * Night to His Day * The Violence of Heteronormative Language Towards the Queer Community |
| **Homework and assignments due at start of class:** | * Weekly content grid * Discussion groups * Self-Care Plan (due 2/14 at 11:59 pm) * Topic Submission Due |

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| **2/17- Introduction to Violence and Trauma** | |
| **Readings & content due at start of class:** | * How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime * Me Too is a Movement, Not a Moment * How Chanel Miller took her story back * Violence Prevention (CDC) |
| **Homework and assignments due at start of class:** | * Weekly content grid * Discussion groups * Thesis statement |

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| **2/24- Brief Histories of GBV** | |
| **Readings & content due at start of class:** | * The Rape of Recy Taylor * Chapter Redefining Rape * "It Was like All of Us Had Been.. |
| **Homework and assignments due at start of class:** | * Weekly content grid * Discussion groups * Two sources |

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| **3/3- Brief Histories of GBV 2** | |
| **Readings & content due at start of class:** | * Anita * How we can end sexual harassment at work * A Brief History of the Anti-Violence Movement |
| **Homework and assignments due at start of class:** | * Weekly content grid * Discussion groups * Introduction |

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| **3/10- - No Class (Time to Work on Paper) & Peer Review** | |
| **Readings & content due at start of class:** | No reading. Next few weeks are heavy reading the next two weeks, so I recommend using extra time to read if you have any. |
| **Homework and assignments due at start of class:** | * Discussion groups * Rough Draft/Peer Review |

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| **3/17 The Color of Violence** | |
| **Readings & content due at start of class:** | * Yes Means Yes Selections * From Black Lives Matter to Black Liberation * Unlocking Us |
| **Homework and assignments due at start of class:** | * Weekly content grid * Paper Due (lightening talk in class) * Discussion groups |

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| **3/24 Unequal Justice and the Prison Industrial Complex** | |
| **Readings & content due at start of class:** | * Statement on Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex * Lessons in Self-Defense: Gender Violence, Racial Criminalization, and Anticarceral Feminism * Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America’s Prison Nation * Law Enforcement Violence Against Women of Color |
| **Homework and assignments due at start of class:** | * Weekly content grid * Discussion groups * Creative Project Proposal |

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| **3/31 Queering Violence** | |
| **Readings & content due at start of class:** | * Gendered Views of Sexual Assault * Queer Spectrum Students Sexual Violence * Sexual Violence of Death and Hard of Hearing Students |
| **Homework and assignments due at start of class:** | * Weekly content grid * Discussion groups |

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| **4/7 Toxic Masculinity** | |
| **Readings & content due at start of class:** | * Violence Against Men is a Men’s Issue * How Jock Culture Supports Rape Culture From Maryville to Steubenville * Riding the Bull at Gilley’s: Convicted Rapists Describe the Rewards of Rape * Good Guys Don’t Rape: Gender, Domination, and Mobilization of Rape |
| **Homework and assignments due at start of class:** | * Weekly content grid * Discussion groups |

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| **4/14 Rape Culture & Consent** | |
| **Readings & content due at start of class:** | * Asking For It chapters 1 &2 * Sexual Assault Survivors Don’t Owe Anyone Their Stories * The Move to Affirmative Consent |
| **Homework and assignments due at start of class:** | * Weekly content grid * Discussion groups * TBTN Due (at 11:59 pm)   This will be a asynchronous class. Turn your weekly content grid in before normal class time. You may complete your discussion groups totally on the document or you may arrange a meeting. Also, please finish and submit your TBTN item. |

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| **4/21 Take Back the Night** | |
| **Readings & content due at start of class:** | No reading- Take Back the Night |
| **Homework and assignments due at start of class:** | \*DON’T forget to attend the event! |

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| **4/28 Intersections of Identity and Violence** | |
| **Readings & content due at start of class:** | * Rape as a Weapon of War: Militarized Border Rape at the U.S.-Mexico Border * The Sexual Assault Epidemic No One Talks about * Native American Women Are Facing a Crisis * Domestic Violence in Muslim Communities * Religion is Blamed for Violence Against Women. We are Christian and Muslim Women Who Fight It. |
| **Homework and assignments due at start of class:** | * Weekly content grid |

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| **5/5 or Exam Period Healing and Restoration** | |
| **Readings & content due at start of class:** | * B**rené** Brown Daring Classrooms * How Culture Connects to Healing and Recovery * Restorative Justice as Social Justice for Victims of Gendered Violence |
| **Homework and assignments due at start of class:** | * Weekly content grid * Be prepared to reflect on the class during class (no reflection paper- just discussion) |

**Grade Grading Worksheet:**

Participation ***110 points total or 55% of your total grade***

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| Introduction Blog & Responses |  | /6 |
| Self-Care Plan |  | /10 |
| Participation in Class (2 per class with room built in incase you miss a class session) |  | /22 |
| Weekly Content Grid (WCG) 1/27 |  | /3 |
| WCG 2/3 |  | /3 |
| WCG 2/10 |  | /3 |
| WCG 2/17 |  | /3 |
| WCG 2/24 |  | /3 |
| WCG 3/3 |  | /3 |
| WCG 3/17 |  | /3 |
| WCG 3/24 |  | /3 |
| WCG 3/31 |  | /3 |
| WCG 4/7 |  | /3 |
| WCG 4/14 |  | /3 |
| WCG 4/21 (freebee- no WCG) | 3 | /3 |
| WCG 4/28 |  | /3 |
| WCG Last class |  | /3 |
| Discussion 2/3 |  | /3 |
| Discussion 2/10 |  | /3 |
| Discussion 2/17 |  | /3 |
| Discussion 2/24 |  | /3 |
| Discussion 3/3 |  | /3 |
| Discussion 3/17 |  | /3 |
| Discussion 3/24 |  | /3 |
| Discussion 3/31 |  | /3 |
| Discussion 4/7 |  | /3 |
| Discussion 4/14 |  | /3 |
| **TOTAL** |  | **110** |

Midterm Paper ***50 points total or 25% of your total grade***

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| Idea Scan |  | /5 |
| Topic Submission |  | /5 |
| Thesis Statement |  | /5 |
| Two Sources |  | /5 |
| Introduction |  | /5 |
| Peer Review |  | /5 |
| Paper |  | /20 |
| Research Lightening Talk |  | /10 |
| **TOTAL** |  | **50** |

Creative Project ***40 points total or 20% of your total grade***

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| Project Proposal |  | /5 |
| Event Participation (or alternative) |  | /10 |
| Project Submission |  | /15 |
| Final Reflection- in class 5/5 or exam period |  | /10 |
| **Total** |  | **40** |

**Total Grade:**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Participation |  | /110 |
| Midterm Paper |  | /50 |
| Creative Project |  | /40 |
| **Total** |  | **200** |