

# Introduction to Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies

University of Pittsburgh  
Spring 2017 (January 4-April 29)

**Course title:** GSWS 0100: Introduction to Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies  
**Course number:** 30065  
**Offered by:** Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies Program/College of General Studies  
**Instructor:** dr. anupama (anu) jain  
**E-mail:** [jaina@pitt.edu](mailto:jaina@pitt.edu) **PREFERRED METHOD OF COMMUNICATION**  
**Phone/Text:** 412.345.1096  
**Office Hours:** Tuesdays 4-5pm, Wednesdays 3-4pm, and by appointment (via phone/Skype)  
**Office address:** 401 Cathedral of Learning, University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA 15260  
**Attributes:** Hybrid/online course

## Modules

Our course is organized around 3 in-person meetings during the semester and weekly online modules beginning on Mondays and ending on Saturdays. Learning objectives, descriptions of assignments and assessment, and expected activities within a particular module will be identified and/or made available to the students no later than **Monday at 8am**. Unless specifically labeled as "optional," all assignments are required for course credit. All work due for a module must be submitted by **5pm on that Saturday unless you are directed otherwise**. Feedback on graded assignments will be provided no later than 2 weeks after submission.

## In-person meetings

9:30am-12:30pm on the following Saturdays:  
January 14, February 25, April 8 in Cathedral of Learning 401

## Course Description

What is sex? What is gender? What is sexuality? How are these concepts related to culture? To nature? To help you answer these important questions, this course will introduce you to the exciting field of gender, sexuality, and women's studies. We will use a range of interdisciplinary concepts, tools, and methods to understand and analyze sex, gender, femininity, masculinity, and sexuality. Through readings, multimedia, and class discussion, we will study how gender and sexuality are socially and culturally constructed. In addition, we will consider how gender intersects with other identity categories such as race, class, ethnicity, nation, age, ability, and sexuality. Because we all have a gender, this course is crucial for any profession and for understanding the world around us. It is also a great opportunity for you to develop your written and oral skills. The course is open to all students regardless of background. As a prerequisite for more advanced courses in the program and as the intro course for current or future students in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies major or certificate, this course will prepare you for more advanced courses in the program. Also, you will learn to apply the critical vocabulary used in gender studies to your major and minor fields of study.

## Required Readings

Shaw, S & Lee, J. (2014). *Women's Voices, Feminist Vision: Classic and Contemporary Readings*. (6th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill. Available for purchase at the University Bookstore or through sellers such as Amazon.com, and also on reserve at Hillman Library (Readings from this book are marked as **WV** on the schedule).

All other readings will be made available on the CourseWeb site (and marked as **CW** on the schedule). The schedule and course content are subject to change at the instructor's discretion in order to maximize learning outcomes. Students will be notified of any changes in a timely manner via *Announcements* on CW.

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## Course Objectives

- 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, sex, 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, nationality, 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.

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## Course Topics

- Women's Studies as an academic discipline
- Theories of the "nature" of gender, including the influences of biology, personality, and social roles
- How feminine and masculine roles are portrayed through fiction and popular media, to children and adults
- Women and the family, including the influences of multiple roles as daughters, sisters, wives, mothers and alternatives to these roles
- Gender roles in society in the realms of religion, education, the health care system, the workplace and the political arena
- Women's roles as influenced by intersections of ethnicity, socio-cultural differences, race, class and culture
- Complementary understanding of masculinity studies
- Definitions and discussions of sexuality cross-culturally

