

**WGS 2500: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies**  
**MWF 12:30-1:30**

**Instructor:** Dana Berkowitz, Ph.D.

**Office:** 133 Stubbs Hall

**Office Hours:** M W F 1:45-3:00 and by appointment

**Phone:** 578-5348

**Course Location:** 112 Tureaud

**Course Description:**

The focus of this course is to introduce students to concepts and issues emerging in the field of women's studies and contemporary debates taking place in feminist theory and scholarship. This course is an introduction to critical thinking about the construction of gender and the intersections of gender with race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and nation. We will be concerned with the ways in which these constructions and intersections shape women's lives. Particular attention is devoted to women's bodies. In this class we will investigate the past, present, and future of feminism, investigating the ways in which women's studies intersects with other disciplines and facets of lives, and the larger realm of feminist inquiry. Our investigation will proceed through reading the work of a diverse group of feminist writers, researchers, and activists in the United States and abroad.

**Course Objectives:**

- To gain an understanding of how women's studies and feminist theory have evolved and affected other viewpoints within the academic world and wider communities
- To examine women's lives through a socio-historical and critical lens that engages a full discussion of social location and intersectionality
- To recognize the diversity of feminist thought
- To promote creative, self-directed learning through the research

**Course Materials:**

Textbook: *Women's Voices Feminist Visions: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). By: Susan M. Shaw and Janet Lee. McGraw Hill.

There is also a course pack with supplementary readings available at the LSU bookstore. Both the text and the course pack are required.

## **STUDENT ASSIGNMENTS:**

Exams (2)	100 points
Discussion Leader	25 points
Personal Essay	25 points
Critical Reflection	25 points
Class Participation & Attendance	25 points
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>200 points</b>

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## **EXAMS**

There will be two exams given during this course. The exams will cover in-class lectures and the assigned readings. They will be mostly multiple-choice, with some short-answer and essay questions. If you miss the exam because you failed to attend class, you will NOT be given a makeup exam. Each exam is worth 50 points.

## **DISCUSSION LEADER**

You will be responsible for leading one classroom discussion based on the day's assigned readings. You may only choose to be a discussion leader on the days that readings are assigned on the syllabus, not chapters. This assignment includes: a) writing a 2-page **critical** reflection paper on the article(s) that you are assigned; b) giving a 10-minute oral summary at the beginning of class discussion; and c) coming up with 3 thought provoking questions for the class to discuss. All questions should be handed in to me **two days** PRIOR to your scheduled discussion. This assignment is worth 25 points.

## **PERSONAL ESSAY**

You are required to write a 2-3 page (double spaced) personal essay about how feminism influences your life. This should be a highly self-reflective exercise. While I expect these to be personal, they should also include examples from class discussion and readings. This assignment is due September 26, 2007 and is worth 25 points.

## **CRITICAL REFLECTION**

During the semester, we will be covering a lot of material, most of which will be new, and all of which will be stimulating and challenging. However, we will not have time to discuss every reading in your text. Thus, you will be required to complete a 2-3 page

**critical** reflection on any reading in the text that is not assigned on the syllabus. These must be **critical** reactions to the reading and interweave thoughts regarding previous class discussions, or **critical** thoughts about current events related to our discussions. I hope you will consider how these particular readings relate to your own lives and gendered experiences, although I understand if this is not something you choose to share. You will be graded on the content of your entries and on the amount of depth and critical analysis your reflections include. This assignment is **due anytime before December 3** and is worth 25 points.

## **CLASS PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE**

You are expected to attend each class session. Additionally, it is not enough for you to merely show-up to class. It is imperative that you come to class prepared, having read the assigned readings. If you miss class, you are responsible for getting the material covered in class. In order to gauge your class attendance, there will be **5 random pop quizzes or activities** throughout the semester that will constitute your class attendance grade.

### **Extra Credit:**

There will be a few times throughout the course when I will allow you to write critical reflections on happenings in the media, on campus, or in Baton Rouge that are associated with the sociology of gender. **These extra credit opportunities are up to my discretion.** Reflections should be approximately two pages long. These reflections are worth 1 point each and you may only do two during the course of the semester. **Therefore, you have the opportunity to earn ONLY 2 extra credit points.**

### **A Note on Classroom Environment:**

The success of this course depends on the interactions generated between the instructor and the students. I do expect you to participate actively in class, share your ideas and opinions, comment on and assess those of your fellow classmates. However, I do demand that everyone treat each other with respect. Ridicule of any sort will not be tolerated.

### **Disabilities:**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation.

## **Course Schedule**

**Please Note:** This course requires a substantial amount of reading.

I have spent a great deal of time planning this course. However, it may occasionally become necessary for me to change the dates of planned activities due to circumstances that arise in class, or in local and national conversations about gender.

The readings for each week should be read in the order in which they appear on this syllabus.

## **8/27: Introduction to the Course and Syllabus**

### **Part 1: Women's Studies: Perspectives and Practices**

**8/29:**

1. **Text:** Chapter 1 (pp. 1-21)

**8/31:**

1. **Text:** "A Day without Feminism" by Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards (pp. 25-28)
2. **Text:** "We are Using this Power to Resist" by Rebecca Walker (pp. 44-48).

