

WGSS 201: Gender and Difference: Critical Analyses

Professor Stina Soderling

Bartlett Hall 202, T/Th 10:00-11:15 (section 01), 11:30-12:45 (section 03)

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 1:15-2:30; Thursday afternoons by appointment; Bartlett Hall 208A

Accessibility

I am committed to fostering a classroom environment that supports the full participation of all students. We all learn in different ways: some learn by reading, some by writing, some by talking and listening, some by actively doing. Most of us learn through a combination of mechanisms. In this course, you will be challenged to step into the learning process in various ways, such as those listed above. If you have individual learning needs and have ideas for how to make this course a better learning experience, please let me know.

If you have a documented learning disability, or think you might, and would like to request special accommodations, please contact Disability Services (<http://www.umass.edu/disability/>). I am always open to hearing about your needs and suggestions; however, you are in no way obligated to share any information about a disability with me or any other instructor, unless you yourself decide to do so.

Teaching philosophy

My teaching philosophy is grounded on feminist and anarchist principles, and I hold that learning can be a collaborative and liberatory experience. I believe that as thinking, feeling beings, we all have something to offer in the learning process. In practical terms, this means that I ask us all to work together to make this course a meaningful experience for everyone involved. While I lay out guidelines and suggestions in this syllabus, they are all up for discussion, with three important exceptions: 1) any student accessibility needs, such as accommodations from Disability Services, shall be met; 2) all class participants must follow the academic integrity policies of the University of Massachusetts; and, most important of all, 3) all participants must strive to treat all class members with respect.

On Title IX and mandated reporting

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/

On names and pronouns

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 you prefer and gender pronouns that correspond to your gender identity. Please advise me of your name's proper pronunciation, and any names or pronouns not reflected by the record in Spire early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Expectations

By staying enrolled in this course, you agree to partake in creating a collaborative learning environment, and to abide by the three rules laid out in the “Teaching Philosophy” section above. Further, I suggest the following course expectations for us as a class.

Attend all course meetings. Learning from each other is a central tenet of feminist pedagogy. Thus, it is crucial that you attend all course meetings. For the course attendance policy, see the “Course Assignments” section below.

Listen to and engage in respectful conversation with classmates. Whether or not you agree with what is said, listen and try to understand where someone is coming from. It is only by being exposed to different views that our own perspectives can change and deepen.

Complete all required readings before the class session for which they are assigned. This means having carefully read all texts, and taken notes on them.

Submit assignments on time. Unless an arrangement has been in advance, I cannot promise that I have time to read (and hence grade and give feedback on) assignments that are turned in past the deadline. In return, you can expect me to comment on and return all assignments in a timely fashion, within two weeks of the due date.

Course Assignments

Attendance, 10 credits. You are expected to attend all class meetings; however, you can miss up to 3 classes without this affecting your grade. After this, your grade will start to drop by 2 points per absence. *If you miss more than 7 classes, you automatically fail the course.* There are no excused versus unexcused absences; it is up to you how to spend your 3 allowed absences.

Participation, 20 credits. Much of our learning will take place in conversation with each other. It is therefore crucial that you not only attend class, but also participate. There are many ways to participate in the course: partake in class discussion, bring in questions about the readings, bring in relevant outside material, partake in group work. In order to participate fully in class, it is vital that you have carefully read the assigned texts. Occasionally, you will have small homework assignments, which are counted toward your participation grade.

Syllabus quiz, 5 credits. The syllabus is the guiding document for this course. By staying enrolled in the course, you agree to follow the syllabus. To ensure that everyone is familiar with this document, we will have a short open-book quiz on its contents. *September 15.*

Class facilitation, 10 credits. Each meeting, a group of students will lead a portion of the class. This could include bringing in discussion questions, leading activities, assigning small-group work, doing a presentation. Creativity is encouraged! You will sign up for a facilitation date at the beginning of the semester.

Response papers, 15 credits (5 papers of 3 credits each). For 5 course meetings, you will write a 1-2 page reading response. These should be analytical, not mere summaries or opinion pieces. The main focus should be on the readings for that day, but you are welcome to draw on earlier readings or outside events. Over the course of the semester, you should hand in 5 reflections, each worth 2 points and graded pass plus/pass/fail. Two of the papers (for peer edit) will be due on set dates. You choose which days to hand in the other three reflections (you must respond to the readings for *that day, no exceptions*), but must have handed in the first one by September 22, and the last one no later than December 8. You cannot write more than one response paper per class session. *You are strongly encouraged to start writing response papers as early as possible, so that you can get feedback on your written work early in the semester.*

A pass paper (2 point) will do at least three of the following: engage with the reading(s); provide an analysis; ask questions for class discussion; include a bibliography.

