WGST 1900: Intro: Women’s and Gender Studies (3 credits)

Spring 2020
T/R 12:30 – 13:45
Padre Rubio 1

Instructor: Roswitha Zahlner, Ph.D.
Classroom: Padre Rubio 1
Office Location: Padre Rubio 1st floor, Modern Language Office.
Office Hours: TR 11-12 and 2-3 pm, also by appointment
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Course Description
This course is an interdisciplinary introduction to feminist thought and Women’s and Gender Studies scholarship. The course material and discussions will focus on the different institutions of Western society such as families, schools, workplaces, and the media, and the way they construct and view gender differences. The course emphasizes how communication creates and reflects gender in society. We will consider how sexism, racism, classism, and global capitalism limit and shape the lives and contributions of the denizens of the 21st century.

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes
By the end of the semester, through reading assignments, independent reflection and writing, watching excerpts from documentaries, TED talks, and videos, exams, and class discussions and presentations, you will have achieved an understanding of the following:

- The vocabulary, concepts, theories and methods of the social sciences as they relate to Women’s and Gender Studies scholarship
- Feminist scholarship and the significance of Women’s and Gender Studies as an academic discipline
- The socialization process and the learning of gender
The various social institutions and their impact on gender

Different impacts of race, class, ethnicity and sexuality as well as global issues and religion when discussing gender and social organizations

You will have completed the first required course towards the Women´s and Gender Studies´ Major and Minor. Find more information about these programs on the university´s website: [https://www.slu.edu/programs/undergraduate/women-gender-studies.php](https://www.slu.edu/programs/undergraduate/women-gender-studies.php) (Saint Louis Campus)


**Required Texts** (available on our Blackboard course site or general internet)


4. Course reserves: As we are no longer allowed to post pdf files on Blackboard, I am setting up a course reserve with the most important reading materials (even though they are almost all available in the internet) through the SLU library. Please ask for these materials at the help desk. You can copy articles there, or borrow and read them while taking notes.

**Class Policies:**

- Students are responsible for all assignments, hand-outs and announcements presented in class. If you arrive late, leave early, or have missed a class, it is your responsibility to make up the work.

- Students must arrive in class prepared to participate *actively* in class discussions. This means that you must have read the materials listed for that date when you come to class. It is not sufficient to skim the texts while we are discussing them in
class. We discuss complex ideas, and you should have your questions and comments prepared before class.

- Skimming the texts in class will also prevent you from participating actively in the discussion, truly comprehending the concepts, and thus reaching the course outcomes.
- Respect your classmates and your instructor. Always use civil discourse in class. Please refer to the “Guidelines for Civil Discourse” section that follows.
- Please turn off all noisemakers, especially cell phones!

**Attendance**

There are no excused absences. All absences are your responsibility. That being said, as a courtesy, please contact me as soon as possible about any series of absences, especially if they are for a medical reason. It is your responsibility to make up any missed work. You must attend all exams and plan ahead in terms of travel.

**More than 4 absences may result in the lowering of your final grade by one half-letter grade for the course, and an additional half letter grade for each consecutive missed class.**

**Criteria for Outstanding Participation:**

**Students…**

- make frequent and substantive comments during discussion demonstrating that they have solid command of the reading.
- actively promote the flow of conversation through affirmation and questioning of peers. Differences in opinion are expressed respectfully.
- refer to the text and cites specific passages to support fully developed points.
- direct comments and questions to other students, referring to them by name, and look to them for answers, clarification, summarization, and so forth, not solely to the instructor.
- remain focused throughout the discussion, actively listening to their peers, looking at them, making eye contact, and not focusing on the instructor.

**Course Requirements:**

- **Class Participation**
  Students will be required to engage with weekly readings thoughtfully and critically. Class discussions are quintessential to the course, and classes should be
attended faithfully. In preparation for classroom discussion and analysis, students are encouraged to respond to each reading with brief notes that can be used in class discussions.

