Fall 2018
Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies 187:
GENDER, SEXUALITY, CULTURE
Course Instructor: Miliann Kang
Office: South College W469, mkang@umass.edu
Office Hours: Mon 11am-12 pm
and by appointment
4 Credit Course Includes Lectures:
Monday and Wednesday 10:10-11:00 am in Herter 231
Discussion Sections: Fridays (see below)

Discussion Section Instructors (all discussions on Friday):
You Must Attend the Discussion Section for Which You Are Registered on SPIRE

Course Writing Instructor: Kate Litterer (@english.umass.edu) is available as a resource to strengthen student writing in the course. She will work with students and TAs, provide guides to writing, tutorials and other writing resources. Her office hours are Wed: 2:30-4:30pm and Thurs 11am-1pm in Bartlett 208.

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Welcome to Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies (WGSS) 187!!! We look forward to engaging you in this vibrant and interdisciplinary field, spanning the humanities, social, natural and physical sciences. Scholars in the field have developed frameworks, theories and methods used to study and understand ourselves and our natural and social worlds. Because Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies challenges traditional academic and cultural understandings on many issues, it is often viewed as “political.” We will argue that all knowledge is “political” and explore how academic knowledge and histories are both shaped by and shape our intellectual histories and knowledges. Placing women and gender at the center of analysis, this class introduces some basic concepts and perspectives in WGSS. The central aim is to foster critical reading and thinking about gender and the ways in which it is shaped by the interlocking systems of racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, heterosexism, ageism, ableism, colonialism and globalization; and how feminist movements have resisted these inequalities and worked to create new systems of change. One must remember that gender or any social category is always contingent – depending on the historical, political, cultural, economic and national contexts. What it means to be a woman or a man, black or white, poor or rich, what “rights” we have, how we understand “freedom” or “civil rights” always depends on who, when, where, and how we are talking about. The course is designed to highlight the similarities and differences across contexts, to have us appreciate how history has shaped who we are, and to understand how our current political, social and economic contexts also profoundly shape our realities and lives.

This is 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 your own lives. Therefore, we have designed assignments that ask you to connect the course material to events outside the classroom and your own personal interests. Some of this material may be new, and you may passionately agree or disagree with the ideas presented during the course. We welcome engaged responses and informed arguments, but insist that you are respectful of others in all, debates and discussions, both in class and online, verbal and written.

The Importance of General Education

This course fulfills two general education requirements (interdisciplinary, “I” and U.S. diversity, “U”). One goal of higher education is to nurture the various potentials in all students through critical thinking skills, personal enrichment, cultural awareness, and breadth of knowledge. General education requirements will help to prepare you for a lifetime of learning and give you skills for community engagement and informed citizenship.

Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies is fundamentally an interdisciplinary field, i.e., you will be introduced to ideas, theories, methods, and concepts from many disciplines. Diversity is central to our conceptions of “women” and “gender” – there is no generic, universal “man” or “woman.” Instead, we are always located in networks of other social variables of race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, nationality, ability and others. We will stress the intersectional nature of social identities and structures both in our theoretical and experiential explorations. While the course will introduce you to the philosophical, theoretical and methodological range within the field of women’s studies, we will ask you to make connections and apply these ideas to our lived experiences. We will encourage you to raise questions regarding your current college life and future goals, while supporting you to hone critical thinking and writing skills to function productively in a diverse and rapidly changing world.
Thirty years ago, there were only a few universities and colleges across the country with women’s or gender studies departments or programs. Today the majority of institutions offer courses in women’s and gender studies as well as majors and minors. This scholarship spans academic disciplines across the humanities, social sciences, physical and natural sciences. The importance of gender has been mainstreamed – whether it be the United Nations in its development training, business corporations or law firms in producing a workforce that can work effectively in diverse groups and across nations, hospitals in training doctors and nurses, or government officials in developing social and public policy, gender has become critically important in all these venues. Our learning goals for you are:

- to think critically and creatively about pressing current issues
- to conduct self-directed learning projects
- to work effectively and collaboratively with diverse groups
- to understand diverse perspectives and how different cultures and groups relate
- to integrate and synthesize different forms of knowledge, quantitative, qualitative and symbolic
- to communicate clearly, concisely and effectively both in writing and speaking
- to deepen self-understanding of personal strengths and challenges
- to acquire knowledge in a variety of scholarly modes and contexts
- to recognize and apply diverse disciplinary approaches
- to bring an interdisciplinary feminist perspective to your scholarship, work, relations and life

