

## INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S STUDIES WS 100

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Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9:35-10:25.

Emerson 101

### **Course Description:**

Serving as an introduction to some of the key concepts and questions that comprise the interdisciplinary field of women's studies in the western world, this course will investigate three important ways in which women experience agency: critical theorizing, self-expression and connection with others. To accomplish this investigation, we will systematically focus on each of these types of agency:

1. *Feminist Critical Theorizing.* In the first section of the course we will explore the nature and purpose of feminist critical theorizing and examine several of the critical tools and concepts employed by different feminists. We will raise questions such as, What is feminist critical theory? and How can women's studies help us to critically reflect on the world and our own lives?
2. *Self-Expression.* In the second section of the course we will explore the variety of ways in which women have expressed their own opinions and offered their own voices. We will raise questions such as, How do women become active participants in their own histories? What material, emotional and intellectual needs must be met in order for women to express themselves and be heard? How do women express themselves?
3. *Connection with Others.* In the final section of the course we will explore the importance of community and connecting with others. We will examine the difficulty of negotiating between difference and coming to terms with one's (sometimes oppressive) heritage and family. We will raise questions such as, How do women connect with other women? What can serve as a source for community? How do we redefine community to reflect our new, more critical, understandings of the world?

### **Course Goals:**

Through the readings, class discussions, and group and individual assignments, this course is designed to help you to recognize, articulate and critique ways in which agency is experienced by women. Through the process of researching, writing, and sharing ideas with your peers, this course is also designed to allow you to engage in your own exploration of agency and to be able to present/defend your ideas to others.

### **Readings:**

This class is heavily focused on women's studies as it exists within the humanities in the western world. Therefore, the readings are drawn from a wide range of disciplines across the humanities and from a wide range of feminist thinkers throughout the western world.

*Feminist Theory: A Reader (FT)*, Wendy Kolmer and Frances Bartowski.

*How the Garcia Girls Lost their Accents*, Julia Alvarez.

Other selected essays and excerpts (RES).

All texts are available for purchase through Emory Bookstore, Dobbs University Center. The other articles are available via EUCLID on-line reserve, but you are expected to have a printed hard copy with you during class. All books are also on reserve in Woodruff Library. If you have difficulty accessing a text, notify me as soon as possible.

### **Course Requirements:**

#### 1. Participation (20%)

You are required to attend class regularly and contribute to class discussions. **More than two unexcused absences will lower your class participation grade.** For each class, you must be prepared, with fully read text in hand, to contribute to discussions. This class is primarily based on discussion so your engaged participation is vital to its success. Included in this participation grade are any in-class assignments (such as writing exercises or quizzes) and/or group work.

*A note about group work:* Throughout the semester, we will be breaking up into small groups (4-5 people) to discuss the readings. These groups will allow for a closer engagement with the text and enable you to get to know your classmates better. As with large group discussions, the success of these small groups is dependent upon you and your level of participation; the more prepared and involved you are in the discussion, the more effective and engaging the small groups will be.

#### 2. Critical Response Notebooks (20%)

You are required to keep a critical response notebook. This notebook should contain two entries per week. Each entry should focus on one of the readings for the week (excluding “Lexicon of the Debate” selections) and include the following: (a) a concise summary (1-3 paragraphs) of the text, (b) an examination of some critical questions that this text raised for you and for the class, based on our discussion, and (c) an explanation of how this text connects or does not connect to the class, to other things you have read and/or to your own life and experiences. These notebooks will be collected 4 times throughout the semester with each collection being worth 5% of your total grade. A handout describing this assignment in greater detail will be distributed and discussed in the second week of class.

