**THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK**

**COLLEGE OF STATEN ISLAND**

**WOMEN’S, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES – SPRING 2025**

**WGS 203: GENDER IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD – ONLINE**

Professor: Red Washburn, Ph.D.

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Class Times: No meetings – Online Asynchronous

Office Hours: Online via Zoom by appointment

**Catalog Description:** An introduction to issues of gender worldwide. This interdisciplinary course draws on literary, cultural, social scientific, and historical approaches to explore the significance of gender in societies in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, and to enable students to think critically about gender issues. Prerequisite ENG 151 and any Us Experience in its Diversity course (FUSR).

**Course Description:** The purpose of this interdisciplinary class is to for you to analyze structures of power and dimensions of difference by focusing on gender and the ways in which it intersects with other social identities, such as race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, ability, and age in the contemporary world. You will learn about concepts of sex/gender systems, histories of social movements, interdisciplinary modes of inquiry, political debates, cultural productions, and current events. You will challenge dominant narratives of power relations and social inequalities, explore different angles of vision, reposition marginalized groups across location, and link critical examination and practical intervention in your lives and in the world**.** You will learn that critical reflection is essential to feminist critique. You will engage in open discussion about social issues addressed in the works we will read. In addition, you will write exploratory and argumentative essays in which you interpret gender issues in your lives and in the world for your own research project.

**Required Text:**

All texts are on Blackboard.

•hooks, bell*. Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics.* Cambridge:

South End Press, 2000 (online).

**Course Objectives:**

•You will do close readings of texts, including summarizing and annotating, and understand social, political, cultural, and historical issues, contexts, and terms.

• You will create central arguments that include a clear topic, a solid stance, and provide support for your main ideas by quoting, paraphrasing, and analyzing passages from texts.

• You will recognize your writing processes, receive feedback from your peers, conference with me, and revise your major writing assignments.

• You will engage in rigorous discussion that fosters critical reflection about gender in your lives, the world, and the texts through collaborative interaction.

• You will write grammatically and mechanically correct papers and cite in MLA (or some other academic) format.

**Requirements:**

• A life writing project, reflecting on your experiences with intersecting identities and examining privilege and oppression that uses at least one essay we read in class, totaling approximately five to six pages

•An argumentative social research project, researching a contemporary gender-related issue in the world that includes three scholarly peer-reviewed articles, goes through several revisions, and is approximately five to six pages

•A current events journal consisting of four one paragraph responses to current events about a gender-related issues due throughout the sesmter on Sundays before 11:59PM before spring break, except the week the life writing project is due, and a response to at least one your peers’ responses

• Participation, discussion, freewrites, and workshops

**Grade Distribution:**

Life Writing Project (Assignments) 30%

Social Research Project (Assignments) 40%

Current Events Journal/ Response (Discussion) 20%

Participation (Discussions & Peer Reviews) 10%

**Writing Procedures:**

• You will engage in a process of composing (i.e., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and proofreading) for all writing assignments.

• You will receive a wealth of feedback on your essays from your peers. You also will conference with me. Before you submit your final drafts, you will produce several drafts for each essay, including for peer review and professor review. You will present your papers to the class during writing workshops once during the semester for feedback.

• You will have the opportunity to revise your essays after your initial grade is recorded so long as you discuss your writing in informal conferences with me. Revisions have the possibility of replacing the previous grade, but only if substantial improvement is evident. In other words, simply changing mechanical errors (i.e., commas) in essays will not raise grades.

• You will be given ample feedback on each essay before the next essay is due. This feedback will allow you to learn from the comments and apply the comments to the next essay.

**Discussion Procedures:**

• You will be well-prepared for all class discussions by doing all the assigned reading and writing.

• You will demonstrate your understanding and analysis of the readings by being fully engaged in class discussions.

• You will be respectful of your peers’ ideas and my ideas.

**Pronoun and Name:** I affirm all forms of gender expressions and identities. If you prefer to be called a different name than what is on the class roster, please let me know. Feel free to inform me on your gender pronoun or if you do not have a pronoun.

**Attendance:**

You are expected to read, write, and discuss regularly each week online. This is your way of “attending” and participating in an online class.

