



WS 201: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES IN WOMEN'S STUDIES SPRING 2009

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Tu, Th 9:30 - 10.45, Bartlett 119

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I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

Women's Studies is a vibrant interdisciplinary field today, spanning the humanities, social, natural and physical sciences. Scholars in women's studies have developed frameworks, theories and methods used to study and understand our natural and social worlds. This course will introduce some of the key concepts and frameworks in contemporary feminist scholarship. Fundamentally we will interrogate the category "woman." Are there essential/innate characteristics that define all women? What of our many differences? How do we incorporate other social categories such as race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and nationality? How do we understand and live with our multiple identities and locations? How do these locations shape our economic, political, and cultural lives? This course will explore theories about women and gender through interdisciplinary analyses, as well as disciplinary lenses such as biology, history, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, and literary studies. It will explore some of the important theorists, thinkers, writers and activists who have addressed the inextricable interconnections of gender, race, class, sexuality, ethnicity and nationality. We will grapple with how to conceptualize the category "woman" to reflect all the similarities as well as the many substantive differences, and how to locate this understanding historically and within contemporary U. S politics.

II. TEXTS

REQUIRED BOOKS:

Race, Class and Gender, Margaret L. Andersen and Patricia Hill Collins eds, 2004, 5th edition. Wadsworth/Thompson Publishing. (*referred to as Text*)

Note: We are using the older edition because we could get used copies. The 6th edition is over \$80.

Through the Kitchen Window: Women Explore the Intimate Meanings of Food and Cooking, Arlene Avakian ed., Berg Publishers, 2005. (*referred to as TTKW*)

E-Reserves: Additional Readings (*referred to as E-Reserves*)

Umass Online: Articles available from the Umass library system online (*referred to as Umass Online*)

Web Articles: Additional readings online (*referred to as Web*). All Web Articles will be accessible through SPARK

The books are for sale at: Food for Thought Books-106 N.Pleasant Street, Amherst

Ereserve articles are available online through the library **electronic reserves**. Enter "Subramaniam" as instructor or WOST 201 under the listed courses and enter the password: "women"

SPARK: We will use SPARK throughout the course. Surprise extra credit assignments, news and information will be posted on SPARK. Once you register for the course, you will automatically be added to the course on SPARK. Use your OIT username and password to sign into the course. Please contact OIT if you have any problems.

Books are On Reserve in the Library.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This class is a reading intensive class. It is essential that you complete and reflect upon the reading assignments before coming to class, and be prepared to contribute to the discussion. Every class will focus on the readings assigned for that class as stated in the syllabus. Your attendance and participation are required for the entire session of each class meeting. The format of the class will be primarily a group discussion focussed on the themes of the class readings.

The issues we will be discussing this semester have both academic and personal implications. In order to grapple with this material it is vital that you read the assignments carefully and on time, come to class with questions, opinions, and analyses (agreements and disagreements) -- in other words to be prepared to participate in an intellectual debate.

ATTENDANCE: Your attendance & participation is required for the entire session of each class. More than 3 unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade by at least one letter grade.

- ***In-Class Writing (20%):*** We will periodically have in class writing assignments based on the readings assigned for the class and the class discussion. Each in class writing assignment is worth 4% points. Your top 5 scores will count towards your final grade.
- ***Social Positionality Paper:*** This 2-3 page paper will not be graded but IS required. Despite the lack of the grade, I consider this assignment to be vitally important and expect your serious consideration and effort. You will be graded down if you do not complete the assignment. (Due 2/10)
- ***Midterm Take-Home Exam (20%):*** The take home midterm will include short answers and essays. Details in class.
- ***Analytic Paper I (20%):*** The first analytic essay (5 pages) will be focussed on the question of food and identity (due 4/7). Details in the syllabus and in class. (due)
- ***Analytic Essay II (20%) and Critical Evaluation (10%):*** The second analytic essay (5 pages) is based on the material covered (due 4/7). You are free to choose the topic for this essay. The paper will require you to do analytic work focussing on the material you have read for this course, rather than doing library research on topics not addressed in class. You will exchange papers with a fellow student, and critically analyze and evaluate his/her paper (due 4.12). The paper will count for 20% of your grade and the evaluation 10% of your grade.
- ***Class Participation (10%):*** Class participation (quality not quantity!) counts for 10% of your grade.
- ***Extra Credit:*** Throughout the semester, I will post events in the five colleges relating to the concepts and ideas of the course. You can attend an event, write a 2 page summary for a 2% extra credit. The summary must be turned in within one week of the event. You can earn up to 6% in extra credits for the semester.

