

Women's Studies 201-02: Critical Perspectives in Women's Studies

Course Information

Professor	Miliann Kang, Associate Professor, Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies Program, UMass Amherst
Office Location & Number	Bartlett 73 (basement), 577-0710 or 545-1922 (WGSS office)
Office Hours	Tues, Thurs 11:30-12:30 and by appointment
Email	mkang@wost.umass.edu
Class Info	Fall 2015, Bartlett 207, Tues/Thurs 10:00-11:15 AM (SPIRE # 32303)

Course Description

The quality of light by which we scrutinize our lives has direct bearing upon the product which we live, and upon the changes which we hope to bring about through those lives. It is within this light that we form those ideas by which we pursue our magic and make it realized. *Audre Lorde, Sister, p. 36*

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*

This course will introduce you to the vibrant field of Women's, Gender, Sexuality Studies and its unique interdisciplinary perspective. Questions that we will interrogate throughout the semester include: What is gender, and why does it matter? How are individuals, institutions and social processes "gendered"? How does gender intersect with race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, nationality, religion, ability and other forms of difference? How do biological, cultural, historical and political frameworks shape knowledge of sex, gender and sexuality? How are gender categories constructed differently across social groups, cultures and historical periods? Can we recognize commonalities based on gender and mobilize based on these, without naturalizing or essentializing them? What are the connections and tensions between feminist theory and practice? How can feminist understandings empower us to act as agents of personal and social change?

In exploring these questions, the course will incorporate sources ranging from social science research, literature, essays, film, poetry and art. The course draws comparisons between the U.S. and regions around the world, emphasizing transnational linkages and the processes of globalization.

Readings

Required Texts: New and used copies of all books are available at Amherst Books (please support your local independent bookstore!) and are also on reserve in the library.

- 1) *An Introduction to Women's Studies: Gender in a Transnational World*, by Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, eds, (New York: McGraw-Hill, SECOND EDITION 2006). Available at Amherst Books (buy local!)
- 2) Additional readings available on Moodle

Goals & Organization

- 1) to understand how gender is socially constructed through discourses, institutions and everyday practices in culture, politics, economics, science, medicine, law, media, literature and art.
- 2) to recognize the ways that gender intersects with race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, nationality, religion, disability and other forms of difference, across different historical periods and geographical locations
- 3) to engage with major intellectual concepts and debates in the field of interdisciplinary feminist studies
- 4) to master and apply the basic tools of feminist inquiry – including the ability to identify gendered processes, to pose theoretical questions, to apply these to contemporary issues and debates, to engage in informed dialogue and to learn methods of research, criticism and advocacy.
- 5) to create an engaged learning environment based on feminist, community-based and contemplative pedagogies that support meaningful integration of course material toward goals of personal and social understanding and transformation.

Approach to Readings and Course Material

This course aims to give you an experience of Women's, Gender, Sexuality Studies as a vibrant interdisciplinary field with numerous cross-currents, debates and applications. Introductory courses can be both exciting and frustrating in that they cover so many topics in such a short period of time. Thus, the course aims for both breadth and depth in mapping exciting and challenging intellectual terrain.

The main reader for the course, *An Introduction to Women's Studies: Gender in a Transnational World* (henceforth referred to as *Text*) addresses the many broad subfields within Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies. It is considered a classic and includes many excerpts of the "greatest hits" in the field. Most of the readings are short excerpts of the original articles. I regret that it is expensive but think that it is worth the price to get your own copy. A copy will also be available on reserve in the library. Please pay careful attention and make good use of the introductory essays for each section, the key terms lists and the "reflecting on the section" questions. Some of the articles may at first seem dated to you, but they cover important theoretical concepts and debates which we will then apply to more contemporary examples – expect to have recent media articles added to the syllabus as issues emerge in the new cycle.

