

INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S STUDIES - WS 100/SOC.SCI 103
Fall 2004

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Office Hours: 2-3 pm, MWF, and by appointment

Required Readings: Wilson, M.C., Closing the Leadership Gap

Weekly required readings are on line and can be accessed through library e-reserves

About this class: This course is an introduction to the study of women. The primary purpose of the course is to position women and their contributions in historical context. Emphasis will be placed on the thesis that both historical and contemporary ideas about women and gender systems are intimately linked to social evolution and change. Particular attention will be given to the intersection of gender, race, class, ethnicity, and sexual orientation as it informs our study.

Our class will operate on the assumption that the teacher-student relationship is a partnership whereby we learn from one another and move together as in a dance. Therefore, each of us will actively participate in and assume responsibility for the class. The class format will emphasize discussion and reactions to assigned readings, films, and lectures.

There is one distinctive feature to this class. In an effort to provide a learning environment that "makes the world more rather than less real" (hooks, 1989), we will utilize a Theory/Practice-Service Learning (TPSL) format. A TPSL component can deepen our understanding of the subject we are studying and develop our ability to reflect on, "practice," and apply to a real life situation what we are learning in the classroom. I believe that knowing facts, reciting theories and concepts, and regurgitating back on an exam what you have memorized is not necessarily reflective of a "deep" understanding of the material nor does it prepare us for real life experiences. Therefore, you will reflect **on what we are learning** by working in a social service agency in the greater surrounding community **at least** two hours a week. I will provide you with a list of possible placements and times, and you then may select the placement based on your personal preferences and schedules. Detailed information will be given in class about this component of the class.

Course Goals: Each of us in this class should expect the following:

1. To participate actively in class discussions and in Learn Link conversations on a regular basis and in a thoughtful manner. This means that each of us should be able to frame our conversations around the readings of the day and the theory presented and to listen respectfully and carefully to one another.
2. To connect the theory of the readings, films, and lectures to the daily lives of girls and women. Our community placements will be one important venue for doing this.

3. To understand the ways in which all girls and women have been discriminated against, marginalized, and often treated as invisible in virtually every culture for which we have empirical research
4. To see the specific ways in which class, ethnicity, sexual orientation and age intersect in defining girls' and women's lives and experiences
5. To appreciate the gains made by the three waves of the feminist movement and acknowledge the work that still remains for the liberation of all women throughout the world
6. To grow in heart and mind. This means that we will make a conscious attempt to develop a tolerance and appreciation of others' ideas and convictions, particularly those who are different from our own.
7. To enjoy this moment in time in our own journey of learning!!

Requirements of the Course:

1. Readings, Group Facilitation, and Quizzes (30%) - For many of the class periods a set of readings is assigned (see attached schedule). You are required to read these selections prior to the class designated for discussion of the readings. A short, 10 minute quiz will be given on that respective day prior to the discussion to assess your understanding of the readings. Each student will have the opportunity to drop her/his lowest quiz grade in the calculation of the final quiz average. Two-three students will be responsible for leading the discussion of these readings each week. It will be incumbent on the facilitators to submit to me a list of discussion questions that they will use to lead the discussion of the readings. This should occur 2-3 days prior to the discussion. A list of discussion leaders will be given out in class, but EVERY student will have this opportunity before the semester ends.

2. Attendance, Class Participation, and Learn Link Conversation (10%) - Since your individual voice is considered very significant to the integrity of this course, you should attend every class and actively participate in discussion. You are also expected to participate in our class conference on Learn Link by making at least 10 entries over the course of the semester. These entries should be directly linked to the course content.

3. Community Placement and Theory/Practice Reflection Paper (20%): Each of you will have an on-site supervisor to whom you will report each week. I will maintain regular contact with this supervisor so as to be certain that this experience is working well for you and the respective agency. The supervisor will evaluate your work at the end of the semester and communicate those results to me. However, this supervisor will **not** assign a grade. Periodically during the course of the semester we will have in-class discussions regarding experiences with these placements. You will be expected to talk about your placement in terms of concepts learned in class.

You will write an 8-10 page paper that demonstrates how your theory/practice community experience is related to, clarifies, or reflects what you have learned in this class. For example, if you are working with an adolescent girl in one of the placement sites, you might want to consider how your interaction with and/or observation of one or more of these girls validates or raises questions about female body image as described in our readings, lectures, or films. Please be aware that this paper must be connected in a concrete manner to specific information from class. This assignment serves as a type of final examination in that it encourages you to see how the theory of the classroom is linked to the actual experiences of girls and women in the real world. (Detailed information about the construction of this paper will be discussed in class).

4. In-class Response to Closing the Leadership Gap (20%) - Details regarding this assignment will be given in class.

5. Political Position Presentation (20%) - Since this year is an election year, we will look carefully at the politics and political platforms of George Bush and John Kerry as they impact the status of girls and women. In groups of three you will be given an issue to investigate in terms of Bush's and Kerry's position on this issue, present these findings to the class, and discuss the political position you have assumed after this investigation. You will also submit a bibliography reflecting your sources for your investigation. (Detailed information will be given in class.)

