

GNDR 2110: Introduction to Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies  
Spring 2024  
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## **Course Overview**

What is women, gender, and sexuality studies? What is the distinctive mark of a feminist investigation into the social position of women? What do such interventions have to say about gender or sexuality? Who gets to count as a woman and why? This class attempts to introduce women, gender, and sexuality studies not by definitively answering these questions but by carefully examining the history of how the fields of feminist, queer, trans, and postcolonial theory address these questions and the broader implications of their social critique. As such, this class deals with topics such as prison abolition, activist work, intersectionality, heteronormativity, colonialism, and historiographical problems related to the study of these subjects.

## **Learning Outcomes and Objectives**

My aims for this course are twofold. On the one hand, I want us to learn about women, gender, and sexuality studies together. This is already a challenge, as this field is well-known for its difficulty. On the other hand, since this class is an introduction, I see it as my obligation to help prepare you for the research environment and expectations of further study in upper-level humanities and social-science coursework. Accordingly, many of our activities are structured around developing the skillset that will allow you to excel in further humanities and social science coursework (as well as other professional environments): such as close reading of primary texts, discussion, and expressive assignments.

## **Required Texts**

There are two required texts for this class:

*Bad Indians: A Tribal Memoir* by Deborah A. Miranda. ISBN: 1597142018  
*My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness* by Nagata Kabi. ISBN: 979-8888432099

## **Method of Evaluation**

Your grade is composed of three parts.

1. Reading Responses: 33% of final grade.
2. Short Projects: 33% of final grade.
3. Final Project: 33% of final grade.

Rubrics detailing the requirements for each assignment as well as the due date will be posted in another document on Canvas.

## **Extra Credit**

There will be one extra-credit assignment for this class. This assignment is called the **final project rough draft**. This will involve turning in a rough draft of your final paper before the due date listed in the class schedule below. I will post a rubric containing more exact requirements along with the rubric for the final paper, but full credit for the rough draft is an extra 10% on your final paper grade. I will also provide vitally important feedback on your progress thus far. This may have the effect of single handedly raising your final grade by a third of a letter grade, potentially pushing you, for example, from a B+ into an A-.

### **Reading Response (and Weekly Routine)**

This class is asynchronous and online. This means that we do not have the opportunity to see one another and discuss the material in person, which means we must settle for second-best: writing. Each week (specifically, I aim for every Monday) I will (1) make an announcement, (2) post lectures for the week, and (3) open a discussion forum thread. You will be expected each week to post a 1-3 paragraph reply on each discussion forum thread by Sunday night of each week (so before the next batch drops). This is to ensure that you don't run behind and so that other classmates can benefit from your discussion posts.

I realize that often these discussion forum posts are a real pain and a waste of time. I would like us to try take this space seriously. A lot of the learning that happens in the classroom doesn't just come from the instructor talking, but students learning from each other, and other than discussion forum posts, there's simply no easy way to make this happen. I do not (and will not) require you to respond to one another, but I would encourage you to think of your classmates as potential sources of keen insight. I try to think of the discussion forum posts as like talking in class – you are allowed to be informal, unsure, and so on. Try to aim the discussion toward everyone, including your peers, and I would encourage you to read what your fellow students have to say. I promise I will match your effort!

That being said, these assignments are largely graded on completion. You are not “graded” on how well you answer the prompt I write each week. I'm more looking for what you think about what we just read. Sometimes you won't have much to say other than to ask questions, and that is totally fine. Asking questions is actually very helpful, since your classmates probably have similar questions and will benefit from you voicing it! I would encourage you not to think of your grade while writing these and instead just grapple with the content however is most natural for you.

### **Short Projects**

You will be required to turn in a short project, either a 2-3 page paper or other form of creative expression, at week 4, week 8, and week 12. More exact requirements will be posted to Canvas.

### **Final Project**

Your final project will be either a 4-6 page argumentative paper or creative expression related to a substantive issue we discuss in the course. A rubric will be posted toward the end of the semester.

### **Grading Scale**

All grades except discussion posts are graded out of 100. The grading scale is provided below.

97-100 = A+

93-96 = A  
90-92 = A-  
87-89 = B+  
83-86 = B  
80-82 = B-  
77-79 = C+  
73-76 = C  
70-72 = C-  
66-69 = D  
65 and below = F

## Online

This class is entirely online. Moreover, every aspect of the course is asynchronous *except* my weekly office hours. As a result, this course will require a lot of individual initiative. Since there are not scheduled class times, I will be posting a lecture on the readings assigned for every week. It is required that you watch all of these lectures in their entirety, as they will allow you to check your understanding. **If you do not listen to the lectures, you will probably not get a good grade.** Moreover, weekly reading responses posted on learn will be your primary opportunity to ask questions related to the course. I highly encourage you to post whatever questions come to mind, as it will not only allow you to receive an answer, but it will also help out your classmates and create a cooperative atmosphere as well! Learning is best done in a collective and cooperative atmosphere, which requires that we each take initiative. I promise to meet you halfway.