A pass plus paper (3 points) will do all four things listed for pass papers, as well as have a clear argument, compare multiple readings, and/or draw on previous readings or outside events. You must also bring up thoughts from your paper in class.

The following will automatically lead to a fail grade (0 points): derogatory comments about a group or an individual; a paper based on stereotypes (instead of fact, analysis and/or experience).

Peer edits and re-writes, 20 credits (5 credits each). For two of your response papers, you will do peer edits and rewrites. These have set due dates.

On the days when you hand in a paper for peer editing, please *bring four copies*: one for me, and one for each of your peer editors, and one for you to take notes on. This is very important, since we cannot edit your paper if we don't each actually have a copy.

You will edit each others' papers in class. I will return comments to you within one week. After this, you have one week to rewrite your paper.

Your peer edits are in a sense the most important assignments for this course, since another student depends on you completing it. It is therefore of utmost importance that you write papers for your assigned editing dates.

Outside event, 5 credits. During the course of the semester, you are expected to attend at least one outside event, such as a conference or lecture, that addresses themes relating to the course. Please bring in a paragraph about the event no more than two weeks after you attended.

Final letter, 15 credits. Write a letter a person of your choosing, discussing the concepts of the course so far. (I have borrowed this assignment from Walter Mignolo; see <http://waltermignolo.com/decolonial-aesthetics-from-singapore-to-cambridge-to-duke-university/> for an example.)

Grade chart

Attendance, 10 credits
Participation, 20 credits
Syllabus quiz, 5 credits
Class facilitation, 10 credits
Response papers, 15 credits
Peer edits and rewrites, 20 credits
Outside event, 5 credits
Final letter, 15 credits
Total: 100 credits

Letter grade percentage-equivalents: A: 94-100; A-: 90-93; B+: 87-89; B: 83-86; B-: 80-82; C+: 77-79; C: 73-76; C-: 70-72; D+: 67-69; D: 63-66; F: 0-62

All written assignments must be submitted, on paper, in class on the due date. Unless prior arrangements have been made, I do not accept electronic submissions.

Extra credit

Completing the assignments above in a timely and conscientious manner will earn you a good grade in the course. If you would like to deepen your study of the course topics, you may complete the following extra-credit assignments.

Beginning-of-semester office hours. In order for me to help you get the most out of this course, I encourage you to come to office hours early in the semester. Email me *by September 15* to set up a 15-minute appointment to talk about what you want from this semester, and to ask questions about the course. 3 credits.

Book review. You may read a book of your choosing and write a 1-page review discussing your views of the book, how it relates to the course, and why you would or would not recommend it to others. 2 credits.

Outside event presentation. You may give a 5-minute presentation of the outside event you have attended. Please email me at least 24 hours before class if you would like to do so. 2 credits.

Academic honesty

The UMass Student Code of Conduct prohibits cheating and plagiarism; that is, “intentional use, and/or attempted use of trickery, artifice, deception, fraud and/or misrepresentation of one’s academic work” and “knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own work in any academic exercise.” You are expected to abide by this code of conduct. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please come talk to me.

Writing

This course requires frequent writing. The assignments are designed both to encourage critical engagement with the course material, and to give you chances to develop your writing voice. You are strongly encouraged to work with Elise Swinford, the WGSS writing tutor, on your assignments. Writing is a constant learning process, and we can all develop our skills further. Elise holds office hours in Bartlett 11B, Tues 9:30-12:30, Thurs 2:30-5:30, and Mon-Thurs by appointment. Her email address is eswinfor@umass.edu.

Good to know

If you are at all struggling in this course, come talk to me! It is my job to facilitate your participation and performance in this course, and you do not “bother” me by asking for help. I have office hours weekly, and we can also schedule a meeting at a different time. I encourage you to attend office hours to check in with me, even if you are not struggling. That way, we can figure out together how to make this semester as beneficial as possible for you.

