

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES
WMST 200**

Introduction to Women and Gender Studies

Semester: Fall 2021

Course Day and Time: Monday and Wednesdays, 3-4:15 pm

Course Location: Buchanan Hall

INSTRUCTOR: Courtney Diener

Email: 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

Interdisciplinary introduction to women's, gender and sexuality studies, encompassing key concepts in the field, history of women's movements and women's studies in America, cross-cultural constructions of gender, and a thematic emphasis on the diversity of women's experience across class, race, and cultural lines.

Required Course Materials

Robin Ryle: *Questioning Gender: A Sociological Exploration* (3rd edition)

Sylvia Plath: *The Bell Jar* (any edition)

Sonya Renee Taylor: *The Body Is Not an Apology* (any edition)

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 in 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.

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 also acknowledge the enormous amount of privilege I have as a white educated cis-gender woman. It is my goal to bring forth texts and voices that de-center my own voice and represent an intersectional approach to feminisms. It is important to me that all voices, but especially voices of people erased or excluded are uplifted in the course.

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 and 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.

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 three-credit class, anticipate a lot of reading that will be 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.

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 703-380-1434 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 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.

Resources

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 | Phone: (703) 993-2474

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

WRITING CENTER Johnson Center 227E; (703) 993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>
The University Writing Center provides free tutorial sessions for all students needing help with any writing project from freshman essays to scholarly publications. It is best to make an appointment; walk-ins are accepted if there are openings at that time. Assistance is also

offered online. You are highly encouraged to take advantage of this free service! After the first writing assignment, I may recommend that you visit the writing center.

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-2380; <http://caps.gmu.edu>

WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES CENTER; JC 240K (703) 993-2986; <http://wmst.gmu.edu/center/>

The Women and Gender Studies Center sponsors programs and events that are relevant to this course. It has a library of material that may be checked out. We also support several student organizations and provide internship opportunities. We also offer free printing to all of our enrolled students and minors. Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 9-7; Tuesdays and Thursdays: 9-6; Friday: 9-4 (virtual)

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and Questioning (LGBTQ+) Resource Center:
SUB I, Room 2200 703-993-2702 lgbtq.gmu.edu

Center for Culture, Equity, and Empowerment (CCEE)
SUB I, Room 2400 703-993-2700 odime.gmu.edu

Student Support and Advocacy Center
SUB I, Room 3200 703-993-3686 ssac.gmu.edu
24 hr. Sexual and Interpersonal Violence Crisis Line: 703-380-1434

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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.

Grading Scale

A+: 97-100%

A: 93-96%

A-: 90-92%

B+: 87-89%

B: 83-86%

B-: 80-82%

C+: 77-79%

C: 73-76%

C-: 70-72%

D: 60-69%

F: 59% or below

Class Grading Structure

Participation (48 pts or 48% of your grade)

- Attendance/Participation (25 sessions. However, I graded based on 23 to allow two misses without penalty) I also weigh this with participation.
- Reading Grids (There are a total of 22, however, I grade based on “20” and so you can either miss two with no penalty or get extra credit for those if you do them.
- Introduction Survey (5 pts)

Bell Jar/Second Wave Paper (11 points or 11% of your grade)

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

Theory Presentation (30 points or 30% of your grade)

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

The Body Is Not An Apology Paper (11 points or 11% of your grade)

