

WGSS 310: JUNIOR YEAR WRITING

Writing as Activism

Fall 2019 UMass Amherst

Instructor: Hazel Gedikli

Course meeting time/location: Tu 4:00 - 6:30 PM, South College W219

Office & office hours: South College W408 (4th floor), Tu 2:00-4:00 PM or by appointment

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Course Description

This junior-year writing course provides fundamental instruction in critical thinking and composition techniques as well as the process of research and documentation necessary for academic and professional contexts in WGSS. The aim of this course is to acquaint students with the many genres and styles of writing and research practices expected from seniors and graduates of the WGSS major. The course is structured around a set of readings selected to represent a large variety of stylistic approaches including scholarly writings in a number of fields, cultural text (e.g. film, book, music, art) reviews/critiques, activist writing, journals, web pages, personal and self-reflexive prose, and abstracts/reports. Readings will be selected from academic, professional, and public contexts, and assignments will facilitate skill development in critical reading, thinking, writing, and research. We will focus on readings by authors that present the political, ideological, personal, and cultural positionings of feminisms.

Some of the questions we will be asking throughout the course include: What is feminist writing? What makes writing feminist? What role does writing play in feminist activism? What are the most important writing skills, practices and sensibilities for WGSS students to learn, understand and master? Are there universal standards for what constitutes good writing? Why or why not? Who gets to decide? How does gender shape writing and how is it interpreted by different audiences? How does gender intersect with race, class, sexuality, nationality, ability, and other social identities and structures to influence modes of writing and their reception? How can feminist approaches to writing give voice to more diverse writing and writers?

In this course, you should expect to write for and during every class meeting. You will practice writing for academic and public spaces and will use writing as an integral mode of learning and research. We will approach writing a process, a tool for critical thinking and a product of communicating the results of critical thinking, rather than simply a communication skill. You will write regularly, in various forms, and will improve your skills by means of revision and feedback.

This course fulfills the Junior Year Writing requirement for WGSS majors.

Course Objectives

- explore what “feminist” writing means to the discipline of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies, as well as what “feminist” writing means to you
- practice feminist analysis and composition
- practice feminist writing as social intervention and political activism
- analyze the intersections of sex, gender, race, class, ability, and culture in writing
- gain an understanding of interdisciplinary feminist research methods and writing skills
- be introduced to tools and methods that writers and researchers use to explore and represent women and marginalized people’s voices

Course Materials

- Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* [Available as e-book through the library]
- The Crunk Feminist Collective. *The Crunk Feminist Collection*. [Available as e-book through the library & also available online as a blog]
- INCITE! Women of Color against Violence. *Color of violence: The INCITE! Anthology* [Available as e-book through the library]
- Wayne C. Booth et al., *The Craft of Research* [Available as e-book through the library]

Other materials for this course will be available via our class Moodle page. Materials will come in the form of downloadable PDFs, images, videos, or web links. Check the Moodle page frequently for updates.

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation: Class activities are a major part of this course and attendance will be taken. You are expected to attend and be prepared for every class, including scheduled one-on-one conferences with the instructor. This class meets once a week, so it is crucial that you be present, physically and mentally, each week. You will lose 3 % from your final grade per absence. If you miss a class meeting for any reason or if you come unprepared, you may still earn full participation credit by submitting, within a week via email no less than 800 words of written comments and questions, demonstrating original prepared engagement with all the material due that day. If you are absent for more than two class meetings, even if you make up the work, you cannot pass the course without consulting with me and obtaining approval for excusable absences (defined as per university policies). The university recognizes that some absences are unavoidable and thus excused, e.g., due to religious observances, required participation in athletic events, disability-related accommodations. See www.umass.edu/registrar/students/policies-and-practices/class-absence-policy. You are responsible for the following if you miss a class: (1) notify me in advance and (2) complete the make-up work by the original deadline. If you cannot give advance notice, talk to me as early as possible. Absences *also* impact the quality and completeness of your work--and thus, may affect the grade that you'll earn for individual assignments.

- Participation & Attendance is worth **20 %** of your final grade.

