

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

Inequalities between men and women, as well as among women, have been studied and explained, locally and globally, by exploring the impact of social structure, class, culture, age, race, and sexualities on gender roles. The goal of this course is to focus on the historical and contemporary contributions of subordinate voices to human discourse in order to unveil the larger framework of gender construction and maintenance that extends beyond the borders of this classroom. In other words, how do the experiences of women and other subordinated groups help us to understand gender norms, identity categories, and sexuality? How might one perform, analyze, interrogate, and challenge what has been constructed as "normal" in contemporary western culture? This class will equip you to answer these questions.

In this Introduction to Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies course, we will use discussion, lecture, film, reading, writing, popular culture, public speaking, and field experiences on and off campus to engage our community of learners to connect personal experiences to global issues that impact our understanding and study of GSWS.

### Fall 2017 Syllabus

<b>Instructor:</b>	Emily Deering Crosby
<b>Teaching Assistant:</b>	Nora Smith, NES74@pitt.edu
<b>Course:</b>	GSWS 0100: 1050, #25571
<b>Class Meetings:</b>	T/Th 9:30-10:45am
<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:30-3:30pm and by appointment
<b>Office Location:</b>	401B CL
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"Everywhere I go I proudly tell folks who want to know who I am and what I do that I am a writer, a feminist theorist, a cultural critic. I tell them I write about movies and popular culture, analyzing the message in the medium. Most people find this exciting and want to know more. Everyone goes to movies, watches television, glances through magazines, and everyone has thoughts about the messages they receive, about the images they look at. It is easy for the diverse public I encounter to understand what I do as a cultural critic, to understand my passion for writing (lots of folks want to write, and do). But feminist theory - that's the place where questions stop. Instead I tend to hear all about the evil of feminism and the bad feminist: how "they" hate men; how "they" want to go against nature - and god; how "they" are all lesbians; how "they" are taking all the jobs and making the world hard for white men, who do not stand a chance. When I ask these same folks about the feminist books or magazines they read, when I ask them about the feminist talks they have heard, about the feminist activists they know, they respond by letting me know that everything they know about feminism has come into their lives third hand, that they really have not come close enough to feminist movement to know what really happens, what it's really about...They do not even think about feminism as being about rights - about women gaining equal rights... 'Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.' I love this definition."

-feminist scholar, bell hooks, in her book *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*, 2000

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#### Required Textbooks:

Shaw, S & Lee, J. (2014). *Women's Voices, Feminist Vision: Classic and Contemporary Readings* (6th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

All other readings will be made available on our Courseweb site.

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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.

## ASSIGNMENTS & EVALUATION

- **Participation & Professionalism (150 points):** This will be a discussion based course. Therefore, attendance, familiarity with assigned readings, and active participation is essential. Students will check Coursweb regularly for relevant course information.
- **Reaction Papers (10 at 15 points each):** 17 reaction papers are assigned (you pick 10 to complete) throughout the semester. These ensure engaged discussion. When a reaction paper is listed in the syllabus, you will write a 1-2 page typed response that answers these following questions in complete sentence or in short answer form. You may do more than 10 for extra credit (+5 each = not exceeding 20 points). Extra credit papers will be turned into the Teaching Assistant. You will hand in your printed paper to your instructor at the end of each class. *Well positioned and argued perspectives, strong familiarity with the readings, concise writing style, and proofread papers are expected.*
  1. **Major claims:** For the class's assigned reading, you need to write about the major claim(s) set forth by the author(s): A claim is the basic argument of a writer, who then attempts to prove it. Try to *narrow your choice down to one specific or one overarching claim in a sentence or two.*
  2. **Significance:** What do you think is significant about the claims? How does it impact the study of gender, sexuality, and women's studies? Why is it relevant to our class?
  3. **Two important concepts:** In your opinion, what are *two* important/interesting/new concepts or terms introduced in the reading? Provide brief definitions of both in your own words.
  4. **Notable quotation or staggering statistic:** What was the most interesting, wrong, enlightening, provocative sentence in this reading and why? Write down the exact quotation, with the page number, as well as a brief response to explain what you thought about it. Was there a piece of noteworthy quantitative data from the reading? Write it down so we may discuss it more in class.
  6. **Class question:** What question do you have about the reading that would be good to discuss in class? This question may seek clarity from your instructor or peers (e.g. "I didn't understand what the author meant by...") or to foment discussion with peers (e.g. "what did you think about..." "how might one go about..."). Pose a question that does not require a simple yes/no answer.
  7. **Synthesis:** Come up with some type of conclusion or "take away" about what you now know about feminism, race, sexuality, or gender etc. that is significant to you, considering *all* the assigned reading for this particular day.
- **In-class presentation (200 points):** 7-9 minutes. Each student will give one professional, polished oral presentation that details their intersectional analysis using PowerPoint or Prezi presentation. This will be timed and graded, but more importantly, it is a chance to share your research skills and project with your peers in an engaging way. This is also an opportunity to exercise important public speaking skills that have a variety of applications outside the classroom.