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## Weekly schedule & in-person meeting dates

|  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Module # 1: Wednesday, January 4 - Saturday, January 7                   | DEFINING OUR TERMS                   |
| Module #2: Monday, January 9- Saturday, January 14                       | POWER & PRIVILEGE                    |
| <b><i>In-person class meeting on January 14, from 9:30am-12:30pm</i></b> |                                      |
| Module #3: Monday, January 16 - Saturday, January 21                     | DECONSTRUCTING ASSUMPTIONS           |
| Module #4: Monday, January 23 - Saturday, January 28                     | INTERSECTIONALITY                    |
| Module #5: Monday, January 30 - Saturday, February 4                     | FEMINISMS                            |
| Module #6: Monday, February 6-Saturday, February 11                      | SEXUAL POLITICS                      |
| Module #7: Monday, February 13 - Saturday, February 18                   | GENDERED NARRATIVES OF WORK & FAMILY |
| Module #8: Monday, February 20 - Saturday, February 25                   | MEDIA & REPRESENTATION               |

***In-person class meeting on February 25, from 9:30am-12:30pm***

Module#9: Monday, February 27 - Saturday, March 4

BELIEFS ABOUT SEX & GENDER

***SPRING BREAK: March 5-12, 2017***

Module #10: Monday, March 13 - Saturday, March 18

INSTITUTIONALIZED OPPRESSIONS

Module #11: Monday, March 20 - Saturday, March 25

ARTS & CULTURE

Module #12: Monday, March 27 - Saturday, April 1

HEALTH & REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE

Module #13: Monday, April 3 - Saturday, April 8

THE WORLDWIDE WEB

***In-person class meeting on April 8, from 9:30am-12:30pm***

Module #14: Monday, April 10 - Saturday, April 15

GSWS & ACTIVISM

Module #15: Monday, April 17 - Saturday, April 22

CURRENT AFFAIRS & EMERGING TOPICS

## **Policies and Expectations**

### ***\*\*\* Academic Integrity/Plagiarism \*\*\****

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the [University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity](#). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators. For this course, all students are required to complete an online tutorial available via CourseWeb.

### ***\*\*\* Accessibility \*\*\****

Blackboard is ADA Compliant and has fully implemented the final accessibility standards for electronic and information technology covered by Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998. Please note that, due to the flexibility provided in this product, it is possible for some material to inadvertently fall outside of these guidelines.

### ***\*\*\* Attendance & Participation \*\*\****

Learning in this class depends upon conscientious attention to detail including participating in all course activities and contributing to the developing online learning community. You are also required to attend 3 mandatory in-person workshops from 9:30am-12:30pm on January 14, February 18, and April 8, 2017.

During these meetings, students will have a chance to learn about each other, have open-ended discussions about core course topics, and engage in experiential/problem-solving activities that deepen their engagement with the issues about which we are learning. All students are expected to actively participate both online and IRL ("in real life") and have the freedom to speak personally about their personal convictions and beliefs; however, it is expected that students treat each other and the instructor with respect. Give an opportunity to other students to express their opinions even if you do not agree with them.

### ***\*\*\* Cancellations \*\*\****

Students will be notified immediately if there is any reason that a meeting must be cancelled and a make-up session will be arranged as soon as possible.

### ***\*\*\* Communications \*\*\****

It is important that we maintain routine communications, especially if you have questions or concerns about course expectations or materials. On Mondays by 8am, there will be new

Announcements via CourseWeb providing all necessary information for students to complete assignments and fulfill expectations for the forthcoming week of learning, as well as grading assessments for previously submitted coursework. The best method to reach the instructor is via email at [jaina@pitt.edu](mailto:jaina@pitt.edu) and you can expect to receive an email response within 2-3 business days. Discussion forums and other asynchronous activities will be monitored by the instructor at least twice a week.

***\*\*\* Content Warning and Class Climate Statement \*\*\****

Our course readings and online/in-person discussions will often focus on mature, difficult, and potentially challenging topics. As with any course in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program, course topics are often political and personal. Readings and discussions might trigger strong feelings—anger, discomfort, anxiety, confusion, excitement, humor, and even boredom. Some of us will have emotional responses to the readings; some of us will have emotional responses to our peers' understanding of the readings; all of us should feel responsible for creating a space that is both intellectually rigorous and respectful. Above all, be respectful (even when you strongly disagree) and be mindful of the ways that our identities position us in the course.

