WSTD 197-01, Seethaler (Fall 2013)

WSTD 197-01 (H)
Introduction to Women’s Studies
MWF 9-9:50AM, Beracha Hall 121
Fall 2013

Instructor: Ina C. Seethaler
Office: Saint Louis University Main Campus, McGannon Hall, Room 143A
Office Hours: M 11-12 and T/R 2:30 – 3:30 pm and by appointment when schedules conflict
E-mail: iseethal@slu.edu (you can usually expect a response email from me within 24h)

Course Description and Goals

Women’s Studies is a broad, interdisciplinary field that covers a vast range of issues. As an introductory course, this class will give you a first insight into some of the historical foundations, theoretical concepts, political manifestations, and social issues at stake. Our course will begin with an overview of the women’s movement in the U.S. and a discussion of what this legacy means to feminism today. The second section of this course will explore gender and sexuality as social constructions and their application to feminist scholarship; we will give special attention to how women and men negotiate these categories of identity on a personal-political level by looking at literature and contemporary media and art. We will focus especially on how gender norms shape identity and influence the distribution of power and the creation of oppression and on how feminist theory gives us the tools to become aware of these issues, to discuss them effectively, and to promote justice and equality. Toward the end of the semester, we will broaden our scope and look at global gender issues, multicultural feminism(s), and consider the future of the discipline.

In addition to your weekly preparation for class, you will contribute to our class blog to record your ideas, complete a number of in-class short writing assignments, readings, and peer feedback, give a presentation, and attend 1 Women’s Studies-related event. Finally, you must meet with me two times for a short conference during the semester to assess your progress.

Objectives:

1. Define and restate key terms and concepts in women’s and gender studies;
2. Understand the basic history of feminism and its relationship to women’s and gender studies;
3. Explain how different theoretical perspectives in women's and gender studies shape feminists' analyses of important practical issues, especially issues pertaining to social justice and systems of oppression;
4. Understand the intersections of gender/sexuality, race/ethnicity, class, and other characteristics and how they are reflected in the diversity of women’s experiences;
5. Develop critical reading, writing and thinking skills necessary for applying feminist thought to life on a practical level;
6. Incorporate classroom learning with practical experience by completing a service learning project.

Required Texts


All other readings can be found in our class shell on Blackboard Learn. It is your responsibility to bring a PRINTED copy of each day’s readings (EXCEPT for the Penguin Atlas scans) and/or detailed notes to class. No computers are allowed in the classroom.

Grading

✓ Class Blog and Participation 10%
✓ Show and Tell 5%
✓ Service Learning Portfolio 20%
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✓ Midterm Exam 20%
✓ Research Essay (15%) & Presentation (5%) 20%
✓ In-Class Final Exam (not cumulative) 20%
✓ Class Portfolio 5%

The grading scale is:

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>3.9 – 4.0</td>
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<td>B</td>
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<td>0.9 – 1.5</td>
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<td>F</td>
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Note: Grades are not negotiable. I do NOT discuss grades over e-mail or discuss them until 24 hours have elapsed, which should give you ample time to reflect on my comments and to prepare specific questions.

Class Blog and Participation (10%): This class cannot work without you actively participating regularly during in-class discussions. In order to continue our discussion outside of the regular classroom, I have created a class blog for us (you should have received an invitation to join this blog from me by now). On this blog we will all share our reactions to the readings and discuss in class. You will post a blog entry once a week (no matter what day of the week, but the cut-off is Sunday at midnight). Additionally, you will comment on 2 entries by your fellow students. This medium should be a carefree environment in which we can share our ideas on an informal, yet appropriate level.

Show & Tell (5%): To personalize our classroom setting, I ask you to bring an item for “show and tell” three times over the course of the semester. You can “show” or “tell” anything you want, as long as it concerns women, Women’s Studies, or our week’s discussion. At the beginning of our class periods, we will have time for “show and tell” before discussion of the day’s readings. This should be fun and exciting. Bring a picture of your grandma, a song with a feminist theme, an article from the newspaper, a YouTube video you found provocative, etc., and talk about why you brought it in.

Service Learning Portfolio (20%): The service learning project is an invaluable learning experience that will make it possible for you to apply practically what you learn in the classroom. I will evaluate it as follows:

✓ **Hours (10%):** 12-15 hours at the organization. You will receive a log sheet for your hours and a “contract” of sorts before you begin your service. A representative of the organization must sign the log sheet each time you work. Any training will also be included in the overall hours, so please obtain a signature for those hours as well.

✓ **Journal (5%):** In addition to the time spent at the site, you will reflect on your experience at the site by keeping a journal. Any insights, observations or reflections are welcome in this journal; however, each response should endeavor to either discuss the learning experience and/or put it into conversation with the texts we read in class. In other words, please stay on topic, but feel free to be creative. You will submit these entries to me on Blackboard Learn after each visit.

