

INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S STUDIES

CRN 43761 Winter 2010

Tuesdays & Thursdays 7-8:15PM CH228

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Course Description: This course will focus on the introduction of women's studies as an academic field of study. Goals for this course is to increase knowledge of the role of women in culture, the feminist response to these roles, development of the ability to think critically on these issues and increase understanding for bringing about justice for the lives of women. Additionally the goals of this course is to have fun while we create a collaborative, inclusive learning community, come to an understanding of the history, theory and joy of feminism as a social justice movement and an ideology through critical analysis and advance academic excellence.

Objectives:

Develop critical thinking, reading, writing and computer skills

Learn proper citation and writing skill

Understand the basic principles of Feminism and women's studies

To be able to analyze a diversity of perspectives as opposed to a monolithic or dichotomous perspective

To analyze power relations and develop an understanding of issues that make up the everyday lives of women

Develop skills to take action based on the principles you learn

To bring about these goals it is important that we learn in community and that each member of the community assume responsibility for their own judgments and learning within this community. This means coming to class prepared (having done all the readings) ready to ask questions and respond to others questions and respecting one another with compassion for each other's different perspectives.

Logistics

We will be using Blackboard as a way of electronic record keeping. I will post the readings there, we will have discussions and you will be able to track your points from there.

If you require accommodations please let me know. Contact DACA 503-725-5664

For help with writing contact the writing Center. They are located at CH188f phone: 503.725.3570

Child Care: Children's Center 143 Smith Center (503) 725-CARE

Information and Academic Support Center (IASC): 425 Smith Center (503) 725-4005. IASC offers a variety of supportive opportunities for newly enrolled students to aid in retention.

Student Health & Counseling (SHAC): 1880 SW 6th Ave. (UCB 200) (503) 725-2800

All regularly enrolled students taking 9 or more credit hours, or students taking 4-8 who elect to pay the health fee, are eligible to use SHAC. SHAC offers medical, counseling, pharmacy and testing services, and complete dental. It's difficult to be a good student if you're in poor health.

ASSIGNMENTS

REQUIRED ASSIGNMENTS

Attendance and Participation:

All students are expected to attend every main session as well every mentor session. Attendance and participation are vital to the learning of the entire class. Your life experience, your understanding of the world, the questions you raise are a fundamental part of the learning of this class. The most important learning you will do is from each other. Participation includes both speaking and listening so please come to class having read each week's materials and ready to engage in fun, healthy dialogue. Each missed class will result in a lower grade. If you miss more than six (6) main sessions and/or mentor sessions you will not pass the class. Exceptions can be made due to illness and unexpected events but please contact me BEFORE class that you will be missing a class (for example, attendance at sports teams, work, etc). Arriving late, leaving early, sleeping, texting and side conversations will result in lowered points. You may have electronics with you in class but leave them closed and off (cell phones on vibrate) in your backpack or bag. **DO NOT COME TO CLASS WITH YOUR LAPTOP OPEN OR BE ON YOUR CELL PHONE.** If you have an emergency step out of class. Take notes with pen and paper. If you can't stay focused on our work, **INCLUDING SIDE TALKING**, I will ask you to leave the room

Discussion: The expectation of this course is for you to learn basic principles of critical thinking through a feminist perspective. Learning concepts of social construction as it relates to gender race class sexuality, etc are very sensitive issues. Oppressive language in discussions will not be tolerated. Remember, everyone in this class will have their own

unique experiences and feelings about the material and we must be respectful of that even when we do not agree. If you feel that you must interrupt someone else's behavior that you perceive as oppressive, please remember that human beings are fallible. We are all learning and this class should be viewed as a learning opportunity for everyone and the utmost sensitivity should be used in addressing oppression

Individual course plan and end of the term evaluation:

This is your opportunity to identify your goals for this course. You write a plan that articulates how you intend to work toward achieving those goals by identifying which optional assignments you would like to work on, what role you will take in your book group and what you would like to do for the final. At the end of the term you will evaluate how well you met these goals. For each paper (the plan and end of term evaluation) use the guidelines as in the essay for this paper, which must include a critical response, a personal response (what does it mean to your life and experience), direct engagement with the material and its relation to at least one specific issue we've discussed in class, double spaced, one inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font and AT LEAST 500 words of analysis not including description of activities. If you need to make changes to this plan please come see me to update this plan.

