

WGSS 263S

Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

Tuesday/Thursday 12:40-2:00

ED 312

Autumn 2014

Instructor Information:

Professor Elizabeth Hubble

Office: LA 138A

Office Hours: MWF 11:10-12:00, and by app't

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Required Texts:

- 1) *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions*. Eds. Shaw and Lee. 5th Edition. McGraw-Hill, ISBN 978007351232-7
- 2) Additional readings available on Moodle.

Course Description:

The course is designed to introduce students to the broad fields of women's and gender studies through an overview of a number of the theoretical and experiential perspectives of those fields. Students will analyze the history of feminism, women's studies, gender studies, and the growing field of queer studies; biological and psychological theories of gender; the social construction of gender as a product of history and culture; the relationship between gender and other categories of difference (race, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity); family and work; gender-based violence; the relationship between politics, economics, and gender; the representation of gender in popular culture; health and reproduction; and activism.

This course is one of the core requirements for the Minor in Women's and Gender Studies (20 credits), which may be combined with any major. If you enjoy this course and would like to know more about the Women's and Gender Studies Program, please contact me or drop by the Women's Studies Office, LA 138A-B, or visit the [Women's and Gender Studies website](http://www.cas.umt.edu/wsprog/). <http://www.cas.umt.edu/wsprog/>.

Methods:

This class is not a lecture course. It is a reading and discussion course. I will present certain background information to provide you with a context for your readings, discussions, and writings. I will propose my own interpretations of the texts we read and the topics we discuss, but you are not expected to accept these interpretations blindly. Each reader brings his or her own experiences to a literary text. If you disagree with my reading of a text, you should feel free to say so. Your active participation is essential and counts as part of your grade.

You will hear many different opinions and ideas during this course, some of which you may disagree with. I expect each student to respect the opinions and beliefs of his or her classmates and for the level of discourse in class to remain civil and academic. A failure to respect your classmates and/or the professor will have an adverse impact on your grade.

Classroom Etiquette: Students should arrive on time and not leave until class is over. All cell phones must be turned off. Students may use laptop computers to take notes. Students should not text while in class, and internet use is limited to topics related to discussion topics.

Classroom Agreement: On the first day of class, students will propose and vote on repercussions for violating classroom etiquette.

WGSS 263S Learning Outcomes:

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| 1) Students will learn about the history and theory of women’s studies and feminisms in the United States and around the world. |
| 2) Students will gain an understanding of how privilege and oppression work in our society through an analysis of categories of difference such as gender, race, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, etc. |
| 3) a) Students will learn how to analyze media representations of gendered bodies and sexualities.
b) Students will analyze the construction of sexuality and the body in our society. |
| 4) a) Students will learn and construct inclusive definitions of home, parenthood, family, work, and marriage.
b) Students will analyze how institutions such as family, culture, work, and religion can be both empowering and oppressive to women and others. |
| 5) a) Students will learn how women and others interface with the criminal justice system, the military, and the government.
b) Students will learn how gendered and sexualized violence operates in our society and world. |
| 6) Students will learn how to put theory and class work into action to make positive changes in their worlds. |

Assessment:

- Preparation and Participation (inc. quizzes and attendance) 10%
- Moodle Discussions 10%
- Reading Journal 20%
- Research Essay/Project 20%
- Media Literacy Presentation 5%
- McIntosh Article Assignment 5%
- Midterm Exam 15%
- Final Exam 15%

Preparation and Participation: This is not a lecture course. It is a course which requires your active participation. Coming to class prepared, i.e. having read all material, written your reading journal and questions and ready to participate in discussions, is essential and counts for a large percentage of your final grade. Participation does not merely mean responding when called upon but showing a willingness to raise your hand and enter discussions. Classroom work will include both general discussions and small group discussions. Quizzes on the readings and discussions may be given at the beginning of class as necessary. Attendance is required. You will be allowed two unexcused absences. Your final grade will be dropped one notch for each subsequent absence.

Moodle Discussions: In addition to the reading journals, each week, by Thursday at midnight, you must post 1 question or issue raised by the readings for that week to your Moodle discussion group (the class will be divided into 4 rotating groups). By Sunday at midnight, you must also reply to 2 postings by your discussion group members. A reading is available on Moodle with information on how to write a good posting.

Reading Journal: This course will raise many questions in your minds. It may challenge your personal opinions. Your reading journal is a place to share the questions, thoughts, and reactions you have to the readings. It will give you an outlet to express your personal opinions about the readings and discussions. You should write ½ page for each class session and include at least two questions raised in the readings for that session. The questions you write will guide our class discussions. Entries must be typed. Entries may be submitted in class or uploaded to Moodle by class time on the due dates. The first two journal topics are assigned. The rest of the topics are your choice. Electronic files must be .doc, .docx, .pdf, .rtf. I will NOT accept emailed assignments.

Research Essay/Project: The research project may take many forms. For example, you may want to design an oral history project; you may develop a creative project in dance, art, music, theater, or writing; you may want to perform original research such as a survey of dorm residents or Missoula agencies working with gender issues; you may also write a traditional essay on a topic in history or literature. I will provide you with a more detailed list from which you may choose your topic. You will turn in a ½ page research proposal for my approval. Final projects should be 5-7 typed pages. For creative projects your paper (2-3 pages) should describe the process and product and its connection to women's or gender studies. Formatting and citation information will be provided.

Media Literacy Presentation: One of the topics we will explore this semester is media literacy. You will be required to independently analyze either a selection of print/tv advertising OR a movie/tv show. You will write a two-page analysis which you will present to the class. Your analysis should focus on how your selection either upholds or subverts dominant discourses of gender, class, race, sexual orientation, etc. A more detailed handout will be provided.

McIntosh Article Assignment: This course asks you to question your own privileges in our society. You will read an important article by the feminist scholar Peggy McIntosh (Reading 13 in Textbook). This assignment asks you to think about your own privilege and oppression. To receive credit, you must write 1.5 pages about one experience you have had or witnessed in which you or someone you know experienced privilege as defined by McIntosh.

Exams: The Midterm and Final Exams will be comprised of a combination of identifications and short essays. Study guides will be provided. The Final Exam will not be cumulative.

Extra Credit: Each chapter features a number of learning activities and ideas for activism. Any activity not completed in class is eligible for extra credit (up to 5% of your final grade depending on the quality of your work). You should submit a 1-page essay describing your experience. No more than 3 extra credit essays may be submitted.

Trigger Warning: This course deals with several difficult topics, including gender-based violence and sexual assault. I will not take attendance during the discussions about Chapter 10 Gender and Violence. All you need to do is send me an email stating that you are unable to attend class on that day. No details are needed. There are other topics in this class that may also trigger difficult memories for you. You should feel free to talk to me about any issues you have with the topics we are discussing and ask for excused absences.

Disability Accommodations: The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and [Disability Services for Students](#). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with Disability Services, please contact Disability Services in Lommasson Center 154 or call 406.243.2243. I will work with you and Disability Services to provide an appropriate modification.