Your comprehension of the material will be greatly enhanced if you take the time to take notes on the author's arguments and develop your own critical responses to them. Careful notes greatly enhance comprehension and also elevate the level of our class discussions. Reliable reading notes also makes studying and paper writing far easier than trying to reconstruct the readings "cold" the night before an assignment is due. In our class meetings, we will frequently refer to specific sections of what we have read, so please bring to class the text or articles to be discussed that day. There will be some on-line and Moodle articles. As course readers have become more and more expensive, these are now the most economical way to assemble readings for class. Please print out all articles and bring them to class. If you do not have access to a printer, OIT will print them out for you for a fee. If you find yourself having a problem with this system, you must let me know beforehand rather than using this as an excuse for incomplete work.

Requirements

Many of us have strong feelings about gender, sexuality and difference and the social practices and structures that shape them. This course aims to create a space that honors the sensitivity of the issues we will discuss. We will work together to build a classroom environment based on trust, confidentiality and community while at the same time challenging each other in intellectually rigorous discussions. It is fine to share personal experiences where appropriate, but strive to use these as examples to illustrate or raise questions about readings and course debates rather than substituting anecdotes for critical thinking.

This course follows a seminar format, which means that it is based mostly on class discussion and interactive learning exercises rather than lectures. This requires that you come prepared to think critically, articulate ideas coherently, listen attentively and respect the diversity of experiences and perspectives of your classmates. Because active class participation is so important for the success of this class, the assignments are designed to foster deeper engagement with the readings and richer discussions. The class is structured around frequent, shorter assignments and regular feedback. In other words, this is not a course that you will be able to “cram” for. In order to do well in this course, you must take time to digest and integrate the course material through consistent work over the semester. Rather than completing one section and moving on, we will weave and layer the many different strands of feminist thought, drawing connections and contrast between different authors and analytical approaches. Thus, it is important to read and master concepts in each section.

- **Class participation, Homework Assignments, Quizzes and In-class Writing (20%)** The class format is designed to encourage and reward you for keeping up with the readings and coming to class prepared with comments and questions. Class participation will include regular attendance, informed and thoughtful contributions to discussion, in-class writing, and participation in group work. I will periodically assign short (hopefully fun and creative) exercises designed to enrich understanding of the readings through applications to your current social world. I utilize frequent, short writing exercises, or what English professor Peter Elbow refers to as “low stakes writing” as a way of helping you to synthesize the course material and to become comfortable with using writing as a way to think and generate your own analysis. There will also be periodic unannounced quizzes. Rather than penalty, these short assignments are designed to allow you to ask questions and clarify points of confusion.
- **Discussant Essay and Presentation 2-3 pages (20%)** You will sign up to be a class discussant for one class session. This will involve writing a short essay, analyzing and critiquing (not merely summarizing) the assigned readings, presenting your arguments briefly to the class (5 minutes), making connections to current issues, and leading discussion. In most cases, you will work together with at least one other student and present on the same readings. I encourage you to meet with each other and find engaging ways to collaborate (eg. One of you can address the strengths, the other focus on the weaknesses; you can lead an exercise together, etc). You will each, however, submit, your own written essay, which you must **post on MOODLE by noon on the day before the discussion** is to take place (eg. you will post on a Wed if you are to be a discussant on Thurs). Other members of the class will read the discussant essay ahead of class time and will post thoughtful responses to the discussant essays (you are required to post at least 5 times during the semester). This kind of public debate can be a little nerve-wracking for some students, but it has proven to be a very effective learning tool. It gives you the opportunity to engage in conversations with both the professor and your peers. Don't worry – we will offer constructive comments building on your ideas and most students find this a rewarding exercise in developing public presentation skills and confidence.
- **Midterm Exam (15%)** We will have an in-class midterm exam which asks you to demonstrate the ability to explain, critique and apply key concepts and arguments.
- **Event Paper 2-3 pages (15%)** We are lucky to be in the Five College area, in which there are so many relevant and stimulating events related to gender and sexuality. You will choose and attend an outside event and write a short paper analyzing it by applying at least two assigned readings. On our Moodle site, there will be a place to post events that are especially relevant to this class; please feel free to notify me of any such events or opportunities that I might have missed.
- Students often ask if they can attend additional events for extra credit. You will not be given direct credit for attending additional events but they will undoubtedly improve your grade by informing your class participation, your discussant essay and presentation and your written papers. The issues we cover in this class will overlap with topics emerging in the news, contemporary political debates, popular culture or other courses you are taking. I encourage you to be on the lookout for such connections, and to share them with the class when appropriate.