#### 3. Class Presentation (20%)

You are required to give a 5-7 minute presentation during the semester on one of our assigned texts (excluding “Lexicon of the Debate” selections). Your presentation must include the following: (a) brief summary of the text. What is the reading about? What are the main points? (b) discussion of the context in which this article was written. When (and/or where, why) was it written? Who wrote it? If possible, what is the background/training of the author? And, are the arguments/topics of this essay still relevant today? Why or why not? (c) discussion of the most interesting thing that you learned from the reading and why and (d) 1-2 questions that you would like to ask the class. This 5-7 minute presentation should include a 5-page write-up of the presentation. A sign-up sheet will be distributed in the second week. Only one student can present per day.

#### 4. Take-Home Midterm Exam (20%)

A take-home midterm examination will be distributed on October 4 and will be due on October 11. This exam, which will consist of several short essay questions, will require you to think critically about what you have learned, drawing upon our texts, films we have watched and in-class discussions.

#### 5. Final Paper (20%)

You are required to write a 8-10 page paper. A more detailed description of this assignment will be handed out on November 8 and the paper will be due on December 13.

### **Grade Scale:**

A (94-100)	C (75-80)
A. (92-93)	C- (73-74)
B+ (90-91)	D+ (71-72)
B (85-89)	D (65-70)
B. (83-84)	F (less than 65)
C+ (81-82)	

### **Course Policies:**

You are allowed to have two unexcused absences during this semester. You are responsible for contacting other students to get any notes, handouts or information on assignments that you might have missed. During the second week of class I will distribute a list of everyone's email addresses.

All assignments must be handed in on the day that they are due. Exceptions will be granted *only* with a doctor's excuse or letter from the dean. Please report these exceptions as soon as possible. Without an official excuse, your grade will be lowered due to lateness. Note that a doctor's excuse must be an *excuse*—simply a receipt from a doctor's visit will not suffice.

If at any point throughout the semester you have questions or concerns about this course, please know that you are more than welcome to visit my office hours and/or make an appointment to meet with me. If you would like to meet to discuss a grade that you received, please email me with your questions or concerns and return your graded assignment to me at least one day in advance of our meeting. This will enable me to give you the best possible feedback.

If you are a student with a disability, you may receive extra assistance from the Office of Disability Student Services in 110 Administration Building (404-727-1065). After contacting them, please let me know as soon as possible so that I can accommodate your needs.

Please be aware that your compliance with Emory University's Honor Code is expected and enforced. Consult your student handbook or [www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/students/honor.html](http://www.emory.edu/COLLEGE/students/honor.html) to review this code.

**Note: This syllabus is subject to change at any point throughout the semester. Any amendments or alterations will be announced in class and through email.**

### **Course Schedule:**

	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>
8/30	Introduction to the course, review syllabus.
9/2	NO CLASS—LABOR DAY

### FEMINIST CRITICAL THEORIZING

9/4 reading: Treichler, Paula and Cheris Kramarae. "'Feminism' from *The Feminist Dictionary*" (FT, 7-11).

9/6 hooks, bell. "'Theory as Liberatory Practice' from *Teaching to Transgress*" (FT, 28-33), "Have We Got a Theory for You! Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism and the Demand for 'The Woman's Voice'," (FT, 28-33).

#### What is a woman part I?

9/9, 9/11 reading: de Beauvoir, Simone. "'Introduction' from *The Second Sex*," (FT, 145-155), "Lexicon of the Debate: Epistemologies, Essentialism/Social Construction/Difference," (FT, 37-40).

#### Race

9/13 reading: McIntosh, Peggy. "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences through Work in Women's Studies" (RES), Williams, Patricia. "The Emperor's New Clothes" (RES).

9/16 reading: Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex" (RES), "Lexicon of the Debate: Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender," (FT, 40-42).

#### Class

9/18 reading: Allison, Dorothy. "A Question of Class" (RES).

9/20 "Lexicon of the Debate: Sexual Division of Labor," (FT, 46-48).  
film: *People Like Us. Social Class in America*

#### Sexuality

9/23 reading: Rich, Adrienne. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," (FT, 304-312), Smith, Barbara. "Homophobia: Why Bring it Up?" (RES), "Lexicon of the Debate: Sexualities," (FT, 48-50).

