

WGSS 187: Gender, Sexuality, and Culture Spring 2021

Instructor: Derek Siegel

Email: dpsiegel@soc.umass.edu

Instructor Pronouns: they/them/theirs

Office Hours: **Mon*** 4pm – 5:15pm EST

Class Meetings: **Wed*** 4pm – 5:15pm EST

*When class is cancelled for Wellness Wednesdays, we will meet synchronously on Monday afternoons instead. Office hours that week will be by appointment.

Course Description

This course offers an introduction to some of the basic concepts and theoretical perspectives in Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies. Drawing on disciplinary, interdisciplinary and cross-cultural studies, students will engage critically with issues such as gender inequities, sexuality, families, work, media images, queer and trans issues, reproductive rights, and history. In particular, we will use the COVID-19 pandemic as a lens to explore how experiences of gender and sexuality intersect with other axes of difference, including race/ethnicity, class, dis/ability, and nationality.

This is not only a challenging course, but it also has the potential to be transformative. We are interested not only in your understanding and command of the course material, but also in your ability to apply these frameworks to analyzing our current times, politics and to your own lives. Some of this material may be new, and challenging. You may passionately agree or disagree with the ideas presented during the course. We welcome engaged responses and arguments, but insist that you are respectful of others in all conversations, written work, debates and discussions in class and online.

Course Objectives

- to think critically and creatively about pressing current issues
- to integrate and synthesize different forms of knowledge
- to communicate clearly, concisely and effectively both in writing and speaking
- to bring an interdisciplinary feminist perspective to your work and life

Readings

I have assigned a mix between journal articles, think pieces, book chapters, and other texts. **Readings should be done for the date they are listed under on the syllabus.** Sometimes I assign only excerpts of a reading, so please pay careful attention to page numbers. Everything without a link on this syllabus is available for free on Moodle.

Weekly Work Flow (How will this online class work?)

While you have assigned readings and discussion questions for both Mondays and Wednesdays, we will only meet once per week (mostly on Wednesdays) over zoom, from 4pm – 5:15pm EST. I will not be collecting written responses to discussion questions. Rather, they will help prepare you for our conversation on Wednesday. Mini-recorded

lectures will be posted on Mondays to correspond with those readings. We will also be using Slack throughout the week to continue discussion.

Mondays – Expectations

1) Read/View Assigned Texts, 2) Watch 5-10 minute recorded lecture, and 3) spend 10-15 minutes responding to discussion questions (in preparation for zoom meeting). *Since we aren't meeting, some people might find it useful to spend their weekly 20 minutes on Slack on Monday afternoons. I will also be available during that time for office house.*

Note: During Week One, we will also meet on Monday Feb 1st. On Weeks Four and Eleven, Wednesday classes are cancelled, so we will meet Mon Feb 22nd and April 12th. During these two weeks you will only be assigned one set of readings.

Wednesdays – Expectations

1) Read/View Assigned Texts, 2) Spend 10-15 minutes responding to discussion questions (in preparation for our zoom call), and 3) **Join Zoom Class (4-5:15pm EST)**
Zoom class will be a mix of mini-lecture, small group discussion, and large group discussion on *both* sets of questions and readings for the week.

Anytime during the week – Spend at least 20 minutes on Slack reading and commenting on various discussions (we'll review slack during the first week, don't worry if you're not familiar). Channels for you to engage in include: readings (what stands out, favorite quotes, questions, etc), discussion questions (start and/or continue the conversation), and general (how do you see the content connecting to the news or other aspects of your life? Share and discuss outside sources).

I need to update this to make it more clear that because of Wellness Wednesdays, our meetings aren't always on Wednesday – so keep track of that.

How to Use Which Technologies (Moodle? E-mail? Zoom? Slack? AHHHHHHHH)

Accessing Assigned Readings & Recorded Mini-Lecture (Moodle)

All Readings Will Already Be Up on Moodle

Mini-lectures (on Mondays) will be posted in a folder on top of Moodle page.

Submitting Assignments – Short Essays & Final Project Components (Moodle)

Discussion Questions – I will email discussion questions on Monday and Wednesday mornings (once I write them!), as well as post them on our Slack workspace.

Synchronous Zoom Meetings

We will always meet at the same time: Wednesdays, 2:30 – 3:45 EST

If for whatever reason I need to update zoom link, I'll e-mail you out. The most recent Zoom link will also be available on the top of our Moodle page.

