

Women, Race, and Ethnicity
Spring 2006
Salisbury 308
Office Hours: M 9-12 and by appointment

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Course Policy

The University of Wisconsin-Whitewater is dedicated to a safe, supportive and non-discriminatory learning environment. It is the responsibility of all undergraduate and graduate students to familiarize themselves with University policies regarding Special Accommodations, Misconduct, Religious Beliefs Accommodation, Discrimination and Absence for University Sponsored Events. (For details please refer to the Undergraduate and Graduate Timetables; the "Rights and Responsibilities" section of the Undergraduate Bulletin; the Academic Requirements and Policies and the Facilities and Services sections of the Graduate Bulletin; and the Student Academic Disciplinary Procedures" [UWS Chapter 14]; and the "Student Nonacademic Disciplinary Procedures " [UWS Chapter 17]).

Goals: Women of color and Latina women in the United States face the “double jeopardy” of racism and sexism. It is not as simple, however, as adding factors of gender, race, and ethnicity together in order to understand their experiences. For one thing, gender and race interact in complicated ways and cannot necessarily be separated out in the experiences of women of color. Also, women of color (and Hispanic women) have complicated lives, as do the rest of us, and we can learn from them best if we see them as much as possible in their wholeness and complexity.

Of course, as a class we can only begin to understand the experiences of Hispanic American, African American, Native American and Asian American women. Nevertheless, this beginning is important. It is these women who most often get left out of national discussions about civil rights and women’s rights, who are left out of history books, who are denied access to self expression through the arts, as well as access to political and economic power. This represents a national failure, as well as a failure of feminism. The women’s movement must be about improving the lives of all women, arguably those facing the biggest challenges first.

Also, though, our failure as a nation to take the lives of women of color into consideration means that our understanding of the world is skewed by our own blindness. Likewise, our understanding of women’s lives and experiences in Women’s Studies is warped when we focus on the lives of privileged women. It is important for everyone to pay attention to the issues women of color face partly for their sakes, because we care that they be included in the future we envision. But white men and women, as well as men of color, also pay attention for their own sakes, to correct the flaws in their understanding of the world—so that we might all see the world around us more clearly.

Attendance and Lateness: I will not count off for missed classes, but you will not be let off the hook for any missed exams (of course!!) or presentations. If you have more than a week’s worth of unexcused absences, you shouldn’t expect to get more than 35 out of 50 points for classroom participation. If you have more than two unexcused absences, you should not expect to get more than 25 out of 50 points.

Texts:

Under Her Skin—textbook rental

Reconstructing Gender—textbook rental

Essays from electronic reserve

Plagiarism: The written assignments for this class should be constructed so that they are not easily plagiarized. If I do find that any of your written work has been taken from a source that has not been credited, however, I will at least fail the paper and possibly fail you for the class. Unintentional plagiarism is not, in my mind, much different from intentional plagiarism. You are all responsible for knowing what plagiarism is, and if you are unsure whether or not a particular passage in your work might be plagiarized, I'd be happy to look at that passage with you or discuss it with you on the telephone or via e-mail.

Special Needs: I am happy to address any special needs students might have. If you need a note taker, extra exam time, or other kinds of consideration, please let me know as early as possible.

Assignments:

Perhaps your most important assignment is to **complete the readings**. These essays represent the voices of women of color describing their own experiences and perceptions of the world, and it is our very first job to listen to these voices. Doing the readings is especially important in this class partly because we want to show respect and attention to these texts, their writers and the experiences they represent. Also, however, there is a practical consideration. If you skip one day's worth of reading, you are skipping one week's worth of reading.