Grading:

In Class Writing	20%
Mid-Term Exam	20%
Analytic Essay I	20%
Analytic Essay II	20%
-Evaluation	10%
Class Participation	10%
Extra Credit:	upto 6%

IV: SCHEDULE

Week I: Introduction

Tuesday, January 27:

- [Web] Gloria Steinem, "If Men Could Menstruate." *Ms Magazine*, October 1978: <http://www.haverford.edu/psych/ddavis/p109g/steinem.menstruate.html>

Thursday, January 29:

- Rachel Fudge, "All you wanted to know about Feminism but were afraid to ask," *Bitch Magazine*, 2005. <http://www.bitchmagazine.org/article/everything-about-feminism>

Week II: What is Feminism?

Tuesday, February 3:

- Catherine Harnois, "Re-presenting Feminisms: Past, Present, and Future," *NWSA Journal*, Volume 20, Number 1, Spring 2008, 120-145. (Umass Online)

Thursday, February 5:

- Andersen and Collins, "Shifting the Center: Introduction," (Text 15-22)
- Marilyn Frye, "Oppression." (Text, 48-50)
- Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference." (Text 64-71)
- Allan G. Johnson, "Patriarchy, The System: An It, Not a He, A Them, or an Us." In *Women's Lives: Multicultural Perspectives*, Gwyn Kirk and Margo Okazawa-Rey eds., McGraw Hill, 2004. (SPARK)

Week III: Social Positionality and Location

Tuesday, February 10:

- June Jordan, "Report from the Bahamas," (Text: 35-43)
- Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack (Text 103-107)
- Cherrie Moraga, "La Güera," (Text 28-34)
- Elizabeth Martizez, "Seeing More than Black and White," (Text 111-116)
- [TTKW] Rice Culture, (19-23)

Thursday, February 12:

- Anne Fausto-Sterling, "How to Build a Man" in Berger, Wallis, and Watson, eds, *Constructing Masculinity* (London: Routledge, 1995): http://bms.brown.edu/faculty/f/afs/pdfs/13_How_To_Build_A_Man.pdf
- Ronald Takaki, : A Different Mirror," (Text) 51-63
- Abby L. Ferber, "What White Supremacists Taught a Jewish Scholar about Identity," (Text 117-120)
- [TTKW] Gloria Wade-Gayles, Laying on Hands' through Cooking (93-103)

Week IV: Conceptualizing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality

Tuesday, February 17:

- Andersen and Collins – Intro: Conceptualizing Race, Class, Gender (Text 75-98)
- Teresa L. Amott & Julie A. Matthaei, "Race, Class, Gender and Women's Works." (Text 228-236)
- Julie A. Greenberg, "Definitional Dilemmas, male or female? Black or white? The Law's Failure to Recognize Intersexuals and Multiracials." In *Gender Nonconformity, Race, and Sexuality: Charting the Connections*, Toni Lester, ed., Wisconsin Univ. Press, 2002. (Ereserves)
- Patricia Williams, "Of Race and Risk" (Text 108-110) (Ereserves)
- Donna Langston, "Tired of Playing Monopoly? (Text 140-148)

Thursday, February 19

- Leslie Feinberg ed., "Transliberation: Beyond Pink and Blue,"., Beacon Press, 1998 pp. 63-67 and 106-109. (Ereserves)
- Gloria Yomato, "Something about the Subject Makes it Hard to Name," (Text 99-102)
- Dalton Conley, "Wealth Matters," (Text 149-153)
- Mary Pattillo-McCoy, "Black Picket Fences: Privilege and Peril among the Black Middle Class," (Text 158-165)

Social Location Paper due February 19: Write a 2-3 page paper outlining your social positionality. How would you locate yourself on the axes of race, ethnicity, class, gender, and sexuality? What has this meant for you and how has it shaped your experiences? How has it affected your life trajectory – in the opportunities or challenges you have faced. This paper will not be graded, but is required.

