
Womensst 187H
Spring 2006
Schedule #: 57871

Introduction to Women's Studies
Tue & Thu: 09:30–10:45 am
Emily Dickinson 109B

Professor Alex Deschamps

Office: Bartlett 7B » Tue 3:30 – 4:30 pm & Thu 2:00 – 3:30 pm

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Course Description

Placing women's experiences at the center of interpretation, this class introduces basic concepts and perspectives in Women's lives both historically and contemporaneously. It is an inter-disciplinary, trans-disciplinary, and cross-cultural study of women's roles and relations but it is also an overview of theoretical perspectives on gender and its intersection with other social constructs of difference, (race/ethnicity, class, disability, sexuality, and age). The central aim is to foster critical reading and thinking about all our lives and the ways in which these interlocking systems have shaped and influenced the historical, cultural, social, political, and economical contexts of our lives. Although the main focus is about women in the United States, specific attention will be given to women's resistance of these gendered inequalities, and the various ways they have worked to create new systems of change, by engaging in national and global transformational politics.

Course Requirements

- ◆ Reading assignments must be *completed by the class period for which they are assigned*.
- ◆ In addition to fulfilling a general education requirement (IU), this course is an HONORS 4 Credit course and particular attention will be paid to your writing (content, style, mechanics, presentation). Let me know early if you need assistance with writing. Relevant resources are also available.
- ◆ You are responsible for knowing when assignments are due (dates are in the syllabus) and handing them in on time. Excused or religious absences **do not exonerate you from** assignments. Read the Booklet on Undergraduate Rights and Responsibilities. You must inform me of Religious observances and other excused absences.
- ◆ Regular attendance and occasional in class exercises are mandatory. Attendances cannot be made up. After *Two unexcused absences* your final grade will begin to be marked down. Class discussions will provide the opportunity to talk critically and analyze issues and topics. You will be expected to have completed and thought about all of the readings for each class.
- ◆ Incompletes will not be given unless there are unusual circumstances. University guidelines will be followed.

Written Assignments and Exams

- ◆ Occasional in-class assignments including short Web Assignments will be part of the attendance and participation grade. (15%).
- ◆ Examination 1, *Thursday March 02nd*. (15%).
- ◆ Mid-Term Examination *Tuesday March 14th*. (20%).
- ◆ ONE 3-5 page written assignment based on the readings, lectures, class discussions and other presentations. Topics and detailed guidelines will be distributed and discussed. *Papers must be typewritten and double-spaced. Late papers will be graded down. Due Thursday April 13th*. (15%).
- ◆ An out of class assignment. Due no later than *Tuesday April 25th*. Detailed guidelines will be distributed. (5%).
- ◆ Examination 3, *Thursday May 04th*. (15%).

Written Assignments and Exams, (Cont'd)

- ◆ Learning Communities Research Activity. Detailed guidelines will be distributed and discussed. You will be required to work in small groups but submit individual learning Summaries which will be due on *Tuesday May 16th*. (15%).

Academic Honesty and Other Undergraduate Policies

My assumption is that students are generally honest. You are responsible for knowing and following the University of Massachusetts Academic Guidelines. *Please read and familiarize yourselves with the University Policy Statement on Academic Honesty, Course Requirements, Attendance, Religious Observances, and other relevant policies, in the Undergraduate Rights and Responsibilities Booklet or at website <http://www.umass.edu/umhome/policies/honesty.html>.* Necessary action, in compliance with official guidelines, will be taken against students who commit academic dishonesty. Plagiarism of any kind will be detrimental to your tenure at the University. Avoid using written papers from the internet. Caucus with me about resources for learning needs.

Books

[Required Texts]:	Gwyn Kirk & Margo Okazawa-Rey. (Third Edition). <i>Women's Lives: Multicultural Perspectives</i> . ISBN: 0072822449. McGraw-Hill, 2004.
	Howard Zinn, <i>A People's History Of The United States 1492-Present</i> . (Twentieth Anniversary Edition). New York. Harper Perennial, 2001.

Available at Food For Thought Book-shop, North Pleasant Street, Amherst
and also on reserve in the library

Topics And Questions to be Covered for the Semester

The Social Construction of Gender, Race, Class & Sexuality, Diversity and Difference

What is “Women’s Studies” and who are the “women”? How is “woman” defined? Does “objective knowledge” exist? In what ways do social, cultural, political and economic forces determine knowledge? Is there a “woman’s perspective”? If there is, how do race, class and sexual orientation impact that perspective? How are women alike? How do women differ? Does the common experience of patriarchy unite us across our differences? As a concept, oppression has had a long history in contemporary feminist scholarship. What does it mean? Why is it important to think about it? What are some of the tensions today? Will the regular methods of scholarship and science be adequate for the task of understanding the diversity between women? Will new tools be necessary? How do we encourage women and men to relate at the points of their “different similarities” to promote growth, and social change?

What is the ideological foundation of the United States? What is the importance of history? How were European American women’s lives shaped by the social, legal, religious and economic forces of the time? How has our knowledge of American Indian women been limited? What are some of the contemporary fields of research of American Indian women? What is the economic foundation of slavery? What was the experience of African American women in slavery? What were the economic and political reasons for the internment of Japanese Americans? How did this affect the experiences of Asian American women?