Book Groups

The class will be divided on the first day into book groups. You will have the choice to read one of these titles:

Two or three things I know for sure by Dorothy Allison

The Bluest eye by Toni Morrison

Paper Daughter by M. Elaine Mar

Memoirs of an ex-prom queen by Alix Kates Shulman

When I was Puerto Rican by Esmeralda Santiago

One Man's Trash by Ivan Coyote

There will be 5-6 people in the group and you will read the book over the course of a few weeks during the middle of the term and then give a short presentation to the rest of the class. You will have time during class to discuss the book in your groups during class as well as on-line over Blackboard. Each person in the group will be responsible for generating discussion by posting a question on line. The on-line discussion will be moderated by the TA and will help guide discussion. Each group will then present to the rest of the class the major themes of the book. Try to have fun in your presentations, use music, food, theater, whatever you all can agree on that will help the rest of the class understand your book. Your grades will be based on your contribution to the group and a reflection paper on your piece. Use the same guidelines as in the essay for example this paper must include a critical response, a personal response (what does it mean to your life and experience), direct engagement with the material and its relation to at least one specific issue we've discussed in class, double spaced, one inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font and AT LEAST 500 words of analysis not including description of the book

BOOK GROUP DUE DATES: 2/16-2/18

Journal Reflection Response Papers:

Required Text:

Feminism is for Everybody by bell hooks

Articles posted on Blackboard

For EACH readings for the week (posted on Blackboard. Every student has access to the computer lab. If you have trouble with Blackboard come see me for instruction. Don't make yourself get late because you can't figure out Blackboard) you are required to turn in a journal entry (or response paper). Your journal will consist of a quote from the text, (using APA style) a brief response based on your dis/agreement or curiosity of the issues raised and a provocative question to stimulate conversation. Do this for EACH article you read. Your journal should have between 300-500 words for EACH reading. This assignment must be typed, have your name, date, title and for EACH article a page number. You will lose points for not following the writing guidelines. This assignment is meant to help you write critically about your understanding of the information presented in the articles and explore how you feel about the subject. Use evidence from the reading to support your arguments but also reflect on personal feelings and experience with these issues. Grading will be based on your demonstration of your understanding of the readings. I will be looking for an analysis that is insightful, thorough and comprehensive of the issues. This is not the place to tell me how much you hate the author's writing style. I want to know what you think of the argument and main ideas being presented. Try not to think of ideas of "right" or "wrong" but place them within a context of understanding. Your paper should include about 1/3 academic reflection, 1/3 personal reflection and 1/3 cultural reflection. Journals that lack depth, are too brief and only scratch the surface will not get full points. Grading is done on an individual basis (do not do your work with someone else and present it as your own. Only original work by the student will be accepted. I, along with the university, take academic dishonesty very seriously. To avoid academic dishonesty, you must always properly cite materials, ideas, and quotes that are not your own. Please see the Universities guidelines on academic honesty <http://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct>). You may post your Journal to blackboard and bring your questions to class to use for discussion.

Your grade will be based on:

7-9 points: work that is exceptional and meets all the requirements

6-4 points: Work that meets the requirements

3-1 points work that does not meet the assignment but makes some attempt

0 points: work that does not meet the requirement and may be re-done

JOURNAL DUE DATE: Every Tuesday. I will only accept journals for the present and previous week ONLY.

Books are available for purchase at the WRC the **FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL ONLY.**

After that you may purchase it at In Other Words bookstore, on line at

www.inotherwords.org or in person at 8 Killingsworth St. Their phone # is 503-232-6003 for directions and hours.