- **GSWS in the News:** Each student is designated a class in which they will highlight a timely and relevant news item that relates to GSWS. A detailed assignment description and schedule will be listed on courseweb.
- **Midterm Exam (150 points):** The first examination will include both traditional multiple choice and essay items and will cover all readings from the first half of the course. Students are responsible for all readings whether or not they are explicitly discussed in class, as well as all lecture notes. *If you miss a class, please make arrangements to obtain notes from another student; I am happy to review your notes with you during office hours.*
- **Final Exam (150 points):** The second examination be very similar in format to the Midterm and will cover all readings and notes from the *second* half of the course only. Students are responsible for all readings whether or not they are discussed in class and for all notes whether or not they are included in the readings. *Should you miss a class please make arrangements to obtain notes from another student; I am happy to review your notes with you during office hours. Please note: make-up exams (for final or midterm) are only given with written evidence from a doctor that the student was too ill to attend class on the day of the exam. If an issue arises, please contact your instructor. The format for make-up exams will be all essay.*
- **GSWS Event Reflections (1 at 25 points):** You are required to attend one GSWS Event and write about the event topic, speaker(s), and make *two* specific connections to class content in a 3-4 paragraph reflection. This assignment is designed to help you branch out on campus, attend these events with your peers, and engage with academic discussions across disciplines. A list of events is found here <http://www.gsws.pitt.edu/events> and if other applicable events interest you, please notify the instructor. You may attend one additional GSWS event and write a reflection for +10 bonus points each. These bonus papers will be turned into the Teaching Assistant.

**Grading Breakdown:**

		<u>Points</u>	<u>My scores</u>
Participation & Professionalism	150	_____	_____
GSWS in the News	25	_____	_____
Reaction papers (10 at 15 pts. each)	150	_____	_____
In-class Presentation	200	_____	_____
Exam I	150	_____	_____
Exam II	150	_____	_____
GSWS Event reflection	25	_____	_____
<b>Total points</b>	<b>850</b>	_____	_____

**Grading Scale:**

A+	98-100 %	C	74-77.9 %	*I do not round-up grades
A	94-97.9 %	C-	70-73.9 %	
A-	90-93.9 %	D+	67-69.9 %	
B+	88-89.9 %	D	64-66.9 %	
B	84-87.9 %	D-	60-63.9 %	
B-	80-83.9 %	F	59.9 % and below	
C+	78-79.9 %			

**Attendance:** Attendance is required. In order for this course to be effective, it is vital to create a supportive atmosphere, exchange information and opinions, and listen to each other. Further, exams are based on both the readings and on lecture material not included in the readings. So missing class will most likely negatively affect your grade.

- Only written, medical excuses will be accepted for missed exams. While I recognize that there are many valid reasons for missing class, if you are not in class then I cannot evaluate your participation for those days.
- There is, however, *two unexcused "freebie" absences* available in this course, no matter the reason.
- Students who miss more than four classes should consider whether or not they will be able to complete course work successfully.
- A student will be counted late if they arrive after attendance has been taken (generally in the first couple minutes of the class). If late due to another class/event, let the instructor know. 2 "*late arrivals*" = 1 *absence*.
- Your participation grade is worth 150 points or 15% of your course grade. Each student will complete a self-evaluation of participation during the semester.

**UNIVERSITY & COURSE POLICIES**

- **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>
- **Content Warning and Classroom Climate:** Our course readings and classroom 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, and laughter. 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 classroom. I expect everyone to come to class prepared to discuss the readings 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 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 or personal reason, you should speak with your instructor and/or seek help from the counseling center.

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


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**Please note:** The day that readings and assignments are listed is the day they are *due*. At each class meeting the instructor will update students about upcoming work; if changes occur students will be notified well in advance.

