

GSWS 0100: Introduction to Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies

Dr. Kerrie Kauer
Office: 402C
Office Hours: 8:30 – 9:00 p.m. (M)
or By Appointment
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Spring 2017
Class Meeting: M 6:00- 8:30 p.m.
Location: 402 CL

Course Description and Objectives

This course is designed to offer students an overview of the field of Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies. As this field is interdisciplinary, this course will introduce students to the range of scholarship from various departments and epistemological perspectives that are engaged in promoting the discipline. This course will serve as a foundation for future coursework in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies Program at the University of Pittsburgh, and as a result will encourage students to engage in activities and events promoted by the Program. Through the readings, activities and assignments in this course, students will develop tools to critically analyze the ways in which social and cultural forces shape us as gendered individuals in the context of the world in which we live. We will analyze a range of perspectives and consider the ways that gender, sex, biology, race, class, nationality, power, politics, and social movements intersect to influence our understanding of gender and culture. In fulfillment of a University Writing Requirement, this writing intensive course will provide students with opportunities to write, revise and hone their academic writing skills. Course prerequisites: none.

Objectives:

At the end of the course, you should achieve the following:

- Demonstrate an introductory understanding of the field of gender, sexuality, and women’s studies, and utilize a range of interdisciplinary tools and methods for understanding and analyzing sex, gender, and sexuality in culture.
- Develop a rich comprehension of both feminist and queer approaches to the social and cultural construction of gender and sexuality.
- Construct and enhance a critical understanding of intersectionality, including an awareness of gender and its complex intersections with other social, cultural, and biological categories, including but not limited to sex, race, ethnicity, class, nation, sexuality, ability, and age.
- Cultivate a language framework for thoughtfully articulating the critical vocabulary in the field of gender, sexuality and women’s studies.
- Improve reading and writing skills through effective synthesis of written material, and subsequently, the ability to convey course concepts in a concise and clear manner both verbally and in writing.
- Develop a skillset to think critically and thoughtfully about the self and others through a deepened understanding of how social, cultural, and biological categories shape our lives, and our understandings of the world.

Class Format

The emphasis in the class is on *how* to think, not *what*, to think. That is to say, everyone’s opinion and point of view will be respected in lectures and class discussions, but we will be challenging each other to critically examine the processes by which we reach and hold opinions about gender, sexuality, race, and other topics. This class will be student driven. This means discussion and even leadership by students is built into the course. My job is not to fill your minds with information. My job is to provide you with the tools to process new information and to make up your own minds about issues in GSWS. Because this

course is student driven, every student needs not only to attend class but to contribute to the class's project of co-constructing knowledge. To this end, we will use several techniques to involve members of the class in organizing knowledge.

Embodied Learning

Learning happens in a variety of ways for students. Embodiment is the integration of mind and body as well as one's soul, spirit, breath. The latter is a deeply personal piece that only you can define or determine for yourself. In courses that incorporate topics of diversity, embodiment is an important part of the learning process. Power and discrimination are never solely intellectual encounters: sexism, racism, heterosexism, classism, and oppression are always experienced through the body. To that end, we will incorporate activities where we integrate the mind and body through breath work, journaling, and sometimes gentle movement.

Electronic Policy

In addition, all electronic devices (including but not limited to cell phones, laptops, iPads) are to be set in silent mode and kept out of sight during class. Laptop computers WILL NOT be necessary for class participation in this course, and should only be used with special permission.

Required Texts

- Shaw, Susan and Janet Lee. (2015). *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions: Classic and Contemporary Readings, 6th Edition*. New York, NY: McGraw Hill. Available in the bookstore.
- Additional readings, films, blogs, etc. will be available on online. They are denoted with an * in the weekly schedule below.

Requirements and Grading

Attendance and Participation (10%)

This is an engaged course, and its quality is built upon participation from all of us. What we each bring to our class and how we engage with one another matter. Thus, I expect everyone to attend and participate fully in our discussions.

Attendance matters, but it does not make up the sole measure of participation. I expect everyone to arrive on time and prepared. **Being prepared means that you read the assigned material *closely* before class and come ready to discuss it, ask questions, and generate ideas.** During class, I expect you to both actively listen and contribute in thoughtful, respectful ways. Be attentive to the balance of conversation so that everyone has ample opportunity to speak. I will facilitate conversation to accomplish this too.

