FGSS 1113
"Social Justice Warriors" and *Cosmo*: Online Feminist Discourse
First-Year Writing Seminar

Course Syllabus

Instructor: Mia Wiegand
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Office: Morrill Hall B06/Rockefeller 170

Meeting Times: MWF 1:25–2:15, White Hall B02
Office Hours: T 3:00–4:00, Rockefeller 170
  (or by appointment, Morrill Hall basement)

Course Description

Online communication is becoming increasingly part of our daily interactions. This course examines the ways that feminism is talked about in the age of social media. How do different online communities discuss feminist issues? What presuppositions are present in those discussions and who is the audience? Who decides what counts as feminism? Whose voices are being listened to (and why)? How does the internet as a medium affect the discourse? The course will draw on the academic literature of both feminist/gender studies and linguistics, as well as nonacademic sources from current media, to examine these questions. While we study the structure of online arguments, we will identify argumentation strategies that can be used to communicate more effectively in both academic writing and broader contexts.

Learning Outcomes

During the course of the semester, you should be working to demonstrate that you are able to:

- Thoroughly and critically read academic texts in the fields of linguistics and gender studies. You should be reading with the goal of both understanding and questioning the arguments presented.

- Construct an argument utilizing secondary sources, as well as primary empirical evidence. Included in this is a **thesis** as well as an organized presentation of the **evidence** supporting that thesis.

- Incorporate sources and citations into your prose in a manner that is appropriate and consistent.

- Edit and revise both your own work and the works of others for content and style.

- Present polished final drafts that are both explicit in argument and concise in language.

- Develop an understanding of the topics discussed and the ability to talk about them in a socially-conscious and informed manner.

Required Readings

There is one required text for this class:

Crystal, David. 2011. *Internet Linguistics: A Student Guide.* **New York: Routledge.**
ISBN: 978-0415602716

This book has been placed on reserve through the library reserves. Other required readings for this course will be available on Blackboard. Additionally, we will frequently utilize the following book and you may wish to get a copy for yourself (though all required sections will be provided):

Graff, Gerald and Cathy Birkenstein. 2014. *They Say/ I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing.* 3rd edn. New York: Norton.
ISBN: 978-0393935844

Expectations and Classroom Policies

It is important that students come to class prepared, which includes having completed any daily assignments and readings beforehand. Students may be called upon for questions or explanations of concepts in the readings.

Discussion and dialogue are encouraged in this class, and disagreement is anticipated. You will almost certainly be exposed to readings and opinions with which you disagree. Please remember to be respectful to one another both in and out of class. If my or any other student's actions make you feel uncomfortable, please discuss it with me.

Given the subject matter of this course, it would not be feasible for me to restrict your access to electronic devices during class, as much of our discussion will involve online forums. As such, you may use laptops and tablets in my class. However, you are expected to remain engaged in discussions and lectures, and if I find that this privilege is being abused, I will consider banning all electronic devices from classroom use.

Grading Breakdown and Policies

Daily Work & Participation:	15%
Large Assignments:	60% (roughly 10%/assignment)
Final Prep Work:	5%
Final Paper:	20%

Daily Work & Participation (15%)

Students will be expected to carefully read all assigned readings and regularly submit reflections or questions from those readings. Unless otherwise stated, reading discussion questions will be due via Blackboard by **10:00 pm the night before class**.

For Blackboard posts, all submissions should be typed directly into the discussion forum interface (rather than as an attachment).

These kinds of assignments will not be graded, but will be scored as either adequate or inadequate, counting toward the participation grade of the course. Also included in participation are any in-class exercises, as well as students' demonstration of active engagement with the course material during class. Unexcused absences, habitual tardiness, or failure to complete course requirements and/or daily work will negatively affect the participation grade in this course. See Requirement for Conferences below.

Large Assignments (60%)

There will be between 6–8 large writing assignment grades throughout the course. These assignments should be submitted before the beginning of class on the day they are due (see General Guidelines for Writing Assignments below for details). Some of these will consist of multiple stages, and several will involve a revision process. Only the final draft of each of these assignments will receive a recorded grade, though you will receive feedback at every stage of the assignment. Each graded assignment will constitute roughly 10% of the course grade (though some assignments may be weighted more heavily than others).

Grading in this course will be strict, and will become more so as the course progresses and your writing improves. However, you will have opportunities to revise your assignments. See the Revisions section below for more details.

Final Paper & Presentation (25%)

Throughout the course, students will be expected to be researching a relevant topic for the purposes of your final paper. This paper will be due on the last day of class, and will constitute 20% of the course grade.