I understand that because of the (still ongoing) coronavirus pandemic, online courses can be a little bit of a hassle. I am in general an understanding instructor, but it is important that you stay in contact with me about any problems you have with the course. If you are unable to complete a response or assignment on time because of external circumstances, it is **imperative** that you let me know via email **beforehand**, if at all possible. The most important part of succeeding in this course is not going AWOL (absent without official leave). Circumstances notwithstanding, please try to stay in communication with me about your ability to fulfill the requirements of the course. Barring exceptional circumstances, if you do not complete an assignment, and do not let me know about your circumstances ahead of time, **you may receive a 0 for the assignment and will not be allowed to make it up later.**

**Finally, no form of ChatGPT or any other artificial intelligence software is allowed to be used in any way for any assignment whatsoever.** The assignments are designed with the intention of me being able to assess your knowledge and skills. There is no value in me grading the mindless output of artificial intelligence, and when you use this software, you make a mockery of the entire enterprise of education as a whole. Therefore, **I will not tolerate any form of academic misconduct, including the use of ChatGPT, and all cases of plagiarism will be reported.** I also reserve the right to give a 0 to any paper, project, or exam that strongly suggests the use of artificial intelligence, such as ones that (a) does not reference our course materials, (b) compares our course materials to something irrelevant, (c) writes on course material that we have not yet covered as a class, (d) provide inane descriptions of what critics or others believe rather than providing an actual argument, etc. These papers are bad, and it is doubly bad to use terrible papers to cheat in college classes.

## Other Rules for the Course

1. All grades are final and non-negotiable. If you have a question about a grade for a particular assignment, eMail with me to discuss it.
2. No incompletes will be given for the semester unless you can demonstrate valid and compelling reasons.
3. You are not guaranteed any extra-credit assignments beyond what is offered in the syllabus.
4. If you fail to turn in a final, you will fail the course.
5. No form of academic dishonesty will be tolerated. All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the university administration. (If you plagiarize, I will catch you. I have caught people **almost every single semester** I have been an instructor! It is simply better from a practical perspective to turn something in that is halfway complete than it is to plagiarize.)
6. You must demonstrate the appropriate respect for all fellow inquirers.
7. I promise to do my best in responding to your eMails and questions right away, typically within 1-2 business days.
8. No use of ChatGPT or any other form of artificial intelligence at any stage will be permitted or tolerated.
9. I reserve the right to give you a 0 for an assignment if it plainly fails to address the question of the assignment, even if it contains some correct information.

## Content Warning and Conduct Expectations

This class addresses pressing personal and political issues facing gender and racial minorities, working class people, the disabled, and so on. Accordingly, the material for this class will address the often severe and on-going violence experienced by these peoples. This introduces a unique responsibility in the classroom environment: in order to investigate our subject matter, we must be sensitive to the classroom's potential complicity to these forms of violence. In short, because we address and concern ourselves with problematic, urgent, pressing, and sometimes graphic descriptions because of their importance to a complete and robust introduction to women, gender, and sexuality studies. Please always be sensitive to the fact that the people being discussed in the literature we are about to read together typically are in the room.

## Welcome Module

1. **Sex, Gender, Difference, Intersectionality**
  - a. Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes" (Online)
  - b. Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes, Revisited" 17-22.
  - c. Paisley Currah, *Sex is as Sex Does* (Online)
  - d. Patricia Hill Collins, *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory* (Online).
2. **Bodies/Sexualities and Desires**
  - a. Betsy Lucal, "What it Means to be Gendered Me: Life on the Boundaries of a Dichotomous Gender System" 85-93.
  - b. Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on Sexuality* (Online).
  - c. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (Online).
  - d. Monique Wittig, *The Straight Mind* (Online).
3. **Identities**
  - a. Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Online).
  - b. Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," 270-274.
  - c. Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools will Never Dismantle the Master's House" (Online).
  - d. Deborah A. Miranda, *Bad Indians* (Online).
4. **Families/Labor**

- a. Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, (Online).
  - b. Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Theory* (Online).
  - c. Patricia Hill Collins, "The Meaning of Motherhood in Black Culture and Black Mother—Daughter Relationships" 315-324.
- 5. Education and Schools/Violence**
- a. bell hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody* (Online).
  - b. Ann Arnett Ferguson, "Naughty by Nature" 476-482.
- 6. Change and Politics**
- a. Combahee River Collective Statement (Online).
  - b. Leslie Feinnberg, *Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink and Blue* (Online).
  - c. Thomas Rogers, "We're All Intersex," 531-533.
  - d. Talia Mae Bettcher, "Intersexuality, Transgender, and Transsexuality"
- 7. Historiographical Problems in WGSS [Penny Choice]**
- a. Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts" (Online).
  - b. David Valentine, *Imagining Transgender*.
  - c. Jules Gill-Peterson, *History of the Transgender Child*.
- 8. Wrap Up and Farewell**

**Final projects due 5/12!**