FINAL

Do an outrageous (Pro-woman) act

Inspired by the Miss America pageant protest and the article “Outrageous acts and everyday rebellions” by Gloria Steinem. Do an activity that is somehow “outrageous” in terms of gender on that you expect might lead to “gender policing.” (That is, people expressing to you—verbally or through their actions—that they considered your activity gender inappropriate). Think about a social or personal problem related to gender that you would like to see changed. Then think about something you can do to effectuate some change on this issue. Your actions must be new to you and the activity must be “pro-woman.” It could be something that helps women collectively, or it can be more personal. Don’t hesitate to think of “pro-woman” broadly, activities that fight racism, homophobia, ageism, etc. can qualify as pro-woman. You are free to do this in groups or as an individual project (and it doesn’t necessarily need to be really “outrageous,” just something active). If you work in a group, be sure to use the talents of each group member effectively. One group member may be a good writer; another may be good at convincing others to take actions, etc.

EACH INDIVIDUAL Write a 500 word report based on the following questions. There are three parts to this project:

1. Pre act: What is your act? Why does the problem addressed concern you? What do you plan to do? Why do you think your actions will help? What are your expectations? How did you feel, and what did you learn about yourself as you planned the act?
2. Act: Describe the act. Your responses? Feelings?
3. Post act: Did you learn anything about the value of pro-woman acts? Are you encouraged or discouraged? If you acted in a group, how did that go?

OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENTS

Customize your assignment according to your level of participation, learning style, interests and as time permits. Each assignment is worth a different level of points and will determine your grade level. If there is something you want to do not on the list then by all means go for it. Make sure it is not illegal or that anyone will get hurt though, so check with me if you have questions about it. The more you put in, the higher your grade. You will meet with me at the beginning of the term to develop your own individual course plan to fulfill the requirements of this class. If your strengths are in taking a test I can develop one for you

Blackboard discussion

Heard something in class you wanted to discuss but there was not enough time? Too shy to speak up? Well here’s your chance. Monitored by the TA, the discussion will be open

for the entirety of the class. I will be looking for questions that encourages a reply and opens a discussion. I will be looking to see questions that indicate that you have read the readings thoroughly, thought about the issues involved and understand them.

Essays

Are you a good writer? Prefer to put all your ideas on paper? This is your opportunity to present your analysis on something you read in class or an issue raised in the class that you would like to explore more in-depth. This is not a summary of the text, it is an analysis. Please do not just repeat what the author stated, discuss what you think about the author says and why. I'm looking for the logic in your argument and how well you back up what you say. Ask yourself some questions such as "what did I learn about women and/or feminism and how do I apply it to my life?" or compare and contrast two opposing viewpoints. Question some previous assumptions you had or still have about an issue. This paper must include a critical response, a personal response (what does it mean to your life and experience), direct engagement with the text including quoted passages with proper citation, double spaced, one inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font and AT LEAST 1500 words, with citations and analysis, a thesis statement, some evidence and a conclusion. You may ask for help on these papers by showing me preliminary drafts

Interview

Do you like to talk? Interview a self-identified feminist and discover how someone comes to feminism and what it means for their lives. Or interview a non-feminist and ask the same question. Interview one of each and compare the two. You may present this assignment in written form (include all the questions but you don't have to hand in a word for word transcription of the interview) or as a spoken word presentation. This paper must include a critical response, a personal response (what does it mean to your life and experience), direct engagement with the material and it's relation to at least one specific issue we've discussed in class, double spaced, one inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font and AT LEAST 500 words of analysis not including any transcription of analysis

Out of Class activity

Attend a lecture, documentary film, an athletic event, a concert or something public and write or present a review of the event. Use the same guidelines as in the essay for example this paper must include a critical response, a personal response (what does it mean to your life and experience), direct engagement with the material in the event and it's relation to at least one specific issue we've discussed in class, double spaced, one inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font and AT LEAST 500 words of analysis not including description of activity

