WMST 101:  
Introduction to  
Women’s  
Studies  

spring term, 2012

Dr. Gail Griffin (griffin@kzoo.edu) 
209 Humphrey House 337-7046 (office) 
349-5345 (home, before 11 pm)

Spring Office Hours: 
MWF 1:30 – 2:30; Tu 1 – 3 pm & by appt.

TAs: Meredith Quinlan & Britta Seifert

About the Course:

This course is designed for people with no background, but strong interest, in Women’s Studies as a field of academic study. It is feminist in philosophy and devoted to the still-radical principle that women’s diverse experiences as women, their oppression in patriarchy, and their modes of resistance to sexism and other systems of domination are crucial areas of academic study. Our analysis of feminist issues will always be intersectional—that is, we will always consider the intersection of gender with significant social and political categories such as race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, economics, culture, religion, age, and physical ability. The great aim of this course is to enable students to understand their world and themselves better and thereby to empower them to lead lives of integrity and consciousness, to make change, and (to paraphrase Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.) to help to bend the long arc of the universe toward justice.
In this course, feminism will be defined and used as fluid and dynamic rather than static or “finished,” a process rather than a product, a lens and a language rather than a set of conclusions, a journey rather than a destination.

Course Goals:

These are the goals I have in mind in developing this course; I’m hoping you will bring your own goals to the table.

- to build a classroom learning community as quickly as possible, and to make that community work for the benefit of all members;
- to allow students to explore their own relationships to contemporary feminism;
- to put women’s experiences and perspectives at the center of inquiry;
- to explore primary sites of women’s oppression and their forms of resistance;
- to familiarize students with central feminist issues and basic theoretical frameworks;
- to develop students’ skills of intersectional feminist analysis, thinking always of the ways race, class, sexuality, physical ability, ethnicity, and other important factors intersect with gender to shape women’s lives;
- to foster the development of voice in every student: that is, the expression of yourself and your one’s thinking in a respectful, informed, powerful way.

Requirements and Grading:

Grade Points

(total 1000)

- 1 reading response (2-3 pp.)
  Your own take on the essay “Fear of Feminism.” 100
- 1 autobiographical essay (4-6 pp.)
  An analysis of how sexual/gender “scripts” have operated in your life. 200
- Midterm essay (5+ pp.)
  Synthesis of readings and discussions with personal opinion. 300
- Final Essay 300
- Privilege List 50
- “Final Fifty” option 50

You will be asked to commit to one of the following activities to earn your final fifty points:

- Regular participation in out-of-class discussion group outside of class, led by TAs Meredith and Britta
- Leadership of a “Forty-minute Friday” session, in which you (with others, possibly) lead a discussion, do an exercise or game, show a video, or explore an assignment of your own.
  The Friday session must relate to the week’s theme/issue, but otherwise is up to you.
  Available Fridays: weeks 3, 4, 7, 8, 9. I must know by FRIDAY of this week!
- One-page responses to at least three on-campus non-class events having something to do with gender. These will be due within one week of the event. If you are in doubt about the appropriateness of an event, consult with me. “Take Back the Night” (4/23) and the lecture by Dr. Richard Schweden (4/2) are automatically approved.
Required Texts:

Course Policies:

Attendance and Participation: This, of all courses, demands collective commitment to succeed. So everyone should be here every time, and everyone should come ready to work: that is, you have not just read the assignment, but you have thought about what you want to do with it in class. I reserve the right to lower final grades for excessive absence (i.e., over three), repeated lateness, or any behavior deleterious to the healthy functioning of the classroom community. I have also been known to raise final grades of students whose contributions have been extraordinary. That does not mean “brilliant.” That means contributions that further the goals of the class and make it a better experience for other students (and me).

Prohibited during class: computer use, cell phone use, departures from the room except during the break.

Deadlines: Grades are lowered for each day late (e.g., B- to C+). A weekend counts as one day, luckily. Work is due in class; work that comes in later on the day that it is due is graded down. No extensions are available for the final essay, due during our exam period.

Accessibility: I am committed to a classroom where everyone has access to a positive learning experience. If you have a physical or learning disability, it should be registered with the Dean of Students’ office so that I may make necessary accommodations to promote your success.

Schedule of Readings & Assignments

- These may be amended as we move along; I’ll make every effort to inform you as early as possible.
- “WVFV” indicates the Shaw/Lee anthology; “LU” is the Findlen anthology
- In WVFV, be sure to read everything in the assigned section, including boxed information, discussion questions, etc.
- Whenever you finish your reading for the next class, ask yourself these questions as a way to prepare for class:
  What did you learn from today’s reading? What are you thinking differently about?
  Which reading particularly engaged you and why?
Is there a passage or two you’d like the class to think about?
Did you learn any new terminology?