**9/5:**

1. **Course pack:** "The Variety of Feminisms and their Contributions to Gender Equality" by Judith Lorber (pp. 1-21) in *Gender Inequality: Feminist Theories and Politics* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) by Judith Lorber

**9/7:**

1. **Text:** "Constitutional Argument" by Susan B. Anthony (pp.637-638)
2. **Course pack:** "Ain't I a Woman?" by Sojourner Truth (pp. 33) in *Feminist Frontiers* (7<sup>th</sup> edition) edited by Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier, and Leila Rupp

**9/10:**

1. **Course pack:** " Liberal Feminism" by Judith Lorber (pp. 26-44) in *Gender Inequality: Feminist Theories and Politics* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) by Judith Lorber
2. **Course pack:** "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" by Audre Lorde (pp. 35-37) in *Feminist Frontiers* (7<sup>th</sup> edition) edited by Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier, and Leila Rupp

**9/12:**

1. **Course pack:** "Third Wave Feminism" by Judith Lorber (pp. 279-281) in *Gender Inequality: Feminist Theories and Politics* (3<sup>rd</sup> edition) by Judith Lorber
2. **Course pack:** "Foreword" by Cherrie Moraga and "Introduction" by Bushra Rehman and Daisy Hernandez (pp. xi-xviii) for *Colonize This!: Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism*

3. **Course pack:** “Feminism without Borders” by Chandra Talpade Mohanty (pp. 76-81) in *Feminist Frontiers* (7<sup>th</sup> edition) edited by Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier, and Leila Rupp

## **Part 2: Systems of Privilege and Inequality in Women’s Lives**

**9/14:**

1. **Text:** Chapter 2 (pp. 60-75)

**9/17:**

1. **Text:** “Toward a New Vision: Race, Class, and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection” by Patricia Hill Collins (pp. 76-84)“
2. **Text:** “Oppression” by Marilyn Frye (84-86); “White Privilege and Male Privilege” by Peggy McIntosh (pp. 91-98).

**9/19:**

1. **Text:** “Something about the Subject Makes it Hard to Name” by Gloria Yamato (pp. 99-101)
2. **Text:** “Tired of Playing Monopoly” by Donna Langston (pp. 101-106)
3. **Text:** “Voices: On Becoming Old Women” by Baba Copper (pp. 106-110)
4. **Text:** “The Social Construction of Disability” by Susan Wendell (pp. 110-118).

## **Part 3: Learning Gender in a Diverse Society**

**9/21:**

1. **Text:** Chapter 3 (pp. 124-138)

**9/24:**

1. **Text:** “The Two Sexes are Not Enough” by Anne Fausto-Sterling (pp. 139-141)“
2. **Text:** “The Social Construction of Gender” by Judith Lorber (pp.141-144)

**9/26:**

1. **Course pack:** “Boys and Girls Together...But Mostly Apart: Gender Arrangements in Elementary Schools” by Barrie Thorne (pp. 141-151) in *Feminist Frontiers* (7<sup>th</sup> edition) edited by Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier, and Leila Rupp

## **9/26 PERSONAL ESSAY DUE**

## **Part 4: Sex, Power, and Intimacy**

**9/28:**

1. **Text:** Chapter 4 (pp. 165-179)

**10/1:**

1. **Course pack:** “Doing Desire: Adolescent Girls’ Struggles for/with Sexuality” by Deborah Tolman (pp. 302-312) in *Feminist Frontiers* (7<sup>th</sup> edition) edited by Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier, and Leila Rupp
2. **Text:** “I was a Cosmo Sex Deviant” by A.E. Berkowitz (pp. 195-198)

**10/3:**

1. **Course pack:** “Black Sexual Politics” by Patricia Hill Collins (pp. 318-332) in *Feminist Frontiers* (7<sup>th</sup> edition) edited by Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier, and Leila Rupp
2. **Text:** “Prue show Her Knickers” by Emily Oxford (pp. 203-205)

**10/5:**

1. **Text:** “Some like Indians Endure” by Paula Gunn Allen (pp. 206-207)
2. **Text:** “Biphobia” by Marcia Deihl and Robin Ochs (pp. 191-195)

**Part 5: Inscribing Gender on the Body**

**10/8:**

1. **Text:** Chapter 5 (pp. 229-247)

**10/10:**

1. **Text:** “If Men Could Menstruate” by Gloria Steinem (pp. 258-259)
2. **Course pack:** “Hormonal Hurricanes: Menstruation, Menopause, and Female Behavior” by Anne Fausto-Sterling (pp. 351-363) in *Feminist Frontiers* (7<sup>th</sup> edition) edited by Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier, and Leila Rupp

**10/12:**

1. **Course pack:** “A Way Outta No Way: Eating Problems among African-American, Latina, and White Women” by Becky Wangsgaard Thompson (pp. 364-373) in *Feminist Frontiers* (7<sup>th</sup> edition) edited by Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier, and Leila Rupp