If you need to contact me outside of class and office hours, the best way to do so is via email. I try to answer emails within 72 hours. On some weekends I do not have email access, and it might take longer for me to get back to you.

Course outline

Tuesday, September 6: Introduction

Movie clip in-class: US Social Forum Plenary, Liberating Gender and Sexuality

Thursday, September 8: Knowledge and ignorance

“White Ignorance and Colonial Oppression: Or, Why I Know So Little about Puerto Rico”

Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”

Cynthia Enloe, “Who Is Taken 'Seriously?'” from *Seriously!*

Excerpts from *Feminism for Real*

Recommended:

Rebecca Solnit, “Men Explain Things to Me”

Stonewall Center Open House, Thursday, September 8, 4-6pm, dinner served

WGSS Welcome-Back Reception, Monday, September 12, noon, Bartlett 102A

Tuesday, September 13: Private/public; personal/political: Bathroom Politics

PISSAR, “Calling All Restroom Revolutionaries”

Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins”

Suggested outside event, Tuesday, September 13, time TBA, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Amherst College

Suggested outside event, Wednesday, September 14, 5:30-7pm, erin Khuê Ninh, “About the Author: The Debt-Bound Daughter of Ingratitude,” UMass Commonwealth College Events Hall

Thursday, September 15: Bathroom Politics, cont.

Syllabus quiz

Laura Norén, “Only Dogs Are Free to Pee: New York Cabbies' Search for Civility”
Christine Overall, “Public Toilets: Sex Segregation Revisited”

Tuesday, September 20: Private/public; personal/political, cont.: “the Closet”

Katherine Schweighofer, “Rethinking the Closet: Queer Life in Rural Geographies”
Carlos Decena, *Tacit Subjects*, excerpt
Stina Soderling, interview with “Bill”

Suggested outside event: Tuesday, September 20, 5:30pm, “Women, Incarceration, and Carceral Feminism,” UMass Student Center, Cape Cod Lounge

Thursday, September 22: Bodies and the binary: Sports

Ruth Padower, “Too Fast to Be Female”
Megan Garber, “The Olympic Quote...”
Jai Dulani, “Caster Semenya: Wrong Is Not Her Name” (video)
Judith Lorber, “The Social Construction of Gender”

Recommended:

Kathryn Henne, “The 'Science' of Fair Play in Sports: Gender and the Politics of Testing”

Suggested outside event: Thursday, September 22, time TBA, Pioneer Valley Bread House, Five College Women's Studies Research Center, Mt Holyoke College

Tuesday, September 27: Violence and Control: Gender and the Prison System

Angela Davis, “Feminism and Abolition: Theories and Practices for the Twenty-First Century,” from *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle*
Critical Resistance and INCITE!, “Gender Violence and the Prison-Industrial Complex”

Suggested outside event: Wednesday, September 28, 7pm, “The Circumference of a Prison: Youth, Race, and the Failures of the American Justice System,” UMass Student Center, Cape Cod Lounge

Thursday, September 29: Violence and Control: Gender and the Prison System, con't.

Angela Davis, “How Gender Structures the Prison System”
Wesley Ware, “Rounding Up the Homosexuals”
Andrea Ritchie, “Law Enforcement Violence Against Women of Color”

Peer edit group A, paper 1 due.

Tuesday, October 4: Violence and Control, cont.: Rape culture and transformative justice

Alisa Bierria, “The Way We Do Things in America: Rape Culture and the American Military”
Vanessa Huang, “Transforming Communities,” in *The Revolution Starts at Home*

Suggested outside event: Wednesday, October 5, 4:30pm, “Racist and Systemic Police Violence, Chicago Style,” UMass, Herter Hall 601

Thursday, October 6: Violence and Control, cont.: Reproductive (in)justice

Loretta Ross, "The Color of Choice"

Andrea Smith, excerpt from *Conquest*

Rachel Held Evans, "So You Think You're Voting for a Pro-Choice Candidate"

Recommended:

Elena Gutierrez, "'We Will No Longer Be Silent or Invisible': Latinas Organizing for Reproductive Justice"

Peer edit group B, paper 1 due.

Tuesday, October 11: No class! Monday schedule

Thursday, October 13: Imperialism and de/colonialism

Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?"