In addition to the final draft of the paper, students will be expected to turn in a paper proposal, annotated bibliography, and at least one draft with revisions. Lastly, each student will give a 5–8 minute presentation (with a handout) to the class detailing some of the background research for their research paper. Students will also be required to submit a brief questions/reflections critique of the presentations of their fellow students. This presentation and critique, along with the fulfillment of the rest of the final prep work (proposal, bibliography, draft) will serve as an additional 5% of the course grade. This last 5% is all or nothing, meaning that if you do not fill out your reflection form, you lose 5% of your entire course grade, but if you fulfill all requirements you essentially have a free 5% buffer. (This makes the final paper and all of its prep work worth a quarter of the entire course grade.)

Policy on Absences, Lateness and Extensions

As stated earlier, multiple unexcused absences and/or chronic lateness will negatively impact the participation portion of the grade.

During the course of the semester, you are allotted **three late days** for large assignments (with the exception of drafts undergoing peer editing—these you must turn in on time). These can be used all at once (one assignment, three days late), or individually (three assignments, each one day late). Beyond these three grace period days, extensions will be given only in exigent circumstances, and assignments turned in late will receive a deduction of a full letter grade for every day past the deadline. Furthermore, assignments originally turned in late will receive a maximum grade of B+ upon any revisions.

General Guidelines for Writing Assignments

- All writing assignments are due by the beginning of class on their due date.

- They should be submitted via Blackboard in **pdf format**.

- All assignments (except in-class exercises) must be typed, following these specifications:

    ○ Use a standard serif font (e.g., Times New Roman, Cambria, Computer Modern, etc.) (This means NOT Arial, Calibri, Comic Sans, Papyrus, Wingdings, etc.).

    ○ Use 12 point font.

    ○ Double space, with 1 inch margins.

    ○ Include page numbers.

    ○ At the top of the first page, include (at minimum) your name, assignment due date, and assignment number (including draft/revision number).

    ○ At the bottom of the last page, include a word count of the content of your essay (this excludes the heading).

- Proofread and spellcheck before submitting any drafts.

- Make sure that you have adequately addressed all aspects of the prompt and that your word count is within the assignment parameters.

- Use a consistent citation style for in-text citations and references. (See handout on citations and references for more detailed requirements.)

Note on Blackboard Submissions

For daily discussion posts, I will set a hard deadline of 10:00 pm the night they are due. This is because discussion posts and reflections are graded as adequate/inadequate, so if you miss the deadline, you simply receive a 0 for that day.

On the other hand, for large assignments, I do not remove the assignment after the deadline, as you may submit late for a reduced grade (see section on large assignments). Additionally, I allow multiple submission attempts on large assignments in order to allow for revisions. Unfortunately, this means that revisions will always receive an automatic "late" marker from the Blackboard site; however, if there is already a graded score there I will know that it was submitted as a revision, so you may safely ignore the late indication.
A side effect of allowing multiple submissions is that you may re-submit a draft before it has been graded. This is fine, but be aware that if I have not yet graded any of your submission attempts, **I will only grade the one submitted most recently**. This means that if you submit a second attempt after the deadline (and do not tell me to ignore it), your final score will be subject to late penalties.

If something ever goes wrong while you're submitting, please email me and let me know so that I can address it immediately.

Revisions (please read carefully)

Beyond the required revision process for selected assignments, you will also have the opportunity to revise final drafts of assignments for a new grade. You may revise any assignment, except the last assignment and the final paper, as many times as you wish. I will not provide any written comments on revisions; I will only give you a score. (If you do want feedback on a revision, you are always welcome to come to office hours or schedule a meeting with me and I would be happy to talk with you about your work.)

If you score higher on the revision, the revision grade will replace the original recorded grade; otherwise, the recorded grade will remain as is. You are not guaranteed an improved score simply because you turned in a revised essay, but you also do not risk a lower score by submitting a revision. The revised essay must be substantially improved in order to warrant a higher grade than the original.

The last day to submit revisions is two weeks before the last day of class. You may not submit more than one revised essay in a single 24-hour period. This means that you should be revising assignments earlier in the semester if you wish to use this option; don't wait until the night before the final deadline.

Requirement for Conferences

You are required by the Knight Institute to meet with me individually twice this semester. At these meetings, we can go over a draft or a paper that has already been returned, talk about your final project, or anything else relevant to the class, including any concerns you or I may have about your performance in this course.

As this is a requirement for completion of the course, failure to schedule and attend these two meetings will result in a failing participation score for the course.