For every set of assigned readings, there will be one **on-line quiz** about the readings scheduled for that day. Pay close attention to the syllabus. Once the time limit for the online quiz has expired, you will no longer be able to take it. Each on-line quiz will be open book, but it there will be a time limit, too, so you will have to be quite familiar with the readings. There will also be **on or off-line discussions** for each set of assigned readings, and you will be expected to participate in both. In order to get full points, you will need to be present for our traditional classroom periods, participate in in-class discussions, and also participate in each on-line discussion in a substantive and focused way. That is, your responses will be evaluated for their quantity to some degree, but also for their quality: *Are your responses aimed at the questions(s) asked by me or by your classmates? Do your responses show an understanding to the material covered? Do they open up new and relevant avenues of inquiry?*

There are two **required papers** for this class. The **first paper** will be a 2-3 page autobiographical writing in which you explore your own ethnic roots and your own developing understanding of issues of race and ethnicity: How do you define yourself in racial and/or ethnic terms and in terms of gender? How important is your race/ethnicity and gender in your own understanding of yourself? How important is race/ethnicity in the life of your community? How do you see gender roles played out in the life of your

community? When did you first become aware of your own race/ethnicity? Can you remember a time when you became aware of the advantages and/or invisibility connected to whiteness? A time when you became aware of the disadvantages and/or visibility connected to being a person of color? How does gender shape your experience of these dynamics, i.e. privileges/disadvantages? I want this to be an essay and NOT simply a series of answers to the questions I am posing. Use as many specific examples as you can in your writing. This will be one important area in which your paper will be evaluated. I also want the paper to be free of surface errors, free of disrespectful language, and submitted to D2L on time. I will not accept late papers.

Your **second paper** will be based on an interview you conduct with someone who immigrated to the United States. More information about this paper will be forthcoming, since it is an assignment being formulated in cooperation with other professors. I will check your questions ahead of time, and you will share these papers in hard copy with your classmates.

Around the middle of the semester, you will work in small groups to plan a **small group presentation/discussion** based on articles of your choice. You may use articles from one of our two books, articles included on electronic reserve, or articles that you provide the class yourselves. Each small group will use electronic format to

*introduce your article. For this, you should write a paragraph explaining how your group's article connects with lectures, films, and other articles we have read or will read in class (you should read ahead if necessary). You should also explain why you think the article is important or interesting.

*provide at least three different kinds of background information that give the reader some context for reading the article. Possibilities include:

- a film/documentary that explores the same issue or a closely related one
- a website that provides statistical information that backs up or complements your article.
- a newspaper article that shows the local/contemporary significance of the issues explored in your article
- a book or book chapter that explores the same ideas
- a scholarly article that explores issues your article addresses.
- a series of photographs illustrating the ideas addressed in your article.

For each source, your group should provide bibliographic/access information plus a very brief summary of the contents

*Come up with one visual that helps us understand the article and the context you are providing for it better and/or makes the document you come up with more compelling.

*Come up with five "quiz" questions you can ask classmates. These questions will be turned into quiz questions for your classmates.

*Come up with two or three larger questions—suggesting the importance of the article/issue—that may be left on the board for further classroom debate. These will be posted for discussion.

Finally, at the end of the class, you will do an **individual project**. For this final project, you will pick an issue relevant to class to explore further. You should start with a research question, decide on a presentation format, check both with me, and then find at least four sources that can help you answer your question. At least two of your sources

must be scholarly articles or book chapters. No more than two can be websites. Consumer magazines, documentaries, radio programs, interviews, and newspapers are among other possible sources of information for this project.

In your project, you will explain, in detail, how you arrived at an answer to your research question. You may present your information in the form of a poster, a small website which you have designed, in the form of Power Point presentation to be posted online, or in some individualized form approved by me. Your presentation should provide your research question, an MLA-style bibliography, detailed information about your topic, an explanation of how you answered your question, and plenty of visuals (graphics, photos, timelines, graphs, etc.). You will also provide **formal responses** two at least two of the presentations. Response questions will be provided online. A copy of the responses should be sent to me and to the author of the presentation.

Grades:

On-line quizzes	10 points each (100 total)
Class Participation, including on-line discussion	50 points
Autobiographical essay	25 points
Interview essays	35 points
Individual Projects	40 points
Group Presentation	20 points
Responses to Individual Projects	10 points each

There will be no make-up work in this class. You will, however, be allowed up to 20 points for going to outside events (5 points per event). For credit, attend the event and write a response that includes as summary and an evaluation (what you liked and didn't like).