9/25 reading: Radicalesbians. "The Woman Identified Woman," (FT, 195-198), Creed, Barbara. excerpts from "Lesbian Bodies" (handout)  
film: clips from *The Celluloid Closet*.

#### What is a woman part II?

9/27 reading: Truth, Sojourner. "Ain't I a Woman?," (FT, 66).

#### What is a woman part III?

9/30, 10/2 reading: Butler, Judith. "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire" (RES), "Lexicon of the Debate: Power," (FT, 43-45).

10/4 catch up day, discuss midterm exam

### SELF-EXPRESSION

#### The value of voice

10/7 reading: hooks, bell. "Talking Back" (RES), Friedan, Betty. "From *The Feminine Mystique*," (FT, 164-169), "Lexicon of the Debate: Language," (FT, 42-43).

10/9 reading: Collins, Patricia Hill. "The Power of Self Definition" (RES).

10/11 reading: MacDonald, Myra. "Voices Off: women, discourse and the media" (RES).

10/14 NO CLASS—FALL BREAK

### **Voice and politics**

10/16 film: excerpts from *One Woman, One Vote* and/or *A Place of Rage*

10/18 reading: Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. "Declaration of Sentiments," (*FT*, 63-65), National Organization for Women. "Statement of Purpose," (*FT*, 168-171), Combahee River Collective. "A Black Feminist Statement," (*FT*, 272-277), "The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action," (*FT*, 506-509).

### **Voice and creativity**

10/21 reading: Woolf, Virginia. excerpts from *A Room of One's Own* (RES).

10/23 reading: Walker, Alice. "In Search of our Mother's Gardens" (RES).

### **Voice, body and sexuality**

10/25 reading: Bordo, Susan. "Hunger as Ideology" (RES), Lorde, Audre. "The Uses of the Erotic" (RES), "Lexicon of the Debate: Bodies," (*FT*, 34-36).

10/28 film: *Killing Us Softly III* + bring in ads, continue discussing Bordo

10/30 reading: Young, Iris Marion. "Throwing Like a Girl" (RES).

### **Voice and story**

11/1 reading: Allison, Dorothy. Excerpts from *Two or Three Things I Know for Sure*. (RES).

11/4 reading: Trinh T. Minh-ha. "Grandma's Story" (RES).

11/6 reading: King, Maxine Hongston. "White Tigers" (RES).

11/8 catch up day, distribute and discuss final paper assignment

## **FINDING CONNECTIONS**

### **Redefining community**

11/11 reading: Yamada, Mitsuye. "Asian Pacific American Women and Feminism," (*FT*, 317-320), Reagon, Bernice Johnson. "Coalition Politics: Turning the Century" (RES). "Lexicon of the Debate: "Third World"/Global Feminism," (*FT*, 50-51).

11/13 reading: Lugones, Maria C. "Playfulness, 'World'-Traveling, and Loving Perception" (RES).

11/15 reading: "Thou Shalt Not Become Thy Mother"

11/18 reading: Walker, Rebecca. "Being real: an introduction" (RES), Delombard, Jeannine. "Femmenism," (*FT*, 497-502), Schultz, Jason. "Getting off on feminism" (RES).

**Renegotiating home and heritage I**

11/20 reading: hooks, bell. "Homeplace" (RES), Martin, Bidy and Chandra Talpade Mohanty. "Feminist Politics: What's Home Got to Do with it?" (RES).  
film: *Tales of Motherhood*

11/22 finish and discuss film

**Renegotiating home and heritage II**

11/25, 11/27 film: extended clip from *The Joy Luck Club*

11/29 NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING

**Renegotiating home and heritage III**

12/2, 12/4, 12/6 reading: Alvarez, Julia. *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*.

12/9 review and conclusion

12/13 final paper due

**Intro to WS  
Puotinen****Critical Response Notebooks**

An essential part of this class is your ability to critically engage with the texts that we are reading and discussing. To demonstrate this critical engagement, you are required to keep a critical response notebook.