Week V: Nature/Nurture, Science/Society

Tuesday, February 24

- Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes: Why males and females are not enough." *The Sciences* 33(2): 20-25, 1994. <http://www.neiu.edu/~lsfuller/fivesexes.htm>. (Web)
- Eve Sedgwick, "How to bring your kids up gay: The War on Effeminate Boys:" <http://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=bjeJCGF50iUC&oi=fnd&pg=PA201&dq=++++Eve+Sedgwick,+%E2%80%9CHow+to+bring+your+kids+up+gay:+The+War+on+Effeminate+Boys,%E2%80%9D&ots=fIRNiohyPW&sig=0Dnd-dHUKuRvthjrl3LPUvmUpQ>
- Robert M. Sapolsky, "Testosterone Rules," In *The Gendered Society Reader*, 3rd ed., Michael S. Kimmel and Amy Aronson eds., Oxford University Press, 2008, pp. 26- 31. (Ereserves)
- Garland Allen, "Science Misapplied: The Eugenics Age Revisited." *Technology Review* 29, Aug/Sep 1996, pp. 23-31. (Ereserves)

Thursday, February 26

- *Video: Intellectual Parity: What Little Girls are Made of*
- Carole Vance, "Social Construction Theory: Problems in the History of Sexuality" In *An Introduction to Women's Studies: Gender in a Transnational World*, Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan eds., McGraw Hill, 2002, pp. 28-31 (Ereserves)
- Emily Martin, "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles," (Ereserves)

Week VI: Gender and Politics

Tuesday, March 3:

- Zinn, Sotelo, and Messner, "Gender through the Prism of Difference," (Text 166-174)
- Yen Le Espiritu, "Ideological Racism and Cultural Resistance: Cosntructing Our Own Images," (Text 175-183)
- Julia Alvarez, "A White Woman of Color," (184-189)
- Michael Massner, "Masculinities and Athletic Careers (190-203)
- Ross et al, "Just Choices: Women of Color, Reproductive Health and Human Rights
- [TTKW] Trudy Condio, Making Do With Food Stamp Dinners (206-214)

Thursday, March 5:

- Rosalind Coward, "The Body Beautiful" In *Introduction to Women's Studies: Gender in a Transnational World*. Inderpal Grewal and Karen Caplan eds., McGraw Hill, 2002, p. 366-368
- Nancy Worcester, "Nourishing Ourselves," In *Introduction to Women's Studies: Gender in a Transnational World*. Inderpal Grewal and Karen Caplan eds., McGraw Hill, 2002, p. 369-375
- [Web] Alice Water's open letter to the Obama's:
<http://www.gourmet.com/foodpolitics/2009/01/alice-waters-letter-to-barack-obama> (Web)

- [Web] Healthy Americans, Historical comparison of portion size: <http://healthyamericans.org/pages/?id=246> (Web)
- Obama Foodorama: <http://obamafoodorama.blogspot.com/2008/12/bill-marler-best-hope-for-rapid-change.html> (Web)
- [Web] Optional - Michael Pollan, Whole Foods' John Mackey usher Berkeley foodies into 'ecological era': http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2007/02/28_pollanmackey.shtml (Web)
- Marie Smyth, Hedge Nutrition, Hunger and Irish Identity (89-94) (TTKW)

Week VII: Women, Identity and Food

Tuesday, March 10:

- Arlene Avakian and Barbara Haber, "Feminist Food Studies: A Brief History," In *From Betty Crocker to Feminist Food Studies: Critical Perspectives on Food*, Univ of Massachusetts Press, 2005.
- TTKW, Section 1 –Re-read Dash, Haber, Gayles and Smyth.

Thursday, March 12:

Women and Food: How do you do ethnographic work?

Mid Term Exam Due

Week VIII:

☺ **TUESDAY, MARCH 17 – MARCH 19 – SPRING BREAK** ☺

Read TTKW

(Section II – focus on Piercy, Minnich, Ayres, Martinac, Shapire, Angelous, Condio)

Homework Assignemnt for Analytic Paper I: For this assignment, interview three generations of women in a family (yours or someone else's) about their food practices. Keeping in mind the frameworks we have developed in this class, the interviews should highlight how processes of gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality shape food practices. You are free to pick one or two particular aspects of food practices: family eating practices (daily meals or traditions of holidays and special occasion), preparation of food, shopping for food, availabilitiy and affordability of ingredients etc. Pay particular attention to the historical, political and cultural contexts to the generational narratives. We will discuss this assignment in detail in class on March 12. Write a summary of the 3 narratives

Week IX: TTKW

Tuesday, March 24:

- TTKW, Section 1; focus on Coss, Cooper, Ormondroyd, Avakian (Remember we have already read Dash, Haber, Gayles and Smyth – If you have not, please do).