Office Hours – On Mondays, 2:30 – 3:45pm EST I will be available on Slack (private message) or e-mail to discuss readings, assignments, check-in, or just chat. I'll create one-on-one zoom calls for anyone who'd rather talk face-to-face than over chat/e-mail.

Course Requirements & Evaluation

1. Active Participation (25%)

Based on 1) attending and participating in discussion groups, 2) your participation on the Slack workspace (students should spend at least 20 minutes on Slack/week), and 3) coming to office hours during Weeks Two or Three (I'll share more info about that!).

The participation grade will be based, in part, on several self-evaluations throughout the semester, probably on Weeks Four and Eight.

Note 1: While I would love you to keep your camera on during class, that isn't required. You can keep it on for some of the time, and not others. You can always use the chat.

Note 2: For now, I have no specific expectations for Slack participation, other than that you're reading and posting (at least part of the time in response to others), engaging course content, and practicing respectful dialogue. Depending on how things go, we might come up with more specific expectation, which I'd communicate clearly.

2. Short Essays (45%) – Each short essay (2-3 pages) is worth 15% of final grade. I will make the prompts and rubrics available at least one week before the deadline.

Short Analysis of Course Readings – Due Friday 2/26 (15%)

Short Analysis of Course Readings – Due Friday 3/12 (15%)

Short Reflection Paper – Due Friday 3/26 (15%)

3. Final Project (30%) – Each student will be asked to select a social issue that they will analyze through the lens of the pandemic (much like we'll do all semester). The final project will consist of three separate components

Final Project Proposal – Due Friday 4/2 (3%)

Final Project Paper (5 Pages) – Due Tuesday 4/20 (22%)

Final Project Presentation – In-Class, Wed. 4/21 or 4/28 (5%)

Academic Honesty & Writing Support

I expect you to write your own original content and adhere to high levels of academic honesty. Any student found guilty of academic dishonesty or plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary action and will receive an "F" in the course. You are encouraged to read and discuss these issues widely; however, make sure to use your own words and cite others when you're referencing ideas that are not your own. If you're overwhelmed, please don't plagiarize! I'm a resource, as well as the research librarians and the Writing Center, which provides free, 1-on-1 help by appointment.

Disability & General Accommodations

Whether or not you have official disability accommodations, I encourage you to meet with me in office hours or via email to discuss any issues you may anticipate this semester. The sooner we talk, the better! I understand that we're living in a pandemic and that you all are not only taking other classes, but negotiating a wide range of other stressors and responsibilities. Which is to say that I'll do my best to reasonably accommodate your needs. Don't hesitate to reach out. *Note: For privacy reasons, I will not be recording our classes. I will, however, post my lecture notes/outlines for the information I plan on presenting at the beginning of class. You should also be in the practice of asking friends for notes for the weeks that you miss.*

Course Readings – Highlighted dates are when we will meet by zoom. Please come to our zoom meetings prepared to discuss all readings assigned for the week.

Week One - Individual vs. Systematic Analysis: How to Analyze a Pandemic

Mon Feb 1

Please read the syllabus for our first meeting! Come with questions ☺

Wed Feb 3

1. Johnson, Allan G. 1997. "Patriarchy. The System: An It, Not a He, a Them, or an Us." *Women's Lives: Multicultural Perspectives*. p. 68-76.
2. Smith, Zadie. 2020. *Intimations: Six Essays*. Excerpt: p. 17-22.

Week Two – Patriarchy and the Exploitation of Gendered Labor

Mon Feb 8

1. Hartman, Heidi. 1981. "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Toward a More Progressive Union." Excerpts p. 187-191
2. Henderson, Tim. 2020. "Mothers 3 Times More Likely Than Fathers to Have Lost Jobs During the Pandemic." *Pew Research*.
<https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/blogs/stateline/2020/09/28/mothers-are-3-times-more-likely-than-fathers-to-have-lost-jobs-in-pandemic>

Wed Feb 10

1. Coastan, Jane. "The Intersectionality Wars." *Vox*.
<https://www.vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination>
2. Baviskar, Amita, and Raka Ray. 2020. "Covid-19 at Home: Gender, Class, and the Domestic Economy in India." *Feminist Studies* 46(3):561-571.

Week Three – White Supremacy and the Exploitation of Racialized Labor

Mon Feb 15

1. Smith, Andrea. 2015. "Heteropatriarchy and the three pillars of white supremacy: Rethinking women of color organizing." Pp. 66-73.