Outside of class, I expect you to read and absorb material. I strongly suggest that you prepare notes each day based on these [reading guide questions](#) and bring your notes to class to use as a basis for discussion.

- What are the main questions the author/s is/are posing?
- What is the methodology? (data, method, qualitative, quantitative)
- What are the main conclusions?
- What is one strength of the article?
- In what ways is this work unsatisfying, inconsistent, incomplete?

- What additional questions does this work raise?

Cell phones, text messaging, private conversations, surfing the web, and working on other things are disrespectful, distracting, and unacceptable. This type of behavior will lower your participation grade considerably. You are welcome to use a laptop to take notes in class; however, if you check email, Facebook, and/or surf the web during class, you will lose this privilege.

Participation accounts for a significant portion of your course grade. These are not automatic points. You earn participation points by the quality of insights and questions you offer, thoughtfulness, discussion leadership, and professionalism. **More than two absences throughout the semester will significantly lower your participation grade (5 points per absence).**

Reflection Blog Entries (30%)

Students will write 5 blog entries based on specific learning and/or activism activities in our textbook or a topic determined by the instructor. These assignments are designed to encourage synthesis, analysis, and reflection about the readings and activities you will complete. Each post will demonstrate your understanding of the material, critical thinking skills, and writing ability. Your entries must be a minimum of one, single-spaced page (no more than 12 point font).

Your posts also help me get to know you and how and what you think. Your responses will help us launch our class discussions and give you practice in critical writing. Feel free to include additional, shorter entries throughout the semester – whether they are initial reactions to material, questions, media clippings, drawings, or anything that the course material inspires in you.

You can post your reflection blogs on Blackboard on our course blog page. Blog entries are due no later than 5:00 p.m. on the designated days in the detailed weekly schedule below.

Epiphanic Moment Paper (20%)

You will write a 3-5 page paper about an “epiphanic moment” in your life that centers on your experience with gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexuality, or feminism. Denzin (1995) defines the ‘epiphanic moment’ as one that ‘leaves a mark on a person’s life’ (p. 83) and is most often experienced in moments of crisis. The “epiphanic moment” is significant in sociological theory because it is a tool that illustrates the ways in which individual biographies and subjective experiences intersect with the ‘larger historical, institutional, and cultural arenas’ (p. 83) that also require analysis. Denzin (1995) posits that there are four kinds of epiphanic ‘moment’—the ‘major upheaval’ and the ‘cumulative’, ‘illuminative’ and ‘relived’ moments (p. 83). Each meaning centers on the ‘problematic’ (p. 83) nature of the experience. **This paper will be peer reviewed and you will be receiving early and sustained feedback from your instructor as well.** (See further details regarding this assignment on Blackboard)

Awareness Activities (2 @ 25% each)

You will have five choices of types of assignments from which to choose. More information regarding your five choices are listed under *Course Documents* on *Blackboard*. Pay close attention to the requirements of each one, most of the projects involve on-going observations that cannot be completed at the last minute. **To that end, this project will be an ongoing writing assignment that will include a proposal to your project.** Please note the due dates. Papers will be submitted on *Blackboard* by 3 p.m. the date they are due.

Grading Scale

Participation	10%
Blog Entries (5)	30% (6% each)
Epiphanic Moment Paper	20%
Awareness Activity (2)	50% (25% each)

Writing Requirement Policy: Both GSWS papers, the Reflection Blog Assignment paper, and the Awareness Assignment papers all need to be completed in order for the student to pass the course. Students who do not complete these assignments will not pass this course.

