

WOMS 201-010/011
INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S STUDIES

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COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This course will use an interdisciplinary approach to investigate the condition of women in society. We will begin by examining the social and psychological forces which shape women's lives. We will then expand our analysis to study some specific aspects of women's experience, from the family, health and sexuality, to their interaction with several formal institutions such as the law and the economy. Particular attention will be paid to the diversity of women's experiences.

The goals of this course are:

- 1) to investigate issues which have an impact on women's lives.
- 2) to expand student's knowledge and understanding of the legal, social, economic and political conditions of women.
- 3) to encourage each student to explore personal values and actions in response to class readings, discussions, lectures, etc.
- 4) to formulate ideas about how society can better meet human needs as we move into the future

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

I expect students to come to class prepared to raise questions and participate in discussions. All assigned readings are required. Reading assignments are listed on the syllabus for the current week's classes. Students should have completed the assigned readings **BEFORE EACH CLASS**. You are expected to incorporate material from class meetings, lectures, discussions, videos and readings into all of your class work. Grades will be based on points acquired through three exams, class participation assignments as listed below, a written web analysis and a paper.

DUE DATES AND POINT COUNTS GRADE COMPUTATION:

Exam 1 - Mar. 6	up to 20 points	94-100 pts = A	67-69 pts = D+
Exam 2 - Apr 17	up to 20 points	90-93 pts = A-	63-66 pts = D
Final Exam -		87-89 pts = B+	60-62 pts = D-
Exam Week	up to 20 points	83-86 pts = B	
Paper, <u>Egalia's Daughters</u>		80-82 pts = B-	
- May 6th	up to 10 points	77-79 pts = C+	
Class Participation	up to 15 points	73-76 pts = C	
Web Analysis	up to 15 points	70-72 pts = C-	
Total	up to 100 points		

TEXTS: Susan Shaw & Janet Lee, eds., Women's Voices, Feminist Visions Mayfield, 3rd ed., 2007.

Gerd Brantenberg, Egalia's Daughters, Seal Press, 2005.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS:

CLASS PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS (15 points)

As stated above, students are expected to come prepared to discuss readings and other class material. Your class participation grade will be based on the following criteria. Failure to complete these assignments on the dates indicated will result in a zero, unless official medical excuses or pre-arranged excuses are submitted.

1. **Class Activities/ Discussions:** As we progress through the semester, there will be regular assignments related to the topic being discussed. Students will be given questions to answer or activities to carry out and are responsible for these assignments. Students will write up short informal responses or analysis of activities. These short writing assignments will be collected and checked off. Failure to turn in an assignment on time will result in a zero for that assignment. The short assignments function to promote attendance, preparedness and good class discussion.

On some occasions, students will be broken up into groups to discuss materials related to specific issues. By the end of the period, each group will come to a conclusion that they will share with the class. Group activities and discussions are meant to be interactive, therefore, missed groups cannot be made-up. Thus, if you foresee missing many classes, I strongly suggest that you take another course. (10 pts)

2. **"Field Trip"** Each student will take a "Field Trip" outside of class by attending a feminist and/or women's event and write a one page response/review/critique of the event. This may be a lecture, concert, exhibition, reading, etc. See handouts for list of several approved activities. Others will be mentioned during the semester. Pass in as soon as you are done. All field trip reports MUST be in by May 15th. (5 pts)

WEB ASSIGNMENT: Each student will research and prepare a report on a website they have investigated. The goal of this assignment is to help students develop critical analysis of web material and learn searching skills to enable them to find appropriate materials. Each student is to select a topic from a range of issues in "Women's Health and Reproduction" and explore resources on the web relevant to the topic. You will turn in an evaluation of the website during the week we are discussing the material it relates to. More information will be forthcoming. (15 pts)

PAPER ASSIGNMENT on *Egalia's Daughters*. Students should read the Brantenberg novel throughout the semester. On May 15th, you will be asked to respond to a question about the novel, *Egalia's Daughter* by Gerd Brantenberg in class. There will be a 25 minute time limit for this assignment, followed by group discussion on the significance and meaning of the novel. More information will be handed out later in the semester. (10 pts).

EXAMINATIONS: (20 points each) There will be THREE exams. The first two will be given in class, the last during exam week. These exams will consist of a combination of multiple choice, short answers and short essay questions. The dates of the exams are listed above.