**Course Requirements**

- You must be registered for **both** the Mon/Wed lecture and Fri discussion section and attend both.
- Reading assignments must be completed by the class period for which they were assigned.
- This course fulfills a general education requirement (IU), and so, we will pay particular attention to your writing. Let us know (early in the semester) if you have special learning or writing needs.
- You are responsible for knowing when assignments are due and handing them in on time. Dates of major writing assignments are in this syllabus. Other assignments will be given in your discussion sections. **Absence from class or section on the day the assignment is due is no excuse for not handing in the assignment on time.** It is each student’s responsibility to find out about assignments from someone in your discussion group or from your Discussion Section Instructors. **All sections may not always have the same assignments so follow your own section.**
- Discussion sections will provide the opportunity to talk and write critically and analyze issues and topics. You will be expected to have completed and thought about all of the readings for each class. Discussion question will be posted each week. **Sections begin Friday Sept 4.**
- **Films, videos and guest lectures** are part of the class material. You are responsible for this material. In most cases we will view part or all of the films in class but we may ask you to view some outside on your own.
- **We will follow all university policies on issues of Academic Honesty, Grading, Attendance, Examinations, and Absences due to Religious Observance.**

**Assignments and Exams**

- **MIDTERM EXAM** in discussion section on Oct 19 (includes material from Sections I & II)
• **FINAL EXAM** Friday Dec 14 8-10am Herter 231. *We do not have control of when the exam is scheduled so do not make plane reservations or plans to leave until after the final exam. It is very difficult to schedule makeup exams for a class this size, unless you have a documented emergency.*

• **TWO WRITING ASSIGNMENTS (15% EACH, 30% TOTAL, 4-5 pages double spaced)** due at the start of discussion section on announced dates. Details of topics and assignments will be posted online and discussed in class. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. If you miss discussion on the day an assignment is due, it will be considered late.

• **FIELD NOTES** (10%) Four times during the semester (two before the mid-term and two after) you will post a “field note” on MOODLE connecting the course readings for that week to current events, personal experiences and/or popular culture. Each post counts for 2% of your final grade. In addition, you must post responses to other class members’ field notes at least four times during the semester (two before and two after the mid-term). Each of your responses will count for .5%. This is an opportunity for you to connect your learning in the class to the world outside and to engage in public conversation with other students. Details on MOODLE.

• **UNANNOUNCED IN-CLASS POP QUIZZES** in lecture or discussion section - 2% each (five highest grades).

• **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION** are an important and integral part of the class. *Attendance and participation in discussion sections are factored into the final grade. Students are allowed one unexcused absence without penalty but additional unexcused absences will result in your grade being marked down.* Non-attendance will result in an “F” in the course. In addition, for an excused absence you must: (i) provide an official note excusing your absence and (ii) submit a one to two page reflection paper based on the readings assigned for that week, due the next class day. For religious observances, you do not need to provide documentation but please let your TA know that you will be missing class. **Even for excused absences, you are responsible for the material covered that day.** Attendance will not be taken at lecture but we will implement unannounced pop quizzes if attendance is lagging.

• **INCOMPLETES** will not be given except in unusual circumstances. See your TA as soon as possible.

• **LATE PAPER POLICY** – papers will be marked down (10% for each day they are late). Papers will not be accepted after a week past the deadline. For any problems, please see your TA as soon as possible.

• **MAKEUP EXAM POLICY** - You cannot make up an exam unless you have extenuating circumstances. If you miss or cannot take the midterm or final on the designated day, you must provide documentation of a medical or family emergency. Please discuss your situation with your TA and/or professor at the earliest possible time.

• **EXTRA CREDIT** Assignments. You can earn extra credit by attending approved events (on topics relating to the course) and writing a 1-2 page summary of the event. Write ups are due the week after the event. Please check MOODLE for details on the events. Only approved events (listed in MOODLE) count towards extra credit (we are open to students informing us of possible events to include on the list).