✓ **Reflection Essay (5%):** Students will compose a 4-5 page reflection paper connecting the issues discussed in the course readings with the issues at the organization while also giving your own account of what you learned by working at this particular organization, with certain people, etc. Begin by informing me about the agency you worked for and their mission, and then explain in detail what you did for the organization. Next, cite any of the readings from the semester that directly relate to your service experience this semester and explain why they did so. From this point, you may want to consider some larger questions: What did you gain from working with this organization? What did the organization gain? What is the relationship between service learning and a Women’s Studies classroom? What is the value of service learning in the Women’s Studies classroom, and what is the value for the community? What was the most rewarding aspect of the experience for you? What new insight did you have? Include any anecdotes that will “show” rather than just “tell” what your organization is all about. The stories you write from this experience are often the most powerful and lead to a deep level of reflection.

✓ **Portfolio:** Please collect these assignments (including prints of your journal) and anything else from the organization— brochures, training materials, photos, anything—in a folder or binder. Organize it in any way you want, but make it look nice.

Midterm Exam (20%): You will be given a review sheet before the midterm is handed out and will have the opportunity to ask me questions about the terms and concepts on the sheet. The exam will consist of short answer and essay questions.
Research Project & Presentation

✓ **Research Project (15%)**: You will select a Wikipedia page on a topic related to Women’s and Gender Studies and critically analyze its content. Based on our course content and outside research, you will evaluate the page (are there any gaps, does it cite the most important scholars, are certain groups excluded?, etc.). You might realize that no Wikipedia page exists on a certain topic and write a sample entry. You will be asked to utilize the library’s databases and catalog to locate sources that support your analysis and to carefully explain the issue or argument. More explanation will be given later on, and you will email me a proposal after midterm so that I may give you feedback on your topic. Your analysis must meet the following criteria: 6-7 pages, APA, MLA, etc. format— whichever is used in your discipline—at least 3 scholarly sources.

✓ **Presentation (5%)**: Based on your research essay, present a 10 minute discussion of your topic that includes some visual elements, using PowerPoint, video, etc. You do not need to lecture to us, so you may want to incorporate some class participation. I will evaluate your presentation based on time, visuals, knowledge of the subject, presentation skills, and organization.

**In-Class Final Exam (20%)**: The exam will consist of short answer questions and two essay questions. This exam is not cumulative, but we will take this test in class, so your answers will focus on texts and concepts that we have studied since midterm. We will discuss more about what makes a good, persuasive essay in class.

**Class Portfolio (5%)**: The Women’s Studies Program has designed an online portfolio program with which you can collect materials that you will have created in your Women’s Studies classes over the course of our studies. We will watch a YouTube video that will explain you exactly how to create such a portfolio. You are to set up your site and upload at least one item (paper, video, etc.).

**GUIDELINES AND GROUND RULES**

1. **Attendance and Participation**
   Attendance and participation are required. More than 3 unexcused absences will move your grade down by 1/3 of a letter with each additional absence. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to talk with a classmate and share notes. You will be able to find all assignments that are given out in class on Blackboard. Work that is handed in late will have 1/3 of a letter deducted for each day that it is late.
   If you must miss a class on a day that an assignment is due, please send your assignment to me as an email attachment or make arrangements to send your work with a classmate.
   I expect you to prepare for and to participate in discussions. We all share the responsibility of making this class interesting and engaging. Everyone reads differently and will have something different to say about a subject. Your comments help others to see topics in a different light.
   Individual conferences with me count as regular class meetings; missing a conference is like missing a class. Individual conferences will not act as make-up sessions for missed classes; if you want to know what happened in the class you missed, please come to my office hours.

2. **Time**
   All of our time is valuable. I expect you to come to class on time – to be here and ready to start class by 9 a.m. Excessive or continuous lateness will not be tolerated; if you are more than 15 minutes late on three separate occasions, I will count them as one absence.

3. **Academic Integrity and Honesty**
   Students are expected to be honest in their academic work. The University reserves the right to penalize any student whose academic conduct at any time is, in its judgment, detrimental to the University. Such conduct shall include cases of plagiarism, collusion, cheating, giving or receiving or offering or soliciting information in examinations, or the use of previously prepared material in examinations or quizzes. Violations should be reported to your course instructor, who will investigate and adjudicate them according to the policy on academic honesty of the College of Arts and Sciences. If the charges are found to be true, the student may be liable for academic or disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion by the University.

4. **Electronic Devices**
   Please turn off (NOT on vibrate) all cell phones, laptops, iPods, and other annoying electronic devices before class. Texting in class will not be tolerated as it shows disrespect to your instructor and your classmates.

5. **Students with Special Needs and Disability Services**
   In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study
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Skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about: 1) Course-level support (faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor, 2) University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Student Success Center (BSC 331) or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Students who believe that they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services (314-977-8885) or visit the Student Success Center. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.

If you have other personal, health, or family issues or needs that could potentially affect your performance in class, please also see me at the beginning of the semester so that we are in communication about these issues before adverse circumstances arise. For general questions about or concerns with this class please contact Dr. Penny Weiss, the Director of the Women’s Studies Program (pweiss1@slu.edu).

8. Course Content Disclaimer
In this course, students may be required to read texts or view materials that they may consider offensive. All ideas are to be examined in the context of intellectual inquiry of the sort encountered at the university level. Arrangements may be made to substitute certain works if students contact the instructor prior to the assignment. The ideas expressed in any assigned text or viewing material do not necessarily represent the views of the instructor, Women’s Studies Program, or Saint Louis University. Course materials are selected for their relevance to Women’s Studies.