- In the spirit of learner-centered teaching, I will model various discussion-styles during the first third of the semester leading up to the first exam. I may present my own summary and analysis of a text and follow up with questions; I may ask each student to come up with questions to ask others; I may break the class into three or four groups and have each group write questions for the other groups; I may give each student two questions to work on, or break the whole class into two groups and have students debate a set of questions based on the text(s). We may also try a discussion-style inspired by bell hooks’ early consciousness-raising meetings where all students get three “chips” and must use them in order to speak. If you have used all your chips, you must sit back and let others speak. Everyone must use all their chips.

- **Show and tell (mini presentation)**
  As you look through the topics we will be discussing and once you have become familiar with the course system, you can start searching for an article, video, blog or song that relates to a topic we will be discussing at a certain date. You will monitor the discussion of this reading/video/song in class. Please share this item with me at least one class period before the discussion date. This should not take more than 5-8 minutes of class time.

- **Feminist Journals**
  For each week of classes, you will be required to turn in **journal entries**. In these you reflect on what struck you about a specific reading from that week. They can be handwritten (if you write clearly) or typed. You could briefly list the main points made by the writer, or at least the points that particularly struck you. Then list some possible discussion questions. Occasionally, I may ask you to use these questions in class.

  **Discussion forum:** You may substitute a week’s journal by posting in a discussion forum on Blackboard. I will start a discussion there about once a month by linking an article, TED talk, or anything similar, and you can post a comment and/or response to someone else’s post.
• **Exams 1 and 2:**
  These will test your understanding of and your ability to explain key concepts presented in class and reflect on them. They will consist of identifications (giving 3 points of information on key terms) and short reflection questions. In-class discussions, visuals, and guest speakers will be treated as course material and are included in these exams.

• **Activism Day**
  This is a regular class period for which you will prepare handouts, short surveys, and visuals such as posters to get people from the campus community thinking about issues related to Women’s and Gender studies, such as body image, gender violence, women and the media, sexism in sports, and many others, and to help you think about the meaning and importance of activism. We will spend roughly one hour talking to people on campus (courtyard, cafeteria, lounges...) and then meet again in the lounge to post any findings or visuals you would like to exhibit. You will then analyze your results to the best of your ability and write up your results in a one-page report. If you work with a partner, each person will hand in their own report and make it clear what their contributions were to the project.

• **Final Presentation:**
  Each student must present an analysis of a current issue related to topics of gender studies which you became more acutely aware of as a consequence of our discussions. You will need to research and present your interpretation of a current issue or topic of your choice. Present your analysis in a coherent and concise way to the rest of the class (power point or presentation of online sources preferred) along with 2 follow-up discussion questions.
  6 minutes + max. 2 for discussion (8 total)

• **Final Exam**
  The final exam will consist of a multiple choice section, short essay responses, and one longer essay. I will be looking for your critical thinking skills, comprehension and application of concepts learned in the readings, and effective writings skills.
**Weighting**

- Participation and attendance (15% - see policy on unexcused absences above)
- Journals/discussion forum (15%)
- Two midterm exams (15%, 15%)
- Activism project and report (10%)
- Show and tell (5%)
- Final Presentation (10%)
- Final exam (15%)

**Guidelines for Civil Discourse:**

- Be willing to examine and question your own beliefs, views and attitudes; explore why you hold them. Remember to always treat each other with respect and tolerance.
- Remember that learning requires occasional periods of discomfort – be willing to explore beyond your comfort zone!
- Do not make personal or derogatory remarks. Sexist, racist, homophobic, body-shaming otherwise hurtful remarks will not be tolerated. When you express yourself, try to ask yourself: Is this just my personal impression? Should I fact-check the statistics related to this issue?
- Actively listen to your classmates. Try not to interrupt (as the instructor I must sometimes interrupt, and I apologize in advance), and when you disagree, give criticism constructively. Try to imagine why the other person holds the beliefs they do.
- Work to resolve conflicts: recognize and accept differences through the practice of mutual respect and honesty.
- Develop an awareness of your own discussion style: Do you follow? Lead? Do you feel cut out of the conversation? Can you push yourself to speak? Do you like to play devil’s advocate? Can you let others take the lead once in a while?