- **Final Prospectus and Paper 5-6 pages (20%)** You will have a choice for the final paper to pick a topic or debate and do an interview with an individual or to focus on an organization that is working on this issue. We will brainstorm topics of interest as a class and you will work in groups, although everyone will receive an individual grade for their final paper. We are not having a final exam so this final paper must demonstrate your mastery of the course readings, concepts and debates and ability to apply them to envision policies, activism and change. More detailed instructions will be given later in the semester, but you should start thinking about the topic, person and/or organization early on.
- **Course Reflection (5%)** This is an opportunity for you to reflect on what you learned and your learning process in the course and share any insights.
- **Academic Honesty** Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated and you are responsible for educating yourself about the University's policy <<http://www.umass.edu/umhome/policies/honesty.html> *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.*
- **Attendance** You are expected to attend every class session and to let me know the reason for absences, if at all possible, ahead of time. If you miss class, you are still responsible for the material covered. I recommend everyone find a class partner to share notes with in case either of you miss. More than two unexcused absences will negatively affect your grade. The attendance sheet will be passed out only at the beginning of class.
- **Deadlines and Late Policy** Most of the written assignments are time-sensitive, especially the discussion-leading Moodle post. Turn in all written assignments on the due date. Except with prior approval of the professor or in the case of documented emergencies, late assignments will not be accepted and/or will receive a significant penalty.
- **Proofreading and Presentation** A sloppy paper detracts significantly from your arguments. We all make honest mistakes but it is disrespectful to your professor and peers to submit hastily prepared work and your grade will reflect this. All written assignments must be properly formatted with citations.
- **TA Support** – We are fortunate to have two excellent TAs working with the class who are available to support you in various ways. **Elise Swinford** eswinfor@english.umass.edu is the writing TA for the WGSS department. She has drop-in hours on Wednesday, 11am-2pm and Thursday, 1-4pm in Bartlett 102A. Appointments are offered Mon-Thurs on request. She can help go over paper drafts as well as discuss topics such as /critical reading, thesis development, audience, argument, drafting, revision, plagiarism, writing strategies, and specific approaches for writing for WGSS. **Martha Balaguera** mbalague@umass.edu will serve as a grader and is available to answer questions about course assignments and grading.

→ **Summary of Assignments and Deadlines**

Participation, homework, in-class writing, quizzes	Throughout the semester	20%
Discussant (MOODLE post and in-class presentation)	Dates for individual sign-up	20%
Midterm Exam	Oct 20 in class	15%
Event paper	Due one week after event	15%
Final paper and course reflection	Prospectus and interview due Nov 19	5%
	Final paper due last day, Dec 10	20%

	Course Reflection	5%
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Total: 100%

Course Schedule

- I reserve the right to make changes in the schedules as I see appropriate.
- I will also post related news and magazine articles on MOODLE – please check frequently.
- Films and short video clips will be viewed in class: We will only see a brief segment of most of the films listed. You are responsible for the content of the films, as they will be referred to in quizzes and you should incorporate them where appropriate into your midterm and papers.

