

Women's & Gender Studies 010
Introduction to Women's & Gender Studies
Spring 2015

Section 020: MW 3:00 – 4:20 pm

OM 280

Professor:	Dr. Jason Crockett	Office:	Old Main 458
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Office Hours:	T/R 3-4:30pm, W 10am-12pm; or by appointment		

Office Hours and Communications

You may make an appointment with me during or outside of posted office hours to discuss matters related to class or your college experience. You are also welcome to drop by and just chat during posted office hours. Email is the best way to contact me – *please include your class number and section in the subject line (e.g., WGS 010-020: question about assignment)*! I will generally respond within 24 hours. Class announcements may be made periodically via KU email and/or D2L, so be sure to check those accounts daily.

Course Overview and Objectives

This course is designed as an introductory, issues-based course in gender studies, with a focus on women's experiences and feminist perspectives. The course aims to grapple with various multicultural and multidisciplinary perspectives to better understand how and why gender is so important in our society today. In particular, we will examine the complexity and variety of women's experiences. Along the way, you will be encouraged to question taken-for-granted assumptions about the role of gender in our lives.

I encourage students to come to this class with an open mind, prepared to think critically about some of the social problems associated with gender inequality within the United States as well as globally. Gender issues are multifaceted and you are encouraged to search for connections to other courses in the college curriculum and make use of their existing knowledge of the humanities, the sciences, and the social sciences. By the end of the semester I hope that students will:

- Be able to explain the biological, psychological, and social forces that shape our lives through gender and sex.
- Apply critical thinking skills emphasized in this course to question taken-for-granted notions related to gender and sex.
- Be able to demonstrate how experiences of different women *converge* and also when and why they *vary* with differences including class, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and location within the global economy.
- Recognize the connections between gender and sexuality and other social institutions such as family, government, politics, media, education, work, health care, and religion.
- Be motivated to advocate for the improvement of the conditions under which all women live, and for a better society for all regardless of gender.

Nature of the Course

This course includes a combination of class discussion, lecture, and exercises. Learning is an active process in which we all participate, which implies several important components. First, an active process suggests the importance of understanding and experiencing ideas as they relate to our own lives, rather than simply remembering a list of facts. This course should provide material upon which to reflect as we consider the pervasive influence of gender on personal identity and societal structures.

Second, a process continually evolves with no clear beginning or end. So, this course should become a dialogue among all of us as we reflect upon the material presented and its relevance to our experiences. Such a conversation includes responsibilities to which we must all agree. Clearly, one initial responsibility involves being in class regularly and on time. But merely being in class is not enough to create a climate in which we can all learn. Being prepared for class is an additional commitment that is necessary from each of us. A quick reading of the assigned material will do little to prepare for class. The nature of the material presented in the course invites critical reflection upon ideas and a willingness to share our insights and perspectives on personal and potentially controversial topics. A final and vitally important responsibility involves a willingness to be open to and consider the ideas of others in the classroom. No one experience is more important or valuable than any other. You may not agree with the views expressed by others in the course (including mine!), but we must all agree to respect each individual's right to have and share their own experiences. Sharing and listening to the perspectives of others should create a greater understanding of the diversity of experiences in contemporary American society.

If at any point you need to leave the class, please do so quietly. Several of the readings/topics could be triggering, and I want you to feel safe in the class at all times.

Materials

Unless otherwise indicated, all reading for this course is required and must be completed at the time listed (see Course Schedule below). The textbook for the course is:

Taylor, Verta, Nancy Whittier, and Leila J. Rupp. 2012. *Feminist Frontiers*. 9th Edition. McGraw-Hill: New York. ISBN-13: 978-0-07-802662-1

Copies should be available through the campus bookstore and online booksellers. If you order online be sure you are getting the correct edition and be sure the book will be delivered in a timely manner! Additional materials may be handed out in class or posted under the "Content" section of the D2L site.