I expect everyone to be prepared to approach the readings and discussion among class members in a mature and respectful way.

If you are struggling with the course materials, here are some tips:

- Read the syllabus so that you are prepared in advance.
- You can approach your instructor ahead of time if you'd like more information about a topic or reading.
- If (during in-class meetings) 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.

***\*\*\* Course Enrollment Caps, Wait Lists, and Reserved Seats \*\*\****

To better accommodate CGS students, the College typically reserves a number of seats in its sections specifically for our students. These seats will remain reserved until a designated date each term, after which time any unfilled seats will be open to all students. Courses which reach their enrollment cap will become closed to further students. Students may then add their names to a course's wait list, which also has a set cap. Students on the wait list will automatically be enrolled in the class if a seat becomes available (e.g. because a previously enrolled student dropped or the cap was raised).

***\*\*\* Copyright Notice \*\*\****

These materials may be protected by copyright. United States copyright law, 17 USC section 101, et seq., in addition to University policy and procedures, prohibit unauthorized duplication or retransmission of course materials. See [Library of Congress Copyright Office](#) and the [University Copyright Policy](#).

***\*\*\* CourseWeb \*\*\****

CourseWeb (CW) is Pitt's implementation of the Blackboard Learning Management System (LMS). Our customized CW site offers students access to all course tools in one central location, including the syllabus, schedule, list of readings, assignments, emails for all learning community members, and more.

Our course is organized according to weekly modules beginning on Mondays and ending on Saturdays. This means that learning objectives, descriptions of assignments and assessment, and expected activities included in a particular weekly module will be identified and/or made available to the students no later than Monday at 8am. All work due for that module must be submitted by 5pm on Saturday.

Each weekly module is organized according to the same format: **Module #, Date range, Title, Learning Objectives, Topics, Activities, Readings, and Assignments.**

To login to the CourseWeb system, please visit the University web portal at <https://my.pitt.edu>. For assistance with CW, contact the Center for Instructional Development and Distance Education (CIDDE) at [etc@cidde.pitt.edu](mailto:etc@cidde.pitt.edu) or 412.648.2832.

### **\* \* \* Disability Statement \* \* \***

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and [Disability Resources and Services](#), 140 William Pitt Union, [drsrecep@pitt.edu](mailto:drsrecep@pitt.edu), 412-648-7890 or 412-228-5347 for P3 ASL users, as early as possible in the term.

### **\* \* \* Gender Inclusive Language \* \* \***

Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of any gender (for example, first year student versus freshman, chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind, etc.). It also affirms non-binary gender identifications, and recognizes the difference between biological sex and gender expression. Students may share their preferred pronouns and names, and these gender identities and gender expressions should be honored. For more information, visit: <http://www.gsws.pitt.edu/faculty/gender-inclusivenon-sexist-language-syllabi-statement>

### **\* \* \* Grading \* \* \***

Failure to complete any of the assignments may result in failure for the course.

#### *Grade Scale*

|    |        |    |          |
|----|--------|----|----------|
| A+ | 98-100 | C+ | 77-79    |
| A  | 93-97  | C  | 73-76    |
| A- | 90-92  | C- | 70-72    |
| B+ | 87-89  | D+ | 67-69    |
| B  | 83-86  | D  | 60-66    |
| B- | 80-82  | F  | Below 60 |

#### *Extra credit*

Extra credit opportunities that arise during the course of the semester will be announced to all students with clear instructions.

#### *Overview of assignments & evaluation criteria (1000 total points possible)*

##### **Contribution to the online learning community (240 points)**

It is crucial that each member of the course completes expected work according to the schedule. The assigned readings, videos, activities, and written assignments all work in conjunction to support the acquisition of new knowledge in GSWS, synthesis of new and old information, thinking deeply and critically about complex ideas related to key topics, and engaging in dialogue with diverse learners. Evaluation is based on students' contributions in terms of completing all assignments by posted deadlines, communicating any issues or obstacles to

participation, building upon the feedback you receive from the instructor and peers via online tools, and clearly exposing your own ongoing learning. For **twelve** of the 15 total modules, our learning and course activities will take place online or remotely, and contribution during each of these modules counts for 20 of your overall points in the class.