**10/15:**

1. **Text:** “What We Do for Love” by Rose Weitz (pp. 270-282)
2. **Text:** “Hold That Nose” by Lisa Miya-Jervis (pp. 282-284)
3. **Text:** “China’s Cosmetic Surgery Craze” by Jonathon Watts (pp. 290-291)

**10/17:**

1. **Text:** “Designer Vaginas” by Simone Weil Davis (pp. 291-299)
2. **Text:** “Dancing Toward Redemption” by Meredith McGhan (pp. 284-289)

**10/19: EXAM 1**

**Part 6: Health and Reproductive Rights**

**10/22:**

1. **Text:** Chapter 6 (pp. 301-331)

**10/24:**

1. **Text:** “Gender Role Stressors and Women’s Health” by Patti L. Watkins and Diane Whaley (pp.342-345)
2. **Course pack:** “Welcome to Cancerland” by Barbara Ehrenreich (pp. 402-412) in *Feminist Frontiers* (7<sup>th</sup> edition) edited by Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier, and Leila Rupp

**10/26:**

1. **Text:** “My Fight for Birth Control” by Margaret Sanger (pp. 352-354)
2. **Text:** “Women of Color and Their Struggle for Reproductive Justice” by Jael Sillman, Marlene Gerber Fried, Loretta Ross, and Elena R. Guiterrez (pp. 354-362)
3. **Text:** “The Way it Was” by Eleanor Cooney (pp. 363-370)

## **Part 7: Family Systems, Family Lives**

**10/29:**

1. **Text:** Chapter 7 (pp. 372-388)

**10/31:**

1. **Course pack:** “The New Momism.” By Susan J. Douglas and Merideth W. Michaels. (Pp. 226-237) In *Reconstructing Gender: A Multicultural Anthology* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) edited By Estelle Disch.
2. **Text:** “ The Emperor’s New Woes” by Sean Elder (pp. 410-413)

**10/31:**

1. **Course pack:** “Bloodmothers, Othermothers, and Women-Centered Networks.” By Patricia Hill Collins. (Pp. 314-320) In *Reconstructing Gender: A Multicultural Anthology* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) edited By Estelle Disch.
2. **Text:** “Cheaper than a Cow” by Miranda Kennedy (pp. 391-395)

**11/2:**

1. **Text:** “Partners as Parents: Challenges Faced by Gays Denied Marriage” (by Charlene Gomes pp. 400-406)
2. **Text:** “Man Child: A Black Lesbian Feminist’s Response” by Audre Lorde (pp. 406-410)

## **Part 8: Women’s Work Inside and Outside the Home**

**11/5:**

1. **Text:** Chapter 8 (pp. 429-450)

**11/7**

1. **Text:** “Maid to Order: The Politics of Other Women’s Work” by Barbara Ehrenreich (pp. 468-474)
2. **Text:** “What Wal-Mart Women Want” by Ellen Hawkes (pp.481-483)

**11/9:**

1. **Course pack:** “The Managed Hand: The Commercialization of Bodies and Emotions in Korean Immigrant-Owned Nail Salons” by Milaan Kang (pp. 217-228) in *Feminist Frontiers* (7<sup>th</sup> edition) edited by Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier, and Leila Rupp

## **Part 9: Women Confronting and Creating Culture**

**11/12:**

1. **Text:** Chapter 9 (pp. 503-517)

**11/14:**

1. **Course pack:** “Raunch Culture.” Chapter 1 (Pp. 7-45) in Levy, Ariel. *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture.*

## **Part 10: Resisting Violence Against Women**

**11/16:**

1. **Text:** Chapter 10 (pp. 554-577)

**11/19:**

1. **Course pack:** “Fraternities and Rape on Campus” by Patricia Yancey Martin and Robert A. Hammer (pp. 417-226) in *Feminist Frontiers* (7<sup>th</sup> edition) edited by Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier, and Leila Rupp

**11/21:**

1. **Course pack:** “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity, Politics, and Violence against Women of Color” by Kimberle Crenshaw. (pp. 431-440) in *Feminist Frontiers* (7<sup>th</sup> edition) edited by Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier, and Leila Rupp

## **Part 11: State, Law, and Social Policy**

**11/26:**

1. **Text:** Chapter 11 (pp. 615-66)

**11/28:**

1. **Text:** “Flat Broke with Children” by Sharon Hays (pp. 641-648)
2. **Text:** “Gender, Folklore, and Changing Military Culture” by Carol Burke (pp. 655-660)

## **Part 12: Activism, Change, and Feminist Futures**

**11/30:**

1. **Text:** Chapter 13 (pp. 704-717)

**12/3**

1. **Text:** “Real Men Join the Movement” by Michael Kimmel (pp. 721-726)
2. **Text:** “A Day with Feminism” by Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards (pp. 739-743)

**12/5: Course Wrap-Up and Review**

**EXAM 2: DECEMBER 7, 2007 (Last day of class)**