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

Course Schedule

Week	Lesson	Reading/Viewing/Listening
1	Monday 8/23: Class Introduction	Syllabus
	Wednesday 8/25: What is Gender?	Mary Wollstonecraft <i>A Vindication of the Rights of Women</i> (bb) Sojourner Truth “Ain’t I a Woman” (bb) Elizabeth Cady Stanton “Declaration of Sentiments” (bb) Susan B. Anthony Speech After Arrest for Illegal Arrest (bb) Ida B. Wells-Barnett “Lynching and the Excuse for Its Existence” (bb)
2	Monday 8/30: First Wave	Ryle Chapter 1 <i>Three Waves of Feminism: From Suffragettes to Gender Equality</i>
	Wednesday 9/1: First Wave	Charlotte Perkins Gilman -The Yellow Wallpaper Kate Chopin The Story of an Hour (bb)
3	Monday 9/6: Second Wave	Ryle Chapter 2 Chapter 1-4 <i>The Bell Jar</i>
	Wednesday 9/8: Second Wave	Chapter 5-10 <i>The Bell Jar</i>
4	Monday 9/13: Second Wave	Chapter 11-14 <i>The Bell Jar</i>
	Wednesday 9/15: Second Wave	Chapter 15- Finish <i>The Bell Jar</i>
5	Monday 9/20: Second Wave	Margaret Sanger “Birth Control- A Parents’ Problem for the Woman’s?” (bb) Simone De Beauvoir <i>The Second Sex</i> (bb) Dorothy Roberts Reaction to Margaret Sanger (bb) Betty Friedan “The Problem That Has No Name” (bb)
	Wednesday 9/22: Second Wave	The Combahee River Collective Statement (bb) Audre Lorde “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” (bb) Mitsuye Yamada “Asian Pacific American Women and Feminism” (bb)
6	Monday 9/27: Third Wave	<i>No Readings Due (given your paper is due)</i>
	Wednesday 9/29: Third Wave	Ryle Chapter 4 (Learning Gender) Ryle Chapter 5 (Sexuality)
7	Monday 10/4: Third Wave	Judith Butler Gender Trouble (bb) Adrienne Rich “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” (bb)
	Wednesday 10/6: Third Wave	Jack Halberstam “An Introduction to Female Masculinity” (bb) Anne Fausto-Sterling “Should There Only Be Two Sexes?” (bb)
8	Monday 10/11: FALL BREAK	*FALL BREAK- Classes do not meet and there are no readings*
	Wednesday 10/13: Third Wave	Ryle Chapter 6 (Relationships) Ryle Chapter 9 (Work) Asynchronous Lecture

9	Monday 10/18:	Asynchronous Lecture Work on Theory Proposal
	Wednesday 10/20:	Ryle Chapter 10 (Gender and Media) *Select one item to watch
10	Monday 10/25:	Ryle Chapter 11 (Power) Rosemarie Garland-Thomson “Integrating Disability Transforming Feminist Theory” (<i>bb</i>)
	Wednesday 10/27:	No Readings- Presentation Preparation Day
11	Monday 11/1: Black Feminisms	Kimberle Crenshaw “Intersectionality and Identity Learning from Violence Against Women of Color” Patricia Hill Collins “Black Feminist Thought” (<i>bb</i>)
	Wednesday 11/3: Black Feminisms	Excerpts from <i>Hood Feminism</i> (Mikki Kendall) (<i>bb</i>)
12	Monday 11/8: Transnational Feminisms	Chandra Talpade Mohanty “Under Western Eyes Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” (<i>bb</i>)
	Wednesday 11/10: Transnational Feminisms	Nadine Gordimer “Once Upon A Time Gloria Anzaldúa - Excerpt from “Borderlands: La Frontera” (<i>bb</i>)
13	Monday 11/15: Presentations	<i>No Readings Due</i>
	Wednesday 11/17: Presentations	<i>No Readings Due</i>
14	Monday 11/22: Modern Feminisms: The Body Is Not the Apology	Prologue- Chapter 3 <i>The Body Is Not an Apology</i> Ryle Chapter 7 *No In-Person Class Session Due to Readings*
	Wednesday 11/24	*University Closed- No class*
15	Monday 11/29: Modern Feminisms: The Body Is Not the Apology	Chapters 4-Conclusion <i>The Body Is Not an Apology</i>
	Wednesday 12/1: Course Synthesis and Closure	<i>No Readings Due</i>