The Student Honor Code of Oxford College applies to every member of the class. Please review this code carefully giving special attention to plagiarism. Remember that plagiarism occurs when one uses the words or ideas of another person without quotations and without adequate referencing. Please note also that the use of former students' papers may not be used in any form; to do so is to violate the Honor Code!!!! Should you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please consult with me. Violations of this code will not be tolerated under any circumstances!!!!

The plus-minus system will be utilized in the calculation of final grades.

COURSE SCHEDULE:

8/25	Introduction to course
8/27, 8/30	What is Women's Studies?
*9/1	NO CLASS!
9/3	Discussion of Community Placements
*9/6	No Class - Labor Day Holiday!
*9/8, 9/10	READINGS AND DISCUSSION (Quiz 1) <i>Women's Studies as a Growth Process</i> <i>Finding My Latina Identity Through Women's Studies</i> <i>What Women's Studies Has Meant to Me</i> <i>Why Women's Studies?</i> <i>Women's Studies: A Man's Perspective</i> <i>Fear of Feminism - Why Young Women Get the Willies</i>
*9/13, 9/15	READINGS AND DISCUSSION (Quiz 2) <i>Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls Convention</i> <i>What Really Happened at Seneca Falls</i> <i>Speech at Akron Women's Rights Convention</i> <i>Address to the First National Conference of Colored Women</i> <i>The Solitude of Self</i>
*9/17, 9/20	READINGS AND DISCUSSION (Quiz 3) <i>The Yellow Wall Paper</i> <i>Annie Oakley</i> <i>1855 Marriage Contract</i> <i>The Problem That Has No Name</i> <i>On Being a "Good Girl": Implications for Latinas in the US</i> <i>Outrageous Acts and Bad, Bad Girls</i>
*9/22, 9/24	READINGS AND DISCUSSION (Quiz 4) <i>The Double Standard of Aging</i> <i>Barbie Doll</i> <i>A Doll is Born</i> <i>Madonna</i> <i>Madonna the Feminist</i> <i>Gender Equity in the Classroom: The Unfinished Agenda</i> <i>Homophobia and Sexism</i>
9/27	Film: <u><i>I am Beautiful</i></u>
*9/29	Last day for dropping without academic penalty

*9/29, 10/1	READINGS AND DISCUSSION (Quiz 5) <i>On Being Black at Yale</i> <i>Salad</i> <i>Jewish and Working Class</i> <i>The Birthday Party</i> <i>White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack</i> <i>Madonna: Plantation Mistress or Soul Sister?</i>
10/4, 10/6	READINGS AND DISCUSSION (Quiz 6) <i>The Turbid Ebb and Flow of Misery</i> <i>Roe V. Wade</i> <i>Thoughts on Abortion for our Sisters</i> <i>The Diary of Anais Nin</i> <i>Lusting for Freedom</i> <i>Living My Life: Thoughts on Sexual Identity</i>
*10/8	No Class!
*10/11-10/12	Midsemester Break
10/13, 10/15	READINGS AND DISCUSSION (Quiz 7) <i>Impressions of an Indian Childhood</i> <i>I Stand Here Ironing</i> <i>My Daughter and Me: Déjà vu Over and Over Again</i> <i>Separating Mom from the Concept Called Mother</i> <i>Family and Women's Lives</i>
*10/18	TPSL Discussion
10/20	Film: <u><i>The Story of Mothers and Daughters</i></u>
*10/22	No Class! Collaborative work on Political Position Paper
10/25. 10/27, 10/29	Position Paper and Presentation due!
*11/1, 11/3	READINGS AND DISCUSSION (Quiz 8) <i>Comments on Genesis</i> <i>Public Effort Excommunication</i> <i>Power, Authority, and Mystery: Ecofeminism and Earth based Spirituality</i> <i>Reactions to a Woman Rabbi</i> <i>In Her Own Image</i>
11/5	Film: <u><i>The Burning Times</i></u>
*11/8, 11/10	READINGS AND DISCUSSION (Quiz 9) <i>Violence in Intimate Relationships</i> <i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i> <i>A Letter from a Battered Wife</i> <i>Toward a Black Feminist Understanding of Child Sexual Abuse</i> <i>Sexual Harassment: An Overview of Its Impact for Women</i>
11/12	Film: <u><i>Battered Women: Under Siege</i></u>

*11/15	TPSL Discussion
*11/17	No Class! Consultation regarding (if needed)
*11/19	In Class Response Paper to <u>Closing the Leadership Gap</u>
*11/22	Discussion of <u>Closing the Leadership Gap</u>
*11/24-11/26	Thanksgiving Recess
*11/29, 12/1	READINGS AND DISCUSSION (Quiz 10) <i>Blame It on Feminism</i> <i>Black Women and Feminism</i> <i>A History of Feminist Movements in the US</i> <i>The Development of Chicana Feminist Discourse</i> <i>Thoughts on Indian Feminism</i> <i>Bringing the Global Home</i> <i>Becoming the Third Wave</i>
*12/3	TPSL Reflection Paper Due! TPSL Discussion
12/6	Closing remarks