**Academic Integrity:**

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged (intentionally or unintentionally) use of summary, paraphrase, direct quotation, language, statistics, or ideas from articles or other information sources, including the Internet. You must cite according to MLA or Chicago format, outlined in the required text. If you plagiarize all or part of a writing assignment, you will automatically receive an F on it, and it cannot be revised. If you repeat the offense, you will fail the course and be reported.

**Artificial Intelligence/ Chat GPT**

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is strictly prohibited in all coursework and assignments. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of AI-generated text, speech, or images, as well as the use of AI tools or software to complete any portion of a project or assignment. Any violations of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including a failing grade for the assignment or course. Our goal is to encourage critical thinking and creativity, and the use of AI detracts from this objective. Students are expected to use their own knowledge, research and analysis to complete coursework.

If you are not yet familiar with ChatGPT or its capabilities, you are now: this policy statement was generated by the ChatGPT AI engine based on the prompt “write a syllabus policy statement forbidding the use of AI.”

**Accommodations:** CUNY provides accommodations to students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability and need supplemental accommodations in connection with this class, contact disability services directly.

**Schedule of Assignments:** The following schedule is tentative and may change based on the needs of the class.

**Week One (1/27): Course Introductions**

Online: Syllabus Distribution and Introduction

* Introduce Yourself on Blackboard (Discussion Board before 11:59PM on Sunday)

**Week Two (2/3): Feminist Curiosity**

Online: “Being Curious about Our Lack of Feminist Curiosity,” Cynthia Enloe

**Current Events Journal Due**

**Week Three (2/10): Feminist Killjoys and Bad Feminists**

Online: Feminist Killjoys (and Other Willful Subjects),” Sara Ahmed and “Bad Feminist” (Intro), Roxanne Gay and watch clips

**Current Events Journal Due**

**Week Four (2/19): Feminist Life in the World**

Online: *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*, bell hooks, chs. 1-8 and “Womanism,” Alice Walker

**Current Events Journal Due**

**Week Five (3/3):** **Feminist Life in the World**

Online: *Feminism Is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*, bell hooks, chs. 9-19

**Week Six (3/10):** **Intersectionality,** **Privilege/Marginalization, and Difference/Power**

Online: White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,” Peggy McIntosh and “‘What Has Happened Here’”: The Politics of Difference in Women’s History and Feminist Politics,” Elsa Barkley Brown and watch clips

**Week Seven (3/17): Life Writing Review**

**Online: Life Writing Final Draft Due (Assignments before 11:59PM on Sunday, 3/23)**

**Week Eight (3/24): Re-Views of First/Second Waves/Taxonomies of**

**Feminisms/ Multiracialisms**

Online: “Re-Rooting American Women’s Activism: Global Perspectives on 1848,” Nancy A. Hewitt and “Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism,” Becky Thompson and watch clips

Online: Watch *Iron Jawed Angels*, Katja von Garnier and *She’s Beautiful When She’s Angry*, Mary Dore

**Week Nine (4/1): Performances/Sanctions**

Online: “Acting in Concert,” Judith Butler and “What’s Wrong with ‘All Lives Matter?’” Judith Butler and George Yancy, “Thinking about Homosexuality,” Anne Fausto-Sterling, and “Uses of the Erotic,” Audre Lorde and watch clips

**Current Events Journal Due**

**Week Ten (4/7): Queer/Trans/Intersex Movements**

Online: “Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come,” Leslie Feinberg, “Queens in Exile: The Forgotten Ones,” Sylvia Rivera and watch clips

– Watch *The Death and Life of Marsha P. Johnson*, David France (film online)