Tues Sept 8 Introduction, Course Overview

Thu Sept 10 Gender as a Social Construction

Fil Clip: *The Miracle of Life* UM Media Video V 2293

- Text: Part 1
 - ___ "Social and Historical Constructions of Gender" (pp.1-5)
- Text: Section 1, A, B + p. 19
 - ___ A: Nelly Oudshoorn, "Sex and the Body," p. 6
 - ___ B: Emily Martin, "The Egg and the Sperm," p. 10
 - ___ + Joan Scott, "Gender and the Politics of History," p. 19

Tues Sept 15 Sex Differences and Changing Ideas of Gender

- Text: Section 1, D, E
 - ___ D: Charlotte Furth, "Androgynous Males and Deficient Females: Biology and Gender Boundaries in 16th and 17th Century China," p. 21
 - ___ E: Carole S. Vance, "Social Construction Theory: Problems in the History of Sexuality," p. 29

Thu Sept 17 The Rise of Western Science

Film Clip: *The Life and Times of Sara Baartman - "The Hottentot Venus"* UMASS V1845

- Text: Section 2, A, C, D, E
 - ___ A: Linda Gordon "Magic," p. 33
 - ___ B: Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Biological Connection," p. 41
 - ___ D: Stephen Jay Gould, "Women's Brains," p. 43
 - ___ E: Udo Schuklnk et al, "The Ethics of Genetic Research on Sexual Orientation," p. 47

(Mon Sept 21 – Last Day to Drop/Add)

Tues Sept 22 The Making of Race, Sex, and Empire

- Text: Section 3, A, B, C, D, E
 - ___ A: Ian F. Haney López, "The Social Construction of Race," p. 52
 - ___ B: Linda Gordon, "Malthusianism," p. 57
 - ___ C: Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood," p. 60
 - ___ D: Frank Dikotter, "Race Culture," p. 66
 - ___ E: Evelyynn M. Hammonds, "New Technologies of Race," p. 69

Thu Sept 24 History of Medicine: Case Study of Birthing Practices

- Text: Section 4, B, C, D, E
 - ___ B: Barbara Ehrenreich and Dierdre English, "Exorcising the Midwives," p. 77
 - ___ C: David Arnold, "Women and Medicine," p. 80
 - ___ D: Ben Barker-Benfield, "Sexual Surgery in Late 19th Century America," p. 85
 - ___ E: Rogaia Abusharaf, "Unmasking Tradition," p. 91
- MOODLE or online:
 - "The Score: How Childbirth Went Industrial," Atul Gawande, *New Yorker*, Oct, 9, 2006.
http://www.newyorker.com/archive/2006/10/09/061009fa_fact

Tues Sept 29 Population Control and Reproductive Politics

Film: *Skin Deep*-Smith College Call # RG137.6.N68 S55 1997

- Text: Section 5, A, B, C, E
 - ___ A: Susan Davis, "Contested Terrain: The Historical Struggle for Fertility Control," p. 99

- ___B: Angela Davis, "Reproductive Rights," p. 103
- ___C: Betsy Hartmann, "Family Matters," p. 107
- ___E: Debra Harry, "The Human Genome Diversity Project," p. 114
- ___ <http://popdev.hampshire.edu/projects/dt/40>
- "10 Reasons to Rethink Overpopulation," The Population and Development Program at Hampshire College, *differenTakes* No. 40, Fall 2006

Thu Oct 1 Health Education and Advocacy

- Text: Section 6, A, B
- ___A: Maureen Larkin, "Global Aspects of Health and Health Policy in 3rd World Countries," p. 119
- ___B: Sandra Morgen, "Conceiving History," p. 129
- Moodle: excerpts from Eula Biss, *On Immunity: An Inoculation*.

