

# INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S STUDIES

University of Cincinnati  
15-WMST 241—002  
Winter 2006  
MWF 10-10:50  
47 McMicken

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Syllabus, course announcements, and select materials can also be found on Blackboard.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary field of Women's Studies. It is a survey course designed to cover a broad range of Women's Studies issues. Further is the gateway course for the Women's Studies major and minor, and it will provide an overview of the topics examined within the major and minor. We will examine relations of inequality and constructions of difference based on gender, race, class, sexuality and nationality. We will analyze their interconnections, and discuss feminist perspectives on social, cultural, political, economic, scientific, and environmental practices and processes. Through a combination of readings, lectures, guest speakers, class discussion and assignments we will examine the field of Women's studies. This class will address women's experience in the US and globally.

## ***COURSE OBJECTIVES***

The following are the main learning goals of the course:

- Use gender as a lens to challenge social, cultural, political, economic and scientific assumptions and practices that produce and sustain inequality.
- Gain a clear understanding of gender as both a category of analysis and a socially constructed identity.
- Examine and define power relations, feminist intersectional analysis and a range of feminist theories.
- Getting a sense of the range of feminist organizing histories and strategies.

**REQUIRED TEXTS** (available for purchase at UC and DuBois Bookstores and online)

Kirk, Gwyn and Margo Okazawa-Rey. 2004. *Women's Lives: Multicultural Perspectives*, Third Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Seager, Joni. 2003. The Penguin Atlas of Women in the World, Third Edition. New York: Penguin Books.

### **BLACKBOARD**

Please note that some readings are posted on through E-Reserve. If you have problems accessing the material contact me immediately via email.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

Students are expected to always come to class prepared by **completing the assigned readings in advance** of the day for which they are assigned in the course outline. Beyond completing the assigned readings, the following are also required.

#### **1. In Class Questions (10%)**

Each student is required to sign up for a week in which they will bring questions to class on Friday to stimulate in class discussion. Each student is required to bring at least 3 questions to class on their assigned Friday to act as a starting point for in class discussion. Sign up sheets will be available the first Friday of class.

#### **2. Discussion Boards (20%)**

In an effort to increase your classroom experience, I will require that each student make a posting to the discussion board each week of the quarter. The postings may start a new thread or be a continuation of an existing discussion. Through an examination of the topics under discussion I would like you to explore the following questions.

- 1) In what ways are inequalities being challenged or supported by the systems of power under examination.
- 2) How can connections between the local and the global be identified and examined.
- 3) How do intersections of race, gender, class, nation, sexuality and religion affect individual experiences of the issues.

#### **3. Cultural Analysis (30 pts)**

You will be required to critically analyze media representations through a gendered lens. You will turn in 3-4 page paper in which you explore the representations of women and gender in a example of current pop culture media. You may examine an episode of a television program, a magazine, or advertisements on TV or in a newspaper or magazine. Describe the cultural artifact and discuss how it represents women, what stereotypes and assumptions it challenges or reinforces, and how issue of race, class, gender, sexuality and nation come together.

#### **4. Final Essay Assignment (40%)**

A final take home essay assignment will be required at the end of the quarter. You will respond to 2 out of 3 essay questions assigned. You may write a 1-2 page double spaced response for each of your questions. Your response should be no less than 2 pages total and no more than 5. Additional assignment information will be given when the essay is assigned.

**Extra Credit:** You can gain up to 5 points of extra credit for involving yourself in an extracurricular activity on or off campus focused on women's issues (such as going to a feminist public lecture, participating in UC Women's Center programming or activities becoming involved in or starting a feminist student organization, volunteering with local feminist organizations, working on a political campaign in support of women's rights, etc.) and then writing a 1-page (typed, double-spaced) paper on the experience and how it affected you that you must submit by the last day of class. Announcements for such opportunities will be made and are encouraged.

***Final grading scale:***

*Points received on assignments will add up to the following:*

*A = 100-93; A- = 92-90; B+ = 89-88; B = 87-83; B- = 82-80; C+ = 79-78; C = 77-73; C- = 72-70; D+ = 69-68; D = 67-63; D- = 62-60; F = 59 or below*

**CLASS POLICIES**

**Class conduct:** This course addresses controversial and sometimes emotional issues and while understanding materials does not mean that you have to embrace all viewpoints presented, it does require that you think deeply about and discuss them respectfully. All students will maintain appropriate classroom behavior such as listening to classmates and lecture material.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism, which is defined as representing someone else's words or ideas as your own (by, for example, failing to use appropriate quotation marks, reference citations, and attributions to refer to material used from text, internet, interview, etc. sources) will not be tolerated. Given that this is an introductory course attracting mostly first year students, students will receive a failing grade for any assignment in which plagiarism is detected if it is their first offense. The second offense will result in applying the full weight of the university policy which requires a failing grade for the course and alerting the Head and Dean of the student's department and college of the offense. It is expected in this course that you will develop your own voice and your own consciousness through exposure to the work of others.

**Differently-abled students:** Appropriate accommodations can be provided to students providing documentation from the University Disability Services office.

