

WGSS 201: Gender and Difference: Critical Analyses

University of Massachusetts-Amherst | Spring 2019

MW 2:30-3:45

South College W101

Instructor: Adina Giannelli, JD

gender pronouns: she/her/hers

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Office Hours: South College W415 | MW 11am-12pm & by appointment

This 200-level, interdisciplinary seminar will consider the issue of gender, race, sexuality, and class in a transnational context, drawing on sociological literature, social critiques, policy papers, case law, documentary, personal narrative, and fiction. In the context of this course, we will critically examine and reflect upon issues of gender and difference transnationally. We will explore the social construction of sex, gender, and sexuality across time and space; develop an understanding of the ways in which sex, gender, and sexuality intersect and are imbricated with—and are mutually constituted by—categories including race, nationality, citizenship, language, and dis/ability. We will develop close reading, critical thinking, analytical, and writing skills in the context of a theoretically rich, intellectually challenging—and supportive—environment.

- GENERAL EXPECTATIONS -

1. Students are expected to come to class on time, having carefully read the material assigned, and ready to engage in serious discussion. **Students are expected to silence and put away their cell phones and computers for the duration of class.** Participation is required, and critical to your success in this class.

In addition, everyone is asked to do the following:

- (i) **Respect your classmates' rights to speak**, and listen attentively to what is being said, even if you disagree with what your peers might have to say. **You don't have to agree with everything that is said in class, but you are expected to use discretion and sensitivity when speaking, and be respectful of everyone present.**
- (ii) **Be willing to consider new ideas.** Over the course of the semester, we will explore themes, concepts, and material that may be new, challenging, and unfamiliar. **This is the art of a good education. Keep an open mind.**
- (iii) **Participate actively.** We all learn best when we are present and engaged in the course material. **Don't be afraid to ask questions.** This is why we are here!
- (iv) **If you have a question, an issue, a problem, or concern that cannot be addressed in class, please send me an email at your earliest convenience.**

[I] COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Your grade in this course will be based on the following components:

Component	Percent of Grade	Due Date(s)
Class Participation	20%	ONGOING
Take Home Exams:	20%	February 13; March 6; April 3 (you complete 2)
Midterm/Book Review	10%	Wednesday, 2/27 in class
Final Project Meeting	ungraded but mandatory	Meetings scheduled between 2/25-3/9
Final Project	30% project: 25% presentation: 5%	PRESENTATIONS: 4/17-5/1
		PROJECT: Monday, May 1 in class
Final Exam	20%	(Due Electronically May 9 (last day of finals))

REGARDING COURSE COMPONENTS:

Class Participation: Attendance is mandatory and critical to your success in this course. All students are allowed two unexcused absences over the course of the semester. Please note: Each additional unexcused absence will result in a 2-point reduction of your final grade. For an absence to count as excused, it must relate to an illness, emergency, religious observance, or documented athletic conflict.

Midterm/Book Review: Your midterm will take the form of a book review. Students will read and critically review a text, selected from a list provided during the second week of class, in consideration of course themes, readings, and discussions. ****More information and specific guidelines to follow.****

Final Project: Your final project will be student-directed and self-designed, in consultation with your instructor. This may take the shape of a creative project (poetry, documentary film, podcast, etc.), a traditional paper, website, or another form. ****More information and specific guidelines to follow.****

Final Assignment: The final assignment will assume the form of an open-book, open-note take-home examination, due electronically by the last day of final exams (Thursday, May 9, 2019). **More information and specific guidelines to follow.**

REGARDING EVALUATION OF YOUR WORK

If you are dissatisfied with any evaluation of an assignment or your performance in this class, you may petition your grade **in writing, no earlier than 24 hours after I have returned graded work to you.** To do so, you need to submit to me a typed explanation detailing why you believe the grade is unwarranted, what grade you feel you deserve with arguments in support of your request, a reply to my comments on your work (e.g. if I say that your explanation is too brief, you should argue why it is not), and a copy of the original piece of written work.

REGARDING WRITTEN WORK

IF YOU WOULD LIKE FEEDBACK ON ANY ASSIGNMENT BEFORE IT IS DUE, I AM HAPPY TO PROVIDE THIS. SIMPLY EMAIL ME A COPY OF YOUR WORK NO LATER THAN 48 HOURS PRIOR TO ITS DUE DATE, AND I WILL READ AND RETURN THIS TO YOU WITH MY COMMENTS AND SUGGESTED REVISIONS.

COURSE POLICIES

All undergraduate students are responsible for complying with the rules, regulations, policies, and procedures contained in this publication as well as those in other official University publications and announcements which may be issued from time to time. This document includes policies on absences, grading, late withdrawal and related issues.