Tues Oct 6 Global Health Systems and Inequalities

- Text: Section 6, C, D, E
- ___C: Nadia Farah, "The Egyptian Women's Health Book Collective," p. 133
- ___D: Andrea Densham, "CDC, NIH, ACS, FDA—Alphabet City: The Institutional and Organizational Terrain of Breast Cancer and AIDS Activism," p. 135
- ___E: Kathryn Corovano, "More Than Mothers and Whores: Redefining the AIDS Prevention Needs of Women," p. 138

Thu Oct 8 Intersectionality and Identity Politics

- Text: Part 2; Section 9, A, C, D, E
- ___A: Kathryn Woodward, "Concepts of Identity and Difference," p. 195
- ___C: Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," p. 200
- ___D: Alma M. Garcia, "The Development of Chicana Feminist Discourse," p. 207
- ___E: Lisa Duggan, "Making It Perfectly Queer," p. 211
- ___+Benedict Anderson, "Imagined Communities," p. 218

Tues Oct 13 NO CLASS – MONDAY SCHEDULE

Thurs Oct 15 Gendered Citizenship: Public/Private

- Text: Part 2, pp. 149-154
- Text: Section 7, A, C, D, E
- ___A: Carole Pateman, "Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy," p. 155
- ___C: Mary Wollstonecraft, "Excerpts from a Vindication of the Rights of Women," p. 164
- ___D: Jan Jindy Pettman, "Women and Citizenship," p. 167
- ___E: Molokomme et al, "Citizenship: An Open Letter to the Attorney-General" p. 170

Tues Oct 20 MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS

**Thu Oct 22 (deadline to withdraw)
Gender, Race, Sexualities and the State**

- Text: Section 8, A, B, C, D
- ___A: Jan Jindy Pettman, "Women, Gender, and the State," p. 174
 - ___B: Jeffrey Weeks, "Power and the State," p. 181
 - ___C: Margot Bardan, "Competing Agendas," p. 185
 - ___D: Gail Bederman, "Remaking Manhood through Race and 'Civilization'," p. 190

Tues Oct 27 Gender, Nation and Nationalism – Guest Lecture, Martha Balaguera, Political Science

- Text: Section 10: A, B, C, D
- ___A: Nira Yuval-Davis, "Gender and Nation," p. 217
 - ___B: Cynthia Enloe, "Nationalism and Masculinity," p. 222
 - ___C: Amrita Basu, "Feminism Inverted: Gendered Imagery and Hindu Nationalism," p. 229
 - ___D: Kathleen Blee, "The First KKK'," p. 234

Thu Oct 29 Feminist Organizing Across Borders

- Text: Section 11: A, B, D, E
- ___A: Leila Rupp, "The International First Wave," p. 240

- ___B: Farida Shaheed, "Controlled or Autonomous...under Muslim Laws," p. 245
 ___C: Winnie Woodhull, "Global Feminists," p. 254
 ___D: Laura Hershey, "Disabled Women Organize Worldwide," p. 260

Tue Nov 3 Gendering Globalization, Diaspora and Displacement

- Text: Intro, A
 ___ "Gendering Globalization and Displacement" (pp. 383-387)
 Section 21, A, D
 ___A: Stuart Hall, "From Routes to Roots" p. 427
 ___C: Mimi Nguyen, "Viet Nam: Journal/Journey," p. 435

Thu Nov 5 Economic and Wartime Refugees, Relocation and Removal

- Text: Section 20, A, B, C, D
 ___A: Lydia Potts, "Excerpt from the World Labor Market: A History of Migration," p. 411
 ___B: Wilma Mankiller and Michael Wallis, "Mankiller: A Chief and Her People," p. 415
 ___C: Phil Marfleet, "The Refugee," p. 419
 ___D: Ayesha Khan, "Afghan Refugees Women's Experience of Conflict and Disintegration," p. 421

Tue Nov 10 Race, Gender, Class in Informal Service Jobs

- In-class film: *MAID IN AMERICA* (2005)
<http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/maidinamerica/film.html>
- Text: Part 4, Section 22 A, B
 ___A: Evelyn Nakano Glenn, "Women and Labor Migration," p. 444
 ___B: Leslie Salzinger, "A Maid by Any Other Name: The Transformation of 'Dirty Work' by Central American Immigrants," p. 449
 ___C: Rigoberta Menchu, "A Maid in the Capital," p. 453