**COLLECTION OF STUDENT WORK FOR ASSESSMENT:**

In order to maintain quality academic offerings and to conform to accreditation requirements, SLU-Madrid regularly assesses its teaching, services and programs for evidence of student learning. For this purpose, SLU-Madrid keeps representative examples of student work from all courses and programs on file, including assignments, papers, exams, portfolios and results from student surveys, focus groups and reflective exercises.
Copies of your work for this course may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes. If you prefer SLU-Madrid not to retain your work for this purpose, you must communicate this decision in writing to your professor.

**Academic Honesty/Integrity:** Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is “the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity.” Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service through which SLU fulfills its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.

The full University-level Academic Integrity Policy can be found on the Provost’s Office website. Additionally, SLU-Madrid has posted its academic integrity policy online. As a member of the University community, you are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions and appeals.

The professor will review these matters during the first weeks of the term. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program or the Academic Dean of the Madrid Campus.

**Title IX Statement:** Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU’s Title IX deputy coordinator, Patrice Burns, whose office is located on the third floor of San Ignacio Hall, Calle Amapolas, 3 (patrice.burns@slu.edu; 915-54-5858, ext. 241) and share the basic facts of your experience with her. The Title IX deputy coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the SLU-Madrid's Counseling Services on the third floor of San Ignacio Hall (counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu; 915-54-5858, ext. 230) or Sinews Multipletherapy Institute, the off-campus provider of counseling services for SLU-Madrid (www.sinews.es; 917-00-1979). To view SLU-Madrid's sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please our policy posted online. Additional information is available at the University’s website “SLU is here for you.”

**Disability Accommodations and Learning Resources:** In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study 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:
Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.

University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by reviewing the Academic Resources website online.

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Once successfully registered, the student also must notify the course instructor that they wish to access accommodations in the course. Please contact Disability Services at disabilityservices-madrid@slu.edu or +915 54 58 58, ext. 230 for an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about the student's eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services. For more information about academic accommodations, see the Disability Services webpage.

Note: Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one are encouraged to contact Disability Services.

Basic Needs Security Statement: Students in personal or academic distress and/or who may be specifically experiencing challenges such as securing food or difficulty navigating campus resources, and who believe this may affect their performance in the course, are encouraged to contact Marta Maruri, SLU-Madrid’s Director of Student Life (marta.maruri@slu.edu or 915 54 58 58, ext. 213) for support. Furthermore, please notify the instructor if you are comfortable in doing so, as this will enable them to assist you with finding the resources you may need.

COURSE OUTLINE + READINGS

Week 1
Thursday, Jan. 9: Getting to know each other.
Discussion of the syllabus, course system, and important assignments. Discussion of attitudes toward feminism and gender.
Assessment survey.

Week 2
Definitions of feminism: anti-sexism? Beginning Historical Survey
Tuesday, Jan. 14: Discussion of bell hooks’s Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics, Introduction + Chapter 1.
Key concepts and arguments.

Thursday, Jan. 16: Historical Survey of Women’s Movements
Early feminists. The First Wave of Women’s Movements.
Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*.

*Jan 19th*: LAST DAY for Drop/add, Audit or Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory options.

**Week 3**  
*Historical Survey (cont)*

**Tuesday, Jan. 21:** “The Second Wave of Women’s Movements in the United States”  
(from Julia T. Wood, *Gendered Lives* p. 72-87, Ch. 3).  
S. Watkins, “Liberal Feminism,” Betty Friedan I and II.

**Thursday, Jan. 23:** Wood: Third Wave of Women’s Movements in the United States, and Anti-Feminism: The Backlash.  
Chapter 4: Men’s Movements in the United States.