• **RESPONDING TO EMAIL:** We will aim to respond to questions sent by email within 72 hours on weekdays. Please do not expect a response on the weekend. Do try to meet with the instructors during office hours.

**Grading**

Your score on each assignment will be accessible on MOODLE at different points in the semester. However, your final letter grade is determined at the end of the course based on the grade distribution of the class.

**Final grades will be computed as follows:**

- Discussion group - includes attendance, class participation and section assignments  
  (Details in discussion section syllabus)  
  20%
- Two Writing Assignments (15% each) (Due Oct 5 and Dec 7)  
  30%
- Midterm Exam (Oct 19 in sections)  
  15%
- Final Exam (Dec 14)  
  20%
• Field Notes (throughout semester) 10%
• Pop Quizzes 5%
• Extra Credit (2% per event - check MOODLE for details) up to 6%

Discussion Sections

Discussions sections are NOT optional or add-ons. They are designed to be an integral part of the course and to provide an opportunity to clarify issues in your readings, films and lectures, as well as to debate and discuss various issues. In addition, there will be informal writing exercises during discussion sections as part of your learning on how to think critically about these given issues. We expect you to have completed and thought about all of the readings for that week before your section meets and to be ready to engage in meaningful dialogue and in class writing. In addition to their strictly academic function, sections are also places where students may talk about the ways in which the topics we address in this course may have touched their lives. Attendance and participation in discussion sections and assignments constitute 20% of the course grade. Two writing assignments (15% each) are due in discussion section. If you miss section for any reason, you must still inform your TA and arrange how to make up the work. (See Written Assignments above).

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.”

Ground Rules

The challenge in such a large class is faculty/student interaction. We invite you to stop by our office hours to discuss the course material, clarify readings, or just introduce yourself. We will try to foster as much active participation in the course as is possible. Discussion sections have been designed to continue the dialogue. Make use of office hours to continue class discussions, clarify confusions or to discuss any other problems you are having with the course. Because of the class size and the nature of the subject matter, it is necessary to set some ground rules:

• With over 100 people in one room is a difficult situation on many levels. One major concern is NOISE. Talking, even whispering is disruptive to both the instructor and other students. Please be courteous to everyone.
• Use of cell phones, Internet, texting etc. are also very disruptive and not allowed in the classroom. This holds both for lecture and section.
• This class is **50 minutes** and we expect you to remain for the entire period. Late comers and those who pack up 5 minutes before the class ends disrupt the class for everyone.

• Make up exams or paper extensions will only be given to students who have a documented conflict, such as a medical or family emergency. Ignorance of this rule is not a valid excuse. See specifics above under section “Written Assignments and Exams.”

### Required Books/Resources

**READINGS:** Recognizing that the high cost of textbooks adds significantly to college education costs and limits access to knowledge, we are committed to increasing open access to educational materials. The primary textbook for the course is an on-line, open access textbook *Introduction to Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies*, co-authored by Miliann Kang, Donovan Lessard, Laura Heston, and Sonny Nordmarken, published in 2017. This open textbook is available for free at: [https://press.rebus.community/introwgss/](https://press.rebus.community/introwgss/) We are proud that this resource has been downloaded more than 10,000 times and is widely used throughout the U.S. and globally. It is not meant to be comprehensive but provides an overview and definitions of key concepts and debates and will be supplemented with other readings, available online or on Moodle. We will also offer recommended readings, which are not required but may be useful for additional clarification.

**MOODLE:** We will use Moodle throughout the course. Surprise extra credit assignments, news and information and discussion questions will be posted on Moodle so please check regularly. Once you register for the course, you will automatically be added to the Moodle. You will use your OIT username and password to sign into Moodle and access course information. Please contact OIT if you have any problems. **Important announcements and assignments will be posted there and you are responsible for this information so please check often.**

### Course Outline

Scholarship in Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies spans academic disciplines across the humanities, social sciences, physical and natural sciences. Scholars have challenged traditional paradigms and knowledge within disciplines as well as developed new interdisciplinary frameworks, methods and theories. What is the field of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies? Who are the scholars? What do they study? Why is it important? How have they transformed our knowledge about the natural and social worlds? What frameworks do feminist analyses bring to our discussions? This course introduces key concepts in Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies by focusing on select topics.

