

Introduction to Gender and Women's Studies (GWS 200)

1. What course does the department plan to offer in Explorations? Which subcategory are you proposing for this course? (Arts and Humanities; Social and Behavioral Sciences; Natural and Physical Sciences)

Subcategory B: Social and Behavioral Sciences

2. How will this course meet the specific learning objectives of the appropriate subcategory. Please address all of the learning outcomes listed for the appropriate subcategory.

Learning Objective 1: Demonstrate knowledge of at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences.

In GWS 200, students explore the human experience using theories and tools of the social and behavioral sciences, particularly as they relate to the material conditions of gendered lives. The course requires students to analyze problems and conceptualize the ways in which sex, gender, and patriarchy impact contemporary economic, social, and political issues. Central to gender and women's studies is the concept of social construction of gender and difference as well as the notion of the generalized "other." This course introduces students to many other psycho-social and behavioral concepts such as heteronormativity, "nature/nurture," and dual-systems theory. The pedagogical underpinnings that we draw from include post-structuralist sociological analyses that challenge master narratives.

Learning Objective 2: Apply knowledge, theories, and research methods, including ethical conduct, to analyze problems pertinent to at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences.

GWS 200 introduces students to a broad range of feminist theories and practices as they relate to specific cultural and historical contexts (primarily U.S.) and ascertains the contributions and limits of disciplinary, inter/intradisciplinary, and multidisciplinary feminist research and scholarship. Students explore important historical and contemporary issues relating to gender and women's studies and learn to evaluate and critically respond to academic scholarship. The underlying social and behavioral theories related to agency, power, privilege, and access form the foundational epistemology of the course. Students develop skills in using empirical methodology, reviewing scholarly literature, and applying theoretical and/or artistic approaches. Emphasis is placed on library skills and proper use of citations. The course articulates the ethical dilemmas inherent to scholarly theories of gender and encourages informed value judgments on specific gendered and feminist practices.

Learning Objective 3: Understand and demonstrate how at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences conceptualizes diversity and the ways it shapes human experience.

Drawing on historical perspectives and socio-cultural analysis, this course considers some of the major issues that have concerned gender & women's studies including the social construction of gender and intersections with other relations of power, such as race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, nationality, religion, geography, ability, and age. Research and course materials investigate understandings of gender, women, and sexuality through multi-dimensional analyses that

recognize interconnectivity and intersectionality. The course focuses on ways in which these constructions and intersections shape women's and men's lives. Students read the work of a diverse group of primarily American feminist scholars, writers, and activists. Outcomes of the course lead to the recognition of the social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions of gender as they relate to disparities in power and privilege. Additional outcome-based objectives of the course include understanding:

1. reproductive and sexual politics
2. media representation and body image
3. understandings of masculinities and femininities
4. gender and violence
5. gender and environment
6. labor and employment
7. health disparities

Learning Objective 4: Integrate knowledge of at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences into issues of personal or public importance.

GWS 200 draws from a variety of texts, ideas, theories, and rhetorical approaches in order to address contemporary issues of public importance (such as violence against women and/or people of color and/or gay children). The claim “the personal is political” speaks to the significance of the ways in which public thought and discourse impinge on private lives. Initially meant to draw attention to the fact that “individual” suffering is not isolated—that women, despite differences in privilege and power among them, share histories of oppression and that change can therefore occur systematically—continues to be relevant. Linking theory with historical and current social practices, students work singly and in groups, exchanging ideas and working toward a greater understanding of “the personal is political.”

Learning Objective 5: Communicate effectively using the language and terminology germane to at least one area of the social and behavioral sciences.

The course encompasses the inter/intradisciplinary and multidisciplinary field of feminist and gender studies, which is theoretically grounded in social and behavioral hermeneutic reasoning. Key concepts and terms include “difference,” “patriarchy,” “power,” “privilege,” “intersectionality,” “sexual division of labor,” and “the social construction of gender.”