Small Assignments Online and In-Class: This is a writing intensive course and you can expect that we will do some form of writing in most class sessions. These low-stake in-class and out-of-class writing assignments are designed to be exploratory, to foster consistent writing habits, to encourage regular reflection, practice peer review, and develop your writerly voice. If you miss a class, check Moodle to see if anything had to be turned in on that day. Although these assignments won't be formally graded, your overall grade will suffer if you don't complete these tasks in a timely manner.

- These assignments is worth **10 %** of your final grade.

Feminist Autobiography/Philosophy: For this assignment, you will explore your own life experiences and to compose your own history of developing an interest in feminist/WGSS issues. You can choose one life event or a theme, period, activity or process on which to focus. This will not be, however, merely anecdotal or narrative writing; you will reflect on your experiences to communicate your feminist philosophy in life. In writing about the meaning of this experience, you will demonstrate your understanding of authentic voice, narrative construction, and reflexive analysis of your social location and how it shapes your views. This assignment will require multiple drafts.

- This assignment is worth 20 % of your final grade.

Blog Post or Op-Ed: For this assignment, you will choose a current news topic related to feminist and WGSS issues and write an opinion piece that demonstrates in depth knowledge of the issues and recommendations for how to address them. The assignment will include multiple drafts, revisions, and peer review. I will provide a more detailed assignment sheet closer to the due date. This assignment will require multiple drafts.

- This assignment is worth 20 % of your final grade.

Final Project & Presentation: This assignment will ask you to develop a research proposal about a topic of your choosing by using a feminist and WGSS perspective. We will employ academic research methods, and you will compose multiple genres of writing that scholars use to develop research projects when they are writing conference proposals, articles, dissertations, speeches, or other texts. Although you will compose a long final paper at the end of the process, this assignment aims to introduce you to produce multiple documents that assist WGSS scholars in developing research projects.

- This assignment is worth 30 % of your final grade.

Class Policies, Grading, and Participation

Student Work: Please create a google docs folder for this class and share it with me (choose “can edit” option). You will submit all your assignments and drafts there. Please label folder with the letters WGSS310_ LastName (e.g. WGSS310_ Gedikli). Please do this by Sep. 6, 10 AM.

Academic Honesty Policy: Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent. See the university’s policy: www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/.

Course Grade: Your final course grade for the semester will be based on the following breakdown:

Participation & Attendance	20 %
Small Assignments Online and In-Class	10 %
Feminist Autobiography/Philosophy	20 %
Blog Post or Op-Ed	20 %
Final Project & Presentation	30 %
Total	100 %

Final grades will be based on the following numerical equivalents and general definitions:

letter	grade pt	percent	meaning
A	4.0	100-94	excellent
A-	3.7	93-90	
B+	3.3	89-87	
B	3.0	86-83	good
B-	2.7	82-80	
C+	2.3	79-77	
C	2.0	76-73	fair
C-	1.7	72-70	
D+	1.3	69-67	
D	1.0	66-60	poor
F	0.0	59-0	failure

***Note: Grades of B and above are considered honors grade. The grade A indicates excellence.**

Moodle: I upload all course materials, handouts, assignment sheets, and other related stuff to Moodle. Check Moodle first if you need any of these materials; if you cannot find it, you can email me.

Email: I will use email to communicate with you. When you email me, please be sure to state your question or concerns *clearly* and *respectfully*. Also, please feel free to speak to me after class on class meeting days as well. You are encouraged to ask course- and assignment-related questions during class time and use office hours to meet with me. I check my email regularly and do my best to respond within 24 hours. Nevertheless, make sure that you have the contact information of at least a peer from class in case you need it.

Cell/Smart Phones, Pagers, Computers, and Email devices: Please silence all cell phones, pagers, and email devices during class. Please refrain from using your computer during class time for email, facebook, and IM chatting—it is disruptive to the class and disrespectful to your peers and teacher; please be present. Your active participation is essential for a successful semester for all of us.

Late Policy: You will be considered absent for the day if you are late more than **10** mins. to the class.

Late Work: Writing assignments that are submitted late will lose 20%.

