

CRITICAL CONCEPTS OF GENDER

Arizona State University
WST 601 (87129) – Fall 2007
Wednesday 4:40-7:30
Location: West 120

Instructor

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Office Hours: Monday: 12:45-1:30
Wednesday: 3:15-4:30
Other: By appointment

COURSE SYLLABUS

Course Description

This graduate course is an introduction to the field of gender studies. It provides an examination of the key concepts, theoretical frameworks, disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches, and critical debates that have shaped scholarship in gender studies. Attention is given to the emergence of gender as a category of analysis and its application to various domains of knowledge, experience, cultural expression, and institutional structure. Topics to be covered include historical and contemporary instantiations of feminism, the “social construction” of sex and gender, cultural representations of gender, sexualities, and “intersectionality.”

Guiding questions include:

- How do models of feminism adapt to and struggle against changing cultural and societal expectations about gender?
- What can we say is “real” about sex, gender, and sexuality?
- How do societies come to understand and represent gender?
- How do conceptions of gender produce norms, difference, and inequality?

Course Objectives

This course has three major objectives. Students will (1) explore a range of writings that contribute to our knowledge of gender and society, (2) evaluate the different perspectives covered in the course, and (3) develop an informed, integrated perspective on gender as a conceptual category.

Grading

Participation	25%
4 Short Writing Assignments	40%
Research Paper	35%

Note: Final grades will be whole letter grades only. There will be no plus/minus grades.

Course Expectations

Attendance: This class will be conducted as a seminar with a focus on in-class discussion. Because of this format, you are expected to attend all classes for the full scheduled time. Excessive tardiness will be counted as an absence.

Reading: Complete all readings (and other assignments) **prior** to the class meeting for which they are scheduled. The readings will be drawn from the required texts for the course. You must bring readings to class for the dates they are assigned. In some cases, I may distribute photocopied readings to you in class. See the course outline below for details on weekly readings.

Participation: Through communication, ideas are formed, revised, borrowed, and developed. It is through argument, description, explanation, and improvisation – within a community – that individual learning flourishes. This course requires full participation (including active listening, facilitating, and question-asking) to create an environment of open and shared learning. **An effective participant is not someone who simply talks frequently, but someone who reliably offers thoughtful insights that help others to learn.**

Writing:

- Synthesis Papers: There are four brief essays (4-6 pages each) due over the course of the semester; each is worth 10% of your grade. These writing assignments focus on critical analyses of the readings and syntheses of the arguments within the field of gender studies. These writing assignments should aim to help you develop a clear normative position about the course concepts. The four essays are due on the following dates: (1) August 29; (2) September 26; (3) October 31; and (4) November 28. I will give you guidance on what themes or topics to focus on in your writing at least one week before they are due.
- Research Paper: There is one research paper required for this course. It should be 20-25 typed double-spaced pages in length. The paper will be on a topic of your choice relating to the themes of the course. This paper is due on Wednesday, December 5 at 4pm. In order to ensure that topics are relevant to the course and – perhaps more importantly – doable papers, you will turn in a paper proposal in class. This will be due on Wednesday, October 10. You are allowed to change your topic at any point, but you must get my approval for the new topic. I recommend that you approach this paper as an article that you are preparing for publication, and you will present a conference version of your paper on the last day of class. More information on this assignment will be distributed in class.

Academic Honesty: In order to avoid plagiarism, your papers must provide full citations for all references: direct quotes, summaries, or ideas. While you are encouraged to develop your thinking with your peers, you cannot use their material without citing it. Work from other courses will not be accepted in this course. Allowing your writing to be copied by another student is also considered cheating. Please review the Student Code of Conduct for complete guidelines on academic honesty. Note: Any instance of plagiarism or cheating can be grounds for failure of the entire course or expulsion from the university.

Gender-Fair Language: Language structures thought and action. Biases in language can (and do) naturalize inequities. Imprecise language also signifies un-interrogated values and sloppy

thinking. For all of these reasons, the use of gender-fair language is expected in this course. For example, do not use words like "mankind" or "men" when referring to people in general; alternate between "she" and "he" instead of always using "he", or construct sentences in the plural instead of the singular so you can use "they" or "them" and avoid the problem altogether.

ESL/LD Students: Course requirements can be adjusted to serve the needs and capabilities of ESL and LD students. Please speak with me during the first two weeks of class to make arrangements. Students may be advised to attend additional sessions during my office hours so they can draw comparable value from the course.

Disclaimer: Finally, please be aware that this course includes topics that are controversial and may be uncomfortable. If you choose to take this class, you are responsible for completing all the reading and written assignments. Remember that you do not have to agree with all of the material presented in this class, but you are required to read, listen, think, and write about the views presented. If you are uncomfortable with certain topics, I encourage you to discuss this with me as soon as possible so that we can determine how you will complete the assignments.