In addition to the reader, you will also need \$5 for a *Vagina Monologues* ticket. *Students in this course are required to attend the KU production on either Thursday, Feb 19 or Friday, Feb 20 at 7pm in the Schaeffer Auditorium – so plan accordingly.* Tickets are \$5 for students (and \$10 for others) and can be purchased by cash or check at the KU McFarland Student Union information desk, or by credit card by calling 610-683-4092. For more information on V-Day and the history of "The Vagina Monologues" visit: <http://www.vday.org/about>

Course Requirements

Class Introduction & Upload Picture	10pts
Attendance	25pts
<i>Vagina Monologues</i> Paper	15pts
Reading Responses/Quizzes	20pts
Final Project	<u>30pts</u>
	100pts

A	more than 89pts
B	80-89pts
C	70-79pts
D	60-69pts
F	less than 59pts

Class Introduction & Upload Picture

Go to the “Discussion” tab on D2L then post a short introduction to yourself under “Introductions.” Items I’d like you to include are detailed in the topic description. This will help me to get to know you as students and also for students to get acquainted with one another.

Upload a classroom-appropriate portrait of yourself on D2L. You may do so through the D2L profile system or under the “Picture” folder of “Dropbox” tab. This will help me to connect names with faces – so make sure I can see your face clearly in the picture. If you don’t have a(n appropriate) picture to post or need help uploading your picture, please come to office hours.

Attendance

Since this course will revolve around class discussion of readings and other class activities, I will regularly assess attendance for this class. Attendance for 25 or more days will receive full credit. Attendance for fewer than 25 days will result in partial or no credit for attendance, at my discretion.

Vagina Monologues Paper

Write a full 3-page response to the KU presentation of the *Vagina Monologues*. Make connections between the readings, class discussion, and/or other course content and the performance, along with your personal response. An electronic copy of these papers will be due no later than April 17th to maximize opportunities to connect with course content. A hard copy of the paper with the cover of your program stapled to your paper must also be turned in in order to get full points.

Reading Responses/Quizzes

As a supplement to your own note-taking/annotations of the readings, I will provide guiding questions for each of the readings to help you focus on key concepts. Throughout the course I will regularly collect your responses to these questions and/or conduct pop quizzes on the readings (you will be allowed to use your books and handwritten notes for such quizzes). In correspondence with the attendance policy you will be allowed two “freebies” which will not count against your final grade.

Final Project

Directions for the final paper/project are included in the syllabus Appendix. The final project is due on the final day of classes.

NOTE 1: All work turned in for credit must be original work. Turnitin software will be used on D2L to ensure originality of papers. Originality reports resulting in a percentage higher than 15% will result in a reduction of a grade equivalent to a deduction of 1% for every number above 15% and may constitute plagiarism (and thus be subject to protocol for violations of academic honesty). For example, if the originality report concludes that 25% of your paper is not original, then 10% of your points will be deducted from your final grade for the paper.

NOTE 2: If at any point during the course you find that you are not doing as well as you hoped or expected, you are encouraged to contact me and meet with me immediately; do not wait until the end of the semester.

Course Policies

Absences and Late Work

It is your responsibility to attend and participate in class as well as to ensure course requirements are submitted properly and on time. Do verify any submissions to the D2L system have in fact uploaded properly. Do not wait until the last minute. That said, I understand that during the semester some students may face obstacles to completing course requirements due to such things as personal illness, computer or internet problems, or family/work responsibilities.

Responses/quizzes have built-in “cushions” for just such contingencies. Therefore, I will not allow make-up responses/quizzes (with the exception of advance notification of excused absences for university-sponsored events). If you miss a class session (excused or not), do not ask me for notes or a personal tutorial regarding information covered in the missed class. You should make arrangements with one or more classmates in regard to sharing notes or other information missed because of absences. This makes it a good idea to exchange contact information with fellow students early in the course.

Students should make an effort to notify me *beforehand* if assignments will be submitted late. If this is impossible, please contact me *as soon as possible*. Students that make arrangements within a reasonable time frame will receive full credit. Otherwise, assignments may be accepted for partial credit on a case-by-case basis. **I do not accept unsolicited emailed assignments – late assignments should be submitted to the “Late Box” on D2L.**

Academic Honesty

You are responsible for familiarity with the Kutztown University Academic Honesty Policy: <http://www2.kutztown.edu/about-ku/administrative-offices/student-conduct/policies-and-procedures/academic-honesty/academic-honesty-faq.htm>
At a minimum, academic dishonesty will result in a failing grade.