Office Hours: You're welcome to come to office hours any time you'd like to discuss questions or concerns related to this course. If you have a time conflict with my office hours, please schedule an appointment.

Office of Disability Services: Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the Office of Disability Services (www.umass.edu/disability/current.html), and, *at the start of the semester*, do meet with me about tailoring accommodations identified by ODS to your work in this course.

Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. Check your email and Moodle regularly for updates.

September 3	Introductions
September 10	<p><u>Reading:</u> 1) Audre Lorde, “Poetry is not a Luxury” 2) Sara Ahmed, <i>Living a Feminist Life</i>, 1-42 <u>In Class Assignment:</u> Generative writing for Feminist Autobiography/Philosophy</p>
September 17	<p><u>Assignment Due:</u> Feminist Autobiography/Philosophy First Draft due by class meeting time in your Google folder <u>Reading:</u> 1) Audre Lorde, “The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action” 2) Sara Ahmed, <i>Living a Feminist Life</i>, 43-88</p>
September 24	<p><u>Assignment Due:</u> Feminist Autobiography/Philosophy Revised Draft due by class meeting time in your Google folder <u>Reading:</u> Sara Ahmed, <i>Living a Feminist Life</i>, 235-268 <u>In Class Assignment:</u> Peer Review</p>
October 1	<p><u>Assignment Due:</u> 1) Feminist Autobiography/Philosophy Final Draft due by class meeting time in your Google folder 2) Locate an example of Op-Ed or Blog Post; post to Moodle and bring a hard copy to class to discuss <u>Guest Speaker:</u> Adeline Broussan <u>Reading:</u> Crunk Feminist Collective, “Re-Nigging on the Promises: #Justice4Trayvon” & “Jesus Wasn’t a Slut Shamer, or How Conservative Theology Harms Black Women” [Feel free to check out the blog or the book for other chapters/writings] <u>In Class Assignment:</u> Reflection</p>
October 8	<p><u>Assignment Due:</u> Critical Incident Analysis Due by class meeting time <u>Reading:</u> INCITE!, Selections <u>In Class Activity:</u> Critical Incident Analysis Roundtable</p>
October 15	<p>No Class: Monday schedule <u>Assignment Due:</u> Blog Post/Op-Ed First Drafts Due by 5 pm in your Google folder</p>
October 22	<p>Class ends at 5:15 PM <u>Assignment Due:</u> Blog Post/Op-Ed Revised Drafts Due by class meeting time in your Google folder <u>Reading:</u> “Thinking in Print” and “Connecting with Your Reader” from <i>The Craft of Research</i> <u>In Class Assignment:</u> Peer Review & Revision</p>
October 29	<p><u>Assignment Due:</u> Blog Post/Op-Ed Final Drafts Due by class meeting time in your Google folder <u>Guest Speaker:</u> Derek Siegel <u>Reading:</u> 1) Carolette Norwood, “Decolonizing my Hair, Unshackling my curls”</p>

	<p>2) “From Topics to Questions” and “From Questions to a Problem” from <i>The Craft of Research</i></p> <p><u>In Class Assignment:</u> 1) Develop two potential research topics/questions 2) Reflection writing</p>
November 5	<p><u>Assignment Due:</u> Final Project Abstract due by class meeting time in your Google folder</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> “From Problems to Sources” and “Engaging Sources” from <i>The Craft of Research</i></p> <p><u>In Class Assignment:</u> Find two potential sources and annotate</p>
November 12	<p><u>Assignment Due:</u> Annotated Bibliography due class meeting time in your Google folder</p> <p><u>Reading:</u> “Making Good Arguments,” “Making Claims” and “Assembling Reasons and Evidence” from <i>The Craft of Research</i></p> <p><u>In Class Assignment:</u> Drafting your proposal</p>
November 19	Proposal presentations I
Thanksgiving Break: Rest, Relax, Refresh	
December 3	Proposal presentations II
December 10	<p><u>Assignment Due:</u> Final Paper Drafts Due by class meeting time in your Google folder</p> <p><u>In Class Assignment:</u> Peer Review</p> <p>Wrap-up</p>
December 17	Final Papers due by 5 pm: No late submissions!