Social and Political Movements: Abolition and Women’s Rights, The Civil Rights Movement, The Second and Third Waves of Feminism

What is abolition? Who were the people involved in the movement? What were the roles of men and women of different races? Was gender an issue? What was the relationship between African American and European women in the abolition movement and the women’s rights movement? What were the economic and political bases for lynching? How has lynching impacted and continues to impact gender and race relations? How do societal attitudes towards African American men and Caucasian women contribute to the justification for lynching? What were the goals of the civil rights Movement (CRM)? What were the Jim Crow laws? What was the role of women in the CRM? What did the CRM accomplish? Why was the CRM seen as the “Borning Struggle”? How was the women’s movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s shaped by social expectations for women? What can we learn from the successes and mistakes of the movement? What still needs to be done? Where shall we put our greatest efforts? What should be our priorities? How do we revitalize the energy, optimism, and power of the women’s movement, and where shall we take it into the future? How do we build allies across gender lines?

Institutions that Shape Women’s Lives — Work

How has women’s work been historically and traditionally defined? How is it related to societal expectations for women? How do race, class, age, and disability impact definitions of women’s work as well as access to wage work? Where are women in the economy today? Do education, individual talents, skills and effort determine women’s placement in the work force? Are there still obstacles to women in the work force? What are the consequences and remedial strategies? Are current economic

problems de-gendering definitions of work? What are some of the consequences of this phenomenon for women, men, families, children, and our society?

Institutions that Shape Women's Lives — The Family, Gender, violence, and Recurring Issues

How is family defined? What are cross-cultural and historical differences in family forms? What are the roles of women in the family? What has been and is the role of the state in maintaining family systems? How do economic, political, and social pressures impact families? What roles do racism and sexism play in shaping public policy on the family? What are the strategies women of color have developed to ensure survival of their families? What is the connection between women and poverty? Why is the current debate about single mothers, poverty, welfare, and marriage? Who are single mothers? What's wrong with current poverty policies and what's the unfinished agenda? What is heterosexism and how does it impact on same sex families? How are definitions of family related to cultural assumptions about sexuality, race, gender and class? What is the current debate and discourse about same sex relationships, same sex families, and same sex unions?

What is the societal basis of violence against women? What are some major contemporary issues in youth violence? How are gender and masculinity linked to violence? What significant changes have the women's movement made to change issues of gendered violence? Women in this culture live with the reality of rape, what are cultural myths about rape? What is the relationship between rape and cultural definitions of aggressive sexuality for males and passivity for females? How has the activism of feminists affected treatment of rape victims by police and the judicial system? How are men engaging in the national and global resistance of violence against women and the culture of violence?

Institutions that Shape Women's Lives — Health Care, Media, Public Policy, Legal System

What is the basis of our health care system? Who are the main beneficiaries? What are the ways in which gender, race and class impact the quality and kind of health care received? What changes in the health care system have resulted from the efforts of women activists? What are the major contemporary issues with our Health Care system? How is youth and gender tied into patriarchy, the media, and profit? What are the links between media representation and health issues? Why does abortion continue to be a major issue for women? Has abortion always been illegal? What are the consequences of denying women access to abortion? What do we mean by reproductive health and reproductive rights? Is sterilization justified? What are the connections between sterilization abuse and population control nationally and globally?

Resistance, Alliance and Coalition Building: Platforms for Action

What is resistance and how has this been impacted by gender, race, class, age, disability, and sexuality? How do we continue to organize for change that can begin to reverse the inequities and inconsistencies in this age of "Globalization" by challenging and transforming the way in which we look at ourselves in relation to each other and to the world? What is consciousness raising? How do we raise awareness and understanding, our own and others, for social action and change? How can alliances be built across all our differences?

