**GLOBAL REPRESENTATIONS OF WOMEN**

**Course Information**   
Title: WMST-100 “Global Representations of Women”

Meeting Times: M/W 10:30- 11:45 am, online via Zoom

Instructor: Kylie Musolf, kmusolf@gmu.edu  
Office Hours: TBD

Schedule appointments: <https://calendly.com/kylieee/25min?month=2021-08>

**General Overview**

In this course we will practice cultivating a delicate balance between understanding the significant differences across women’s experiences while also learning to see profound and entrenched similarities. This course leans heavily on theoretical texts and documentary films in order to provide a conceptual framework through which students can view the gendered world around them. We will also read poetry, literature, see ethnographic interviews, and consider visual culture and the fine arts. Throughout the course, students will think critically about the meaning and role of representation in feminist politics and women’s studies.

**Mason Course Catalogue Description**

Explores ways women are portrayed around the world in advertising, film, TV, cartoons, and news media; literature and religious texts; as well as photography, and the visual and performing arts. Through interdisciplinary study, students evaluate the powerful effects these representations have on the political, economic, and social lives of women throughout the world. Limited to three attempts.

**Student Learning Objectives**

* Students will be exposed to various portrayals of women both in the US and globally
* Students will be able to use 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
* Students will cultivate awareness of global issues to think critically about individual or collective responsibilities within a global society

**Warning**

Since my background is in philosophy, you can expect that this class will focus on the complexity of global feminist issues. Overall, I want us to practice raising smart questions about gender and patriarchy as we encounter them in our lives. We can’t be afraid to work hard and really think if this is going to work. This is not an ‘easy elective,’ we’re going to get messy and curious. You will need to decide if this is the kind/style of course you will learn well in.

**Course Materials**

All course materials will be provided to you via Blackboard. Contact me if you don’t have access to Netflix.

**Grading**

Participation: 20 points  
Reading Responses: 20 points  
Collaborative Assignments: 10 points

Essays: 30 points

Final: 20 points

Total: 100 points

**Assignments**

Participation: I will take attendance for this class. Show up, both physically (virtually—cameras on!) and intellectually. Honestly, I care more about the latter, but the former is kind of a necessary condition. Showing up to me means on time and having done the assigned work. Importantly, participation will not look the same for everyone. Some folks will need to learn to listen as a form of participation; some folks will need to practice speaking up. Take some time to think about what kind of participation goals you have for yourself in this course.

Reading Responses: On the syllabus, 15 sessions have reading (or viewing) response questions. You are required to complete 10 responses—in 1-2 pages, double spaced—which will be graded as +/√/- (correspondingly, 2/1/0 points). Students can complete more for extra credit or to recover points lost in previous responses. These essays can be completed any time but must be submitted ahead of class time for the date it is assigned.

Collaborative Assignments: Toward the end of the semester, students will conduct and record a written (magazine style) or oral (recorded, podcast style) interview with a classmate. Each pairing will produce two interviews, covering 5-7 questions, as partners will switch roles as interviewer and interviewee.

Essays: The point of these 3–4-page written assignments is to help you develop the ability to articulate your questions and positions in contemporary feminist issues and to think through the (admittedly very difficult) material. Each short essay will respond to a prompt.

Final Essay: For your final paper you will write an essay in which you argue for the inclusion of one text of any kind on future iterations of this syllabus. You will summarize the work, including its relevant citation and then make an argument as to why it belongs on a “Global Representations of Women” syllabus. The aim is to demonstrate that you have expanded your thinking about feminism, women, and representation beyond what we have covered in class and that you’re able to apply frameworks learned in class to issues beyond the syllabus.

On Writing:

* Avoid gross generalizations and fluffy beginnings. Do not say anything like “From the beginning of history…,” “All women are X….,” or “Plato was the greatest thinker of all time.” These lack substantiation and do not help develop a precise, concise, and compelling argument.
  + Include page numbers please. Number the pages of your paper and include the page numbers for any citations.
  + In proofreading your paper, look especially for over use of “this,” “these,” and “it.” Avoid beginning sentences with “It is…” when the “it” does not refer to anything. Good writing habits take practice!
  + You will be asked to take positions on issues. A good paper will also consider possible objections to the position it articulates.