3. Syllabus statement of learning outcomes for course. NOTE: In multi-section courses, the same statement of learning outcomes must appear on every section's syllabus.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

1. Recognize and understand ways that gender functions as a social institution;
2. Identify and explain how socially constructed categories of gender, race, class, and sexual identity function together to formulate systems of oppression that shape women's and men's lives;
3. Define and utilize basic terms and concepts central to gender & women's studies, including sex, gender, sexuality, feminism, patriarchy, and oppression;

4. Apply concepts and theories important to the field of gender & women's studies to their individual life experiences and to the broader society.

4. Brief description of how the department will assess the course for these learning objectives.

The gender and women's studies program has an assessment committee that will assess the effectiveness of GWS 200 by incorporating the Colonnade Plan Learning Outcomes into our existing assessment structure.

The program will collect samples of writing from each section of GWS 200 in the spring semester every academic year. The samples will be chosen randomly and all student information will be removed. The GWS assessment committee faculty will assess the essays following the course outcomes:

- 4 = outstanding (far exceeds expectations)
- 3 = good (exceeds expectations)
- 2 = average (meets basic expectations)
- 1 = poor or unacceptable (falls below basic expectations)

Targets are as follows:

- 70% of essays will score 2 (average—meets expectations) or higher
- 30% of GWS 200 essays will score 3 (good-exceeds expectations) or higher

5. How many sections of this course will your department offer each semester?
6-8 sections.

6. Sample syllabus attached

Approved by Colonnade Committee: 4/4/2013

Sample Syllabus of GWS 200 Introduction to Gender & Women's Studies

Instructor: Dr. Kristi Branham

Email: kristi.branham@wku.edu

Office Hours: 1:00-3:00p Wed; 3:00-4:00p Tue/Thu; and by appt.

Office: Women's Studies Center

Office Phone: (270) 745-2943

Women's Studies Center: (270) 745-6477

Required Texts:

- Dicker, Rory. *A History of U.S. Feminisms*. Seal Press, 2008.
- Foster, Patricia, ed. *Minding the Body: Women Writers on Body and Soul*. Anchor, 1995.
- Taylor, Whittier, and Rupp, eds. *Feminist Frontiers*. 8th edition. McGraw-Hill, 2008.
- Websites and Course Docs: See Class Schedule for details.

Course Overview: This class introduces students to the interdisciplinary field of Gender & Women's Studies. Drawing on historical perspectives and socio-cultural analysis, this course will consider some of the major issues that have concerned Gender & Women's Studies including the social construction of gender and the intersections of gender with race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. We will be concerned with the ways in which these constructions and intersections shape women's and men's lives. Our investigation will proceed through reading the work of a diverse group of primarily American feminist scholars, writers, and activists.

General Education: [current description] This course fulfills Category C (Social and Behavioral Science) of the general education requirement. It will help students to attain a stronger understanding of society and human behavior. Introduction to Gender & Women's Studies accomplishes this goal with the following objectives.

Course Objectives: Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- Recognize and understand ways that gender functions as a social institution;
- Identify and explain how socially constructed categories of gender, race, class, and sexual identity function together to formulate systems of oppression that shape women's lives;
- Define and utilize basic terms and concepts central to gender & women's studies, including sex, gender, power, privilege, feminism, patriarchy, and oppression;
- Apply concepts and theories important to the field of gender & women's studies to their individual life experiences and to the broader society.

Gender & Women's Studies Minor: In addition to meeting general education requirements, this course is also a core course requirement for the Gender & Women's Studies Undergraduate Minor. For more information on the minor, visit www.wku.edu/womensstudies or call the Women's Studies Center, 270.745-6477.

Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who require accommodations (academic adjustments and/or auxiliary aids or services) for this course must contact the Office for Student Disability Services, Downing University Center A200, (270) 745-5121 V/TDD. Please do not request accommodations directly from the instructor without a letter of accommodation for the Office for Student Disability Services.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Evaluation: Students must satisfactorily complete the following requirements in order to pass this course. Please remember that if you're having difficulties, speaking with me is the best way to resolve them.