9. Feedback
I am very interested in hearing from you throughout the semester. Please don’t hesitate to e-mail me, leave a note in my box, or see me during office hours to talk about what works and what doesn’t in the course. The ultimate goal of good writing is good communication, and I hope you will communicate with me whenever you have any frustrations or concerns.

A Note on Reading:
Active reading is essential to your success (and enjoyment) in this course. You should be reading with a pen in hand, taking notes in the margins and underlining words as you read. Your comments will provide you with a record of your own initial response to the reading, which is invaluable as you prepare for discussion and to write your essays. Be sure to read when your concentration is at its peak. Read and re-read: read for pleasure and initial comprehension first, and then read again for increased understanding and analysis. Take note of any phrases/passages that confused you – chances are that if you didn’t understand, someone else in the class didn’t, either! So don’t be shy about asking for help.

Specific Assignments Schedule
(Note: This schedule is preliminary and may be subject to modifications)

M 8/26: Introduction

W 8/28: Audre Lorde, Zami (excerpts on Bb. Learn)
GUEST VISIT: Center for Service and Community Engagement

F 8/30: Marilyn Frye, “Oppression” (Bb. Learn)
Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House (Bb. Learn)

M 9/2: Labor Day

Historical-Critical Foundations of Feminism


F 9/6: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions” (Bb. Learn)
Sojourner Truth, Two Speeches (Bb. Learn)
Penguin Atlas, 14-19 (Bb. Learn)
W 10/9: Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “The Yellow Wallpaper” (Bb. Learn)
   bell hooks, Class Matters (excerpts, Bb. Learn)

F 10/11: Christine Bose and Rachel Whaley, “Sex Segregation on the US Labor Force” (FF 197-205)
   Penguin Atlas, 62-67 (Bb. Learn)

M 10/14: Andrea Smith, “Beyond Pro-Choice Versus Pro-Life” (FF 372-383)
   Penguin Atlas, 34-41 (Bb. Learn)
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W 10/16: Susan Moller Okin, *Justice, Gender, and Family* (excerpts, Bb. Learn)

**MIDTERM REVIEW**

SIGN-UP: Midterm conferences

F 10/18: In-class **MIDTERM EXAM**

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**M 10/21: Fall Break**

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Laurie Essig and Lynn Owens, “What if Marriage Is Bad for Us?” (FF 258-260)

**Sexuality and Human Rights**

F 10/25: Deborah Tolman “Doing Desire: Adolescent Girls’ Struggles With Sexuality” (FF 284-294)
Laurie Schaffner, “Violence against Girls” (FF 386-398)

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*Penguin Atlas*, 28-31 (Bb. Learn)

W 10/30: Patricia Yancey Martin and Robert A. Hummer “Fraternities and Rape on Campus” (FF 405-414)

*Penguin Atlas*, 58-59 (Bb. Learn)

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**F 11/1: GUEST LECTURE: Disability Studies**

*Penguin Atlas*, 80-83 (Bb. Learn)

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**M 11/4: Kristen Schilt and Laurel Westbrook, “Doing Gender” (FF 309-322)**
Laurel Richardson, “Gender Stereotyping in the English Language” (FF 103-107)

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**W 11/6: SCREENING and discussion of Sheryl WuDunn, “Tens of Millions of ‘Missing’ Girls”**

**F 11/8: WORKSHOP: WS LIBRARIAN (MEET in Pius Library Room LL7 at beginning of class)**

DUE: Research Paper Proposal

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**M 11/11: Ingrid Banks, “Hair Still Matters” (FF 142-150)**
GUEST LECTURE on African American women’s hair

**Embodying Gender Globally**

SCREENING: excerpts of *Killing Us Softly*


**F 11/15: Maxine Zinn and Bonnie Dill, “Theorizing Difference” (FF 70-75)**
Rosemarie Tong, “Multicultural, Global, and Postcolonial Feminism” (Bb. Learn)

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**M 11/18: Denise Segura and Patricia Zavella, “Gender in the Borderlands” (FF 75-86)**
Lila Abu-Lughod, “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?” (FF 486-495)


*Penguin Atlas*, 56-57 (Bb. Learn)
F 11/22: Gwyn Kirk, “Contesting Militarization” (FF 470-485)
   *Penguin Atlas, 52-55 (Bb. Learn)*
   SIGN-UP: End-of-year conferences

   **SERVICE LEARNING PORTFOLIO DUE**

W 11/27—F 11/29: **Thanksgiving Break**

M 12/2: Pamela Aronson, “Feminists or ‘Postfeminists’? Young Women’s Attitudes Toward Feminism and Gender Relations” (FF 516-526)

W 12/4: Presentations/Conferences

F 12/6: Presentations/Conferences

M 12/9: **Last Day of Class**: Course Wrap up and revisions
   **RESEARCH PAPER DUE**

M 12/16, 8-9:50 AM **Final Exam Day**
   **CLASS PORTFOLIO DUE**