**Policies and Requirements**

Reasonable Accommodations- Please be in contact with me directly, as well as Disability Services, should you require any accommodations for the course. For more info:

Disability Services at George Mason University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students by upholding the laws that ensure equal treatment of people with disabilities. If you are seeking accommodations for this class, please first visit http://dsgmu.wpengine.com/ for detailed information about the Disability Services registration process. Then please discuss your approved accommodations with me. Disability Services is located in Student Union Building I (SUB I), Suite 2500. Email: ods@gmu.edu | Phone: (703) 993-2474

Women and Gender Studies at George Mason- The Women and Gender Studies Program offers an interdisciplinary minor to undergraduate students. This is an 18-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.

Trigger/Content Warnings- I have chosen not to place trigger warnings on specific pieces in the syllabus because triggers are unique and highly personal. It’s not possible for me to discern in advance what content has the potential to be upsetting and/or triggering to every one of my students, and I do not want to inadvertently create a hierarchy of what material is “intense” or “real” enough to warrant a warning.

Academic Integrity- If you aren’t familiar with GMU’s Academic Integrity policy, read up here:

“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>

Late Work- Late work submission is not a right but a privilege. You may submit one assignment up to three days late, no questions asked. \* After that, there will be questions. For your one late assignment, just indicate somehow that this assignment is “FASHIONABLY LATE.”

\*This policy only applies to essays, not reading responses and not the final.

\*\*All assignments are due at the beginning of the class period on the assigned due date.

\*\*\*All prep work must be completed prior to the class session on which they are assigned.

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| **Date** | **Prep Work** | **What’s all this about?** | **Assignment Due** |
| M 8/23 | Syllabus Day –no prep | Shared expectations for a feminist classroom |  |
| W 8/25 | “African American Women’s Quilting” by Elsa Barkley Brown | “” | RR |
| M 8/30 | *Miss Representation*  “What does a woman need to know?” by Adrienne Rich | Representation as a Feminist Issue | RR |
| W 9/1 | Disclosure | “” | RR |
| M 9/6 | LABOR DAY NO CLASS |  |  |
| W 9/8 | “Feminist Politicization, a Comment” and “Feminism: A Transformational Politic” by bell hooks | Seeing Structures | RR |
| M 9/13 | “What is Oppression?” by Marilyn Frye | “” | RR |
| W 9/15 | “The Five Faces of Oppression” by Iris Marion Young | “” | RR |
| M 9/20 | *The Beauty Myth* Intro & Ch 1 by Naomi Wolf  “Marked” (documentary) | Beauty Standards | RR  Zine assignment |
| W 9/22 | “Narcissism as Liberation” by Susan Douglass  *Good Hair* documentary | “” | RR |
| M 9/27 | *The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison | Intersections of Race and Gender |  |
| W 9/29 | (cont.) | “” |  |
| M 10/4 | Angela Davis TBD | “” | Literary Analysis Essay  RR |
| W 10/7 | *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuf* by Ntozake Shange | “” |  |
| M 10/11 | FALL BREAK NO CLASS |  |  |
| W 10/13 | (cont.) | “” |  |
| M 10/18 | “Soft White Underbelly” ethnographic videos (selection) | Prostitution and Sexual Violence | Poetry Reading  RR |
| W 10/20 | *Revolting Prostitutes* (selections) by Juno Mac and Mollie Smith | “” | RR |
| M 10/25 | *One Left* by Kim Soom | “” | RR |
| W 10/27 | (cont.) | “” |  |
| M 11/1 | “Exploiting the Dignity of the Vulnerable Body: Rape as a Weapon of War” by Debra Bergoffen | Women’s Responses to War | RR |
| W 11/3 | *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* (documentary) | “” |  |
| M 11/8 | *Las Sandinistas!* (documentary) | “” |  |
| W 11/10 | “Rojava: The Revolution by Women” | “” | Collaborative Assignment: Interview |
| M 11/15 | *Persepolis* (reading) by Marjane Satrapi | “” |  |
| W 11/17 | (cont.) |  |  |
| M 11/22 | “Feminist Killjoys” by Sara Ahmed | Feminist Ethics | RR |
| W 11/24 | THANKSGIVING BREAK NO CLASS | “” |  |
| M 11/29 | *Frames of War* (selection) by Judith Butler |  |  |
| W 12/1 | (cont.) | “” | RR |
| M 12/6 | Student Presentations |  |  |
| W 12/8 | Student Presentations |  |  |
| Final Exam Period |  |  | Final Essay due |