Introduction to Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies (W-Course)

Instructor: Jess Klein (She/Her/Hers)  
Contact: jessklein07@gmail.com / 248 766 0357  
Class: Thursdays, 6:00 – 8:30 PM, CT 402  
Office Hours: Thursdays, 5 – 6 PM and by appt.  
(GSWS Office)

Course Description

This interactive course will provide you with an overall understanding of gender, sexuality, and women’s studies. We will be looking at these concepts from an intersectional perspective – that is, focusing on how the intersections of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, sexuality, and other social identities shape how we view the world, how we treat others, and how society responds to us. This class also provides a space where these new concepts and values can be shared safely within the classroom.

Remember that not everyone signed up for this class for the same reasons and we all must respect that. This class may challenge your core beliefs, values, and ethics. I ask that all of you come to every class with an open mind, ready to learn, and ready to challenge others and be challenged (that includes me!).

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.

Required Reading


*Other readings will be expected throughout the course of the semester.*
Expectations

*Remember: You are solely responsible for your performance in this class.*

**Attendance, Absences, and Participation:** I will take attendance. You are expected to come to class on time and be present. This means you are expected to actively participate in class discussions and read in advance of class. You are not to use cell phones or laptops during the class period. This class and your success in it relies on community and the discussion of different perspectives. I expect you to read the content ahead of time and come to class with questions and observations.

If you are absent during a class lecture, please find someone in the class who can give you the notes that you missed. I will not give you notes nor catch you up on what was discussed in class unless you have questions about the content.

**Assignments:** It is your responsibility to turn in all papers and assignments on time. I will not accept late assignments. See Course Requirements for more information on assignments.

**Email:** I will be communicating with you via your Pitt.Edu e-mail address. I will not email any other address, so please make sure you check your Pitt.Edu e-mail frequently.

**Course Requirements**

**A. In-Class Reading Responses (5 @ 10 Points = 50 Points)**

There will be a total of six in-class reading responses that will be given at the beginning of class. These will be given at-random and ask you to answer a question about the assigned reading for that week (See Course Schedule). If you are late to class, you may not make up the reading response for that day. I will drop the lowest score at the end of the semester and will not include it in your final grade.

**B. Writing Responses (5 @ 10 Points = 50 Points)**

You will be responsible for five writing responses that focus on your understanding of the material. It is crucial that you are aware of what is happening in the world around you including current events and pop-culture and that you are critical of it! These responses will be reflections of the in-class material and relate to something that you may witness or experience – an advertisement, an event you attend, a TV show or movie, an article you read, a meme, a conversation between people, a conversation or experience you had with someone, etc.

**Example:** During the class on sexual and domestic violence we will be talking about power and control being the central causes of violence. You may have an experience where you witness an unequal power dynamic between friends, TV characters or you may see violence against women depicted in an advertisement in a magazine. I want you to be critical of the world around you.

**Note:** You may not email me the paper. You may not turn in more than one paper during any class period. You may not write about the same topic for more than one paper.
Writing Response Criteria:
3 FULL pages, typed, printed, doubled-spaced, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman, 12 pt. font

If you’re not sure whether what you are writing is appropriate or not, please ask me! I will be happy to help. This assignment is supposed to be FUN and EDUCATIONAL! So have a good time and be creative with your papers. There is no one-right-way to write about your experiences and how you interpret the course material. Further instructions will be given in class.

C. In-Class Discussion Question (20 Points)

Everyone will be responsible for writing two discussion questions to pose to the class during the course of the semester based on the readings for a particular week (See Course Schedule). Sign-Up will begin the first week of class and further instructions will be given in class.

D. Attendance and Participation (50 Points)

Everyone automatically gets 50 points for attendance. You are given two excused absences – for every absence after two I will deduct 10 points from the total of 50 points.

If you know that you will be absent, I ask that you send me a formal email to let me know. I am happy to work with you if you work with me. If you miss 7 classes, you will automatically fail the course.

E. MOSAIC Conference Project (50 Points)

Each of you will be responsible for putting together a project for the annual MOSAIC Conference on Gender at Carnegie Mellon University (Saturday, April 8, 2017). You will be writing and submitting a proposal. You may do this project as a group or on your own. You will get extra credit for actually going to the conference and you are not required to be in attendance, but you must participate by submitting your project. More information will be given in class.

