

Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies – **Williams College**

W › Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies › WGSS 101

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Interested in taking Introduction to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies? Here's a sample syllabus for the course.

Introduction to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies—Sample Syllabus

This course is designed to initiate you into the pleasures, pains and perplexities of critical thinking about gender and the situations of women (and men) across the globe. We will survey a wide variety of writers and issues—historical and contemporary, theoretical and practical. Above all, the course is intended as an exploration of the tremendous diversity of thought contained under the general rubrics of feminist, gender and sexuality studies and a vehicle for developing skills in writing and research as well as analytical tools for further work in the field. Emphasis will be placed on critical dialogue, not consensus.

Course readings:

Johnson, Allan. *The Gender Knot* (Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1997).
Bright, Susie. *The Sexual State of the Union* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997).
Allison, Dorothy. *Bastard Out of Carolina* (New York: Plume Books, 1992).
The majority of the readings are in a bound course packet.

Course films:

Fire, dir. Deepa Mehta (Trial by Fire Films, 1996).
Just Call Me Kade, ed. Sam Zolten (San Francisco: Frameline, 2001).
Boy I Am, dir. Sam Feder and Julie Holler (New York: Women Make Movies, 2007).
Troop 1500: Girl Scouts Beyond Bars, dir. Ellen Spiro (New York: Women Make Movies, 2005).
Real Women Have Curves, dir. Patricia Cardoza (New York: HBO, 2003).

Part I: Experiencing Gender

Why Feminism Now?

"Manifesta" in *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future*, eds. Jennifer Baumgarten and Amy Richards (2000).
Joan Morgan, "Hip Hop Feminism," in *when chickenheads come home to roost: my life as a hip-hop feminist* (1999).
"Lisa Weiner-Mahfuz, "Organizing 101: A Mixed Race Feminist in Movements for Social Justice," in *Colonize This* (2002).

Stephen Lewis, "Statement by Stephen Lewis at University of Pennsylvania's Summit on Global Issue in Women's Health" (2005).

Theorizing Gender

Allan Johnson, *The Gender Knot*.

Josephine Donovan, "Enlightenment Liberal Feminism," "Feminism and Marxism," "Radical Feminism," in *Feminist Theory: The Intellectual Traditions*, 2000.

Sex, Class, and Literature

Dorothy Allison, *Bastard Out of Carolina* (1992).

Dorothy Allison, "A Question of Class," in *Skin: Talking about Sex, Class, and Literature* (1991).

First, Second, and Third Wave U.S. Feminist Manifestos/Documents

"Declaration of Sentiments," Seneca Falls Convention (1848) in Alice Rossi, *The Feminist Papers: From Adams to de Beauvoir* (1988).

Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I a Woman" (1851) in *The Feminist Papers*.

Founding the National Organization of Women, "Bill of Rights" (1967) in Robin Morgan, *Sisterhood is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Movement* (1970).

"Redstockings Manifesto" (1969) in Robin Morgan, *Sisterhood is Powerful*.

Valerie Solanas, "SCUM Manifesto" (1967), excerpts, *Sisterhood is Powerful*.

Bernice Johnson Reagon, "Coalition Politics: Turning the Century" (1981).

"Manifesta," reread from 9/9

Not Just a First World Issue

Robin Morgan, "Introduction," in *Sisterhood is Global* (1984/2004).

Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Sisterhood, Coalition, and the Politics of Experience," in *Feminism Without Borders* (2003).

Geraldine Heng, "'A Great Way to Fly': Nationalism, the State, and the Varieties of Third-World Feminism," in *Feminist Genealogies, Colonial Legacies, Democratic Futures* (1997).

Part II. The Body Politic

Bodies and Power

Sandra Bartky, "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power," in *Femininity and Domination* (1988).

Susan Bordo, "Beauty (Re)discovers the Male Body," in *The Male Body* (1999).

Body Politics

Susan Bordo, "Anorexia Nervosa: Psychopathology as the Crystallization of Culture," in *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body* (1993).

Abra Fortune Chernik, "The Body Politic," in *Listen Up* (1995).
Sirena J. Riley, "The Black Beauty Myth," in *Colonize This* (2002).
Natalie Kusz, "The Fat Lady Sings," in *The Bitch in the House* (2002).

Thinking Sex, Gender, and Power

Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (1982).
Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality," in *Pleasure and Danger*, ed. Carole Vance (1984).

Sexual Pleasure

Susie Bright, *The Sexual State of the Union*, pp. 1-100, 147-196 (1997).
Audre Lorde, "The Erotic as Power" in *Sister Outsider* (1984).