This notebook should contain at least **two entries per week**. Each entry should be roughly **one-page typed, double-spaced and in 12-point type**. Please remember to spell-check all entries! Occasionally I will assign the topic for your entry. This assignment will be announced in class and through email. If I do not assign a specific topic, the entry should focus on one of the readings for the week (excluding "Lexicon of the Debate" selections) and include the following:

(a) *A concise summary (1-3 paragraphs) of the text*: In your own words, summarize the key points of this text. Keep in mind the questions: What is the author trying to say? What is the

purpose of this text? What are the main ideas? Please try to be as concise as possible in your summary.

(b) *An examination of some critical questions that this text raised for you and for the class:* Using your reading and our in-class discussions, critically evaluate the text. Ask yourself: What is effective about this reading? What is ineffective? What does the reading fail to address? What does it address? What are the limitations of this reading's argument? Does the reading provide any viable/valuable solutions?

(c) *An explanation of the relevancy of this text:* Discuss how the reading connects or does not connect to the class, to other things you have read and/or to your own life and experiences. Ask yourself: How does this reading connect to some of the larger issues in the class? To other readings in the class? Does the reading provide accurate descriptions of the world and/or women's situation within it? Does this reading relate to my life and experiences? What is particularly important for me about this reading? (How) does it make me think about the world differently?

**Note:** Although these entries are brief, make sure to give specific examples with page numbers from the text in your responses. Remember that direct quotations must be properly cited (that is, with quotation marks and page numbers).

These notebooks will be **collected 4 times** throughout the semester with each collection being worth 5% of your total grade. I will notify you one week before they are due.

You will begin working on these notebooks the week of September 9. You are allowed to **skip two entries throughout the semester** without it adversely affecting your grade. You must turn in 24 entries in total by the end of the semester.

## **WS 100 Puotinen Final Project**

The purpose of this project is to enable you to critically reflect on what you have learned in the class. Please pick one of the following options for your final paper/project. Your paper/project should be roughly 8-10 pages, double-spaced and in 12 point font. Make sure to carefully proofread and spell-check your writing. All quotations from class articles or outside sources must be correctly cited. **MAKE SURE THAT YOU READ ALL OF THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR CHOSEN TOPIC THOROUGHLY AND CAREFULLY!!**

### **1. What is women's studies and why is it important?**

Drawing upon the articles we have read and our class discussions, develop your own definition of women's studies and then carefully (in good detail) describe why it is important. To help in your discussion, pick at least three (3) articles that we have read and effectively explain:

1. Why they are representative of women's studies. That is, why they should be considered articles appropriate for a women's studies class.

2. Why they are important for you, for other Emory students, for family members and/or for society to read. How do these articles help make us more aware of the world and the ways in which we are shaped (positively and negatively) by society? Basically, how do these articles make us more critically aware?

Your essay should be roughly 8-10 pages long and should involve a compelling and well-developed argument for what women's studies is and why it is important. You are welcome to be as creative as possible in your response, but your essay must include direct evidence (in the form of quotes or paraphrased examples) from your three selected articles and a critical reflection on your own experience in Introduction to Women's Studies.

## 2. Novel Analysis

Pick a novel or autobiography and do a critical analysis of it in terms of gender, race, class, and sexuality. Your essay should not be a mere summary of the book—although you should offer a brief summary of it—but instead should be a critical analysis of the book in terms of the issues of our class. What is the experience of women in the novel? Does the author accurately depict the situation of women? Why/why not? What are the key issues in terms of women in this novel? What roles do gender, race, class and/or sexuality play in this novel? Why is this novel an important one for a women's studies class? Make sure to address issues from the class and use at least two essays that we read. If you choose this option, remember that it requires that you read the novel very carefully and critically—this means reading the novel more than once. The following are some suggested novels:

*The Color Purple* by Alice Walker  
*In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez  
*Bastard out of Carolina* by Dorothy Allison  
*The Bluest Eye* by Toni Morrison  
*Gender Outlaw* by Kate Bornstein

If you would like to write on a novel other than the ones listed above, it must be approved by me first. This book analysis should be roughly 8-10 pages long.

