WMST 200: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN AND GENDER STUDIES

Fall 2012
MW 3:00—4:15pm
Robinson A101

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Course Description
Women and Gender Studies is an interdisciplinary program that seeks to address the impact of gender and sexuality on the world around us and on the inequalities that shape it. This course will offer an introduction to some of the current debates taking place within the interdisciplinary field of women’s and gender studies. During the course of the class, we will grapple with historical as well as contemporary feminist concerns, paying close attention to both local and global issues. We will consider a wide variety of texts—from personal narratives and historical documents to films and cultural criticism—across a range of disciplines, including political science, media studies, anthropology, and sociology, to name but a few. In doing so, some of the goals of the course will be:

1. To get a sense of both historical and contemporary debates taking place within the field of women’s, gender, and sexuality studies, and become familiar with their language, theories, and methods of critical engagement
2. To consider the ways in which race, class, gender, and sexuality are linked and how such intersections have been articulated
3. To look for connections between local and global feminisms, while also keeping in mind that differences matter
4. To begin to grapple with some of the uneven effects of globalization
5. To think more about our own self-positioning in an increasingly globalized world, and the extent to which identity is never simply a question of “us” and “them”
6. To explore some of the ways in which feminism both interacts with and helps to bring about social change

This course satisfies the General Education requirement for social and behavioral science.
Required Texts

- Melody Berger, ed., We Don’t Need Another Wave: Dispatches from the Next Generation of Feminists (Emeryville: Seal Press, 2006)
- Additional readings will be available through Blackboard

The required texts are available for purchase through the campus bookstore. Alternatively, you may purchase the course texts through any other bookstore or online retailer.

Course Requirements

- Class attendance and participation: 25% (includes reading responses, study questions, and quizzes)
- One in-class group presentation on the assigned readings: 15%
- Two five-page papers based on the assigned readings: 15% each (30% total)
- A final research paper (8-10 pages) on any issue relating to women’s, gender, and sexuality studies, due on December 12th at 12 noon in 240K Johnson Center: 30%

Note: Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. Any papers submitted after the due date will be subject to a late penalty.

Incompletes will not be awarded, except in cases of severe illness.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance: your daily presence is critical to the success of the class. I take attendance daily, using a sign-in sheet (if you are late for class, make sure that you sign the sheet after class). An excused absence requires proper documentation (i.e. a doctor’s note or written proof of participation in a University or work-related event). If you are more than 20 minutes late for class, your lateness will be considered ½ an absence. You are responsible for making up missed work and obtaining any materials that are handed out during the missed class. Be aware that repeated unexcused absences will impact your participation grade.

Participation: participation means coming to class ready and prepared to make an active contribution to our discussions. In-class participation consists of all in-class work (i.e. participation, class discussions, informal presentations, group work, writing, and quizzes). Please print off a copy of all the assigned readings for each day and bring them with you to class. It is absolutely vital for your participation in this course that you bring hard copies of the readings with you to class each day; repeated failure to bring the appropriate materials with you to class will affect your participation grade.
Presentation
You will do the in-class presentation in groups of two or three on a topic to be assigned early in the semester. Each presentation should be 15-20 minutes in length. The project will require strong collaboration on the parts of all group members in order to achieve a good grade. In addition to participating in the in-class presentation, each member of the group should submit a one-page description of their contribution to the project.

Papers
You will write two five-page papers—both of which will respond to an essay prompt and/or series of questions related to the assigned readings—and one final research-based paper. Essay prompts for the five-page papers will be distributed two weeks before the due date for each of the papers. These prompts will include more detailed instructions and grading criteria. Additional research is not required for either of these papers, although it could prove useful for your argument. The final paper must utilize at least three of the course readings and three outside sources, using MLA citation style. An assignment sheet for the final paper will be distributed later in the semester.

The Writing Center on campus can also help you with your written assignments. For more information see: http://writingcenter.gmu.edu

Late or Missing Work
Assignments are due as indicated above and/or as announced in class. You must complete all the assignments listed above to pass this class. Late assignments will be penalized by 20% for each day that they are late.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity
All the work you submit in this course must have been written for this course and must originate with you in form and in content and with all sources fully and specifically acknowledged. In this course, the normal penalty for a violation of the code is an “F” for the term. Violations may also subject you to disciplinary action including the following: receiving a failing grade on an assignment; receiving a notation of a violation of academic integrity on your transcript; or being suspended from the University. You have the right to appeal any charges. For further information about the University’s policy regarding academic integrity see: http://mason.gmu.edu/~montecin/plagiarism.htm

Collaborative work of the following kinds is authorized in this course: peer review and critique of students’ essays by one another and, when approved by the instructor in particular cases, collaborative projects by pairs of students.