F. Final Reflection Paper (50 Points)

In your final paper you will have a chance to reflect on what you learned during the course and how you envision the application of the course topics to your academic discipline and other aspects of your life. Further instructions will be given in class.

Final Reflection Criteria:
4-6 FULL pages, typed, printed, doubled-spaced, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman, 12 pt. font

Grading Scale

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<th>Grade Range</th>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
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<td>87-89%</td>
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<td>84-86%</td>
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<td>74-76%</td>
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**Point Distribution**

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<tr>
<td>Writing Response (5 @ 10 pts. each)</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion Questions</td>
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<td>Attendance</td>
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<td>MOSAIC Conference Project</td>
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<td>Final Reflection Paper</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>270</strong></td>
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**Academic Integrity Policy**

Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the quiz, exam or paper will be imposed. For the full Academic Integrity policy, go to: [www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html](http://www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html).

Violation of the Academic Integrity Code requires the instructor to submit an Academic Integrity Violation Report to the Dean’s Office.

**Plagiarism:**

Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of such papers. Use of Turnitin.com page service is subject to the Usage Policy and Privacy Pledge posted on the Turnitin.com site.

**Disability Resource 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, 412-648-7890 as early as possible in the term. Disability Resources and Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. For more information, visit [https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/](https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/)

**Gender-Inclusive Language Guidelines**

Aspiring to create a learning environment in which people of all identities are encouraged to contribute their perspectives to academic discourse, the University of Pittsburgh Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies Program provides guidelines and resources regarding gender-inclusive/non-sexist language ([gsws.pitt.edu/node/1432](http://gsws.pitt.edu/node/1432)). Following these guidelines fosters an inclusive and welcoming environment, strengthens academic writing, enriches discussion, and reflects best professional practices.

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 (e.g. first-year student versus freshman, chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind). 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.

These guidelines fulfill the best intentions of the University of Pittsburgh’s Non-Discrimination Policy: [https://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/07/07-01-03.html](https://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/07/07-01-03.html).

**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](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](http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report-0)
*Tentative Course Schedule*

*Lectures and assignments subject to change with advanced notice.*

**Week 1: 01/05**
*Introduction + review of syllabus, A Letter to Yourself*

**Week 2: 01/12**
*Chapter 1: Women's and Gender Studies: Perspectives and Practices*
*MOSAIC Conference Proposal: Conversation*

**Week 3: 01/19**
*Chapter 2: Systems of Privilege and Inequality*
*MOSAIC Conference Proposal: Begin Writing First Draft*

**Week 4: 01/26**
*Chapter 3: Learning Gender*
*In-Class Film: “Straightlaced: How Gender’s Got Us All Tied Up”*

**Week 5: 02/02**
*Chapter 3: Inscribing Gender on the Body*
*DUE: Writing Response #1*

**Week 6: 02/09**
*Chapter 5: Media and Culture*
*In-Class Film: “Hip-Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes”*
*DUE: MOSAIC Conference Proposal, First Draft*

**Week 7: 02/16**
*Chapter 6: Sex, Power, and Intimacy*
*Peer Review of Conference Proposal*

**Week 8: 02/23**
*Chapter 7: Health and Reproductive Justice*
*Possible Film: “12th and Delaware”*
*DUE: Writing Response #2*
*MOSAIC Conference Proposal: Draft Returned with Comments*
Week 9: 03/02
Chapter 8: Family Systems, Family Lives
Chapter 9: Work Inside and Outside the Home
DUE: MOSAIC Conference Proposal, Final Draft

Week 10: 03/09
No Class; Spring Recess

Week 11: 03/16
TBD

Week 12: 03/23
MOSAIC Conference Prep
DUE: Writing Response #3

Week 13: 03/30
Chapter 10: Resisting Violence

Week 14: 04/06
Chapter 10 Continued
MOSAIC Conference Prep
DUE: Writing Response #4

*MOSAIC Conference: Saturday, April 8th, 2017*

Week 15: 04/13
Chapter 11: State, Law, and Social Policy

Week 16: 04/20
Chapter 13: Activism, Change, and Feminist Futures
DUE: Writing Response #5

Week 17: 04/27
DUE: Final Reflection Paper