

## WGS 2500: INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN'S & GENDER STUDIES

FALL 2011

Section 3: T-Th 10:40-12:00 (226 Tureaud)

Section 4: 12:10-1:30 (226 Tureaud)

**INSTRUCTOR:** Ms. Monica Miller

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**OFFICE:** 118-E Himes

**OFFICE HOURS:** Tuesdays 1:30-2:30

Thursdays 1:30-3:30

and by appointment

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course engages students to reflect critically on the constructs of gender and sexuality across diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, and class intersections through a feminist perspective. Students will be introduced to the intersectional fields of feminist theory and gender studies and to the movements which generated and benefited from that scholarship. They will examine how these dynamic forces shape different gendered identities in historical and present-day local, national and global contexts (though in this introductory course, our primary focus will be on these issues in the United States) and how these forces impact our lives and choices at the personal, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural levels. As a General Education course, this course enable students to gain an understanding of historical, cultural, and philosophical complexity which supports sophisticated discourse. The primary goal of this course is to familiarize students with key issues, questions, and debates in feminist theory and gender studies scholarship, both historical and contemporary.

### OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Students will expand their knowledge in the interdisciplinary field of Women's and Gender Studies by generating critical thinking and analysis through critical reading and writing, and respectful expression and interaction.
- ❖ Students will learn to appropriately use major terms and concepts in the field while developing critical writing and speaking skills about diverse cultures and cultural constructions that can be used inside and outside the college setting.
- ❖ Students will demonstrate the ability to evaluate a position or argument in the light of one or more of the following criteria: (a) internal consistency; (b) factual evidence, pro or con; (c) prevailing counter-arguments that have withstood critical examination
- ❖ Students will demonstrate an understanding of the levels of association, from friends and family, to economic and polity, and to civilizations of global significance seen in the social sciences.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

- ❖ Susan M. Shaw and Janet Lee, *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions, Fifth Edition*
- ❖ Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*
- ❖ Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home*
- ❖ Other readings on Moodle

### ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The following is the University's official statement on Academic Integrity: "Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to give an unfair academic advantage to the student." (Sec. 5.1, C. of the LSU Code of Student Conduct). For more specifics, see:

<http://www.lsu.edu/judicialaffairs/AI.htm>

**I expect all of the work you turn in to be your own. If you submit work to me which I determine to be plagiarized, you will receive a zero for the assignment, and the work will be turned over to the Office of Student Advocacy and Accountability for possible further sanctions.**

### DISABILITY CODE

According to the our *General Catalogue*,

The *Office of Disability Services* assists students in identifying and developing accommodations and services to help over-come barriers to the achievement of personal and academic goals. Services are provided for students with temporary or permanent disabilities. Accommodations and services are based on the individual student's disability-based need. Students must provide current documentation of their disabilities. Students should contact the office early so that necessary accommodations can be arranged.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

- ❖ **Daily Participation (10%)**—Students will demonstrate competency in written and oral communication through organization, clarity, and consciousness in written and spoken English. Active engagement in the class is key for high participation grades. I reserve the right to dock participation grades for use of cell phones, other electronic devices, or other non-class related activities.
- ❖ **Quizzes (10%)**—Unannounced quizzes will be given from time to time during class. These may not be made up.
- ❖ **Privilege Inventory (5%)**—Students will write a privilege inventory of at least thirty entries based on John Scalzi’s “Things I Don’t Have to Think About Today” model.
- ❖ **Group Presentation (10%)**—Students will participate in a group project in which they will present to the class a historical aspect of Margaret Atwood’s *The Handmaid’s Tale*. Presentations should include both a visual element as well as handouts for the class. The final grade for the group presentation will include successful completion of project checkpoints—such as topic proposal—which will be specified in the assignment sheet.
- ❖ **Response Papers (10%)**—Over the course of the semester, students will submit four short responses (500-1,000 words) to any of the assigned readings on the day they are assigned to be read. The course schedule will show when the deadline for each response paper is, though students are encouraged to submit responses before the final deadlines.
- ❖ **Research Paper (20%)**—Students will write a major research paper of 2,400-3,000 words (8-10 pages) on any book, television show, movie, or similar cultural production they like using a feminist lens to provide a researched critical analysis. Topics must be pre-approved with preliminary research. The final grade for the paper will include successful completion of paper checkpoints (the topic proposal is an example of such a checkpoint) which will be specified in the assignment sheet.
- ❖ **Midterm (15%) and Final Exam (20%)**—Twice this semester, students will be tested in an in-class exam covering key content and ideas. We will discuss the format as the exam draws nearer, but expect an in-class essay and short answer questions.

## GRADING SCALE

Daily Participation and Professionalism	10%	A: 100-90
Privilege Inventory	5%	B: 80-89
Quizzes	10%	C: 70-79
Group Presentation	10%	D: 60-69
Response Paper	10%	F: Below 60
Research Paper	20%	
Midterm Exam	15%	
Final Exam	20%	

## ESSAYS: FORM

All formal essays and proposals must be typed in 12-point, Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins, submitted electronically to me by the start of the class period in which it is due. Along with your name, date, and the title of the assignment in the upper left-hand corner of the first page, each subsequent page should contain a header with your last name and the page number. Any citations should be use MLA style formatting, which we will go over in class.