Course Calendar

Tue January 31 st	<p><u>Introduction to Course: Implications for Women & Men</u></p> <p>Syllabus, Requirements, Expectations, Guidelines, Introductory Questions</p>
Thu February 02 nd	<p><u>The Focus of Women’s Studies, Key Concepts, Theories, Theorizing, & Ways of Knowing</u></p> <p>Readings: [Text]–Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, pp. 1-19.</p>
Tue February 07 th	<p><u>Social Construction of Gender: Issues of Equality & Equity</u></p> <p>Readings: [Text]–Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, pp. 21-56.</p>
Thu February 09 th	<p><u>Social Identities & Social Locations: Micro, Meso, Macro Levels</u></p> <p>Readings: [Text]–Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, pp. 59-109.</p>
<p>Social, Economic, Political Histories, & the First Wave of the Women’s Movement – Suffrage & Feminism</p>	
Tue February 14 th	<p><u>Women’s Lives: Indigenous People & Foundations of U.S. Society</u></p> <p>Video Screening</p> <p>Readings: [Text]–Howard Zinn, Chapters 1, 2, & 3.</p>
Thu February 16 th	<p><u>European American Women’s Lives: Colonial & Early National Periods, Republican Motherhood, Cult of True Womanhood.</u></p> <p>Readings: [Handout]–Sally Roesch Wagner, <i>Is Equality Indigenous? The Untold Iroquois Influence on Early Radical Feminists</i>. 1996. http://www.awakenedwoman.com/iroquois_women.htm. [Text]–Howard Zinn, Chapter 4.</p>
Tue February 21 st	<p><i>No Class – Monday’s Class Schedule re President’s Day Holiday</i></p>
Thu February 23 rd	<p><u>Movements & Ideologies in the 19th Century: Abolition and the First Wave of the Women’s Movement</u></p> <p>Readings: [Handout]–Angela Davis, <i>Working Women, Black Women and the History of the Suffrage Movement in Women, Race and Class</i>. 1981. [Text]–Howard Zinn, Chapter 6. [Web Resources]–“The Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions”. http://www.pbs.org/stantonanthony/resources/resources.html. http://ecssba.rutgers.edu/.</p>
Tue February 28 th	<p><u>Black Women, Ida B. Wells, & Gender, Race, Class, Sexuality</u></p> <p>Video Screening: Ida B. Wells – A Passion for Justice</p> <p>Readings: [Text]–Howard Zinn, Chapter 9. [Web Research Assignment]–Wells Biography and “Lynch Law in America”.</p>

Course Calendar (Cont'd)

Thu March 02 nd	***Examination I***
Tue March 07 th	<u>Industrialization & Immigrant Women's Work: 1890-1924</u> Readings: Review time table on pp. 66-67. [Handout]– <i>A Century of Women</i> , 1994, pp. 7-39. Turner Publishing Inc. [Web Resource]–“Triangle Factory Fire” http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1416870
Thu March 09 th	<u>Industrialization & Women's Work: World War II</u> Video Screening: Rosie The Riveter Readings: [Web Resource]– http://www.rosietheriveter.org/ . [Web Research]–World War II posters: Search for “women” and “Japanese” at http://www.library.northwestern.edu/govpub/collections/wwii-posters/
Social Change, Social Justice, Civil Rights & The Second Wave of the Women's Movement	
Tue March 14 th	***Mid-Term Examination***
Thu March 16 th	<u>Women in the Civil Rights Movement, the Second Wave of the Women's Movement – Alliances, Coalitions & Conflicts</u> Readings: [Text]–Howard Zinn, Chapter 17
March 18 th –26 th	***Spring Break***
Contemporaneous Issues: The Ongoing Debates	
Tue March 28 th	<u>Women, Work, Wages, the Workforce</u> Readings: [Text]–Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, pp. 317-331. [Web Assignment]–Additional Web Resource: www.aauw.org (American Association of University Women Educational Foundation).
Thu March 30 th	<u>Women & Work: Feminization of Poverty, Solutions & Actions</u> Readings: [Text]–Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, pp. 333-366.
Tue April 04 th	<u>Women, Work, & Realities of the Global Economy</u> Video Screening: Made in Thailand or Behind the Labels. Readings: [Text]–Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, pp. 372-384 & 388-411.
Thu April 06 th	<u>Socio-Cultural Concepts of the Family 1: Public Policy & Motherhood</u> Readings: [Text]–Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, pp. 273-285. [Web Resource]– www.unmarried.org/rings.html . [Web Resource]– www.pbs.org/americanfamily/series.html .

Course Calendar (Cont'd)

Tue April 11 th	<u>Socio-Cultural Concepts of the Family 2: Ongoing Issues</u> Readings: [Text]–Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, pp. 286-315.
Thu April 13 th	<u>Gender, Violence & Masculinity</u> Video Excerpts From Tough Guise ***Written Assignment Due***
Tue April 18 th	<u>Gender, Violence, Culture, Femicide, Contemporaneous Issues, Sports, Sexuality</u> Readings: [Text]–Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, pp. 226-238 & 240-271. [Web Resource]–No Safe Place: http://www.pbs.org/kued/nosafeplace/ . [Web Assignment]–The Women’s Sports Foundation: www.womenssportsfoundation.org
Thu April 20 th	<u>Women & Medicalization, Reproductive Health, Reproductive Freedom</u> Readings: [Text]–Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, pp. 173-186 & 187-223.
Tue April 25 th	<u>Women’s Bodies: Representations, & the Cult of True Womanhood</u> Screening of Various Media Clips Readings: [Text]–Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, pp. 111-119 & 121-141. ***Last Date to submit Out of Class Event Paper***
Thu April 27 th	<u>Women’s Sexuality: Contradictions & Double Standards</u> Readings: [Text]–Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, pp. 143-151 & 152-171. [Web Research Assignment]
Tue May 02 nd	<u>Discussion, Panel Presentation, Review</u>
Thu May 04 th	***Examination 3***
Tue May 09 th	<u>A Platform for Action, Creating Change – Student Research Projects</u> Dialogues and Discussions
Thu May 11 th	<u>A Platform for Action, Creating Change – Student Research Projects</u> Dialogues and Discussions
Tue May 16 th	<u>Summaries, Visions, Closing Exercises, Resources for Advocacy</u> ***Individual Project Summaries Due***