2. Kelly, Robing D.G. “What Did Cedric Robinson Mean by Racial Capitalism.”
<https://collectiveliberation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/What-Did-Cedric-Robinson-Mean-by-Racial-Capitalism-by-Robin-DG-Kelley.pdf>

Wed Feb 17

1. Traub, Amy. 2020. “Protect Black and Brown Workers on the Frontlines.” *Demos*.
<https://www.demos.org/blog/protect-black-and-brown-workers-front-lines-coronavirus-fight>
2. Lowrey, Annie. 2020. “The Plight of Essential Workers.” *The Atlantic*.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/05/why-are-americas-most-essential-workers-so-poorly-treated/611575/>
3. Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II. 2019. “Racist History of Tipping.” *Politico*
<https://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2019/07/17/william-barber-tipping-racist-past-227361>

Week Four – Eugenics and the Politics of Death

Mon Feb 22

1. **Short Video (9 Minutes)** “America Created Eugenics, Not Hitler”
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxPCBNuNQoc>
2. Roberts, Dorothy. 1997. “Introduction.” *Killing the Black Body*. **Excerpts: p. 13-22.**
3. Strauss, Noah. 2020. “Ableism, Covid-19, and Eugenics.” *Philadelphia Partisan*.
<https://philadelphiapartisan.com/2020/08/01/ableism-covid-19-and-eugenics/>
4. Jones, Sarah. 2020. “Eugenics Isn’t Going To Get Us Out of This Mess.”
<https://nymag.com/intelligencer/2020/03/eugenics-isnt-going-to-save-you-from-coronavirus.html>

Wed Feb 24 – Wellbeing Wednesday (No Class)

Week Five – Xenophobia, Othering and Being an “American”

Mon March 1 – Wednesday Schedule (Previous Week)

1. Gover, Harper, and Langton. 2020. “Anti-Asian Hate Crime During the Covid-19 Pandemic: Exploring the Reproduction of Inequality.” *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 45: **Excerpt. P. 647-655.**
2. Smith, Terry. 2020. “Introduction.” *Whitelash: Unmasking White Grievance at the Ballot Box*. **Excerpt. p. 1-3.**
3. Illing, Sean. 2019. “White identity politics is about more than just racism.” *Vox*.
<https://www.vox.com/2019/4/26/18306125/white-identity-politics-trump-racism-ashley-jardina>

Wed March 3

1. Esch, Joanne. 2010. “Legitimizing the ‘War on Terror’: Political Myth in Official-Level Rhetoric.” *Political Psychology* 31(3): **Excerpts. 366-69; 372-77.**
2. Yuanzhi, Lu. 2020. “American Exceptionalism has become deadly arrogance.”
<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1184607.shtml>

3. Palmer, James. 2020. "Why Americans Can't Defeat Coronavirus." <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/11/18/why-united-states-cant-defeat-coronavirus-covid/>

Week Six – "Another Zoom Meeting..." Capitalism, Ableism, and Productivity

Mon March 8

1. Eppard, L.M. et al. 2020. "In Conversation." *Rugged Individualism and the Misunderstanding of American Inequality*. **Short Excerpt: p. 125-129.**
2. Mingus, Mia. 2017. "Access Intimacy, Interdependence, and Disability Justice." **Excerpt.** <https://reneeroederer.com/2020/07/04/the-myth-of-independence/>
3. Bader, Eleanor J. 2018. "Reimagining Disability Justice: An Interview with Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha." <https://blog.lareviewofbooks.org/interviews/reimagining-disability-justice-interview-leah-lakshmi-piepzna-samarasinha/>

Wed March 10

1. Giles, Gillian. 2019. "You Do Not Exist to Be Used." *The Body is Not an Apology*. <https://thebodyisnotanapology.com/magazine/you-are-more-than-what-you-do-dismantling-ideas-of-productivity-in-life-purpose/>
2. Haag, Tamara. 2020. "Unwinding and Ungrinding." <https://rheumatoidarthritis.net/living/grind-hustle-culture/>
3. Gupta, Dyuti. 2020. "Zoom Fatigue is Real." *She the People*. <https://www.shethepeople.tv/interviews/zoom-fatigue-is-real-students-share-their-experiences-of-online-classes/>

Week Seven – Having Sex (or Not) During a Pandemic

Mon March 15

1. McBride, Andrew. 2008. "The Feminist Sex Wars, 1970s and 1980s." *OutHistory* <https://outhistory.org/exhibits/show/lesbians-20th-century/sex-wars>
2. Lorde, Audre. 1984. "Uses of the Erotic: the Erotic as Power." **Short Essay.**