<https://www.umass.edu/registrar/students/policies-and-practices/academic-regulations>

Academic Honesty: Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated and you are responsible

for educating yourself about the University's official policy on academic honesty. Following is a summary (you can read it in full at

http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/code_conduct/acad_honest.htm):

"If an instructor finds that a student has violated the University's Academic Honesty Policy, the instructor has the right to lower the student's grade, or even to fail the student for the course. Students have the right to appeal such a grade penalty by an instructor. The University Academic Honesty Board, which must be notified by instructors of any grade penalty, reviews all student appeals. The Board may sustain or recommend modification of the penalty given by the faculty member, or may recommend sanctions exceeding those originally given, such as suspension or expulsion from the University. The Board may also recommend sanctions for offenders who have committed

multiple violations of the Academic Honesty Policy but who have not appealed the faculty members' decisions."

Accessibility: The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), Learning Disabilities Support Services (LDSS), or Psychological Disabilities Services (PDS), please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements: <http://www.umass.edu/disability/procedures.pdf>

Pronoun Use: There is a long history of dialogue and activism around how we address one another, with respect to both names and pronouns. Students should be referred to by the name they prefer, and with the proper pronunciation, by faculty and other students. I will gladly honor your request to address you by the name and gender pronouns you prefer. Please advise me of your name's proper pronunciation, and any name or pronoun preferences not reflected in Spire early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies (WGSS) classes are a place where issues of sexual violence and other sexual misconduct are discussed as a matter of course. It's not a taboo subject, and feminists have long worked to develop theory and activism around sexualized violence, including rape, dating violence, child sexual abuse, and the like. If you want to discuss your own personal experiences of sexual violence in a class, we don't consider that a "report" covered by Title IX (although if you want faculty help and support in reporting sexual violence, we are here to help you do that). Other available resources on campus for addressing sexual violence include both confidential and non-confidential resources—non-confidential resources will keep your concerns private but will report your concerns to the Title IX coordinator, or, the Dean of Students Office who will provide you with different options to assist you. Confidential resources will keep your concerns confidential and will provide you support, assistance in addressing safety concerns as well as other services such as providing you with an advocate. The resources can be found at www.umass.edu/titleix/.

WGSS Librarian: WGSS has specialized librarians, Isabel Espinal and Anne Moore who can assist students with research. These librarians have developed a subject area research guide which has links and information to contact them directly.

<http://guides.library.umass.edu/wost>

WGSS HAS A WRITING TUTOR:

You can access everything you need to know about WGSS Writing Tutoring (announcements, session sign ups, resources, office hours, updates, a writing blog, etc.) on the Tutoring Website, www.wgsswritingtutor.com. Email: wgsswritingtutor@gmail.com.

COURSE READINGS & ASSIGNMENTS (subject to change)

Note: All readings are available on the course Moodle, and are due on the date listed. (In other words, the reading for Monday, January 28 is due on that date.)

I will regularly assign short, non- academic readings derived from current events in addition to the readings outlined below.

Week One: Introductions

Day One Wed. Jan 23	INTRODUCTION TO COURSE Review of Syllabus, Course Expectations, Survey, Preliminary Questions
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Week Two: Genealogies

Day Two Mon. Jan 28	SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lorber, Judith. "The Social Construction of Gender." pp. 99-101 • Vance, Carole S. "Social Construction Theory: Problems in the History of Sexuality." • Onwuachi-Willig, Angela. "Race and Racial Identity Are Social Constructs." <i>NY Times</i>.
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Day Three Wed. Jan 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combahee River Collective. "A Black Feminist Statement." • Lorde, Audre. "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference." • "Girl," Jamaica Kincaid
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Week Three: Genealogies

Day Four Mon. Feb 4	END OF ADD/DROP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes." • Mukherjee, Bharati, "A Four Hundred Year Old Woman"
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Day Five Wed. Feb 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Women's March on Washington: Guiding Vision and Definition and Principles" • Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" • Patrisse Cullors, "On A Lifetime of Activism and the Founding of BLM" (podcast)
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Week Four: Intersections

Day Six Mon Feb 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." • Desmond-Harris, Jenée. 2017. "To Understand the Women's March on Washington, You Need to Understand Intersectional Feminism."
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Day Seven Wed Feb 13	<p style="text-align: center;">TAKE HOME EXAM # 1 DUE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DiAngelo, Robin. "White Fragility: Why It's So Hard to Talk to White People About Racism -." The Good Men Project, April 9, 2015. • Dzodan, Flavia. "My Feminism Will Be Intersectional Or It Will Be Bullshit" • Koyama, Emi. "Whose Feminism Anyway? The Unspoken Racism of the Trans Inclusion Debate"
Week Five: Histories & Contexts	
Mon Feb 18	UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY - NO CLASS
Day Eight Tues Feb 19	(Monday Schedule) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lorde, Audre. "Poetry is Not a Luxury" • Olsen, Tillie. "I Stand Here Ironing." • Wilchins, Riki Anne. "What Does It Cost to Tell the Truth?"
Day Nine Wed Feb 20	WHAT IS FEMINISM? WHY IS FEMINISM? <i>In lieu of course readings, for class today you should identify a feminism-related reading. Read it. Bring it (in hard copy) to class. Additional details will be provided in anticipation of today's class.</i>