### **Participation in workshops (150 points) & Final presentation (35 points)**

Attendance is mandatory at **three** in-person meetings on January 14, February 18, and April 8, from 9:30am-12:30pm. **Final presentations** are required at the last of these three meetings, when students will describe their final papers so that everyone in class benefits from the learning and research being done by the entire group. Presentations will be evaluated based on the polish and persuasiveness of the argument, clarity, focus, and engagement with the audience. At all of the workshops, we will participate in activities that are not viable in an online format but that will complement the work we are doing throughout the semester in our online learning community.

We will spend part of the first meeting learning about the members of the class through icebreaker activities and collaborate on ground rules for open dialogue. Another component of the workshops will include small-group work in which students can delve into a particular intellectual question in more depth than a large group can achieve. There will also be opportunities for building writing skills and brainstorming your own final writing projects for the class. Evaluation is based on attentiveness, collaborative participation in all activities, the precision of verbal and written responses to cues for group or individual work, and clear evidence of familiarity and fluency with key course ideas and issues. Assessment for each workshop will count toward 1/3 of the participation grade (50 points each), and your final presentation can earn up to 35 points.

### **Journal entries (120 points)**

**Four** sets of journal entries are due over the course of the term, with each one counting for 30 points. Evaluation will be based on fulfilling the expectations for the assignment, including length (at least one substantive paragraph for each reading), submission by the deadline, incorporation of quotes from course readings and activities to support written ideas and claims, specificity of word choice and examples, attention to core ideas in GSWS, and the ability to engage meaningfully with each of the materials.

### **Reading Map (70 points)**

**Two** reading maps are due, worth 35 points each. Creating a reading "map" is a process for ensuring active reading and retention of information from assigned materials. It requires explicitly recognizing how a piece of writing is organized and being able to communicate its central claims in your own words. It represents the reading process in which you are participating and also allows you to quickly review the meanings of a particular essay in order to be able to more meaningfully and precisely contribute to class discussions online and in person. They also serve as a model for testing your comprehension of diverse texts, because you have to be able to reflect what you have learned. The sections for a Reading Map include: Thesis/Central Point of the writing; Development of the analysis (in which you summarize the major points in the order they are laid out in the article); and Major topics and concepts identified by location in the writing (page number or section).

### **Reaction papers (160 points)**

**Four** sets of reaction papers are due over the course of the term, with each set counting for 40 points. Evaluation will be based on depth and specificity of your critical analyses of course materials and topics. There should be evidence that you have been able to engage deeply with the issues and found your own meaning in their implications that you can successfully

communicate to others. Writing expectations include focus, clarity, spelling and grammatical precision, attention to detail, and use of scholarly language.

### **Discussion questions (45 points)**

**Three** paragraph-long discussion questions are due, and each DQ is worth 15 points. Two of your DQs will serve as conversation-starters for the latter two of the in-person meetings, and one DQ will be the foundation for an online discussion in Module #14. Evaluation will be based on potential for inspiring reactions and responses from others, especially in terms of questioning familiar ideas or assumptions. They will also need to clearly reveal active reading of course materials through direct citation or other reference in the question, leading to deeper engagement for responders with class readings or activities.

### **Final paper (180 points)**

A first-draft of your final paper is due at the end of Module #11 and the final draft is due at the end of the Module #15. The first draft can earn up to 60 points and will be assessed based on evidence of having completed research in order to identify appropriate outside sources, brainstorming about ideas from course materials, and progress towards developing a viable hypothesis that can be used as the basis for a meaningful scholarly analysis of relevant issues. The final draft counts for 120 points towards your overall course grade and evaluation is based upon completion of all expectations and the persuasiveness of an original argument pertinent to GSWS.