Accommodations

If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course (for example, due to disability, physical injury, PTSD, or TBI), please contact the Disability Services Office (215 Stratton) and/or contact me privately so that I can assist you and preserve confidentiality. Please plan to meet with me to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements may affect your ability to fully participate. More information is available at: <http://www.kutztown.edu/admin/humandiversity/disabilityservices>

Classroom Behavior

It is my policy to maintain a respectful, safe classroom and it is everyone's responsibility to help maintain such an atmosphere. A respectful, safe classroom ensures a positive learning environment in which everyone can explore class ideas fully. Respectful good practices include such things as coming to class on time and turning off cell phone ringers. (It is also good to practice these habits since they will be expected behaviors by most employers and graduate school supervisors.) Distracting or rude behavior may result in you being asked to leave the classroom. Consistently disruptive behavior will result in you being dropped from the course.

We all have different points of view, different personal values, different life experiences, and different personal preferences that we bring with us to the classroom. Course material may challenge attitudes and assumptions, exposing you to ideas that will require you to think critically, and perhaps differently. You may encounter ideas of which you have never heard or that make you feel uncomfortable. Each student has the right to respectfully disagree with an idea, concept, or opinion that is written or expressed by myself or other learners. While disagreement is expected, hostility is not. A climate of tolerance and respect is essential. Harassment, intimidation, or derogatory comments toward any individual or group will not be tolerated and will result in you being dropped from the course.

Extra Credit

Please share any on-campus or off-campus events that relate to gender and sexuality studies and I will be happy to announce such activities in class. I rely on students' knowledge of such activities as one source for extra credit opportunities. Any extra credit opportunities will be announced as such in class and the opportunity to earn extra credit will be available to all students. Do not request individual extra credit for this class.

Extreme Weather

If severe weather becomes an issue, you should check the Kutztown University website or hotline (610-683-4649) for information concerning the campus-wide cancellation of classes. I may also post a specific announcement on D2L.

Questions

If you have questions about this course, please check this syllabus or D2L for answers. If you ask me a question that is answered in the syllabus or on D2L, I will refer you to those sources.

Tentative Course Schedule

Note: I reserve the right to modify the schedule as deemed appropriate during the semester. Some things are bound to change due to class needs, how quickly students grasp material, and class dynamics. Any changes will be announced in the course website “News” section.

WEEK 1 (Jan 20-23) – Course Introduction; Section I: Diversity and Difference

Introductory Reading for Wednesday

- Taylor, Part I: Introduction, Section I: Diversity and Difference (p. 1-5)
- D2L – Syllabus, “Introduction to your professor”

D2L Assignment for Wednesday

- Post a picture of yourself on D2L
- Post an introduction to yourself under the “Discussion” tab

WEEK 2 (Jan 26-30) – Section I: Diversity and Difference (continued)

Reading

- Mon: Reading 1, 2, & 3; Wed: Reading 4 & 5

WEEK 3 (Feb 2-6) – Section II: Theoretical Perspectives

Reading

- Mon: Section II Intro, Rd 6 & 7; Wed: Rd 8 & 9

WEEK 4 (Feb 9-13) – Section III: Representation, Language, & Culture

Reading

- Mon: Rd 10 & 11; Wed: Part II & Section III Intros, Rd 12 & 13

WEEK 5 (Feb 16-20) – Section IV: Socialization

Reading

- Mon: Rd 14, 15, & 16; Wed: Section IV Intro, Rd 17 & 18

R Feb 19 & F Feb 20 – *Vagina Monologues* KU performance (7pm, Schaeffer Auditorium)

WEEK 6 (Feb 23-27) – Section V: Work

Reading

- Mon: Rd 19 & 20; Wed: Part III & Section V Intros, Rd 21 & 22

WEEK 7 (Mar 2-6) – Section VI: Families

Reading

- Mon: Rd 23 & 24; Wed: Section VI Intro, Rd 26 & 27

WEEK 8 (Mar 9-13) – SPRING BREAK

HALFWAY POINT OF THE SEMESTER

WEEK 9 (Mar 16-20) – Section VII: Sexualities

Reading

- Mon: Rd 28 & 29; Wed: Section VII Intro, Rd 30 & 31

WEEK 10 (Mar 23-27) – Section VIII: Bodies

Reading

- Mon: Rd 32, 33, & 34; Wed: Section VIII Intro, Rd 35 & 36

WEEK 11 (Mar 30-Apr 3) – Section VIII: Bodies (continued)