Sonali Kolhatkar, "Freedom through Solidarity: The Lie of 'Liberation'"

Arundhati Roy, "Come September"

Suggested outside event, Thursday, October 13, 4pm, "U.S. Neoslavery: A History of the Prison Industrial Present," UMass, Goodell Hall, Bernie Dallas Room

Suggested outside event, Monday, October 17, 4:30pm, "Chained in Silence: A History of Black Women and Convict Labor," UMass, Goodell Hall, Bernie Dallas Room

Tuesday, October 18: Imperialism and de/colonialism, con't.

Anne McClintock, "Soft-Soaping Empire" from *Imperial Leather*

Thursday, October 20: Imperialism and de/colonialism, con't.

Idle No More, North Dakota oil pipeline protest, readings TBA

Suggested outside event, Thursday, October 20, 5pm, Ryka Aoki, Campus Center 162-75

Tuesday, October 25: (Wo)man and (more-than)human

Joan Roughgarden, "Introduction" and "Part I: Animal Rainbows," from *Evolution's Rainbow*

Noël Sturgeon, "Penguin Family Values: The Nature of Planetary Environmental Reproductive Justice"

Suggested outside event, Wednesday, October 26, 7pm, "Resisting Police Violence in Springfield and Beyond: Mothers, Scholars, and Queer People of Color Speak Out," STCC, Building 2, Scibelli Hall Auditorium

Thursday, October 27: (Wo)man and (more-than)human, cont.

Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body*, excerpts

Suggested outside event, Thursday, October 27, 12pm, "Conversation with Dr. Rhoda Williams," UMass, Herter Hall 601

Tuesday, November 1: (Wo)man and (more-than)human, cont.

Eli Clare, *Exile & Pride*, excerpts

Chaone Mallory, "Ecofeminism and Forest Defense in Cascadia: Gender, Theory and Radical Activism"

Eric Zencey, "In Search of the Virgin Forest"

Suggested outside event, Tuesday, November 1, 5pm, "Concentration Camps, American Style: Japanese Americans and WWII," UMass, Herter Hall 601

Thursday, November 3: Work and play

Cynthia Enloe, "The Globetrotting Sneaker"

Leslie T. Chang, excerpt from *Factory Girls*

Cynthia Enloe, "The Mundane Matters," from *Seriously!*

Peer edit group A, paper 2 due.

Suggested outside event, Thursday, November 3, 5:30-7pm, Jodi Kim, "Debt Imperialism, Settler Modernity, and Militarized Sleights of Hand in Asia and the Pacific," Mt Holyoke College, Dwigh 101

Suggested outside event, Monday, November 7, 6:30pm, "Know Your Rights" workshop, UMass Campus Center 904

Tuesday, November 8: Work and play, cont.

Susan Bremer, "The Grind"

Emma Goldman, "The Traffic in Women"

Thursday, November 10: Love, relationships, community

Mary Gray, excerpt from *Out in the Country*

America ReCycled, *Idyll Dandy Acres*, online documentary

Suggested outside event, Thursday, November 10, 4:30pm, "Alien' Incarcerations: Migrants in Detention," UMass, Goodell Hall, Bernie Dallas Room

Tuesday, November 15: Love, relationships, community, cont.

Martin Manalansan, excerpt from *Global Divas*

Samuel Delany, *Times Square Red, Times Square Blue*, excerpt

Peer edit group B, paper 2 due.

Suggested outside event, Tuesday, November 15, 5pm, "Historicizing the Carceral State: Race, Sex, and Power in Early America," UMass, Herter Hall 601

Thursday, November 17: Love, relationships, community, cont.

bell hooks, excerpt from *All About Love*

Tristan Taormino, excerpt from *Opening Up*

Elizabeth Joseph, "Polygamy: The Ultimate Feminist Lifestyle"

Tuesday, November 29: World and self: Cancer

In-class: watch excerpts from *Pink Ribbons, Inc.*

Audre Lorde, *The Cancer Journals*, excerpts

Suggested outside event, Tuesday, November 29, 6pm, “The Collateral Consequences of a Criminal Record,” UMass, Herter Hall 601

Thursday, December 1: World and self: Cancer, cont.

Julia Serrano, “Margins”

Kelli Dunham, “Pudding Day”

Suggested outside event, Thursday, December 1, 5pm, C. Riley Snorton, Campus Center, 162-75

Tuesday, December 6: TBA

Thursday, December 8: TBA

Tuesday, December 13

Last class