**PLEASE LET ME KNOW IMMEDIATELY IF YOU ARE HAVING ANY LEGITIMATE PROBLEMS WITH MEETING THE FOLLOWING COURSE REQUIREMENTS SO THAT WE CAN WORK THEM OUT IF POSSIBLE.**

## COURSE OUTLINE

### PART I: Core Concepts, Vocabulary and Theory.

- Week 1**            **Introductions**  
W. 01/04           Introduction to the course, program, and field  
F. 01/06           *Who, What and Why of Feminism?*  
Readings  
**Readings:** Blackboard, “Fear of Feminism,” Hogeland  
Women’s Lives: Introduction ; Atlas Part 1: Women in the World
- Week 2**            **Theory and Core concepts**  
M. 01/09           *Constructed Identities and Internalization*  
**Readings:** WL: Chap 2 pp 60-68  
Allison pp 78-85  
W. 01/11           *Intersectionality and Power*  
**Readings:** WL Lorboritor pp. 21-24 ; Atlas Part 7: Power  
F. 01/13           *Theory: The basics.*  
**Readings:** WL Chapter 1 pp.. 9-20  
Mohanty pp. 38-43 ;Hand out on Blackboard

### PART II: The Personal Is Political

- Week 3            **Women and Health**  
M. 01/16           NO CLASS  
W. 01/18           *Health and Reproduction (Possible Guest Lecture)*  
**Readings:** WL Chapter 5 pp. 173-185  
Saxton pp. 190-193  
Atlas Part 3: Birthrights  
F. 01/20           *Health and the Environment: A Global Look*  
**Readings:** WL Chap 12 pp.494-499  
Atlas Part 4: Body Politics pp. 46-50
- Week 4** Women, Family and Sexuality  
M. 01/23           *Public/Private Sphere*  
**Readings:** WL Chap 7 273-286  
Hinjosa pp. 294-300  
W. 1/25           *Lets Talk Sex.*  
**Readings:** WL Chap 4 143-151  
Fienberg pp. 164-168  
F. 1/27           *Getting Global*  
**Readings:** Khan pp. 162-163  
Atlas Part 2: Families

- Week 5**  
 M. 01/30 **Beauty and Cultural Representations**  
*Film: Killing Us Softly*  
**Readings:** WL Chap 3 pp. 111-119  
 Chernik pp. 121-124
- W. 02/01 *The Beauty Myth and Its Dangers*  
**Readings:** Blackboard. Excerpt from Wasted  
 Ka'ahumanu pp. 135  
 Rubin pp. 138-141
- F. 02/03 *Exporting the Beauty Myth*  
**Readings:** Croteau and Hoynes pp. 483-486  
 Atlas Part 4: Body Politic pp. 52-58

### Part III: Women and the Community

- Week 6**  
 M. 02/06 **Women, the Economy and Poverty**  
*Women and work*  
**Readings:** WL Chapter 8 pp.s 317-332  
 Atlas Part V: Work
- W. 02/08 *Women and Poverty*  
**Readings:** Excerpt from Nickel and Dimed  
 Explore website-www.financeprojectinfo.org
- F. 02/10 *Work or Welfare?*  
 Working Hard, Staying Poor simulation exercise  
**Readings:** Mink pp 350-358

- Week 7**  
 M. 02/13 **Women, Violence and Crime**  
*Domestic Violence*  
**Readings:** WL Chap 6 pp. 225-238  
 Foo pp. 249-255
- W. 02/15 *Sexual Violence*  
 Smith. 256-265  
 Ensler pp. 271
- F. 02/17 *Crime and criminization*  
**Readings:** WL Chap 12 492-497  
 Murray 425

### PART III: Global Gender Issues

- Week 8**  
 M. 02/20 **Women and the Global Economy**  
*Global Factory*  
**Readings:**  
 Chapter 9 pp. 371-388  
 In Atlas Part 6, To Have and Have Not

- W. 02/22      *Structural Adjustment programs.*  
**Readings:**  
 Chang pp. 397-407  
 Fernandez-Kelly pp 388- 397
- F. 02/24      *Exploring the Border*  
**Readings:** Blackboard: “The Homeland, Aztlan”, Anzaldua  
 Mora (pp. 410)
- Week 9**  
 M. 02/27      **Border Crossings: Women in a North American Context**  
*Shaping the Border*  
 Screening: “Performing the Border”
- W. 03/01      *“Performing the Border” Discussion*  
 Fernandez-Kelley pp. 288-396.  
 In Seager, Part 5, Migration
- F. 03/03      *Borderlands*  
**Readings:** Blackboard: “The Homeland, Aztlan” , Anzaldua

**Final Essay assignment: Your final essay assignment questions will be passed out and additional information given.**

- Week 11**  
 M.03/06      **Women and political activism**  
*Feminist organizing Global*  
 Screening “Beyond Beijing”  
 Atlas Part 7: Feminist Organizing
- W. 03/08      *Feminist Organizing Local*  
 Guest Speaker  
**Readings:** WL Chapter 13 pp521-533)
- F. 03/10      Organizing, Summation, and Evaluation  
**Final: Essay Assignment Due**