The course material is organized into various topics that introduce how scholars in different disciplines incorporate gender as a critical tool in their analysis. Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies is an extraordinarily broad and diverse field. To give a sense of its diversity, the course includes guest lecturers from WGSS and other departments at UMass. We hope you will make connections with these professors and graduate students, and use them as resources in your academic interests. While we explore the different disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches in WGSS, several themes will be emphasized throughout the course. Please keep these themes in mind throughout the course:
**Intersectional/Integrative Analysis:** We emphasize the need to understand “women” “men” and “gender” as fluid and diverse categories, embedded in a complex network of interlocking variables of race, class, sexuality, ethnicity and nationality.

**Levels of Analyses:** We will analyze the material using multiple levels – micro, meso, macro and global.

**Feminism(s):** There is no unitary “feminism” but rather “feminisms.” We understand feminism(s) as multiple, shifting and contested movements – historically and in contemporary times.

**Knowledge Construction:** We will explore feminist interventions in the politics of knowledge – disciplinary and interdisciplinary, as well as popular discourse.

**Feminist Theory:** We emphasize a notion of feminist theorizing that includes theory as well as praxis, description and analysis as well as envisioning change.

**History Matters:** Throughout the course we will examine the experiences of women and constructions of gender, race, class and sexuality across historical periods. Pay attention to the similarities and differences across contexts. How has our history shaped us? What are the similarities and differences across periods?

**Activisms:** We emphasize women’s resistance to oppression and work for progressive change.

### COURSE SCHEDULE

*(There may be changes so pay attention to announcements and Moodle)*

Please make an effort to complete readings before class on the day they are listed and come to lecture and sections prepared with questions – this will make the lectures and discussion much more meaningful and engaging for you. Lectures do not cover all the material in the readings but frame, synthesize and apply them in different contexts. Readings listed here are mostly scholarly articles, and will be supplemented during the semester with references to current news coverage, blogs and opinion pieces. We want the course to be relevant and useful in making sense of recent events so please expect these to be added, and look for them on Moodle. The readings are meant to give you a range of perspectives – we encourage you to first understand their main points and then engage with them critically, providing support for your critiques while listening openly to the positions of others. Most films will be viewed in class – for many of them, we will only view clips in class so we will announce some extra credit opportunities for students to view the entire film on their own and write up a reflection.

#### Week One

**Wed, Sept 5**  
**What You Need to Know**  
An Introduction to the course and the field of Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies. What can you expect? Tips on how you can best prepare for class - lectures and discussion sections.

**Fri, Sept 7**  
**Discussion Sections begin:** *In preparation for this discussion:*  
**Homework:** Ask 2-3 people you know for their definition of feminism. Record their answers. In addition to their words, note their tone of voice and facial expressions. Please bring your observations and notes to discussion section.  
Go to the course website on Moodle to make sure you can access course material.

#### Week Two

**Mon, Sept 10**  
**Why Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies? Identity and the Politics of Knowledge**  
*What is Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies? Who are the scholars? What do they study?*
An Introduction to Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies Unit I: (Chapters 1-6)

Wed, Sept 12  Identities and Social Location: Theorizing Experience
Defining Sex/gender/race/ethnicity/class/sexuality


Week Three

Mon, Sept 17  Conceptualizing Structures of Power –LAST DAY TO DROP/ADD
Defining Sex/gender/race/ethnicity/class/sexuality


Wed, Sept 19  Intersectionality and Its Critics


Week Four

Mon, Sept 24  Biopolitics and Biopower


Wed, Sept 26  Feminist Critiques of Science


Week Five

Mon, Oct 1  Domestic Violence & the Ecological Model
Guest Speaker: Jessica Dautruche, Community Educator, Center for Women & Community
### Week Six

**Mon, Oct 8**  
No Class -- Indigenous People’s Day

**Tues, Oct 9**  
(Monday Schedule)  
*Transgender Studies – Transphobic Violence*  
Guest Lecture: Derek Siegel, WGSS and Sociology Department


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**Wed, Oct 10**  
*Thinking Transgender*  
Guest Lecture: Cameron Awkward-Rich, WGSS Department

| Readings | Susan Stryker, “(De)Subjugated Knowledges,” Introduction, *The Transgender Studies Reader* |