\* **Please note:** a typed, 1 page "reaction paper" is due most classes. Students will turn in their "reaction papers" to the instructor at the end of each class. All outside readings will be available on Courseweb.

***Week One***

- T 8/29            Distribution of Syllabi  
                      Introductions, Class Exercise
- Th 8/31            Discuss: Why Women's Studies? Why feminism? Why both? Connotation Exercise  
                      Read: *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions* Chapter 1 pgs. 1-27; "A Day Without Feminism" pgs. 34-36; "Feminist Politics" pgs. 37-39

- Review "GSWS in the News" Schedule on Courseweb

***Week Two***

- T 9/5                Introduce yourself to the class on Courseweb by this date (see "Introductions" tab)
- Discuss: Social construction, privilege, language as institution, #blacklivesmatter vs. #alllivesmatter  
                      Read: Chapter 2 pgs. 49-71; "White Privilege and Male Privilege" pgs. 86-93; "White Fragility: Why It's So Difficult to Talk to White People about Race" (on courseweb)
- \*Reaction Paper 1 Due

Th 9/7 Discuss: Is gender something we “do” or something we “are”?  
 Read: Chapter 3, pgs. 116-135; “The Social Construction of Gender” pgs. 141-144; “Intersectionality” pgs. 79-83; “Unraveling Hardwiring” p. 144-149  
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### **Week Three**

T 9/12 Discuss: Gender, Beauty Ideals, and Controlling the Feminine Body  
 Read: Chapter 4 pgs. 181-219; “If Men Could Menstruate” p. 209 “What We Do for Love” p. 221-230; “Beating Anorexia and Gaining Feminism” p. 211-213; “Hold that Nose” p. 231-233; “Prosthetic Power” pgs. 210-211  
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Th 9/14 Discuss: Media and Culture; the Male Gaze, Women and Music  
 Read: Chapter 5 pgs. 250-274; “Thinking about Shakespeare’s Sister” p. 276-278; “If Women Ran Hip Hop” p. 287; “Beyoncé: Feminist Icon?” p. 296-297  
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### **Week Four**

T 9/19 Discuss: Trans identities, Intersexuality, Gender and sports  
 Read: “Cisgender Privilege” 93-95; “The Five Sexes Revisited” pgs. 136-140; “Trans Identities and Contingent Masculinities” p. 150-156; “Bodies and Bathrooms” pgs. 245-246; “Wrestling with Gender” p. 173-179

Close reading of *Fixing Sex* on subject/object positions

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Th 9/21 Discuss: Resisting Gender Violence, #byefelipe #sayhername  
 Read: Chapter 10 pgs. 537-564; “Betrayed by the Angel” pgs. 571-574; “How Some Men Harass Women Online...” p. 574-576; “Beyond the Politics of Inclusion” P. 565-567  
 Watch: Jackson Katz’s TED Talk

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### **Week Five**

T 9/26 Discuss: Sex, Power, and Intimacy  
 Read: Chapter 6 pgs. 313-333; “The Cult of Virginity” p. 334-338; “Gate C22” pg. 339; “Queering Black Female Heterosexuality” p. 356-361

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Th 9/28 Discuss: Family systems, wives, and the white wedding as a rhetorical text  
 Read: Chapter 8 pgs. 433-451; “Marriage and Love” p.452-454; “Who Wants to Marry a Feminist?” pgs. 454-456; “Family Way” p. 456-459; “If the Clothes Fit: A Feminist Take on Fashion” p. 247-248

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- Midterm Study Guide Made Available on Courseweb

**Week Six**

T 10/3 Discuss: Reproductive Justice  
 Read: Chapter 7 pgs. 362-394; “The Gender Gap in Pain” p. 395-396; “Freedom to Choose: Three Essays...” p. 424-431

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Th 10/5 **In class Midterm exam (Exam I)**

**Week Seven**

T 10/10 NO CLASS (Monday classes meet)

Th 10/12 Discuss: Women and Work; Tokenism, Queen Bees and Mean Girls  
 Read: Chapter 9 pgs. 470-499 and Chapter 11 pgs. 582-605; “A Brief History of Working Women” pgs. 503-514; “Power Plays” pgs. 525-528; “The Sexist Truth about Office Romances” pgs. 528-529