The breakdown of your final grade is as follows:

Participation	50
Reading Responses	200
Group Presentations	150
Designated Drivers.....	200
Essay	250
Final Exam.....	<u>150</u>
Total Points.....	1000

Class Participation: This class functions as a forum in which participants can engage the texts and exchange ideas, interpretations, and insights with each other. The success of this format depends on everyone's preparation and participation. Therefore, I expect you to participate in class activities and discussion. Successful participation requires that you prepare for class by completing the reading, doing your homework, and actively engaging the course material. Any in-class work such as reading quizzes and in-class writings will count toward your participation grade. I expect you to attend class and to be an active participant in class discussion.

Reading Responses: This class requires you to compose a reading response for each week's assigned readings. Weekly responses are due at the beginning of class each Tuesday. Responses should be at least two typed double-spaced pages. Your response should explore more deeply the themes and ideas expressed in the readings for that week and should incorporate and react to specific examples and passages from the texts. This assignment allows you to experiment with the ideas expressed in the readings and to examine the ways these ideas influence your own lives. Your responses should reflect careful consideration of the readings and a thoughtful analysis of the issues addressed. I will not accept late responses.

Group Presentation: In groups of three, students will research a specific topic related to Women's Studies and present that topic to the class. Examples of topics include reproductive rights, institutional sexism, breast cancer, pornography, popular music, images and tropes in gaming and/or film or TV shows, and eating disorders. A sign-up sheet and assignment description will be distributed mid semester. This project may be completed in a variety of ways, through such means as (but not limited to) videos, panels, or talk show formats. Presentations should be no more than 15 minutes long. In addition to the presentation, your group will submit a 3-5 page written report that discusses what you discovered as you researched your topic and that explains the choices your group made when preparing the presentation.

Designated Drivers: In small groups, students will have the opportunity to lead class discussion at least once during the semester. Your group will be responsible for presenting key themes from the readings and facilitating constructive critical discussion related to the readings. There is no prescribed format for discussion. Your group may divide the work by articles, by topic, or in some other manner. You should prepare discussion questions, guidelines, or other handouts, but the most important thing is for you to help your classmates understand, assimilate, and critique the assigned texts. Designated Drivers will be responsible for the majority of the class period on the assigned days and will submit in advance a description of the DD's planned route.

Essay: For this assignment, students will choose from a variety of writing prompts to compose a 6-to 8-page essay. The writing prompts along with a more detailed description of the essay assignment will be distributed during the third week of the semester.

Final Exam: The final exam will be a take-home essay exam that will ask you to respond to your experience during the semester. The exam will require you to recall and synthesize material from the assigned readings and class discussion.

Format for Written Assignments: All written assignments must be typed (in a standard 12-point font size) and double-spaced, with one-inch margins on all sides. Each written assignment should have a title. Your name, the course name and section, the due date, and my name should appear in the upper left-hand corner. Assignments should be stapled and pages should be numbered. You should use MLA format for incorporating and citing outside sources. All assignments should be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class on the due date.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: Because this course is discussion oriented, attendance is necessary. Students are allowed three unexcused absences; missing more than three classes will lower your final grade one-half letter grade for each absence after three. Excused absences will be handled on a case-by-case basis. If you do miss class, it is your responsibility to find out the assignments you missed and be prepared for the next class. Excessive tardiness will also affect your grade.

Academic Integrity: It is understood that students will present their own work for all assignments. Student work will be checked using plagiarism detection software. Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will result in either failure of the assignment or failure of the course. Please refer to the *WKU 2012-13 Student Handbook* for more information.

Late Assignments: Assignments submitted after the due date will be penalized one letter grade for each business day it is late. Assignments late more than five business days will not be accepted.

Email and Office Hours: I will use WKU's Blackboard and email system to communicate with students outside of class. These communications will range from class announcements to supplemental readings. Students will be responsible for information posted on the class Blackboard site and sent via email. In addition, there are two ways to contact me outside of class. Please feel free to come by my office during office hours or to email questions and concerns to me. I have listed my office hours and email address at the top of this syllabus. Understand, however, that I need 24 hours to respond to email. If you need to meet with me but cannot make my office hours, I'll gladly schedule an appointment at a time convenient for both of us.