Reading

- Mon: Rd 37 & 38; Wed: Rd 39

WEEK 12 (Apr 6-10) – Section IX: Violence Against Women

Reading

- Mon: Section IX Intro, Rd 40 & 43; Wed: Rd 41 & 42

WEEK 13 (Apr 13-17) – Section X: Global Politics and the State

Reading

- Mon: Part IV & Section X Intros, Rd 44 & 45; Wed: Rd 46 & 48

F Apr 17 VAGINA MONOLOGUES PAPER DUE @ 11PM (D2L submission)

WEEK 14 (Apr 20-24) – Section XI: Social Protest and Feminist Movements

Reading

- Mon: Section XI Intro, Rd 49 & 50; Wed: Rd 51, 52, & 53

WEEK 15 (Apr 27-May 1) –

Review/Catch Up

Reading

- Rd 54

F May 1 FINAL PROJECT DUE @ 11PM (D2L submission)

Appendix: Final Project Directions

Basic guidelines for all assignments:

1. Remember that all assignments should be centered on gender-and/or-sexuality-related issues. Therefore, if you are in doubt about your chosen subject matter, be sure to ask me.
2. While you have a lot of choice in the type of project you do, the primary purpose of these assignments is to demonstrate what you have learned. Therefore, you should be explicit in demonstrating the breadth, depth, and sophistication of your knowledge: use terms from class and readings, name names where relevant, and explain everything as if you were talking to someone who didn't know anything about gender-and/or-sexuality-related issues. The final product should also have a polished, professional feel. For example, correct grammar, sentence structure, and spelling is expected and points will be deducted for failure to produce a final product that flows well (i.e., a paper that is difficult to read or a presentation that is difficult to follow or understand).
3. Give credit where credit is due. A good rule of thumb to follow is that if you are using work, ideas, or concepts that are not your own, you will need to cite. Written assignments should properly cite work in the body of the paper and also include a References page with proper ASA, APA, or MLA citation (a quick guide to ASA style: <http://www.uwp.edu/departments/library/guides/asa.htm> – you can find guides for other citation styles online as well). Audio/video assignments should credit sources by name of author and source (e.g., “Judith Butler, in her book *Gender Trouble*, advances the idea that...”) and should also be accompanied with a full References sheet.
4. Be careful about using unverifiable Internet sources. As you should know, anybody can publish on the Internet. Therefore, without some sort of institutional credentials or “referee,” it can be hard to know how much confidence to place in an Internet source. Unless you are using a book or scholarly journal article that has been republished online (such as might be found through the KU library databases or a Google Scholar search), you should be cautious about citing websites. That includes information found on sites like Wikipedia – especially if you can't verify through a valid citation. For some assignments it may be appropriate to use a social movement organization's website as a source if you are writing about that social movement organization (SMO), but in general unless an online source is available through a reliable source (e.g. the KU library, another academic source, or a government website) you should avoid it. Again, if you really want to use a source, but have doubts about its validity, be sure to ask me!
5. Be sure to follow the specific assignment guidelines. If it says to do something, do it. If an assignment states to “write 5-7 pages,” your turned in assignment better be at least 5 full pages unless you have received written approval otherwise from me. If an assignment asks you to answer the question “when did the identity emerge?” I'd better know your answer to that question by the time I finish reviewing your assignment.

Choose *one* of the following as your final project:

A) WOMEN'S/GENDER ISSUES ACTIVIST INTERVIEW

Interview an activist who works on women's/gender-related issues – someone who has done work at a state, federal, or international level is preferred. If you consider yourself a women's/gender-related activist, sorry, you can't interview yourself! ☺ It could be someone you know, especially if you've never really asked them about their activism – now you have a good

excuse! However, for the purposes of this assignment it is much better if you try talking to someone you don't know. Perhaps someone from a social movement you aren't familiar with or are even opposed to. Make sure they have actually participated in a social movement (NOT charities or party politics). For this assignment, more participation is better!