Please mark or make a note of sections, ideas, and issues you want the class to address, along with taking notes on major points or points of interest. **You will need notes on your reading in order to write the midterm essay** (see assignment at the end of this syllabus). **I may call on people randomly each day to raise a question or discussion point from the day’s reading.**

**Week 1: Women’s Studies and the F-Word**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>Introductions; video (“The F Word”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>WVFV all of part 1 (through p. 40); read syllabus thoroughly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>Hogeland, “Fear of Feminism,” WVFV p. 655. <strong>Due: Response to Hogeland’s essay.</strong> (Assignment at the end of this schedule) <strong>Due: Sign-up for Final Fifty</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Week 2: Privilege, Power, Difference: Interlocking Systems of Inequality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| M   | 4.2  | WVFV part 2, Intro and readings 9, 10, 11, 12  
Tonight, 8 pm, Olmsted: Dr. Richard Schweder, U of Chicago, "Engaging Cultural Differences without Moral Panic: The Burqa and Female Genital Mutilation" |
| W   | 4.4  | WVFV Readings 113, 14, 15, 17  
LU “Weaving an Identity Tapestry,” 51; “Beyond Bean Counting,” 67 |
| F   | 4.6  | **DUE: privilege list** (Assignment at the end of this schedule) |

**Week 3: Learning Gender: Education and Socialization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| M   | 4.9  | WVFV part 3, Intro and readings 19, 20, 21, 22  
LU “Your Life as a Girl,” 3; “Bloodlove,” 40 |
| W   | 4.11 | WVFV remainder of part 3 |
| F   | 4.13 | Student-led session |

**Week 4: Sexuality and Power**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>WVFV part 4, Intro and readings 27, 28, 29; LU “Lusting for Freedom,” 19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Week 5: The Gendered Body**

**M 4.23**  WVFV part 5: Intro and readings 36, 37, 38, 39 (page number should be “241”)
Tonight:  **TAKE BACK THE NIGHT!**

**W 4.25**  WVFV, remainder of part 5
In class:  Video, “Killing Us Softly 4”

**F 4.27**  LU “The Body Politic,” 103; “It’s a Big Fat Revolution,” 133
Handout:  Britta Seifert, “Hungry”
Student-led session, using these two readings plus any others from week 5

**Week 6: Health and Reproductive Rights**

**M 4.30**  WVFV part 6: Intro and readings 46, 47, 48

**W 5.2**  WVFV readings 49, 51, 52

**F 5.4**  In-class: video, “When Abortion Was Illegal”
Midterm Essay Due (see assignment at the end of this syllabus)

**ENTERING DoGL SEASON:** If DoGL falls on a Monday or Wednesday, the readings will shift as follows: Monday  Wednesday or Wednesday  the following Monday; the Friday class that week will stay as scheduled.  If DoGL falls on a Friday, the student(s) leading class that day will lead forty minutes of the following Monday’s class.  I have left one class period blank in week 9 to accommodate the shift.

**Week 7: The Family as Gendered Social Institution**

**M 5.7**  WVFV part 7, Intro and readings 53 & 54  (please note the date on #54!)

**W 5.9**  WVFV readings 55, 56, 58, 59; LU  Hernandez, 209; Richards, 229

**F 5.11**  Student-led class

**Week 8 Resisting Violence Against Women**

**M 5.14**  WVFV part 10, Intro and readings 77, 79, 80
F 5.18  Student-led session

**Week 9: Imagining the Future, Part I**

M 5.21  TBA
F 5.25  Student-led session

**Week 10: Imagining the Future, Part II**

M 5.28  NO CLASS: Memorial Day Holiday
W 5.30  WVFV part 13, Intro; also Readings 103, 105, 106, 107
Course evaluations
F 6.1  Final Class Ritual (possibly student-planned)

**Exam Week:** Final essay due

Monday, June 4, by noon at Gail’s office. No essays are accepted late.

---

WILL WOMAN SUFFRAGE BE GOOD FOR WOMANHOOD?

No!

Dr. Anna Howard Shaw, President of the National American Woman Suffrage Association, says:

"I believe in Woman Suffrage, whether all women vote or no women vote; whether all women vote right or all women vote wrong; whether women will love their husbands after they vote, or forsake them; whether they will neglect their children or never have any children.

I believe I speak for the thousands of women belonging to the National Association."

Vote NO on the Suffrage Amendment next November
Anna Howard Shaw was from Albion, MI

Paper #1: Due in class Friday, week 1 (April 1)

A Response to Lisa Marie Hogeland’s

“Fear of Feminism: Why Young Women Get the Willies”

Length: 2-3 pp.

Why do you think Fear of Feminism is so prevalent among young (high school, college) women? Do you agree with Hogeland’s analysis? Can you cite other reasons? Feel free to use your own experience of F.o.F. or that of your peers, and to cite media, political discourse, or any other area where you think important evidence can be found.