Required Texts:

- Walters, Margaret (2005). *Feminism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Beasley, Chris (1999). *What is Feminism? An Introduction to Feminist Theory*. Thousand Oaks, Sage.
- Grewal, Inderpal and Caren Kaplan, Eds. (1994). *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.
- Bradley, Harriet (2007). *Gender*. Malden, MA: Polity.
- Fingerson, Laura (2006). *Girls in Power: Gender, Body, And Menstruation in Adolescence*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Silverstein, Helena (2007). *Girls on the Stand: How Courts Fail Pregnant Minors*. New York: New York University Press.
- Berger, Michele T. (2006). *Workable Sisterhood: The Political Journey of Stigmatized Women with HIV/AIDS*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Fonow, Mary Margaret (2003). *Union Women: Forging Feminism in the United Steelworkers of America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Tasker, Yvonne & Diane Negra (eds.) 2007. *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- *Course Reader*. Available from AlphaGraphics, 815 W. University Dr., (480) 968-7821. [I advise that you call ahead to ensure your copy is ready for pick-up.]

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Week One: Exploring the Field of Women / Gender Studies

August 22 Readings:

- Boxer, Marilyn J. (1982). "For and About Women: The Theory and Practice of Women's Studies in the United States." *Signs* 7(3): 661-695.
- Brown, Wendy (1997). "The Impossibility of Women's Studies." *Differences* 9(3): 79-101.
- Weigman, Robyn (2002). *The Progress of Gender: Whither "Women"?* *Women's Studies on its Own: A Next Wave Reader in Institutional Change*. R. Weigman. Durham, Duke University Press: 106-140.
- Auslander, Leora (1997). "Do Women's + Feminist + Men's + Lesbian and Gay + Queer Studies = Gender Studies?" *Differences* 9(3): 1-29.
- Allen, Judith A. and Sally L. Kitch (1998). "Disciplined by Disciplines? The Need for an Interdisciplinary Research Mission in Women's Studies." *Feminist Studies* 24(2): 275-299.
- Implications of "Academic Bill of Rights" and the Conservative attack on women's studies:
 - Hebel, Sara (2004). "Patrolling Professors' Politics: Conservative activists and students press campaigns against perceived bias on campuses." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 13, 2004.
 - <http://www.womensenews.org/article.cfm/dyn/aid/2430>
 - Indoctrination U: Arizona State:
<http://www.frontpagemag.com/Articles/ReadArticle.asp?ID=24818>

Recommended:

- May, Vivian M. (2005). *Disciplining Feminist Futures? "Undisciplined" Reflections about the Women's Studies PhD. Women's Studies For The Future: Foundations, Interrogations, Politics*. E. L. Kennedy and A. Beins. New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press: 185-206.

Week Two: Genealogy of Feminisms

August 29 Readings:

- Walters, Margaret (2005). *Feminism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York, Oxford University Press.
- Beasley, Chris (1999). *What is Feminism? An Introduction to Feminist Theory*. Thousand Oaks, Sage.
- Rosser, Sue (1992). "Are There Feminist Methodologies Appropriate for the Natural Sciences and Do They Make a Difference?" *Women's Studies International Forum* 15(5/6): 535-550.

Assignment Due: Synthesis paper due in class.

Recommended Text:

- Andermahr, Sonya, Terry Lovell and Carol Wolkowitz (1997). *A Concise Glossary of Feminist Theory*. New York, Arnold.

Week Three: Transnational Feminisms

September 5 Readings:

- Grewal, Inderpal and Caren Kaplan, Eds. (1994). *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices*. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press.

Week Four: Gender as a Concept

September 12 Readings:

- Bradley, Harriet (2007). *Gender*. Malden, MA: Polity.
- Haraway, Donna (1988). "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Studies* **14**(3): 575-599.
- Harding, Sandra (2001). Feminist Standpoint Epistemology. *The Gender and Science Reader*. M. Lederman and I. Bartsch. New York, Routledge: 145-168.

Recommended Text:

- Cranny-Francis, Anne, Wendy Waring, Pam Stavropoulos and Joan Kirkby (2003). *Gender Studies: Terms and Debates*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan.

Week Five: Social Construction of Sex

September 19 Readings:

- Hubbard, Ruth (1988). "Science, Facts, and Feminism." *Hypatia* **3**(1): 5-17.
- Terazawa, Yuki (2005). Racializing Bodies through Science in Meiji Japan: The Rise of Race-Based Research in Gynecology. *Building a Modern Japan: Science, Technology, and Medicine in the Meiji Era and Beyond*. M. Low. New York, Palgrave: 83-102.
- Kaplan, Gisela and Lesley J. Rogers (2001). Race and Gender Fallacies: The Paucity of Biological Determinist Explanations of Difference. *The Gender and Science Reader*. M. Lederman and I. Bartsch. New York, Routledge: 323-342.
- Birke, Linda (2001). In Pursuit of Difference: Scientific Studies of Women and Men. *The Gender and Science Reader*. M. Lederman and I. Bartsch. New York, Routledge: 309-322.
- Van den Wijngaard, Marianne (1995). The Liberation of the Female Rodent. *ReInventing Biology: Respect for Life and the Creation of Knowledge*. L. Birke and R. Hubbard. Bloomington, Indiana University Press: 137-148.
- Fujimura, Joan (2006). "Sex Genes: A Critical Sociomaterial Approach to the Politics and Molecular Genetics of Sex Determination." *Signs* **32**(1): 49-82.