Keeping your interviewee in mind, you should develop an "interview guide" – an organized sheet of questions or topics you want to cover in your interview. Generally you should keep your questions broad and open-ended (not simply "yes or no" questions), although a structured, specific set of questions for at least part of your interview is fine too. During the interview there may be additional things that come up that you hadn't anticipated. You aren't strictly harnessed to your interview guide – you can follow up to ask about those things too! How long your interview will be is up to you and the person you arrange the interview with, but you probably want to aim for 30-60 minutes (enough time for you to get a good amount of information for your assignment, but not taking up too much of the person's time). How many questions you will need for that amount of time depends on how broad your questions are and how talkative your interviewee is, but unless you have experience with interviews, whatever number of questions you come up with that you think will take up that amount of time, you might want to double or even triple it. You can always prioritize or focus in on the ones you really want answered if it looks like you have too many to get answered during your interview time, but it's harder to come up with additional questions on the spot if you run out! You should take notes during and after the interview, and (with permission of the interviewee) you might also record your interview. After the interview, you should reflect on what you learned.

Hand in: (a) A copy of your interview guide – your list of planned questions – and your interview notes. (b) A report on what you learned and how it ties to gender and sexuality theories and concepts from gender studies. This can be written (minimum 5 full pages double spaced) or digitally recorded (minimum 10 minutes). I do NOT need to see or hear your entire interview, *just* your 5-page/10-minute concise application of it to information from class. The goal of this assignment is to synthesize the information about this particular gender activist and their experience with the things discussed and read about in class in a relatively concise way.

B) CROSS-GENERATIONAL INTERVIEW

Interview a woman at least two generations in age difference from yourself. For the purposes of this assignment it is probably best to talk to someone you already know fairly well and especially who would be comfortable talking with you about intimate details of life. For example, the best choice is a family member, such as a grandmother (or other "matriarch" of the family) or granddaughter. If not a family member, a general rule of thumb for generations is ~20 years per generation, so someone ~40 years your senior or junior in age.

Keeping your interviewee in mind, you should develop an "interview guide" – an organized sheet of questions or topics you want to cover in your interview. The focus here is a kind of "life history" - focusing on areas of change and areas of consistency in the lived experience of women over time, and also how it compares to your own lived experience. Otherwise, the guidelines for option (A) apply here as well (i.e., open-ended questions, aim for ~30-60 minute interview, etc).

Hand in: (a) A copy of your interview guide – your list of planned questions – and your interview notes. (b) A report on what you learned and how it ties to gender and sexuality theories and concepts from gender studies. This can be written (minimum 5 full pages double spaced) or digitally recorded (minimum 10 minutes). I do NOT need to see or hear your entire interview, *just* your 5-page/10-minute concise application of it to information from class. The goal of this assignment is to synthesize the information about this particular gender activist and their experience with the things discussed and read about in class in a relatively concise way.

C) SOCIAL RESEARCH SOCIAL JUSTICE UNDERGRADUATE CONFERENCE

On April 10th, Muhlenberg College is hosting the 12th annual Lehigh Valley Association of Independent Colleges Social Research Social Justice Undergraduate Conference. This conference provides students with a forum for sharing innovative, excellent research addressing challenging issues of social justice in both contemporary and historical contexts. They are accepting proposals to present research papers, poster sessions, media, arts and cultural productions, performances, and exhibits connected to issues of social justice. In order to choose and complete this option, you must (a) let me know you are pursuing this option ASAP (b) submit an abstract that you can demonstrate relates to this course to the conference (c) have your abstract accepted and (d) actually present at the conference.

Please note that if you are interested in presenting your work you must submit an abstract of no more than 250 words by **February 20**. Your abstract must explain how your work connects to social justice, and you must include your name, email address, phone number, school affiliation (KU), a title for your presentation, and keywords for your presentation that describe its main themes. You must also include your faculty mentor (this could be me but you should check with me first!), their departmental affiliation, and their email address and phone number. You may submit abstracts electronically at:

<http://www.muhlenberg.edu/main/academics/mediacom/srsj/callforproposals.html>

If you have questions about this option please let me know. Again, if you are thinking about pursuing this option you should contact me ASAP.

Turn in: Summarize and reflect on your experience preparing and presenting in a minimum of 3 pages (double-spaced). Your summary should include a discussion of how the presentation is related to the course. You should also include a copy of your paper/notes used for your presentation.

D) DESIGN-YOUR-OWN

In order to choose this option, you **MUST** talk to me about it during office hours and get my approval. Bring your idea to me, we will discuss whether it is doable, and if so we will work out the details, set the criteria, and establish goals.