Art

Draw or paint a picture, write a song, do a dance, perform a theatrical play, invent a jeopardy version of the class. If you are using that side of the brain then explore the themes in this class through an artistic creative outlet. The challenge is to create a visual representation of your thinking. Points will be determined by relevance, analysis and engagement with the issue. Please submit a reflection paper on your art piece. Use the same guidelines as in the essay for example this paper must include a critical response, a personal response (what does it mean to your life and experience), direct engagement with the material and it's relation to at least one specific issue we've discussed in class, double spaced, one inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font and AT LEAST 500 words of analysis not including description of activity

Spoken word

Don't want to write an essay but would rather speak it? Follow the same guidelines for the essay assignment citations and all. You can also be a little more creative. You could review a children's book for example and discuss male and female roles for example. Examine a Harlequin romance. Look at some magazines targeted to women (examine the ads for example). Please submit a reflection paper on your piece. Use the same guidelines as in the essay for example this paper must include a critical response, a personal response (what does it mean to your life and experience), direct engagement with the material and it's relation to at least one specific issue we've discussed in class, double spaced, one inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font and AT LEAST 500 words of analysis not including description of activity

Do some kind of community service

Hand out flyers, volunteer for the women's crisis line, volunteer for the WRC get people to register to vote. Protest a blood donation (they don't allow blood from gay men simply **because** they are gay men) or make up your own community service for a day. You can write about it or present it as spoken word. Please submit a reflection paper on your service. Use the same guidelines as in the essay for example this paper must include a critical response, a personal response (what does it mean to your life and experience), direct engagement with the material and it's relation to at least one specific issue we've discussed in class, double spaced, one inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font and AT LEAST 1500 words of analysis not including description of activity

Do some research

Find out the average incomes for women and men. How many female CEO's are there? How many women represent congress, the senate, federal judges, etc. Or examine an up close profile of your family, school or workplace. Use a chart to collect data about the people there and list what you notice about who does what job and what does that suggest about the functionality of the relationships. Ask yourself which sex does what job/task, how many hours a week, who has more leisure time and where are sites of inequality. Pick a country off the map. Examine the status of women in that country. Compare with other countries. What is your reaction to what this information reveals?

Did it surprise you? How does it relate to the status of women in the US? Like the essay this paper must include a critical response, a personal response (what does it mean to your life and experience), direct engagement with the text including quoted passages with proper citation, double spaced, one inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font and AT LEAST 1500 words, with citations and analysis, a thesis statement, some evidence and a conclusion

Read a book/Watch a film and write a review

Analyze the book/film based on the course materials. How does it focus or touch on women's/feminist issues? What are the gender roles? Does the story accurately reflect the lives of women? Do the women have a variety of experiences or are they one dimensional (or stereotyped)? Does it reinforce gendered stereotypes or confront them? Was it a good film/read? Would you recommend it to a friend or a Women's Studies professor? Should they consider including the book/film as a part of their class? Watch/read something beyond your usual scope of things. Watch a film made pre-1980 like An Unmarried Woman, Adam's Rib, Rebecca, All About Eve or It Happened One Night. Please submit a reflection paper on your piece. Use the same guidelines as in the essay for example this paper must include a critical response, a personal response (what does it mean to your life and experience), direct engagement with the material and it's relation to at least one specific issue we've discussed in class, double spaced, one inch margins, 12 point Times New Roman font and AT LEAST 500 words of analysis not including description of the film

Grading

Grading on optional assignments and required assignments is done on a points system similar to that of the journals.

Most points: work that is exceptional and meets all the requirements

Average points: Work that meets the requirements

Less than average points: work that does not meet the assignment but makes some attempt

Failing points: work that does not meet the requirement and may be re-done

If you do the minimum amount of effort in the class (only fulfilling the required assignments) then you will just barely "pass" the class. The more effort you put in (the more optional assignments you do) the better your grade. Plan out your work accordingly. Your grades will be based on ¼ of Attendance/participation (including mentor session), ¼ Journal/Reflection papers, ¼ Group Work and ¼ Optional assignments and final.

All points are negotiable. Please contact me BEFORE you engage in an activity to make sure you get the correct grading. I will be posting your points on Blackboard as you go so you can keep track of your points.