The individual meetings can be fulfilled during office hours, or via independently scheduled appointments, but the meeting must be substantive (i.e., coming in to office hours to just say hi does not count). You are responsible for scheduling and keeping your meetings! Beyond these conferences, you are encouraged to attend office hours or schedule meetings with me as often as desired and/or needed.

You will get more out of these meetings if you schedule at least one of them fairly early in the semester.

Contacting your Instructor

I am available by email (see contact info). I may not respond to all emails immediately, but I will respond by the end of the next weekday. I may answer emails over weekends or holidays; however, I make no guarantees, so try to ask any questions during the week.

When you send me an email, be sure to include the string "FWS" in the subject line (this helps ensure that I see your email, as I have a filter set up prioritizing student emails.)

You should feel free to stop by office hours any time. Additionally, you are encouraged (in fact, required) to schedule meetings with me throughout the semester, and you may do so as often as you like. One-on-one detailed conversations about your work are often the best way to improve your writing, so don't be afraid to ask me to review my comments and/or look through a draft with you. I make myself available to you as a resource as often as possible, but ultimately it is your responsibility to ask for clarification or guidance if find yourself struggling in this course.

Public Domain Disclaimer

All student writing for this course will become open information for this course. As such, it may be read and shared by all members of the class at any time. This includes all in-class and take-home assignments, both graded and not graded.

University Policies and Regulations

As your instructor I respect and uphold University policies and regulations pertaining to the observation of: religious holidays; assistance available to the physically handicapped, visually and/or hearing impaired student; plagiarism; sexual harassment; and racial or ethnic discrimination. All students are advised to become familiar with the respective University regulations and are encouraged to bring any questions or concerns to the attention of the instructor.

Students with Disabilities

In compliance with the Cornell University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except in unusual circumstances, so that arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations.

Academic Integrity

All the work you submit in this course must have been written for this course and not another and must originate with you in form and content with all contributory sources fully and specifically acknowledged. Make yourself familiar with Cornell's Academic Integrity Code, which is distributed to students in *The Essential Guide to Academic Integrity at Cornell*. The code, together with a guide to *Acknowledging the Work of Others*, can be downloaded at `https://cornell-classic.univcomm.cornell.edu/provost/docs/0814-academic-integrity.pdf`. In this course, the normal penalty for a violation of the code is an F for the term.

Collaborative work in the form of peer review and critique of students' essays by one another is authorized, and indeed encouraged, in this course.

Important Dates – Subject to change, last updated October 28, 2018

(*Recent adjustments in* **bold**)

August 24	FIRST DAY OF CLASS	
August 29		Due: Assignment 1
September 3	NO CLASS: LABOR DAY	
September 7		Due: Assignment 2
September 17		Due: Assignment 3 Draft
September 24		Due: Assignment 4, Part A
October 1		Due: Assignment 4, Part B
October 5	NO CLASS	
October 8	NO CLASS: FALL BREAK	
October 12		Due: Assignment 3
October 22		Due: Assignment 5 Draft
October 24	LIBRARY SESSION	
October 26		Due: Peer Review of Assignment 5
October 29		Due: Final Paper Proposal
October 31	HALLOWEEN!	Due: Assignment 4, Part C
November 5		**Due: Assignment 5**
November 9		**Due: Annotated Bibliography**
November 16		Due: Assignment 6 Draft **(Optional)**
November 19	LAST DAY TO SUBMIT REVISIONS![1]	Due: Final Paper Draft
November 21–23	NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING BREAK	
December 3	LAST DAY OF CLASS	Due: Assignment 6
December 13		Due: Final Paper (4:30 pm, via Blackboard)

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[1]Exceptions: You may submit revisions to <u>Assignment 5 only</u> until the last day of class (Dec. 3). No revisions are allowed for Assignment 6 at all, so be extra careful to examine instructor comments on your draft, if you choose to submit a draft.

List of Topics

This represents an initial sketch of the topics I intend to cover in this course. As we go, some of parts will likely be added or deleted. Weekly detailed schedules will be handed out in class and posted on Blackboard.

If there are relevant topics not on this list that are of particular interest to you, always feel free to email me and I will do my best to include them!

Introduction to the Course: Feminism 101

Language and the Internet

Communities of Practice & Sociolinguistic Research Methodology

Definitions & Communities

Feminist Identity in the Digital Age

"SJW" as Identity and Insult

#Activism & "Slacktivism"

Presupposition

Power & Privilege

Dog Whistles & Coded Language

"Pop Feminism"

Online Feminist Marketing & Commercialization

Political Correctness & Free Speech in the Context of Social Media

Memes & Internet Culture