Thursday, March 26:

- TTKW, Section 2; focus on Piercy, Minnich, Ayres, Martinac, Shapire, Angelous, Condio

Ethnographic Narrative Summary and Proposal Due

Week X: Work, Families and Economic Status

Tuesday, March 31:

- Andersen and Collins, Introduction (Text 215-227)
- Kenneth Brown, "The Indignities of Unemployment"(Text 237-238)

- Philip Moss and Chris Tilly “Soft Skills and Race (Text 239-247)
- Katherine Newman “The Invisible Poor” (Text 248-256)
- Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo, “Domestica” (Text 257-265)

Thursday, April 2:

- Dill, “Our Mothers’ Grief: Racial-Ethnic Women and the Maintenance of Families,” (Text 266-279)
- Eleanor Palo Stoller and Rose Gibson, “The Diversity of American Families,” (Text (280-286)
- Robin Kelley, “Countering the Conspiracy to Ignore Black Girls,” (287-294)
- Kath Weston, “Straight is to Gay as Family is to No Family,” (Text 304-309)

Week XI: Cultural, State Institutions and the Production of Ideas

Tuesday, April 7:

- Robert Moore, “Racist Stereotyping in the English Language,” (Text 310-320)
- Ward Churchill, “Crimes Against Humanity,” (Text 321-328)
- Gregory Mantsios, “Media Magic: Making Class Invisible,” (Text 329-336)

Thursday, April 9:

- Mathew Snipp, “”The First Americans: American Indians,” (Text 354-360)
- Mickelson and Smith, “Can Education Eliminate Race, Class, and Gender Inequality?” (Text 361-370)
- Jael Silliman, “Policing the National Body: Sex, Race, and Criminalization,” (Text 383-392)

Analytic Essay I due April 9: Using the narratives of the interviews of three generation of women, write an analytic essay on women and food. Reflect on the content we have learnt in class to this point. How do processes of gender, race, ethnicity, class, nationality, sexuality shape food practices? Choose two or three points that stand out for you to help focus your responses. Remember to include the content from the class readings – you must use (in context) at least 5 references.. Discuss insights gained or limitations in the analysis. I want to know that you have read, understood, and analyzed the class reading material. (5 pages)

Week XII: Ethnicity, Migration and Sexuality

Tuesday, April 14:

- Applying the Framework – Andersen and Collins Intro (Text 395-409)
- Lillian Rubin, “Is This a White Country, or What?” (Text 410-417)
- Mary Waters, “Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only?” (Text 418-426)
- Almas Sayeed, “Chappals and Gym Shorts,” (Text 441-447)

Thursday, April 16:

- Pepper Schwartz and Virginia Rutter, “The Gender of Sexuality,” (Text 448-454)
- Amy Gluckman and Betsy Reed, “Where has the Gay Liberation Gone?” (Text 461-464)
- Kamala Kempadoo, “Globaliation Sex Workers’ Rights,” (Text 465-473)
- Jason Schultz, “Geetting Off on Feminism,” (Text 474-482)

Week XIII: Violence

Tuesday, April 21: No Class (Monday Schedule)

Thursday, April 23:

- Brent Staples, “Just Walk on By: A Black Man Ponders His Power,” (Text 499-501)
- Helen Zia, “Where Race and Gender Meet,” (Text 502-505)
- Desiree Taylor, “How Safe is America?” (Text 506-508)

Week XIV: Making a Difference

Tuesday, April 28:

Andersen and Collins, Intro (Text 511-518)

Celene Krauss, "Women of Color on the Front Line," (519-529)

Gary Comstock, "Whosoever Is Welcome Here," Text 530-536)

Shani Jamila, "Can I Get a Witness?" (Text 552-559)

Thursday, April 30:

[TTKW] –Section on Transformations (focus on Urvater, Goek-lin Lim, Ire, Katrak, Allison, & Morales)

Week XV: By Popular Choice

Tuesday, May 5:

Analytic Paper due may 5: For this essay, you are free to pick a topic of your choice. Reflect on the content we have learnt in class to this point. Choose two or three points that stand out for you to help focus your responses and/or critique and write a critical analysis on those points - take risks, and incorporate your ideas about the subjects, but remember to include the content from the class readings. Discuss insights you have gained and the limitations in the analyses. I want to know that you have read, understood, and analyzed the class reading material. (5 pages)

Thursday, May 7:

Week XVI: Conclusion and Wrap-Up

Tuesday, May 12: Conclusion and Summary

Comments on paper, Due May 12: Last week, you will have exchanged your paper with another student. Critically analyze and evaluate the paper. Has s/he understood the material? If yes, why? If not, why not? How could the student have further developed the paper? What grade would you give the paper? (2 page evaluation)