Wed March 17

1. Berkowitz, Richard. 1983. "How to Have Sex in an Epidemic: One Approach" **Excerpts:** 1-4, 15-18, and 33-40 – *Note: parts are sexually explicit!*
2. King, Mark S. 2020. "Stop Comparing Covid to Early HIV/AIDS. Just Stop." <https://marksking.com/my-fabulous-disease/stop-comparing-coronavirus-to-early-hiv-aids-just-stop/>
3. Davids, J.D. 2020. "How to Have Sex in the Covid-19 Pandemic." *CrankyQueer*. <https://thecrankyqueer.substack.com/p/how-to-have-sex-in-the-covid-19-coronavirus>

Week Eight – Intimate Partner Violence

Mon March 22

1. Johnson, Michael P. 2005. "Domestic Violence: The Intersection of Gender and Control" in A. Cherlin, *Public and Private Families*, fifth ed., **Pp. 277-286**
2. Machado, Carmen Maria. 2019. *In the Dream House: A Memoir*. **Excerpts (PDF)**

Wed March 24

1. Bradbury-Jones, C, and L. Isham. 2020. "The pandemic paradox: The consequences of Covid-19 on Domestic Violence." *Journal of Clinical Nursing*: p. 1-3
2. Quinian, Andrea, and Rashmeee Singh. 2020. "COVID-19 and the Paradox of Visibility: Domestic Violence and Feminist Caring Labor in Canadian Shelters." *Feminist Studies* 46(3): 572-582.

Week Nine – Fake News, Lived Experience: Feminist Approaches to “The Truth”

Mon March 29

1. Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspectives." **Excerpts: 412-416, 419-421.**
2. Dunbar-Ortiz, Roxanne. 2014. "Introduction." *An Indigenous People's History of the United States*. **Excerpts: p. 17-26.**

Wed March 31

1. Lopez, German. 2016. "Why the Country is Having a Conversation about Empathy." <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2016/11/21/13642606/trump-voters-empathy-racism>
2. Spring, Marianna. 2020. "How you should talk to friends and relatives about conspiracy theories." *BBC News*. <https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-trending-55350794>
3. Penny, Laurie. 2018. "No I Will No Longer Debate You." *Longreads*. <https://longreads.com/2018/09/18/no-i-will-not-debate-you/>

Week Ten – Defining Terrorism (Why Words Matter)

Mon April 5

1. Bazian, Hatem. 2012. "Muslims – Enemies of the State: the New Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO)" *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 1(1): **166-177**
2. Maira, Sunaina. 2009. "Good" and "Bad" Muslim Citizens: Feminists, Terrorists, and U.S. Orientalisms. *Feminist Studies* 35(3): **We will only read 632-636, 640**

Wed April 7

1. Wade, Peter. 2021. "Biden: They Are Domestic Terrorists." *Rolling Stone*. <https://www.rollingstone.com/politics/politics-news/biden-trump-rioters-are-domestic-terrorists-1111375/>
2. "Rep. Cori Bush Bashes Double Standard on Rioters." 2021. **Short Video (3 min)** <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=493530454950300>
3. Marji, Shareen Marisol. 2021. "What Does it Mean ..." *NPR Code Switch*. <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2021/01/14/956881738/what-does-it-mean-to-call-the-capitol-rioters-terrorists>

Week Eleven – Solidarity and Mutual Aid

Mon April 12

1. Kendall, Mikki. 2019. "Solidarity is Still for White Women." In *Hood Feminism: Notes from the Women a Movement Forgot*. p. 1-14.
2. IndigenousAction. "Accomplices Not Allies: Abolishing the Ally-Industrial Complex." <https://www.indigenouaction.org/accomplices-not-allies-abolishing-the-ally-industrial-complex/comment-page-1/>
3. Arani, Alexia. 2020 "Mutual Aid and Its Ambivalences: Lessons from Sick and Disabled Trans and Queer People of Color." *Feminist Studies* 46(3):653-662.

Wed April 14 – **Wellbeing Wednesday (No Classes)**

Week Twelve – Presentations (Part One) – Readings To Be Assigned

Mon April 19

Tues April 20 – **Wednesday Classes Followed – But No Class for Us**

Wed April 21

Week Thirteen – Presentations (Part Two) - Readings To Be Assigned

Mon April 26

Wed April 28

Week Fourteen – Presentations (Part Three) – We may or may not need this

Mon May 3