### *Policy for "G" grades for unfinished course work*

In keeping with University policies, an instructor may assign a G grade only in the case of extenuating personal circumstances that prevent a student from completing the course work within a term. Qualifying extenuating personal circumstances include major illness or injury, or family issues such as illness, birth, or death. When assigned a G grade, students should expect to complete some clearly defined work, such as a final examination paper, within a specified period of time. Students are required to complete the course requirements no later than one year after the term or session in which the course was taken. Once the one-year deadline has passed, the G grade will remain on the record, and the student will be required to reregister for the course if it is needed to fulfill requirements for graduation. A G grades does not automatically revert to an F grade if the work remains incomplete.

### **\* \* \* Netiquette ("network etiquette") \* \* \***

As with any mode of interaction between people, there are certain norms we can adopt that will encourage civility and respectfulness towards one another, even or especially when we encounter intellectual disagreements or conflicts.

In all of your communications, please maintain polite and respectful language and tone towards all members of our learning community. Offensive or disrespectful communications will not earn academic credit.

### *Some helpful reminders (From ["Ground Rules for Online Discussions" by Peter Connors](#))*

- *Participate:* This is a shared learning environment. No lurking in the cyberspace background. It is not enough to login and read the discussion thread of others. For the maximum benefit to all, everyone must contribute.
- *Report Glitches:* Discussion forums are electronic. They break. If for any reason you experience difficulty participating, please call, email, or otherwise inform me of the issue. Chances are others are having the same problem.
- *Help Others:* You may have more experience with online discussion forums than the person next to you. Give them a hand. Show them it's not so hard. They're really going to appreciate it!

- *Be Patient:* Read everything in the discussion thread before replying. This will help you avoid repeating something someone else has already contributed. Acknowledge the points made with which you agree and suggest alternatives for those with which you don't.
- *Be Brief:* You want to be clear—and to articulate your point—without being preachy or pompous. Be direct. Stay on point. Don't lose yourself, or your readers, in overly wordy sentences or paragraphs.
- *Use Proper Writing Style:* This is a must. Write as if you were writing a term paper. Correct spelling, grammatical construction and sentence structure are expected in every other writing activity associated with scholarship and academic engagement. Online discussions are no different.
- *Cite Your Sources:* Another big must! If your contribution to the conversation includes the intellectual property (authored material) of others, e.g., books, newspaper, magazine, or journal articles—online or in print—they must be given proper attribution.
- *Emoticons and Texting:* Social networking and text messaging has spawned a body of linguistic shortcuts that are not part of the academic dialogue. Please refrain from :- ) faces and **c u l8r's**.
- *Respect Diversity:* It's an ethnically rich and diverse, multi-cultural world in which we live. Use no language that is—or that could be construed to be—offensive toward others. Racists, sexist, and heterosexist comments and jokes are unacceptable, as are derogatory and/or sarcastic comments and jokes directed at religious beliefs, disabilities, and age.
- *No YELLING!* Step carefully. Beware the electronic footprint you leave behind. Using bold upper-case letters is bad form, like stomping around and yelling at somebody (**NOT TO MENTION BEING HARD ON THE EYE**).
- *No Flaming!* Criticism must be constructive, well-meaning, and well-articulated. Please, no tantrums. Rants directed at any other contributor are simply unacceptable and will not be tolerated. The same goes for profanity. The academic environment expects higher-order language.
- *Lastly, Remember: You Can't Un-Ring the Bell.* Language is your only tool in an online environment. Be mindful. How others perceive you will be largely—as always—up to you. Once you've hit the send button, you've rung the bell. Review your written posts and responses to ensure that you've conveyed exactly what you intended. This is an excellent opportunity to practice your proofreading, revision, and rewriting skills—valuable assets in the professional world for which you are now preparing.
- *Hint:* Read your post out loud before hitting the send button. This will tell you a lot about whether your grammar and sentence structure are correct, your tone is appropriate, and your contribution clear or not.

### **\* \* \* Recording \* \* \***

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.