Thu Nov 12 Sexualities, Cyberculture, Tourism

- Text: Section 18, B, C
 ___B: Juana María Rodríguez, "Welcome to the Global Stage: Confessions of a Latina Cyber-Slut," p. 371
 ___C: Vernadette Gonzalez and Robyn Rodriguez, "Filipina.com," p. 375
 Section 19, A, D,
 ___A: Cynthia Enloe, "On the Beach: Sexism and Tourism," p. 388.
 ___D: Sylvia Chant, "Female Employment in Puerto Vallarta," p. 406
- Text: Part 4, Section 22 D
 ___D: Satoko Watanabe, "From Thailand to Japan: Migrant Sex Workers as Autonomous Subjects," p. 458

Tue Nov 17 Women, Work, and Immigration: Case Study of the Nail Salon Industry

Moodle: excerpts from Miliann Kang, *The Managed Hand: Gender, Race and the Body in Beauty Service Work*

Thur Nov 19 Feminist Research and Writing Workshop - Final paper prospectus due in class

Student discussion of final papers in progress.

Bring interview transcription or ethnographic notes on organization

Readings On Moodle

- ___A: Camacho, "Power and Privilege: Community Service Learning in Tijuana"
 ___B. Holyoke Campus-Community Compact

Tues Nov 24 Commodifying Bodies, Consuming Beauty

- Text: Part 4, Intro
 ___ "Representations, Cultures, Media, Markets," (pp. 265-268)
 Section 17 A, B
 ___A: Rosalind Coward, "The Body Beautiful," p. 345
 ___B: Nancy Worcester, "Nourishing Ourselves," p. 348
 ___C. Roland Marchand, "Grotesque Moderne," p. 356

- ___D: Celestine Bohlen, "Italians Contemplate Beauty in a Caribbean Brow," p. 359
- ___E: Barry Bearak, "Ugliness in India over Miss World," p. 361
- ___F: Rone Tempest, "Barbie and the World Economy," p. 363

Thu Nov 26 NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING

Tues Dec 1 Gender and Representation

In-class film: *Guerrillas in Our Midst* UMASS V 841

- Text: Section 12, A, C

___A: John Berger, "Ways of Seeing," p. 269

___C: Suzanne Lustig, "How and Why Did the Guerrilla Girls Alter the Art World Establishment?"

- Text: Section 13, A, B

___A: Judith Davidov, "Prologue," p. 282

___B: Judith Halberstam, "Mackdaddy, Superfly, Rapper" p. 286

Thur Dec 3 Gender, Media and Colonial Projects

- Text: Section 14, D, E

___D: M. S. Mlahleki, "Literacy: No Panacea for Women's Problems," p. 305

___E: William Wresch, "World Media," p. 307

- Text: Section 15, A

___A: Judith Williamson, "Woman is an Island: Femininity and Colonization," p. 309

___B: Catherine Lutz and Jane Collins, "Excerpts from National Geographic," p. 317

___C: Marnia Lazreg, "Feminism and Difference," p. 321

Tues Dec 8 Food, Environment and Activism

- Text: Section 24, A, B, C, D

___A: Ecumenical Coalition, "Tomasito's Guide" p. 479

___B: Martha McMahon, "Resisting Globalization: Women Organic Farmers and Local Food," p. 481

___C: Helen Zweifel, "The Gendered Nature of Biodiversity Conservation," p. 485

___D: Nancy Worcester, "The Obesity of the Food Industry," p. 491

- Visit "Sustainable South Bronx" <http://www.ssbx.org/>

- Majora Carter's "Greening the Ghetto" speech (Feb. 2005):

<http://www.ted.com/index.php/talks/view/id/53>

Thurs Dec 10 Course Wrap-Up and Evaluations, Final Papers Due at Beginning of Class

___Conclusion, A: Cynthia Enloe, "Beyond the Global Victim," p. 496

Final Paper due in class on Thurs Dec 10