## 3. Media Notebooks

Construct a notebook of at least eight (8) media images of women. This notebook must include a thoughtful analysis of the implications of these images for women in terms of gender, race, class and sexuality. Acceptable media images include: publication ads and articles, comic strips and comic books, book illustrations, postcards, greeting cards, internet images, posters, CD covers, billboards and bumper stickers (you must present photographs of these two examples), music videos, prime time TV—including television ads (you must include a video tape of these two) and song lyrics (you must include song lyrics). You must organize your notebook around a theme, such as: images of beauty, ways in which women are silenced/objectified, the performance of gender, women and sexuality, woman as passive, etc. Your analysis should include the following:

1. 1-2 page introduction in which you clearly define the organizing theme of your notebook and explain the process you went through in collecting these images.
2. At least 3/4 page of detailed analysis of your chosen image. This analysis should not be a mere description of the ad, but instead should be a critical engagement with the ad and its implications for women. In your analysis, you should draw upon articles from class, class discussions/films and your own observations. In total (that means for the whole notebook) you need to incorporate at least five (5) of the texts that we have read and discussed this semester.
3. 1-2 page conclusion of your finding and an overall summary of what you learned from this process. You should include some questions that this project raised for you.

Your notebook should be roughly 8-10 pages long and all images (excluding music videos and/or TV clips) should be neatly placed in a binder and clearly identified as to what they are and where they are from.

#### 4. Interview

Interview a woman from another generation (mother, relative, professor, community activist) about women and feminism and then write an analysis of your findings. For the interview, develop questions that are related to the class—the articles that we have read, the films we have watched and the discussion that we have had—and that explore the differences (or similarities) between generations of women. Some possible questions are: Would you consider yourself a feminist? Why/why not? What does it mean to be a woman? How does your experience as a woman differ from that of younger women? How have women's lives changed since you were younger? Have you ever felt silenced? When did you develop your own voice?

Your paper should be 8-10 pages and include the following (in no particular order):

1. A discussion of your experience of the interview. Make sure to discuss what you learned through the interview process. Any answers surprise you? Did you learn some things about this woman that you didn't know before? Do you understand her better? less? Did this process make you think about the articles that we have read in a different way?
2. A brief description of the woman that you interviewed—her background, how you know her, age, where she lives, interests and/or job, economic background, race/ethnicity, sexual preference—and of the interview itself—where it took place, for how long. Also include a list of the questions that you asked.
3. An analysis of your findings. Critically reflect on your conversation with this woman and the answers that she gave to your questions. Make sure to connect your analysis with at least two (2) of the articles that we have read this semester. Also make sure to address some of the themes that we have discussed in class (e.g. alienation/competition between women, complexity of women's lives/intersectionality, tension between generations/mother-daughter relationships, role of storytelling/writing) in your questions and your analysis of those questions

#### 5. Your Own Project

If you have an idea for a project not listed here, you are welcome to propose your suggestion to me ***in writing no later than Thursday, November 20***. Your proposal must include a clear trajectory of your plan: questions your project will undertake, sources that will be used, appropriateness of this project to the class and the form the project will take.

**Although not required, I strongly encourage you to meet with me to discuss your final project sometime in November or the first week of December. Remember this assignment is worth 20% of your final grade. Good Luck!**

Final projects are due in my mailbox (or on the table beneath, clearly marked) in the WS Lounge by **Friday, December 10, at 4:30 p.m.** I will collect them at that time exactly, and any projects that exceed that deadline will drop by a letter per day late. No extensions or exceptions without a verifiable doctor's excuse or Dean's letter.

