Introduction to Women’s Studies course: Orientation for new instructors

1. Introductions

2. W&GS Program philosophy for teaching undergraduates
   • to teach students about feminism, how to use gender as an analytical tool to understand the world, and how to use what they have learned to change the world
   • In general, Intro. instructors can organize the course to reflect their own areas of expertise and teaching skills

3. Course content:
   a. Course objectives
      • list of learning objectives should be copied into the syllabus as written, and used
      • in general, to help student make connections between course material and their personal experiences
   b. Essential content
      • course must cover ten key concepts, as listed in the pre- and post-test
      • syllabus must also include SLU’s statements about academic honesty and disability services
      • there is no required textbook; many instructors use at least one anthology
   c. Essential requirements
      • students must complete a service learning project (12-15 hours total service) and some sort of reflection assignment about it
      • students must set up a portfolio and add at least one item to it from the course; instructors have found it helpful to give some course credit to encourage students to complete this
      • students must attend at least one Women’s Studies Program event during the semester
      • instructor must administer our pre- and post-test for evaluation purposes

4. Preferred pedagogies
   • discussion, or combination of discussion and lecture, with students expected to participate in at least some class discussions
   • we encourage instructors to use innovative assignments, including things like show and tell, movies\(^1\) or literature, YouTube video clips, assigning students to be responsible for leading some class discussions, etc.

5. Students assessment strategies and guidelines
   • can assign papers, tests, journals, projects, blogs, etc.—this is instructor’s choice

---

\(^1\) Some movies that instructors have used successfully include “Dreamworlds,” “Misrepresentations,” “Tough Guise,” “Killing Us Softly,” “Half the Sky,” and “Makers” (PBS documentary about the U.S. feminist movement).
6. Student evaluation (grading procedures, grading scales)
   • can use either number/points or letter grading for individual assignments; for final course grade, we suggest using the SLU Arts and Sciences scale of 4.0 = A, 3.0 = B, etc.

7. Upcoming departmental events
   • each instructor should make sure that they are on the email list announcing upcoming events—see Jenni Semsar for this

8. Other
   • all Intro instructors should have access to a common Google drive collection of syllabi, the pre- and post-test for Intro. to WS, a link to the portfolio instructional video