Sexual Violence

Sharon Marcus, "Fighting Bodies, Fighting Words," in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. Butler and Scott (1992).
Alice Walker, "Advancing Luna and Ida B. Wells," in *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down* (1981).
RAINN Statistics Sheet
Sexual Violence World-Wide, World Health Organization
<http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/sexual/brochures/WorldStats2005.pdf>

Thinking about Culture and Sex

Uma Narayan, "Cross-Cultural Connections, Border-Crossings, and 'Death by Culture'" Thinking about Dowry-Murders in India and Domestic-Violence Murders in the United States," in *Dislocating Cultures* (1997).
Virenda Kumar and Sarita Kanth, "Bride Burning" in *The Lancet* 18 (December 2004), 18-19.
<http://www.sacw.net/Wmov/sasiafeministdecla.html>
Fire.

HIV

"Facing the Future Together: Report of the United Nations Secretary-General's Task Force on Women, Girls and HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa" (You may skim, but please try to get an overview of the situation, as it will provide a context for the conversation in class)
"UNAIDS Guidance Note: HIV and Sex Work, April 2007."
"A Human Rights-based Commentary on *UNAIDS Guidance Note: HIV and Sex Work (April 2007)*," Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network, August 2007.
Please take a look at <http://www.bayswan.org/index.html>

Part III. Labor, Family, Economy

Women and the State

Nancy Fraser, "After the Family Wage," in *Justice Interruptus* (1997).
Barbara Ehrenreich, "Scrubbing in Maine," *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America* (2001).

Reproductive Justice

Rickie Solinger, *Pregnancy and Power: A Short History of Reproductive Politics in America*, excerpts (2005).
Marsha Saxton, "Disability Rights and Selective Abortion," in Rickie Solinger, *Abortion Wars: A Half Century of Struggle, 1950-2000*, 374-393 (2005).
Choice USA materials
Erika Bachiochi, "Coming of Age in a Culture of Choice," *The Cost of "Choice": Women Evaluate the Impact of Abortion*, ed. Erika Bachiochi (San Francisco: Encounter Books, 2004), 22-32.

(Wo)Men in Families: The Cost of Caregiving

Nancy Folbre, excerpt from *The Invisible Heart* (2001).
Elinor Burkett, *The Baby Boon: How Family-Friendly America Cheats the Childless* 1-21, 25-61, 179-98 (2000).
"Family Leave Values," *New York Times*, July 29, 2007

Reproductive Politics

Rebecca Mean, "Eggs for Sale," in *The New Yorker* (August 9, 1999).
Angela Davis, "Outcast Mothers and Surrogates: Racism and Reproductive Politics in the Nineties," in *Feminist Theory* (1991).

Transgender Activism, Transgender Challenges

Kate Bornstein, "Naming All the Parts" (1994).
Riki Ann Wilchins, "Selected Chronology of the Transsexual Menace and Genderpac" (1993).

"A gender glossary," http://www.gazettenet.com/09252003/valley_1/9297.htm

Nancy R. Nangeroni, "Transgenderism: Transgressing Gender Norms,"
<http://www.gendertalk.com/tgism.shtml>
Discuss films *Just Call Me Cade* and *Boy I Am*.

Part IV. Feminist Analysis, Feminist Futures

Gender and Incarceration

Meda Chesney-Lind, "Imprisoning Women: The Unintended Victims of Mass Imprisonment" in *Invisible Punishment: The Collateral Consequences of Mass Imprisonment* (New York: New Press, 2002), 79-94.
Julia Sudbury, "Women of Color, Globalization, and the Politics of Incarceration," *The Criminal*

Justice System and Women: Offenders, Victims and Workers 3rd. ed., eds. Barbara Raffel Price and Natalie J. Sokoloff (2002). Manuscript.

WPA Focus on Women and Justice, "Trends In Incarceration 1" (August 2003).

WPA Focus on Women and Justice, "A Portrait of Women in Prison" (February 2004).

WPA Focus on Women and Justice, "Barriers to Reentry" (October 2003).

Discuss *Troop 1500*

The Fashion Industry

Angela McRobbie, "A New Kind of Rag Trade?" in *No Sweat: Fashion, Free Trade, and the Rights of Garment Workers*, ed. Andrew Ross (1997).

Steve Nutter, "The Structure and Growth of the Los Angeles Garment Industry," in *No Sweat* (date).

Jo-Ann Mort, "'They Want to Kill Us for a Little Money': Sweatshop Workers Speak Out," *No Sweat* (date).

María Angelina Soldatenko, "Made in the USA: Latinas/os?, Garment Work and Ethnic Conflict in Los Angeles Sweat Shops," *Cultural Studies* (1999).

Discuss *Real Women Have Curves*.

Where to Go from Here

Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Women Workers and the Politics of Solidarity," in *Feminism without Borders* (2003).

Examples of gender activism:

Mom's Rising

<http://www.momsrising.org/>

WIEGO:

<http://www.wiego.org/>

SEWA:

<http://www.sewa.org/>

SHACK/SLUM DWELLERS INTERNATIONAL (SDI):

<http://www.sdinet.org/>

ACTIONAID INTERNATIONAL:

<http://www.actionaid.org/>

WOLA NANI

<http://www.wolanani.co.za/>