Syllabus

January

- M 23 introduction, including introduction to D2L; meet groups; “For the White Person” from *Reconstructing Gender*; “Poem for the Young White Man . . .”; lecture.
- W 25 D2L quiz to be completed on “Blonde” and “A Child’s Christmas” from *Under Her Skin*; Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege,” from *Reconstructing Gender* before 3:00.
- F 27 Autobiographical essays in to D2L by 3:00.
- M 30 Cyber meeting only today. “Blonde” and “A Child’s Christmas” from *Under her Skin*; Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege,” from *Reconstructing Gender*. D2L discussion on these essays will shut down at the end of the class period (8:45).
- F 3 Proposal for group project to be completed and submitted via D2L by 3:00.

February

- M 6 Native American Women lecture:
“Yellow Woman,” from *Reconstructing Gender*; “I Give you Back” and “Journeys of the Mind,” posted on D2L; “Where I Come from is Like This” and “Better Dead” from *Electronic Reserve*.
D2L quiz to be completed by class time.
- M 13 Asian-American women lecture: “Desert Run,” hand-out; “Corrosion,” hand-out; “Betsy, Tacy, Sejal, Tib,” *Under Her Skin*; “Ideological Racism and Cultural Resistance.”
Film: *Slaying the Dragon*.
D2L quiz to be completed by 6:15.
Group projects to be completed and submitted via D2L by class time.
- M 20 cyber meeting only:
Read essays chosen by groups 1, 2, and 3, and respond to quiz questions by 6:15. Respond to discussion questions and on-line presentations by 8:45.

M27 cyber meeting only:
Read essays chosen by groups 4, 5, and 6, and respond to quiz questions by 6:15. Respond to discussion questions and on-line presentations by 8:45.

March

M 6 lecture on African-American women; "In Magazines," posted on D2L; "Who's the Fairest of Them All?" *Reconstructing Gender*; "The Last Safe Place," *Under Her Skin*; "The Teach-In," *Under Her Skin*; film.
Respond to quiz questions on D2L by 6:15.

M 13 cyber meeting only: "Selling Hot Pussy," electronic reserve; "The Past is Always Present" and "Man Child," from *Reconstructing Gender*.
Respond to quiz questions by 6:15. Respond to discussion questions by 8:45.

M 20 Individual projects due by 6:15; viewing of posters; Honors, graduate student, and other presentations; film

W 22 Responses to individual projects (2 each) due today by 3:00.

April

M 3 Latina women lecture; film; workshop interview questions.

M 10 Cyber meeting only: "The Myth of the Latin Woman" and "I'm not Fat I'm Latina" from *Reconstructing Gender*; "Homecoming" from *Under Her Skin*. Respond to quiz questions by 6:15.
Respond to discussion questions and on-line presentations by 8:45.

M 17 Interview essays due. Please bring them in hard copy. We will have reading circles and comments.
Globalization lecture/discussion: "The Ultimate Growth Industry," from *Reconstructing Gender*.

M 24

Cyber meeting only: “The Globe Trotting Sneaker,” from *Reconstructing Gender*. Respond to quiz questions by 6:15. Respond to discussion questions and on-line presentations by 8:45.

May

M2

Catch up; business; film

Ideas for paper/presentation topics:

Famous African/Asian/Native/Hispanic American woman and the importance of her contributions.

African/Asian/Native/Hispanic American women in history—pick an important moment, issue or era.

Images of African/Asian/Native/Hispanic American women—in films, books, television, or some other medium.

African/Asian/Native/Hispanic American women and creativity—pick just one form of expression.

African/Asian/Native/Hispanic American women in a particular profession.

African/Asian/Native/Hispanic American women and Health—pick an issue, for example, eating disorders, access to healthcare, pre- and post-natal care, cancer, heart disease, nutrition.

African/Asian/Native/Hispanic American women and Violence

African/Asian/Native/Hispanic American women and Economic Inequality

African/Asian/Native/Hispanic American women and Education

African/Asian/Native/Hispanic American women and Sexuality

Women of Color and the criminal justice system