University Policies
I respect and uphold University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of religious holidays; assistance available to the physically handicapped, visually and/or hearing impaired student; plagiarism; sexual harassment; and racial or ethnic discrimination. All students are advised to become familiar with the respective University regulations and are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns to my attention.
Students With Disabilities
Disabilities will be accommodated in conjunction with the Office of Disability Resources. If you think you have a qualified disability and need special accommodations, you should notify me and request verification of eligibility for accommodations from the Office of Disability Resources as soon as possible. You will need to contact the office at 703-993-2472.

Instructor-Student Interaction
Please take advantage of my office hours or schedule alternative times to see me if those hours don’t work for you, especially when you are writing papers. I am happy to speak with students about any aspect of the course. You may also e-mail me with any questions and comments about the course. Don’t, however, use e-mail as a substitute for coming to office hours. If you have substantive questions or comments, please come and see me.

Ground Rules

Electronic Devices: the use of cell phones is prohibited in class. If I notice you using your cell phone during class, your participation points will be docked.

Recording Class: any type of electronic recording of class is prohibited without my permission. This is necessary to protect my intellectual property as well as the privacy of students in the class.

Conduct: it is important in this course that we create as safe a space as possible for all involved. This principle should guide your personal conduct in class at all times.

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.

You can learn about the Women and Gender Studies Minor and the Women’s Center at: http://www.gmu.edu/acadexcel/findex.html

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4
INTRODUCTION: WHY FEMINISM MATTERS TODAY

Week 1: Introduction
M Aug. 27th Introductions, course overview
W Aug. 29th Alix Olson, “Womyn Before” (Berger, 8-12)
Lisa Jervis, “Goodbye to Feminism’s Generational Divide” (Berger, 13-18)
Melody Berger, “Introduction” (Berger, 19-22)
Jessica Valenti, “You’re a Feminist, Deal” (Berger, 23-27)
Kat Marie Yoas, “I Went to College and All I Got Was This Trailer-Trash T-Shirt” (Berger, 261-270)

Week 2: Thinking Transnationally
M Sept. 3rd LABOR DAY — NO CLASS
W Sept. 5th Selections from Susan Hawthorne and Bronwyn Winter (2003), eds., After Shock: September 11, 2001: Global Feminist Perspectives (Blackboard):

- Women Living Under Muslim Laws, “Statement on Attacks in the USA”
- Suheir Hammad, “First Writing Since”
- Delhi Women’s Petition, “Women Oppose War”
- Kalpana Sharma and Ayesha Khan, “Peace is the Only Option”
- Cynthia Enloe, “Masculinity as a Foreign Policy Issue”


UNIT I: U.S. CONTEXTS AND HISTORIES

Week 3: Key Terms and Concepts in Women’s and Gender Studies
Simone de Beauvoir (1951), “Introduction” to *The Second Sex* (Nicholson, 10-18)


**Week 4: Women of Color Feminism and Intersectionality**


Selections from Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa (1981), eds., *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Blackboard):

- Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, “Introduction”
- Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House”
- Mitsuye Yamada, “Asian Pacific American Women and Feminism”
- Barbara Cameron, “Gee, You Don’t Seem Like an Indian from the Reservation”
- Consuelo Nieto, “The Chicana and the Women’s Rights Movement”

W Sept. 19th Norma Alarcón (1990), “The Theoretical Subject(s) of This Bridge Called My Back and Anglo-American Feminism” (Nicholson, 288-299)


**Week 5: Lesbian Feminism**


Audre Lorde (1981), “Uses of the Erotic: the Erotic as Power” (Blackboard)


**Week 6: Pornography and Erotica**

M Oct. 1st


W Oct. 3rd
Lisa Duggan (1988), “Censorship in the Name of Feminism” (Blackboard)


Susie Bright (1992), introductions to Herotica 2 and 3: A Collection of Women’s Erotic Fiction (Blackboard)