**Spring Break (4/12-4/20)**

**Week Eleven (4/21): Social Research Project**

**Online: Social Research Project Rough Draft Due (Discussions before 11:59PM on Sunday, 4/27)**

**Week Twelve (4/28): Social Research Project**

**Online: Social Research Project Peer Review Due (Discussions before 11:59PM on Sunday, 5/4)**

**Week Thirteen (5/5): Social Research Project**

**Online: Social Research Project Final Draft Due (Assignments before 11:59PM on Sunday, 5/12)**

**Intersecting Identities: Examining Privilege & Marginalization**

**Life Writing Project Due 3/23**

In this paper, you will examine instances where you are privileged, as well as instances where you see privilege operating but are in a marginalized position. One of the issues we need to address as we undertake our studies is our own perspective and understandings of identity. While we learn about social inequalities and power, we must also interrogate our own subject positions. How has (and/or has not) privilege and/ or marginalization shaped your life? What forms has it taken (consider race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, etc.) Have you been aware of privilege and marginalization in your life as you were growing up? Why or why not? As you learn more about privilege and marginalization and examine your life, what do you find most interesting or surprising? How have privilege and marginalization shaped your life opportunities, life chances, and experiences. How do privilege and marginalization interact in your life? Are there certain forms of privilege and marginalization that have been more visible to you than others? What changes would you make in your life and your community to spread power around? Will your new understanding of privilege change your life, your actions, your behaviors in the future in any way? Do social class, race/ethnicity, gender, and sexuality have an impact on your everyday experiences? How do these identities intersect and interact in your everyday experiences? How can we apply our social imagination to these intersections? Who are you and how do you fit into the larger social structure in the world?

In an essay on your own lived experience, you will analyze your identities and social location through the lens of privilege and marginalization. You will need to situate yourself in a larger social system. Then, define and describe the identity categories you inhabit. Then, using between one and three examples from your everyday life with gender in the world, begin to analyze the ways these identities affect your experiences around privilege and marginalization. You are aiming for depth of analysis here—keep answering the question “why?’” to drive your discussion. Think about both the intersections of identity as well as the structural social inequalities we discussed in class as you shape your essay. You will use at least at least one reading to help illustrate your points. This essay comprises 40% of your grade.

The following format is to be followed as you write up this exercise. This paper must be:

\* 5-6 pages in length, typed

\* Double-spaced

\* 12 point Times New Roman font

\* 1-inch margins all around

\* Good grammar and sentence structure are expected

**Social Research Project**

**Paper Due 4/27 (Rough Draft), 5/4 (Peer Review), and 5/12 (Final Draft)**

**Overview**

Research is not a type of essay on its own. Research merely assistsin supporting a central argument. Many of you might feel overwhelmed by information and allow it to outweigh your own ideas. However, you should not rely exclusively on quoted passages. Instead, you should develop your own ideas and reasons. Your goal is not to string information together, but rather to write a coherent, argumentative essay for your joint capstone project—one that embodies your ideas about three scholarly peer-reviewed articles you find independently to support your ideas about a contemporary gender-related issue in the world. You may wish to write an initial draft before you incorporate research, and then supplement your ideas with the information you have found and synthesized. You should research a gender-related issue in the world (i.e., street harassment, equal pay, welfare, intimate partner violence, cyberactivism, hip hop feminism, riot grrl, trans healthcare, all gender bathrooms, transgender passports, LGBTQ education, sex work, #Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, incarceration, immigrant/ undocumented deportation, homelessness, sweatshops, environmental racism, and the media portrayals of women, etc.) about which you wish to know more. This issue can be examined within a historical context, i.e., World II or Black Lives Matter. If you care about your topic, your essay will be easier for you to write. Your scholarly peer-reviewed articles must be valid. It should come from one of the library journals or databases. It should have an author, journal title, volume, issue, and year. It should not be a newspaper article or a magazine article. You must be able to examine scholarly journal articles and determine their relevance to your project. You must develop your own ideas and topics, follow your beliefs and passions, and strengthen your ideas with outside sources. You may pick any contemporary gender-related issue in the world to research so long as you three scholarly peer-reviewed articles, make your own argument, and provide several reasons for your arguments. For instance, you may discuss intimate partner violence. You may argue about the prevalence of violence in the United States, reasons of control, and lack of prevention and put within a historical context like divorce laws and the women’s liberation movement. You should get assistance from librarians and come to me for help as you begin to work on your projects. All projects must be revised and proofread before handed in.If you plagiarize, the project will receive a failing grade. Your paper must be five to six pages. You should submit all drafts and peer reviews. It comprises 40% of your grade. Your capstone paper should be double-spaced, typed and stapled, have one inch margins all around, be 12 point Times New Roman font, and have a proper heading with your full name, both of your professors’ full names, the full titles and sections for both classes, a date, and a title.