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**Week Eight**

T 10/17 Discuss: The germinal work by Gayle Rubin; “Traffic in Women” and “Thinking Sex”  
 Read: Gayle Rubin “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex” (1975) *OR* “Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality” (1984)

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- Gayle Rubin, a huge name in GSWS, speaks tonight at 5pm in 602CL
- <http://www.gsws.pitt.edu/events/lecture-gayle-rubin-michigan-0>

Th 10/19 Discuss: Women’s Bodies as Currency, Complicating Empowerment and Agency  
 Read: “No More Miss America” p. 33; “Breast Buds and the ‘Training’ Bra” pgs. 205-209; “Enlightened Sexism” p. 283-287; “Is Fat a Feminist Issue?” pgs. 233-241

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**Week Nine**

T 10/24 Watch *She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry* (2014) as a way to understand “2<sup>nd</sup> Wave Feminism” and mobilizing approaches to activism

Th 10/26 Discuss: Humor and feminist agency  
 Read: “Guerrilla Girls’ Comic Politics of Subversion” (Courseweb)

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- Bring in one example of “subversive humor” for small group discussion

**Week Ten**

T 10/31 Discuss: Politics and Gender Bias; the Case Study of Melania Trump  
 Read: *Woman President* excerpt (Courseweb); “‘Stand by your Man’ Revisited: Political Wives and Scandal” (Courseweb); “Feminist Factor” textbook p. 607-610; “Name it. Change it” textbook p. 610-616

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- Final Research Project Presentation Assignment Description Handed Out

Th 11/2 Discuss: Masculinity, Nationalism, and the Charlottesville protests  
 Read: "What's up with Boys?" p. 156-159; *Angry White Men* excerpt (Courseweb); online readings about Trump, whiteness, class, and masculinity  
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### ***Week Eleven***

T 11/7 Masculinity unit continued  
 Have final research topic finalized, discuss assignment parameters  
 Discuss academic research, writing style, and library resources

- Handout presentation parameters – select presentation date
- Public speaking tutorial

Th 11/9 Discuss: Spiritual Ambivalence: Religions as Sources of Strength and/or Oppressions; The Burkini  
 Read: Chapter 12 pgs. 635-649; "Introduction to the Woman's Bible" p. 650; "God Says Yes to Me" p. 651; "Fundamentalism and the Control of Women" pgs. 651-655; "Decolonizing Religious Beliefs" p. 660-665; "What Pussy Riot Taught the World" p. 723-724  
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In class: Partner "oral histories" method

- Think of your earliest memory in relation to religion
- Think of your earliest memory relating to religion that informed/confirmed/disciplined/complicated your understanding of gender

### ***Week Twelve***

T 11/14 Bring in 3 academic sources for instructor's review that will help shape and support your research topic  
 Final presentation topic, artifact of analysis, and drafted thesis statement due; in class workshop

- Speed acquainting

Th 11/16 NO CLASS - Professor Crosby at NCA Academic Conference in Dallas  
 In lieu of class, watch the film: "13<sup>th</sup>" on Netflix  
 Take notes, make class connections, and be prepared to discuss in class

### ***Week Thirteen***

T 11/21 Discuss "13<sup>th</sup>" in relation to the law, masculinity, antiblack anxieties, and the State

Discuss: 1990s Feminist Activism, "3<sup>rd</sup> Wave" Momentum - Changing the Present and Future  
 Read: Chapter 13 pgs. 692-714; "Feminist Men" p. 715-717; "We are the Ones We've Been Waiting For" p. 724-726; "Cyberactivism and the Role of Women in the Arab Uprisings" p. 298-308  
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Th 11/23 NO CLASS - Thanksgiving Break

***Week Fourteen***

- T 11/28 In class presentations on final paper: 7-9 minutes with PowerPoint/Prezi presentation
- **Presenters (6):**
- Th 11/30 In class presentations on final paper: 7-9 minutes with PowerPoint/Prezi presentation
- **Presenters (6):**

***Week Fifteen***

- T 12/5 In class presentations on final paper: 7-9 minutes with PowerPoint/Prezi presentation
- **Presenters (5):**
    - Final exam study guide made available to the class via Courseweb
- Th 12/7 In class presentations on final paper: 7-9 minutes with PowerPoint/Prezi presentation
- **Presenters (5):**
- TBD **Final Exam (Exam II)**

*Have a wonderful winter break!*