**PAPER ONE DUE**

**UNIT II: INTRODUCTION TO FEMINIST AND QUEER THEORIES**

**Week 7: Theories of Intersectionality, Location**

M Oct. 8th
COLUMBUS DAY — NO CLASS

T Oct. 9th


W Oct. 10th

Donna Haraway (1988), “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective” (Blackboard)
**Week 8: Poststructuralist Feminism and Queer Theory**

M Oct. 15th
Judith Butler (1990), excerpt from “Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire,” in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Blackboard)

Dani S. Dela George, “For the Love of Feminism” (Berger, 143-150)

W Oct. 17th
Judith Butler (1991), “Imitation and Gender Insubordination” (Nicholson, 300-315)

Elizabeth Latty, “The Silence that Surrounds Queer Sexual Violence and Why We’re Not Talking” (97-105, Berger)

**Week 9: Transgender Representation**

M Oct. 22nd
Susan Stryker, “Transgender Feminism: Queering the Woman Question” (Blackboard)

Sarah Kennedy, “Postbinary Gender Chores” (162-165, Berger)
Dean Spade, “For Lovers and Fighters” (Berger, 28-39)

W Oct. 24th
Judith Halberstam (2006), excerpt from *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (Blackboard)

Judith Butler, excerpt from *Undoing Gender* (Blackboard)

Film discussion, *Boys Don’t Cry* (Kimberly Peirce, 1999) (prior screening will be arranged)

**Week 10: Disciplined and Unruly Bodies**

M Oct. 29th
Susan Bordo (1993), “Reading the Slender Body” (Blackboard)

Stephanie Abraham, “Model vs. Feminist: Seeing Beyond the Binaries” (Berger, 283-286)
Courtney Martin, “Steam-Room Revelations” (Berger, 51-63)
L. A. Mitchell, “The Healing Vagina” (Berger, 106-119)

W Oct. 31st
Rosemary Garland-Thomson (2002), “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory” (Blackboard)

Debra Moddelmog and Brenda J. Brueggemann (2002), “Coming-Out Pedagogy: Risking Identity in Language and Literature Classrooms” (Blackboard)
UNIT III: TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISM REVISITED

Week 11: Women’s Rights, Human Rights

M Nov. 5th    Cynthia Enloe (2004), “The Globe Trotting Sneaker” (Blackboard)

The Nike Foundation:
- “The Girl Effect” video
- “I Dare You” video
  http://www.girleffect.org/

The Girl Store:
  http://www.the-girl-store.org/shop

Angela McRobbie (2009), “Resurgent Patriarchies and Gender Retrenchment” and “The Global Girl” (pp. 54-59 and 87-90) (Blackboard)

W Nov. 7th    Sara Ahmed (2000), “Close Encounters: Feminism and/ in ‘the globe”’ (Blackboard)


Week 12: Reproductive Rights and Sexual Health

M Nov. 12th   Andrea Smith (2005), “Beyond Pro-Choice Versus Pro-Life: Women of Color and Reproductive Justice” (Blackboard)

Angela Davis (1990), “Racism, Birth Control, and Reproductive Rights” (Blackboard)

Kathryn Joyce (2010), “Abortion as ‘Black Genocide’” (Blackboard)


Cynthia Rothschild (2007), “Abstinence Goes Global: The United States, the Right Wing, and Human Rights” (Blackboard)
In-class screening: *Not Yet Rain* (Lisa Russell, 2009)

**PAPER TWO DUE**

**Week 13: Migration and Border-Crossing**

M Nov. 19th  Gloria Anzaldúa (1987), *Borderlands* (selections) (*Blackboard*)

In-class screening: Ursula Biemann, *Performing the Border* (1997)

THANKSGIVING BREAK: Wednesday, November 21st to Sunday, November 25th

**Week 14: Sexuality, Immigration, and Human Rights**


In-class screening: *Getting Out* (Daniel Neumann, 2011)

**Week 15: Transnational Feminism and/ in the Academy**

M Dec. 3rd  Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003), “‘Under Western Eyes’ Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anti-Capitalist Struggles” (*Blackboard*)

Monisha Das Gupta (2006), “Bewildered? Women’s Studies and the War on Terror” (*Blackboard*)


Katie King (2002), “‘There Are no Lesbians Here’: Feminisms, Lesbianisms, and Global Gay Formations” (*Blackboard*)

Conclusions, course evaluations