Course Description
This course is an introduction to some 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. I am 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. You may passionately agree or disagree with the ideas presented during the course. I welcome engaged responses and arguments, but insist that you are respectful of others in all conversations, written work, debates and discussions.

Course Objectives
- to think critically and creatively about pressing current issues
- to provide a critical introduction to the concepts of gender, sexuality, and race
- 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.

Office Hours
While I’m available before/after class & over email for discussion, office hours are a great opportunity to discuss challenges you’re having in class or to review feedback from previous assignments. While I’m not able to review assignment drafts, we can discuss your ideas and brainstorm writing strategies. To set up an office hours appointment send me an email with your availability & what you want to discuss – we’ll set something up!
**Course Requirements & Evaluation**

1. **Active Participation (25%)**
   Based primarily on participation and attendance. Participation includes full-group discussion, small group discussion (I often have students work in pairs or in groups of 3-5), and active listening to your peers. Students should engage with the readings, but can also build connections to their own lives, to other classes, or to current events. Students who earn an “A” participate often and with a high level of critical engagement, showing that they understand and are able to articulate key course concepts. **Students are also expected to attend group office hours that will be held during Weeks Two & Three. More on that to follow.**

   I don’t take attendance so won’t mark you down for each absence. However, if your absences become frequent enough that I can’t gauge your typical level of participation – then that’s something that would affect your grade. I don’t have formal mid-semester check-ins for participation and attendance, but at any point during the semester you can feel free to reach out to me for feedback, and I’m happy to work with you to set goals for the remainder of the semester. That’s something we could discuss in office hours.

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 3/3 (15%)**
   - **Short Analysis of Course Readings – Due Friday 3/24 (15%)**
   - **Short Reflection Paper – Due Friday 4/7 (15%)**

3. **Final Project (30%)** – Each student will be asked to select a social or political issue that they will analyze through the lens of the pandemic and the lens of gender/sexuality. This assignment is not meant to replicate what we’ve already covered, so you’ll need to choose a different topic or stake out a specific sub-topic within something we’ve already covered. The early proposal will let me give feedback, and the final paper won’t be due until after the in-class presentations.

   - **Final Project Proposal – Due Friday 4/21 (3%)**
   - **Final Project Presentation – In-Class, Thursday 5/11 (5%)**
   - **Final Project Paper (5 Pages) – Due Wednesday 5/24 (22%)**

**Disability & General Accommodations**
Whether or not you have official disability accommodations, I encourage you to meet with me in office hours or send me an 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 also negotiating a wide range of other stressors and responsibilities. Which is to say that I’ll do my best to accommodate your needs. Don’t hesitate to reach out.
COVID-Safety and Precautions
All students should follow university guidelines regarding vaccination, testing, and masks. Since UMass no longer includes classmates or instructors in contact tracing, if you test positive, you are welcome (although not required) to share your results so others can get tested. Remember that I do not track attendance, so if you’ve been exposed or are concerned about your symptoms, you won’t be penalized for missing class. Thanks for taking care of yourselves and each other!

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 course topics widely; however, make sure to use your own words and cite others when you’re referencing ideas that are not your own. I’m a resource, as well as the research librarians and the Writing Center, which provides free help by appointment. Please ask if you have any questions. 
https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/avoiding_plagiarism/documents/plagiarism_one_pager.pdf

Week One – Individual vs. Systemic Analysis; How to Analyze a Pandemic

Tues February 7
Please read the syllabus for our first meeting! Come with questions 😊

Thurs February 9

Week Two – White Supremacy and the Exploitation of Racialized Workers

Tues February 14

Thurs February 16
https://www.demos.org/blog/protect-black-and-brown-workers-front-lines-coronavirus-fight
Week Three – Patriarchy and the Exploitation of Gendered Workers

Tues February 21


Thurs February 23


Week Four – Reproductive Justice & Parenting in a Pandemic

Tues February 28


Thus March 2 – Guest Lecture – Lexi Dotson-Dufault (Abortion Fund of Ohio)

2. Siegel, Derek P. 2021. “Trans moms discuss their unique parenting challenges during the pandemic.”
Week Five - Xenophobia, Othering and Being an “American”

Tues March 7


Thurs March 9


SPRING BREAK – MARCH 12th – 19th

Week Six - Eugenics & the Politics of Death

Tues March 21 – Guest Speaker: JD Davids, cofounder of Long COVID Justice


Thurs March 23

Week Seven  - Another Zoom Meeting? Capitalism, Ableism, and Productivity

**Tues March 28**


**Thurs March 30**

   [https://www.shethepeople.tv/interviews/zoom-fatigue-is-real-students-share-their-experiences-of-online-classes/](https://www.shethepeople.tv/interviews/zoom-fatigue-is-real-students-share-their-experiences-of-online-classes/)

Week Eight – Intimate Partner Violence

**Tues April 4**


**Thurs April 6  - No Class (Passover Holiday)**

Week Nine  - Having Sex (Or Not) During a Pandemic

**Tues April 11**

Thurs April 13 – Guest Speaker: Emmett Patterson, Building Health Online Communities, Associate Director


Week Ten – Solidarity and Mutual Aid

Tues April 18 – No Class, Patriot’s Day Holiday

Thurs April 20


Week Eleven – Defining Terrorism (Why Words Matter)

Tues April 25


Thurs April 27 – Guest Speaker: Ashley Garner, UMass Amherst (Sociology)

Week Twelve – Creating Livable Lives (Navigating the Pandemic in 2023)

Tues May 2


Thurs May 4


Week Thirteen – Round-Table Presentations

Tues May 9 - No Class, Will Be Available for Office Hours

Thurs May 11 – In-Class Roundtable Presentations

Week Fourteen – Make Up Class If Needed

Tues May 16

Final Papers Due Wednesday May 24