“W-COURSE,” WRITING INTENSIVE COURSE

http://www.wid.pitt.edu/writing_intensive_courses/teachingexistingcourses.php

The particular shape and trajectory of any writing-intensive course will be partly determined by its relation to the discipline, its position in the major, and its instructor’s pedagogical convictions. Across the Arts and Sciences, however, writing-intensive courses should enact these common practices:

1. Students in W courses should write regularly, from the beginning of the term onward. Students writing in the last month of class should be able to work from what they have learned by writing in the first month. By the end of the term, students should have written a minimum of 20-25 pages, and this writing should determine a significant portion of the final grade.
2. This semester-long sequence of writing assignments—both formal and informal—should engage students actively in the intellectual work of the course. Instructors should help students understand the purpose of each assignment and its relation to the rest of their course work. Students should also be made aware of how each assignment will be evaluated.
3. During the semester, students should revise at least one piece of writing substantially. Course schedules should allow enough time between drafts and revisions for teachers to provide instructive (rather than merely corrective) responses, and for students to revise their thinking as well as their prose.
4. Although students typically do most of their formal writing outside the classroom, in a W-course they should also spend time in class learning to write. Instructors should direct the students’ attention to relevant issues of thinking and writing (whether specific to the discipline or more general), and use class time helping students address those issues.

How to Succeed in This Course:

First, stay actively engaged with the material throughout the semester. Read the assigned readings *before* attending class. I have chosen these readings carefully to illustrate key concepts as well as for their readability. Second, check our Black Board site *regularly*. Staying on track is key, so plan ahead using the weekly schedule below. Pay attention to deadlines, and begin working on your assignments early. Importantly, ask for help. I am here to help you learn. Talk to your classmates about class material and develop study groups. You are fabulous assets to each other. Be sure to give me plenty of time to read any emails or drafts you have regarding written assignments. Do not wait until the last minute! If you think a particular reading or topic might be especially challenging or unsettling, you can arrive to class early and take a seat by the door so that you can easily exit the classroom as needed. If you need to leave or miss class, you are still responsible for the work you miss. If you are struggling to keep up with the work because of the course content, you should speak with your instructor and/or seek help from the counseling center.

Policies

Academic Integrity Policy: The fundamentals of Academic Integrity are valued within the University of Pittsburgh community of scholars. All students are expected to understand and adhere to the standards of Academic Integrity as stated in the Pitt Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found on the Pitt website at www.pitt.edu/academicintegrity. Any student who violates the Academic Integrity Policy is subject to judicial proceedings, which may result in sanctions as outlined in the Policy. Depending upon the severity of the violation, sanctions may range from receiving a zero on an assignment to being dismissed from the university. If you have any questions about the policy, please consult your course instructor.

Students should be aware that all violations, including minor infractions, will be reported to the University of Pittsburgh Academic Integrity Committee.

Plagiarism Policy: Plagiarism, taking someone else's words or ideas and representing them as your own, is expressly prohibited by the University of Pittsburgh. Good academic work must be based on honesty. The attempt of any student to present as his or her own work that which he or she has not produced is regarded by the faculty and administration as a serious offense. Student academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

- Copying the work on another during an examination or turning in a paper or an assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- Copying from books, magazines, or other sources, including Internet or other electronic databases like ProQuest and InfoTrac, or paraphrasing ideas from such sources without acknowledging them;
- Submitting an essay for one course to a second course without having sought prior permission from your instructor;
- Giving a speech and using information from books, magazines, or other sources or paraphrasing ideas from sources without acknowledging them;
- Knowingly assisting others in the dishonest use of course materials such as papers, lab data, reports and/or electronic files to be used by another student as that student's own work.

Students in this class and in all courses are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Cheating, plagiarism in written work, receiving and providing unauthorized assistance, and sabotaging the work of others are behaviors that are inconsistent with standards of academic integrity. Students/candidates are expected to do their own work. Plagiarism is defined as using someone else's work ideas, or words without giving the author credit for using them. This can mean many things, including downloading papers from the Internet, using a friend's paper, inaccurately quoting or paraphrasing ideas or words from a text. In the academic community, people earn their living through the use of their work ideas, and words. Their reputation is built, in part, by others using their ideas and giving credit to the author. Therefore, you have the responsibility, both legal and ethical, to cite their work properly. Plagiarism is a major offence in the academic community of which you are a part. Students/candidates who commit blatant acts of plagiarism will fail the course and may be required to present a defense to be allowed to continue in the department.

PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED. If you have any questions or are uncertain about the meaning of this policy, it is your responsibility to meet with the instructor to discuss the policy. **It is the student's responsibility to understand the definition of and consequences of plagiarism!! Students who cheat or plagiarize any assignment, exam or other course element will receive a ZERO on that particular piece of work. In addition, your final course grade will be lowered ONE FULL LETTER grade as a result of this action and your case may also be subject to review by the Office of Judicial Affairs. We will also discuss this topic in class.**

E-mail policy:

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address.