Schedule: Below is the schedule for the semester. I expect you to have completed all of the week's assigned readings by the beginning of each week. I reserve the right to make additions, amendments, or changes to this schedule as needed. Please note that you are responsible for all class meetings, assignments, and any announced changes that occur, even if you are absent from class.

(Key: **FF**=*Feminist Frontiers*, **HF**=*A History of U.S. Feminisms*, **HO**=handouts, **MB**=*Minding the Body*)

Week 1 FEMINISM

8/28 Tue First Day! Introductions

8/30 Thu Film: *My Feminisms*

Week 2 – RRI

9/4 Tue Chapter 1: "Feminism's Legacy" (HF)

Due: Interviews—ask 10 people to define "feminism." Type-up the answers including age and gender for each person interviewed to submit in class.

9/6 Thu Chapter 2: "First Wave Feminism: Fighting for the Vote" (HF)

Week 3 – RR2

- 9/11 Tue Chapter 3: “Second Wave Feminism: Seeking Liberation and Equality” (HF)
Firestone “American Feminism” (HO)
- 9/13 Thu Aronson “Feminist or ‘Postfeminist’” (FF 572-582)
“UN Commission Approves” and “Fourth World Conference” (FF 613-616)

Week 4 – RR3

- 9/18 Tue Chapter 4: “Third Wave Feminism: Embracing Contradiction” (HF)
Walker “Becoming the Third Wave” (HO)
- 9/20 Thu Chapter 5: “Knowing Our History” (HF)

Week 5 – RR4 *OPPRESSION and PRIVILEGE*

- 9/25 Tue Frye “Oppression” (HO)
Johnson “Patriarchy, the System” (HO)
- 9/27 Thu TA-led discussion (PCAS/ACAS Nashville)
McIntosh “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” (FF)
Schact “Teaching about being an Oppressor” (HO)

Week 6 – No RR due

- 10/2 Tue TA-led Discussion
- 10/4 Thu **Fall Break—No Class!**

Week 7 – RR 5 *GENDER*

- 10/9 Tue Lorber “Night to His Day: The Social Construction of Gender” (FF)
- 10/11 Thu Kessler “The Medical Construction of Gender” (FF)
“Intersex,” “Between the Sexes,” Evaluation of the Newborn” (HO)

Week 8 – RR 6 *BODY IMAGE*

- 10/16 Tue Foster “Reading the Body: An Introduction” (MB)
Atwood “The Female Body” (MB)
- 10/18 Thu Tisdale “A Weight that Women Carry” (MB)
Shute “Life Size” (MB)

Week 9 – RR 7

- 10/23 Tue Film: *Period: The End of Menstruation*
Steinem “If Men Could Menstruate” (HO)
- 10/25 Thu Fausto-Sterling “Hormonal Hurricanes” (FF)
Harrison “Thicker than Water” (MB)

Week 10 – RR 8

- 10/30 Tue Film: *Killing Us Softly III*
- 11/1 Thu Gimlin “Cosmetic Surgery: Paying for your Beauty” (FF)
Davis “Loose Lips Sink Ships” (FF)

Week 11 – RR 9 *GENDER and RACE*

- 11/6 Tue Election Day!
- 11/8 Thu Collins “Black Sexual Politics” (HO)

Week 12 *VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN*

- 11/13 Tue Banks “Hair Still Matters” (FF)
Porter “Beauty and the Beast” (MB)
- 11/15 Thu **Essay due**
Film: *Rape Is...*

Week 13 **MASCULINITY**
11/20 Tue Film: *Tough Guise*
11/22 Thu **Thanksgiving Break—No Class!**

Week 14 – RR 10
11/27 Tue Steinem “Supremacy Crimes” (FF)
 Kimmel “What are Little Boys Made Of?” (FF)
11/29 Thu **Group Presentations**

Week 15
12/4 Tue **Group Presentations**
12/6 Thu **Group Presentations**

Week 16 – Final Exam due no later than 1p CST Thursday, Dec. 13.