In your paper, be sure to cite Hogeland’s arguments. Please conclude your paper by agreeing or disagreeing with her conclusion—that young women have every reason to fear feminism.
Format Requirements -- which will be consistent for all your writing in this class:

- Paper must have a title but no title page; title should **not** be underlined or in quotation marks.
- Paper must have page numbers—doesn’t matter where they are.
- Title of Hogeland’s essay in quotation marks, NOT italics, NOT underlined.
- Paper must be stapled—not folded or paper-clipped. I do not accept unstapled papers.
- Paper must be double-spaced and I encourage double-siding.
Personal Privilege List

Due: Friday, week 2, in class, TYPED and numbered

Using Peggy McIntosh’s privilege list as a model, write a privilege list of your own. Determine one area in which you have societal privilege in the following list: class, race, sex, sexual orientation, physical ability. For clarity, here’s the way this would go:

Only a man could choose sex.
Only a straight person could choose sexual orientation.
Only a white person could choose race.
Only a person who does not experience poverty could choose class. (The so-called “poverty” of students does NOT count here.)

Then list specific privileges this category gives you, as many as you can. Please DO NOT avoid race simply because McIntosh focuses on it. But if you decide to work on race privilege, do not use any of the items from McIntosh’s list.

To generate thinking, try categorizing all the worlds you inhabit: your daily life at K (academic, social, residential, job-related, athletic); your life at home (family, social, work-related); your life in US or your home culture (films, books, music, food, cosmetics, clothes, moving around a city or town); the world of travel or Study Abroad; your future world (further education, career, family, cultural), etc.

Format: At the top of your page, type “Because I am _______,” filling in the blank with the identity category you are considering. Then, below, type your list, numbering your entries. Always use the first person. The items on your list must be valid and understandable to any reader, and they MUST take the form indicated above. Avoid any item that you would not want someone else to read. So an item from my list on race might read as follows:

Because I am white . . . .

35. I don’t even think about being shot while walking home from the store.

On Friday, we’ll use these lists in class, in groups.

Grading: This project is worth 5 points of your final grade and will be evaluated as follows:

A list of 40 items or more will receive 50 pts.
30-39 items: 40 pts
25-29 items: 30 pts
20-24 items: 20 pts
10-19 items: 10 pts.
Less than 10 items: no points.
Midterm Essay:

Looking into the Nightmare to Find the Dream

Due: In class Friday, week 6
Length: 5 pages minimum; as long as it needs to be
The goal: this essay asks you to focus on a feminist issue you care about, to demonstrate your understanding of the feminist frameworks in which we have studied the issue, to discuss your issue in conversation with course readings, and to imagine and define a way or ways the problem might be addressed in order to improve the status and lives of women and girls.

First, choose an issue covered in the first 5 weeks of this course, one that you care a lot about. Then narrow it down to specific and manageable terms. In other words, if you want to write about fear of feminism (week 1), you could limit it to fear of feminism among high-school girls. Or if you wanted to write about gender socialization, you could limit it to media, or to elementary-school children, or to elementary-school boys or girls. You should settle on your issue by the end of week 5.

This essay should be written in three separate parts, as follows. Please separate the parts into titled or numbered sections.

Part One (one page should do it, more if necessary): Define your issue very clearly, and explain why it is particularly important to you. This can be your introduction, and it needn’t be longer than a good paragraph, though you might have more of a story to tell.

Part Two (A good essay will require several pages): Discuss the issue, using several readings from this course (from any week). Feel free to bring in other sources, including your own experience or that of family or friends, media, etc., but your essay will be evaluated heavily on your ability to apply multiple course readings to a particular issue of interest. The readings may apply to your issue without necessarily concerning only that issue; in other words, a reading that deals with gender socialization may be used to support a discussion on any number of issues, from health care to education to body image. If you have learned something new about your issue in our class, please mention that. (Note: No “Works Cited” list is necessary for readings from our texts, though they should be cited correctly [parenthetically] within the paper.)

Part Three (at least one full page, but good essays will probably need more): Propose at least one practical action that might be taken to address the problem. Be as specific and detailed as you can. If you are proposing an educational program, outline the program in detail, unit by unit, exercise by exercise. If you know of efforts underway already that are making a difference, mention them too, but be sure to come up with an original initiative, program, or reform.

Final Advice:
• Plan and outline each part carefully before you begin to write.
• Let someone else read your paper in time for you to make revisions.
• **You MAY collaborate on this essay if you wish. Each collaborator would receive the same grade, and each must write at least one section of the essay independently, though you may plan them together.**

Welcome to Women’s Studies!

Name:___________________________ Year at K: F So Jr Sr. Phone (optional): ____________

Other college Women, Gender and Sexuality Program courses taken, if any:

Most important reason for taking this course:

Any worries or anxieties about the course that I should know about?

Anything else you want me to know about you?
And finally: Do you have any bright ideas for turning 36 people into a community ASAP?? Please list them on the reverse.