Week Six: Social Construction of Gender

September 26 Readings:

- Hawkesworth, Mary (1997). "Confounding Gender." *Signs* **22**(3): 649-685.
- Butler, Judith (1993). *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York, NY, Routledge. Introduction and Chapter One (pp. 1-55).
- Risman, Barbara J. (2004). "Gender as a Social Structure: Theory Wrestling with Activism." *Gender & Society* **18**: 429-450.
- Moore, Mignon R. (2006). "Lipstick or Timberlands? Meanings of Gender Presentation in Black Lesbian Communities. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, volume 32, 113-139." *Signs* **32**(1): 113-139.
- Dozier, Raine (2005). "Beards, Breasts, and Bodies: Doing Sex in a Gendered World." *Gender & Society* **19**(3): 297-316.

Assignment Due: Synthesis paper due in class.

Week Seven: Cultural Representations of Gender

October 3 Readings:

- Abu-Lughod, Lila (1989). "Bedouins, Cassettes, and Technologies of Popular Culture." *Middle East Report July-August*: 7-11, 47.
- Naaman, Dorit (2007). "Brides of Palestine/Angels of Death: Media, Gender, and Performance in the Case of the Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers." *Signs* **32**(4): 933-955.
- Salzinger, Leslie (1997). "From High Heels to Swathed Bodies: Gendered Meanings under Production in Mexico's Export-Processing Industry." *Feminist Studies* **23**(3): 549-574.
- Steinke, Jocelyn (2005). "Cultural Representations of Gender and Science: Portrayals of Female Scientists and Engineers in Popular Films." *Science Communication* **27**(1): 27-63.
- Messner, Michael A. and Jeffrey Montez de Oca (2005). "The Male Consumer as Loser: Beer and Liquor Ads in Mega Sports Media Events." *Signs* **30**(3): 1879-1909.
- Moore, Lisa Jean and Matthew A. Schmidt (1999). "On the Construction of Male Differences: Marketing Variations in Technosemen." *Men and Masculinities* **1**(4): 331-351.

Week Eight: Gloria Steinem Lecture / Research Paper Proposal Due

October 10: NO CLASS (*Attend the Women of the World Lecture: Gloria Steinem*)

Assignment Due:

Research paper proposal due (post to Blackboard) at 5pm

Week Nine: Sexualities

October 17 Readings:

- Schwartz, Pepper and Virginia Rutter (1998). *The Gender of Sexuality: Exploring Sexual Possibilities*. Lanham, AltaMira Press. Chapter One (pp. 1-34).
- Groneman, Carol (1995). Nymphomania: The Historical Construction of Female Sexuality. *Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture*. J. Terry and J. Urla. Bloomington, Indiana University Press: 219-249.
- Terry, Jennifer (1995). Anxious Slippages Between “Us” and “Them”: A Brief History of the Scientific Search for Homosexual Bodies. *Deviant Bodies: Critical Perspectives on Difference in Science and Popular Culture*. J. Terry and J. Urla. Bloomington, Indiana University Press: 129-169.
- Marshall, Barbara L. (2002). "'Hard Science': Gendered Constructions of Sexual Dysfunction in the 'Viagra Age'." *Sexualities* 5(2): 131-158.
- Fishman, Jennifer R. (2002). "Sex, Drugs, and Clinical Research." *Molecular Interventions* 2: 12-16.
- Tyler, Melissa (2004). "Managing Between the Sheets: Lifestyle Magazines and the Management of Sexuality in Everyday Life." *Sexualities* 7(1): 81-106.

Week Ten: Power and Agency

October 24 Readings:

- Fingerson, Laura (2006). *Girls in Power: Gender, Body, And Menstruation in Adolescence*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Week Eleven: Policy and Social Justice

October 31 Readings:

- Silverstein, Helena (2007). *Girls on the Stand: How Courts Fail Pregnant Minors*. New York: New York University Press.

Assignment Due: Synthesis paper due in class.

Week Twelve: Intersectionality, Politics and Health

November 7 Readings:

- Berger, Michele T. (2006). *Workable Sisterhood: The Political Journey of Stigmatized Women with HIV/AIDS*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Week Thirteen: Gender and the Political Economy

November 14 Readings:

- Fonow, Mary Margaret (2003). *Union Women: Forging Feminism in the United Steelworkers of America*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Week Fourteen: Postfeminism

November 21 Readings:

- Tasker, Yvonne & Diane Negra (eds.) 2007. *Interrogating Postfeminism: Gender and the Politics of Popular Culture*. Durham: Duke University Press. [To be released in October 2007].

Week Fifteen: Final Paper Presentations

November 28: NO READING

Assignment Due: Synthesis paper due in class.

Week Sixteen: FINAL PAPER DUE

Wednesday, December 5:

Final Paper due in West 212 at 4 PM