Special Learning or Physical Accommodations Policy: Disabilities Services: If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you must notify your instructor within the first two weeks of the course. Please also notify Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890. You may be asked to provide appropriate documentation of your disability.

Sexual Misconduct, Required Reporting, and Title IX

The University is committed to combatting sexual misconduct. As a result, you should know that University faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct, including harassment and sexual violence, to the University's Title IX office so that the victim may be provided appropriate resources and support options. What this means is that as your professor, I am required to report any incidents of sexual misconduct that are directly reported to me, or of which I am somehow made aware.

There are two important exceptions to this requirement about which you should be aware:
A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here:
<http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report/confidentiality>

An important exception to the reporting requirement exists for academic work. Disclosures about sexual misconduct that are shared as part of an academic project, classroom discussion, or course assignment, are not required to be disclosed to the University's Title IX office.

If you are the victim of sexual misconduct, Pitt encourages you to reach out to these resources:

* Title IX Office: 412-648-7860

* SHARE @ the University Counseling Center: 412-648-7930 (8:30 A.M. TO 5 P.M. M-F) and 412-648-7856 (AFTER BUSINESS HOURS)

If you have a safety concern, please contact the University of Pittsburgh Police, 412-624-2121. Other reporting information is available here: <http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report-0>

[This statement was developed by Katie Pope, Title IX Coordinator, in conjunction with GSWS instructors.]

Weekly Schedule

**** Please acquaint yourself with the GSWS Events Calendar as there will be possible extra credit opportunities throughout the semester. <http://www.gsws.pitt.edu/events> ****

Introduction to GSWS

- 1/9 Welcome, Introductions, and Course Requirements
Women's & Gender Studies: Perspectives and Practices
- Chapter 1
 - <https://ww2.kqed.org/lowdown/2016/12/06/the-honest-truth-about-fake-news-with-lesson-plan/>
- 1/16 *Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – NO CLASS*
- Chapter 2
 - The power of privilege: Tiffany Jana at TEDxRVAWomen
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0acvkHliZs>
-

Key Concepts and Perspectives

- 1/23 *Privilege and Inequality*
- Chapter 2 (cont.)
 - **Epiphanic moment paper due** – bring to class
- 1/30 *Learning Gender*
- Chapter 3
 - *****Submit REVISED Epiphanic Moment Paper Online**
- 2/6 *Inscribing Gender on the Body*
- Chapter 4
 - Film: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/film/growing-up-trans/>
- 2/13 *Media and Culture*
- Chapter 5
- Miss Representation – In Class Film*
- 2/20 *Sex, Power, & Intimacy*
- Chapter 6
- 2/27 *Health and Reproductive Justice*
- Chapter 7
- Podcast: Listen- Men Bring Condoms, Women Take Pills: Men's and Women's Roles in Contraceptive Decision Making**
http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/suppl/10.1177/0891243211416113/suppl_file/GAS_Julie_Fennell.mp3
- 3/6 ****SPRING BREAK** Pink Ribbons, Inc. Online**
- 3/13 *Family Systems, Family Lives*
- Chapter 7
- Awareness Assignment 1 Due Online**

3/20 *Work Inside and Outside the Home*
• Chapter 9

3/27 *Resisting Gender Violence*
• Chapter 10
Jackson Katz: Ted Talk

4/3 *State, Law, and Social Policy*
• Chapter 11
• *Guest Lecture: Dr. Dana Brown - Executive Director*
Pennsylvania Center for Women and Politics Assistant Professor of Political Science
Chatham University

4/10 *State, Law, and Social Policy*
<http://thebaffler.com/salvos/trumped-abandoned-faludi>

4/17 *Religion & Spirituality*
• Chapter 12

4/24 • *Activism, Change, and Feminist Futures*
• Chapter 12

4/27 **Final Exam Week**
Awareness Activity #2 Due 4/21

**** THIS IS A TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. PLEASE COME TO CLASS TO STAY AWARE OF ANY CHANGES TO THE SCHEDULE. ****