EXTRA CREDIT: There are several possible options you have for earning extra credit. 5 possible points may be added to your final grade. Must be passed in by May 15th to be accepted.

1. Write a short paper analyzing something found in the popular media using material from class.
2. Attend Women's Studies brown bag discussion and events and write up report with analysis.
3. Volunteer at shelter or with group working on issues and write up summary of experience.
4. Other options may arise during the semester, I will make announcements in class (ie attend lectures, conferences.) In order to get the full 5 points for the extra credit assignment, you need to requires apply the theories and concepts covered in the course to your analysis.

Helpful Hints: 1) When in doubt, ask questions. If you don't understand something, ask for clarification. 2) Come to class prepared; jot down questions to be asked in class. Try to keep up with the reading. You will find your learning experience will be enhanced if you read the material before class. Class lectures will not necessarily repeat information given in the textbook. 3) The key to passing the course and getting a decent grade is to READ the assignments. 4) If I talk too fast, ask me to slow down.

COURSE OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS: Please note that the dates are flexible - and there is some leeway built into the schedule. If we need more time on a topic - we will take it.

I. What is Feminism? Perspectives & History of Women's Movement & Women's Studies.

2/12, 2/14, 2/19, 2/21

Introduction to Class/ Exchange of Expectations and Ideas

Introduction to Women's Studies / What is Feminism? What is Women's Studies?

Historical Overview of Women's Movement(s)

Readings: S&L, Ch. 1, "Women's Studies: Perspectives and Practices." [all articles], 1-58

"Fear of Feminism," Reading #103, 718-720

II. The Social Construction of Gender, Race and Class

2/26, 2/28, 3/4, 3/6

The Social Construction of Gender, Race and Class

Multicultural Perspectives and Diversity in Women's Lives

Gender Acquisition // Gender and Education // Gender and the Media

Readings:

Ch. 2, "Systems of Privilege & Inequality in Women's Lives," [all articles], 60- 122

Ch. 3, "Learning Gender in a Diverse Society," [all articles], 124-164

Ch. 9, "Women Confronting and Creating Culture," [all articles], 503-552

March 6 - First Exam - in class Covers sessions: What is Feminism? What is Women's Studies?, Multicultural Perspectives and Diversity in Women's Lives, The Social Construction of Gender, Race and Class

III. Private Matters and Intimate Relationships

3/11, 3/13 Sexuality

Readings: Ch. 4, "Sex, Power, and Intimacy," [all articles], 165-228

3/18, 3/20, 3/25, 3/27 Women's Health and Reproduction

Readings: Ch. 5, "Inscribing Gender on the Body," [all articles], 229-299

Ch. 6, "Health and Reproductive Rights," [all articles], 301-370

Mar. 27th - WEB Assignments of Women's Health and Reproduction are due in class .

SPRING BREAK - MAR. 29- April 8

4/8, 4/10 Women and the Family

Readings: Ch. 7, "Family Systems, Family Lives," [all articles], 372-428

4/15, 4/17 Violence against Women

Readings: Ch 10, "Resisting Violence Against Women," [all articles], 554-614

Thurs April 17th - Second Exam - in class covers sessions Sexuality, Women's Health and Reproduction, Women and the Family, and Violence Against Women

IV. Women and Social Institutions

4/22, 4/24 Women, Work, Poverty and the Economy

Readings: Ch., 8, "Women's Work Inside and Outside the Home," [all articles], 429-502

4/29, 5/1, 5/6

Women and the State

Readings: Ch 11, "State, Law, and Social Policy," [all articles], 615-664

May 6th In class writing assignment Egalia's Daughters Students should be prepared to discuss and write about Brantenberg's novel.

5/8, 5/13 Women and Religion

Readings: Ch 12, "Religion and Spirituality in Women's Lives," [all articles], 666-702

VI. Feminism In the Future

5/15 The Future of Feminism: Where Do We Go From Here?

Readings: Ch 13, "Activism, Change and Feminist Futures," [all articles], 704-742

Final Exam - Tues May 20th in class. Will cover: Women, Work & the Economy; Women & Religion, Women & the State, Future of Feminism, as well as questions from Egalia's Daughters.