### Week Seven

**Mon, Oct 15**  
*Gender and Sexuality*  

| Readings | Angie Willey, *Undoing Monogamy*, Introduction  

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**Wed, Oct 17**  
*Body Politics – Personal, Political and Institutional*  

The Politics of Women’s Health:  

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**Fri, Oct 19**  
MID TERM EXAM (Includes content up to Wed Oct 17)
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| Wed, Oct 24 | Families, Welfare and the Culture Wars                                | Textbook--Unit III: Institutions, Culture, and Structures  
| Mon, Nov 5 | Indigeneity and Colonization: The Shaping of Nations and Empire       | Howard Zinn, Chp 1, “Columbus, The Indians & Human Progress” From: People’s History of the United States -1492- Present. Perennial Classics, 1999  
Week Eleven

Mon, Nov 12    No Class -- Veterans’ Day

Wed, Nov 14    Gender, Environment and Climate Change

Readings      Winona LaDuke, “Native Environmentalism” in *The Winona La Duke Reader*
              Rachel Stein, *New Perspectives on Environmental Justice: Gender, Sexuality, and Activism*, Introduction 1-15

Week Twelve

Mon, Nov 26    Queer Voices: Gender Performativity in Black Popular Music

Guest Lecture: Prof. Fumi Okiji, WGSS Department

              Prince, “When doves cry” 
              [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UG3VcCALUgE&index=4&list=PL6u0K8q2DitMB1j1Hg6Dcsw0UQYilDWD](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UG3VcCALUgE&index=4&list=PL6u0K8q2DitMB1j1Hg6Dcsw0UQYilDWD)

Wed, Nov 28    The Problem with Global Sisterhood

Readings      Chandra Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes”
              Janell Hobson, "Black Women, White Women and the Solidarity Question," Nov. 27, 2013, 
              Latoya Peterson, “Does Feminism Have to Address Race?”
              [http://www.racialicious.com/2008/04/28/does-feminism-have-to-address-race/](http://www.racialicious.com/2008/04/28/does-feminism-have-to-address-race/)

Fri, Dec 7     Writing Assignment #2 due at beginning of section

Week Thirteen

Mon, Dec 3    Gender and Globalization

Readings      Miliann Kang, *The Managed Hand: Race, Gender and The Body in Beauty Service Work*, Conclusion

Wed, Dec 5    Gender and Work

Readings      Textbook--Unit IV:
              Crystal Jackson, “Repeal FOSTA and Decriminalize Sex Work”
Week Fourteen

Mon, Dec 10  Contemporary Feminism

Readings  Textbook: Unit V: Historical and Contemporary Feminist Social Movements
Surfing the Third Wave: A Dialogue between two third wave feminists”,
Gaga and Some Thoughts on Balls

Wed, Dec 12  Creating Change: Feminist Activism

Readings  Jennifer Pozner, “How to reclaim, Reframe, and Reform the Media,” _Bitchfest_, Lisa Jervis and
Andi Zeisler, 2006, 344-352
Hernandez & Leong “Feminism’s Future: Young Feminists of color take the mic”
http://www.inthesetimes.com/article/724/feminism_future/
http://inthesetimes.com/article/5575/girls_gone Anti-feminist/

Finals Week  Final Exam (as scheduled by the university)

I change myself, I change the world”
_Gloria Anzaldúa_  “Sentences that begin with ‘all women’ are never, never true.”
_Margaret Culkin Banning_

“It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.”
_Audre Lorde_

“I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is; I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat.”
_Rebecca West_

“Don’t compromise yourself. You are all you’ve got.”
_Janis Joplin_

Remember, Ginger Rogers did everything Fred Astaire did, but she did it backwards and in high heels.
_Faith Whittlesey_  We’ve begun to raise daughters more like sons… but few have the courage to raise their sons more like daughters.
_Gloria Steinem_

It's important to remember that feminism is no longer a group of organizations or leaders. It's the expectations that parents have for their daughters, and their sons, too. It's the way we talk about and treat one another. It's who makes the money and who makes the compromises and who makes the dinner. It's a state of mind. It's the way we live now.
_Anna Quindlen_