Week Six: Transnational Feminisms	
Day Ten Mon Feb 25	Rich, Adrienne. "Notes Towards a Politics of Location." Volpp, Leti. "Disappearing Acts: On Gendered Violence, Pathological Cultures, and Civil Society."
Day Eleven Wed Feb 27	MIDTERM BOOK REVIEWS DUE Swarr, Amanda Lock & Richa Nagar. "Dismantling Assumptions."
Week Seven: Indigeneities/Mestizaje	
Day Twelve Mon Mar 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anderson, Kim. "Affirmations of an Indigenous Feminist." <i>In Indigenous Women and Feminism: Politics, Activism, Culture.</i> • Smith, Andrea. "U.S. Empire and the War Against Native Sovereignty." <i>In Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide.</i> • Harjo, Joy. (Mvskoke). "Perhaps the World Ends Here." (poem) • Bruchac, Marge (Algonkian), "Captives" (poem) • Long Soldier, Layli (Oglala Lakota), "38"
Day Thirteen Wed Mar 6	SECOND TAKE HOME DUE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anzaldúa, Gloria. 1987. <i>Borderlands-La Frontera: The New Mestiza.</i> Excerpts. • <i>Ibid.</i> "Toward a New Consciousness."
March 10-March 17 SPRING BREAK Have Fun Be Safe	
Week Eight: Epistemologies	
Day Fourteen Mon Mar 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collins, Patricia Hill. Excerpts. <i>Black Feminist Thought.</i> • Cooper, Brittney. Excerpts, "Eloquent Rage"
Day Fifteen Wed Mar 20	Guest Lecture--Readings TBA
Week Nine: Hip Hop Feminisms	
Day Sixteen Mon Mar 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simone, Nina. 1966. "Four Women" • Pough, Gwendolyn. 2015. "Do the Ladies Run This? Some Thoughts on Hip Hop Feminism." • Wegerif, Maya; Putuma, Koleka; Ikpi, Bati. "Three Women: a Poem in Honor of Fezeka."
Day Seventeen Wed Mar 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooper, Brittney, "The Beyoncé Wars" • Hobson, Janelle. "Feminists Debate Beyoncé" • Jackson, Destinee, "Beyoncé, BEYONCE, Lemonade" • <i>Lemonade</i>
Week Ten: Resistance, Postmodernity, and the Global	
Day Eighteen Mon Apr 1	TAKE HOME # 3 DUE

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morris, Susana M. "Black Girls Are from the Future." • Lordi, Emily. 2013. "Calling All Stars": Janelle Monae's Black Feminist Futures.
Day Nineteen Wed Apr 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abu-Lughod, Lila Abu. "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?" Al-Ali, Nadjie. 2015. "Gendering the Arab Spring." • Excerpts, <i>Woman at Point Zero</i>, Nawal El Saadawi
Week Eleven: The Body	
Day Twenty Mon Apr 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Martin, Emily. "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science Has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles." • Richardson, Sarah S. "Sexing the X: How the X Became the "Female" Chromosome." • Winterson, Jeannette. <i>Written on the Body</i> (excerpts).
Day Twenty-One Wed Apr 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grosz, Elizabeth. "Bodies and Knowledges." • Butler, Judith. "Bodies that Matter." • Rapp Black, Emily. "Solving the Body Problem at the Bikini Bar." • Spade, Dean. 2006. "Mutilating Gender."
Week Twelve: Carcerality	
Mon Apr 15	NO CLASS
Day Twenty Two Wed Apr 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Davis, Angela. <i>Are Prisons Obsolete?</i> Excerpts. • Law, Victoria. 2014. "Against Carceral Feminism." • Crenshaw, Kimberlé, Priscilla Ocen, and Jyoti Nanda. "Black Girls Matter: Pushed Out, Overpoliced, and Underprotected."
Weeks Thirteen & Fourteen: WRITING AS RESISTANCE	
Day Twenty Three M 4/22	<p>STUDENT PRESENTATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baldwin, James. "A Letter to My Nephew." • Johnson, Javon. "Cuz He's Black."
Day 24 W 4/24	<p>STUDENT PRESENTATIONS</p> <p>Davis, Angela. "The Meaning of Freedom."</p>
Day 25 M 4/29	<p>STUDENT PRESENTATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jordan, June. "Some of Us Did Not Die."
Day 26	LAST DAY OF CLASS

W 5/1	<i>STUDENT PRESENTATIONS</i> Baldwin, James & Audre Lorde. "Revolutionary Hope."
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