

# Introduction to Women's Studies

WS 105 Sec. 1  
Fall 2007, CCC 224  
MW 11.00-12.15

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Office Hours: MW 12.45-1.45; 4.45-5.15 and by appointment

CCC 464

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*Talking about gender for most people is the equivalent of fish talking about water. Gender is so much the routine ground of everyday activities that questioning its taken-for-granted assumptions and presuppositions is thinking about whether the sun will come up.*

From J. Lorber "Paradoxes of Gender" p.13

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**What do we mean by the category "woman?" Are there essential characteristics that define all women? How do we incorporate other social categories such as a race, ethnicity, religion, class, sexuality, disability and nationality? How do we understand and live our multiple identities and social locations? Women's studies is the study of women's lives from an interdisciplinary perspective that includes sociological, historical, cultural, literary political and other approaches. We will investigate women's experiences across a number of different arenas, including work, health, family, violence and embodiment. We will also examine the development of women's studies and students will have an understanding of how and why women's studies came into existence.**

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Course objectives: This course will provide a comprehensive introduction to the various fields within women's studies. We will interrogate how different societies have produced and defined gender identity and look at how those gendered identities intersect with other forms of identity, including race, class, sexuality. More specifically, we will look at women's lives as they are lived and understood. By the end of the class, students will be able to:

- Analyze intersections of gender, race, class and sexuality
- Understand the ways in which gender has been defined and explained
- Understand a feminist approach to academia
- Understand the development of women's studies within academia
- Recognize the diversity of feminist thought
- Be able to think critically about gender
- Actively discover, create and analyze knowledge

Required reading:

One required textbook is available from text rental:

Amy Kesselman et al. *Women: Images and Realities: A Multicultural Anthology*

One required book is available for purchase from the campus bookstore:

Daphne Scholinski: *The Last Time I Wore a Dress.*

In addition, a series of readings will be posted weekly on electronic reserve.

### Course Requirements:

Attendance: Attendance is required in this class. Lectures and discussions will complement and expand on the material in the book and additional readings. Students will be expected to read the required material before coming to class.

Class Participation: I see my role in the classroom as being discussion leader, as opposed to a lecturer that stands in the front and lectures all class period, every class period. As such, I value class discussion and interactive learning. I am actively involved in teaching and expect you to be actively involved in learning. I will do everything I can to make this class fun and entertaining, as I believe this is the best way to learn. Be prepared to participate!

Final Paper (30%): You are required to write an approximately 5-7 page paper analyzing an issue of concern to the Women's Studies student. This paper is due to me Wednesday, December 12<sup>th</sup> at the beginning of class. I will not accept emailed papers. Late papers will be penalized one letter grade for every day they are late. Details will be given in class.

Reading Journal (40%): You will be required to maintain a journal. I will collect these twice over the course of the semester. You must have a **minimum** of 4 entries at each collection point. In this journal you will record your responses to reading material, class discussions or movies. Your journal entries can take two forms;

*Formal Entries:* your journal entries will be responses to the articles assigned, or movies watched. You must write a maximum of 2 pages (typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman 12 point font) for each topic covered on the syllabus in which you respond to the readings assigned. You need not respond to each reading. As you become more skilled at these responses I expect you to make connections between the various articles and across the various topics. I may also give you questions to think about in class that you should respond to in your journals.

*Creative Entries:* In addition, you should write about current events and/or your own experiences as they relate to material covered in class. Feel free to clip things out of magazines, talk about movies, TV shows, tell stories from your own experiences.

Group Presentation (20%): In groups of 3, you will be required to prepare a presentation to be given to the whole class towards the end of the semester. ALL students must attend ALL presentations. For every day of presentations you miss, you will be docked a full letter grade from your own presentation. Details will be given in class.

Class participation/attendance/assignments (10%): This class depends upon your attendance and active participation to be successful. Therefore, I will use a combination of class participation, attendance and completion of in-class writing assignments as part of your final grade. In-class assignments may not be made up except for religious holidays or documented UWSP events (sports team participation for example). In these cases, you must notify me of your absence in advance.

Grade scale: I do not negotiate final grades.

	A = 93.5 to 100	A- = 89.5 to 93.4
B+ = 86.5 to 89.4	B = 82.5 to 86.4	B- = 79.5 to 82.4
C+ = 76.5 to 79.4	C = 72.5 to 76.4	C- = 69.5 to 72.4
D+ = 66.5 to 69.4	D = 59.5 to 66.4	F = Less than 59.5

**Students with Special Needs:** Students with special needs as documented by the Office of Disability Services should identify themselves at the beginning of the term. The Department of Sociology is dedicated to providing these students with necessary academic adjustments and auxiliary aids to facilitate their participation and performance in the classroom.

**Academic Misconduct:** Academic integrity is central to the mission of this institution.

UWS 14 defines academic misconduct as any “action which a student:

1. seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
2. uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
3. forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
4. intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
5. engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student’s academic performance;
6. assists other students in any of these acts.”

UWS 14 allows for disciplinary sanctions that range from an oral reprimand to suspension or expulsion from the University. You can obtain a copy of the full academic misconduct policy through the Student Services office.

If I observe academic misconduct, or if suspicions of cheating are reported to me, I will request that the identified parties come to my office to discuss the situation, and the procedures set out in UWS 14 will be followed.

I recognize that the rules regarding academic misconduct can sometimes be confusing for students with respect to specific assignments or course work. If you have questions, I encourage you to come and see me. I am always prepared to help clarify any aspects of the work for this course that may be confusing. If you have questions or concerns about a particular assignment, you should talk with me before the assignment is submitted. Ignorance or misunderstanding of the UW System policy will not serve as a valid excuse for academic misconduct.

*I reserve the right to change the syllabus to suit the pedagogical needs of the class.*

## Tentative Reading Schedule

Week	Topic	Reading Assignment
1	What is Women's Studies?	Ch. 1
2	Becoming a Woman	Ch 2
3	Becoming a Woman Gender and Bodies	Ch 2 Ch 3
4	Gender and Bodies	Ch 3
5	Institutions (work)	Ch 4
6	Institutions (law)	Ch 4
7	Institutions (family and religion)	Ch 4
8	Health	Ch 5
9	Differences and Divisions	Ch 6
10	Differences and Divisions	<i>Last Time I Wore a Dress</i>
11	Violence	Ch 7
12	Violence	Ch 7
13	Social Change	Ch 8
14	Presentations	
15	Presentations	

### Important Dates

Wednesday, October 17<sup>th</sup>: First Journal Collection  
 Wednesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>: Final Paper Due  
 Wednesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>: Last Journal Collection  
 Thursday, December 20<sup>th</sup>: Presentations 2.45-4.45