**Grading Checklist**

•This project has a clear argumentative statement. Each body paragraph raises a supporting point. Each body paragraph has a topic sentence that clearly encapsulates the point of the paragraph and connects it to the central argument.

•The research is smoothly incorporated into your project. Nothing seems to have been forced in arbitrarily. All quotes need to be introduced, explained, and connected to support the topic.

•Every piece of information has a clear citation within the text. You have not plagiarized.

•There is a Works Cited page that is formatted according to MLA rules.

•The project has been proofread for errors.

You should submit all drafts and peer reviews.

**Grading Checklist**

•You should write an introduction that has a strong hook or captivating opening (i.e., quote, anecdote, or question).

• You should synthesize your central arguments and main ideas.

• You should write in a professional tone by removing or revising personal experiences and reflections. Instead, you should focus on historical commentary about the texts for your body/ middle paragraphs.

• You should save passages from the texts you enjoyed and used in your journals, yet locate additional passages that further support your critical insights.

• You should explain and analyze why the passages you chose are important. You should support your claims by adding additional topic paragraphs.

•You should smoothly incorporate the article into your critical analysis. All quotes need to be introduced, explained, and connected to support the topic.

•You should have a clear citation within the text. You should not have plagiarized.

•You should have a Works Cited page that is in MLA format.

• You should include a conclusion that neither summarizes your introduction nor includes topics that you did not discuss in your essay.

•You should develop and organize your sentences and paragraphs coherently, with clear topic sentences, a clear focus, and strong examples.

•You should revise your essay and eliminate any grammatical and mechanical errors.

**Citation­­ Guide**

•Remember to include all drafts.

•Remember to include a proper heading.

•Remember to craft a creative title. (i.e., “Research Paper” or “Transgender Passports” are not creative).

•Remember to do parenthetical references in MLA format. For instance, according to MLA format, all references should have the author and the page from which you are citing in parentheses followed by a period. For instance, According to research, “. . .” (Smith 56). If “Smith” is in a sentence, just write the page number. For instance, Smith writes, “. . .” (56).

•Remember a passage that is more than four lines long needs to be indented.

•Remember that periods and commas always go in quotes and that only quotes within quotes have single quotes.

•Remember to do a Works Cited page.

For a book, the MLA citation is:

Brady, Evelyn et al. *In the Footsteps of Anne: Stories of Republican Women*

*Ex-Prisoners*. Belfast: Shanway Press, 2011.

For an article in a book, the MLA citation is:

James, Joy. “Framing the Panther: Assata Shakur and Black Female Agency.”

*Want to Start a Revolution?: Radical Women in the Black Freedom Struggle*. Ed. David F. Gore, Jeanne Theoharis, and Komozi Woodard. New York: New York University Press, 2009. 138-160.

For a journal article, the MLA citation is:

Butler, Judith. “Critique, Dissent, Disciplinarity.” *Critical Inquiry*. 35.4. (Summer 2009): 773-795.

For a website, the MLA citation is:

Goodman, Amy. “Deportations Continue Despite Review of Immigrants with

Family Ties.” *Democracy Now!* 7 June 2012. Headlines. www.democracynow.org

**Current Events Journal/ Response**

**Responses Due Sundays Online before 11:59PM**

**Overview**

I am requiring you to do four responses to current events connected to gender in the world throughout the course (see dates on syllabus, 2/9, 2/16, 2/23, and 4/1. You may write about what you have read about or listened to in the news. You may write about whatever you want so long as it incorporates what you learned, what you were thinking, or how you felt after reading or listening to the news each week. It should not be a summary. For instance, you may write a response critiquing the recent transphobic policies forcing incarcerated trans women to be reclassified as men and placed in men’s prisons. I am looking for your own analysis. Please incorporate textual data from news sources into your responses. Your responses should be informal and at least a paragraph to a page. Be sure to be respectful to your peers. Your responses comprise 20% of your grade.