**Week 4**  
*Theoretical Foundations. Establishing the Field.*

**Tu., Jan. 28:** *Textbook intro.*  
Julia T. Wood, Chapter 1: “The Study of Communication, Gender, and Culture.” Slideshow on Blackboard. Read before class!

**Th., Jan. 30:** Wood, Chapter 2: “Theoretical Approaches to Gender Development”: Slideshow on Blackboard

**Week 5**

**Tu. Feb. 4:** *Gender Development: How Do We Learn Gender?*  
Julia T. Wood, Chapter 7: “Becoming Gendered: The Early Years.”  
Slideshow on Blackboard.  
“What Are Little Boys Made Of?” + “Night to His Day”  
Read before class.

**Th., Feb. 6:** *Oppression and Privilege: Intersectional Feminism*  
Online readings: “White Privilege, Male Privilege” Peggy McIntosh  
Combahee River Collective: “Black Feminist Statement”
Week 6
Wood, Chapter 5, “Gendered verbal communication: names, games, communication styles” (Slideshow)

Th., Feb. 13:  **First Exam**

Week 7
Tu., Feb. 18:  *Gender in Communication (cont.)*
Chapter 6, “Gendered Non-Verbal Communication.”

*Feb. 18: Registration begins for Summer 2020.*

*Winter break:* Feb. 20-21. No classes!

Week 8
*Body Image, Cosmetic Surgeries, Eating Disorders, Hormonal Pretexts to Oppression*


Th., Feb. 27:  “Hormonal Hurricanes” Dr. Anne Fausto-Sterling
“The Myth of the Perfect Body” (short article on disabled women)

Week 9
*March 1st: Midterm grades on Banner.*

Tu., March 3:  *Gendered Education*
Wood, Chapter 8: Gendered Education: “Communication in Schools.” Blackboard slideshow.
“Shortchanging Girls: Gender Socialization in Schools.” Peggy Orenstein.

Th., Mar. 5:  Activism Day and Consciousness-Raising on campus. Prepare a questionnaire and/or poster/visual to use around campus and exhibit in Padre Rubio’s Student lounge after class. Write up an analysis of your results and experience to hand in on Tuesday.

*International Women’s Day + March 8th!*
Week 10  
Gender at Work
Tu., March 10:
Wood, Chapter 10: “Gendered Organizational Communication.”
Slideshow (Blackboard).
Activism Project Report due

Th., Mar 12:  
Reproductive Rights
bell hooks, Chapter 5: “Our Bodies, Ourselves”
“Beyond Pro-Choice Vs. Pro-Life...” Andrea Smith

Sunday, March 15: Last day to withdraw with ‘W’

Week 11
Tu., March 17:  
Sexist Violence:

Th. March 19:  
Second exam (identifications and short essay questions)

Week 12
Tu., March 24:  
Global Women’s Oppression
“Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?” Lila Abu-Lughod

Th., March 26:  
Women and Globalism.
“From the Third World ...” Grace Chang.

Thursday and Friday: “Hedda Gabler,” Theater Workshop.

Week 13  
Gender in the Media. 21st Century Sexism
Tu., March 31:  
MissRepresentation. Excerpts from the documentary.
Th., Apr. 2: Susan J. Douglas. “Enlightened Sexism: The Seductive Message that Feminism’s Work is Done”

April 6-10th: SEMANA SANTA Spring break. No classes.

Week 14
Tu, Apr. 14 Wood, Ch. 11, “Gendered Media.” Slideshow.

Visit transjusticefundingproject.org.

Apr. 15th: Registration for fall semester opens

Week 15:

Thursday, Apr 23: https://medium.com/queer-history-for-the-people/barbara-smith-mother-of-black-feminism-revolutionary-publisher-4189232e15b0

Tu., Apr. 28: Final presentations

Th., Apr. 30: Final presentations.

Friday, May 1st is a holiday.

Tu, May 5th: Final presentations. Last class.

Please remember to complete the course evaluations!

FINAL EXAM: Tuesday, May 12th, 12-2 pm (3 pm with extra time)
May 17: Final Grades on Banner.