***Final copies of these papers, paper proposals, and all other writing checkpoints should be submitted electronically to me unless I specify otherwise. These should be emailed to me as a .doc or .docx file (either through Moodle email or directly to [mmil132@tigers.lsu.edu](mailto:mmil132@tigers.lsu.edu)) by class time on the day it is due.***

***Any assignments received after the due date and time will automatically lose 10%. Major assignments turned in more than twenty-four hours late will automatically lose 20%. Any work done in class—including quizzes and exams—cannot be made up under any circumstances.***

*Note: This syllabus is subject to change; any changes will be announced in class. You are responsible for noting these changes and for turning in all assignments on time to avoid penalization.*

Week	Date	Topic	Readings & Work Due
<b>Privilege</b>			
1	Tu 8/23	Course Introduction and Overview	
	Th 8/25	Privilege	* Read "Things I Don't Have to Think About Today" (on Moodle) *Read <i>Women's Voices/Feminist Visions</i> 42-59
<b>Gender and the Body</b>			
2	Tu 8/30	Gender Studies Introduction	* <b>Privilege Inventory Due</b> *Read <i>WV/FV</i> 70, 75-82, 86-90
	Th 9/1	Historical Overview	*Read <i>WV/FV</i> 1-25, 30-36
3	Tu 9/6	Historical Overview	Read excerpt from "Vindication of the Rights of Women" (on Moodle)
	Th 9/8	Historical Overview	*Read "Cult of True Womanhood" (on Moodle)
4	Tu 9/13	<i>Handmaid's Tale</i>	*Read <i>Handmaid's Tale</i> I-V (1-75)
	Th 9/15	<i>Handmaid's Tale</i>	*Read <i>Handmaid's Tale</i> VI-X (77-188)
<b>**Deadline for Response #1**</b>			
5	Tu 9/20	<i>Handmaid's Tale</i>	*Read <i>Handmaid's Tale</i> XI-XII(189-255)
	Th 9/22	<i>Handmaid's Tale</i>	*Read <i>Handmaid's Tale</i> XIII-End (256-311)
6	Tu 9/27	<i>Handmaid's Tale</i>	* <b>Group Presentations</b>
	Th 9/29	<i>Handmaid's Tale</i>	* <b>Group Presentations</b>
7	Tu 10/4	Gender-Based Violence	* <i>WV/FV</i> 503-524
	Th 10/6	Midterm Review	
8	Tu 10/11	Midterm Exam	
	Th 10/13	Fall Break	
<b>**Deadline for Response #2**</b>			
<b>Gender Construction and Society</b>			
9	Tu 10/18	Introduction to Gender Construction	*Read <i>WV/FV</i> 105-120, 126-134 *Read "Even the Queen" (on Moodle)
	Th 10/20	Gender and the Media	*Read <i>WV/FV</i> 36-38, 450-472

10	Tu 10/25	Ethnic Minorities/ Role of Religion and Culture	*Read <i>WV/FV</i> 595-609-614, 213-233
	Th 10/27	Law/Discrimination/ Sexual Harassment	*Read <i>WV/FV</i> 548-566; 436-445; 279-309
11	Tu 11/1	Cultural Perspectives on Gender	*Read <i>WV/FV</i> 164-181, "Shaking Our Shells" (on Moodle), "On Being a Queer Man" (on Moodle)
	Th 11/3	Tentative Library Date	*TBA

**\*\*Deadline for Response #3\*\***

**Sexuality and Sexual Identity**

12	Tu 11/8	Compulsory Heterosexuality	*Read "Changes" and excerpt from "Compulsory Heterosexuality" (on Moodle)
	Th 11/10	Coming Out Narrative	*Read <i>Fun Home</i> Chapters 1-3 (pages 1-86)
13	Tu 11/15	Coming Out Narrative	*Read <i>Fun Home</i> Chapters 4 (87-120)
	Th 11/17	Coming Out Narrative	*Read <i>Fun Home</i> Chapters 5-6 (121-186)
14	Tu 11/22	Coming Out Narrative	*Read <i>Fun Home</i> Chapter 7 (187-232)
	Th/11/24	Thanksgiving	
15	Tu 11/29	Sexual Identities	*Read "The Making of a Southern Faggot," "Somewhere in Between," "Penis. Vagina, Penetration. The End" (on Moodle)
	Th 12/1	Final Exam Review	<b>*Research Paper Due</b>

**\*\*Deadline for Response #4\*\***

**FINAL EXAMS**

**2500-3 (10:40-12:00): Wednesday, December 7, 10:00am-12:00pm**

**2500-4 (12:10-1:30): Thursday, December 8, 12:30-2:30pm**