

WGSX 200: Introduction to Women Studies

Spring, 2007

Coordinating Professor: Dr. Katherine Socha

Office: SB168

Office Hours: MW 4:00-5:00pm

Phone: (240) 895-4353

Email: ksocha@smcm.edu

Course TA: Roya Biggie

Email: rjbiggie@smcm.edu

Classroom: Schaefer 132

Class times: MW 6:00-7:50pm

Required Course Materials:

Ms. Magazine Coursepack

Balliet, Women, Culture, and Society, 4th edition (abbreviated WCS)

Tobias, Faces of Feminism

e-reserve readings

www.salon.com/broadsheet weekly review

films: *Girl 6*, *Legally Blonde*, *Thelma and Louise*

Required Events:

Women Studies Colloquium presentations by Tickle, De Seve, Coontz, and Card
NSM Colloquium presentation by Tobias

Contributing Faculty:

This semester, we have the wonderful opportunity to learn about the work of 18 professors here at St. Mary's: Jennifer Cognard-Black (English), Merideth Taylor (Theater), Carrie Patterson (Art), Sandy Ganzell (Mathematics), Laine Doggett (French), Deborah Lawrence (Music), Elizabeth Williams (Psychology), Celia Rabinowitz (Library), Andrew Cognard-Black (Sociology), Ruth Feingold (English), Anna Bedford (Women Studies), Adriana Brodsky (History), Joanne Klein (Theater), Jennifer Tickle (Psychology), Katie Gantz (French), Angela Johnson (Education Studies), Sybol Anderson (Philosophy), and Kate Norlock (Philosophy).

The first two weeks of this course will be a crash course in the history of feminism, as told by the voice of an esteemed activist and educator, Sheila Tobias. We are delighted that she will be able to visit St. Mary's in April, in order to give a NSM Colloquium and to visit our class.

As part of the Women Studies Colloquium we will also have the honor of meeting scholars and activists from across the nation, including social psychologist Jennifer Tickle (of our own SMCM psychology department), documentary producer and director Jim De Seve, director of research and public education for the Council on Contemporary Families Stephanie Coontz, and Emma Goldman Professor of Philosophy Claudia Card (University of Wisconsin).

Course Philosophy:

This class is a survey of women studies. There is such a wealth of material available and so many wonderful professors whose work can be explored through the feminist perspective, that choosing just one semester's worth of material was an exercise in frustration. There are many, many issues to examine once your eyes have been opened to a more realistic view of the world and its social structures.

This course is designed to be the opposite of the *tabula rasa* approach to education, where the students are assumed to be blank slates awaiting the professors' writing. In this course, you will need to consider and re-consider your own beliefs, attitudes, assumptions, and actions. This course is about thoughtful analysis of the world around us and about the ways that world affects (and is affected by) the work and lives of women. This course is about growing our awareness and becoming engaged with society. Every one of us can make a difference in our culture. It is our responsibility to act, but it would be irresponsible to act without knowledge, understanding, and compassion.

Throughout the coming 14 weeks, we will be pointed to doorways where that knowledge lives and grows. You get to choose if you want to explore further. (One excellent resource for further exploration is our textbook by Balliet, which contains a wealth of essays about experience and ideas.)

Course Expectations:

Attendance in Class: This class will not succeed if you are not here. This is not a passive framework, where someone "reads you the book." Rather, this class will be discussion-driven. Hence, if you miss more than two class periods, your final grade will be dropped by 2% for each additional day missed. (If you miss 3 classes, your grade goes down by 2%; miss 5 classes, and the grade goes down by 6%.) **Missing more than six classes (three weeks of class) is an automatic F.** We are turning students away from this course. Don't blow off this opportunity. You need to be here, not just physically but also mentally. Do your reading. Come to class. Talk to us.

Behavior in Class: This course touches on some of the most difficult and divisive issues in our society: pornography, abortion, free choice, domination and subjugation, poverty, and more. We may disagree, but we will all talk respectfully and thoughtfully about our disagreements---and we will guide our conversations with facts and theories, not with prejudice and "gut-reaction" emotion. I expect that everyone will have strong emotional reactions during this course (myself included---I chose mathematics for my career, after all!), however it is critically important that we do three things:

- 1) recognize those emotions; try to name them; try to understand where they come from and what they may be telling us about our own history, experience, fears, or hatreds;
- 2) ground our discussion in intellect, fact, and analysis---emotion can point us to the issues, but intellect helps us understand the issues; and
- 3) NEVER make personal attacks on a classmate.

Your arguments should always return to the course material: what does psychology have to tell us about this topic? How did history repeat itself here and affect this other cultural custom? In this class, appeal to a religious belief (for example, it is immoral for women to shake hands with non-relative men) is not a helpful approach to our goal: understanding our society and its effects on women. However, an analysis of how that religious belief altered women's experiences might be a relevant contribution.

If I could wave a magic wand and make one wish for everyone, it would be that our conversations, our choices, and our actions would not be guided by fear but by thoughtful and passionate efforts to understand and to improve human society and, hence, the world. Be brave. Risk understanding what you feel. Risk regretting a past injustice you committed. Risk looking foolish. Risk caring. We have one chance at this world (I think) so think hard and care hard.

Attendance at Films and Colloquium Talks/Panels: In order to experience the cross-disciplinary nature of this course, you must participate in all activities that do not depend on written text alone. I will be scheduling film viewings in the library; however, I will also put the films on reserve in case you have a conflict. Your attendance at the Women Studies Colloquium and the April 16 NSM Colloquium talks is required.

Individual Work: There are several ways in which you will make your own explorations of the course material.

Weekly Broadsheet Review	15%
Attending Colloquium Talks	10%
Reading Quizzes	10%
Creative Response Works	40%
Hard Work (including final exam period)	25%

The Weekly Broadsheet Review is designed to help you begin accessing feminist commentary on and critique of mainstream media news issues. The material is available at www.salon.com/broadsheet after watching a brief ad. (Sorry about the ad.) Due by 5pm every Sunday night (except the Sunday that starts Spring Break), you will email me and Roya a write-up with two components: (1) a summary of that week's Broadsheet topics, and (2) an in-depth (400-500 word) discussion and analysis of one issue raised by the Broadsheet posters. Look at original sources, if given, and connect the material thoughtfully to our work in the class. Use a spell-checker and proof-read your work.

Reading Quizzes will be occasional, five minute checks at the beginning of class. If you have done the day's reading, the quiz will be a breeze.

The four Creative Response Works are your opportunity to synthesize and expand on material we cover in class. Our topics are grouped into related units. One week after the end of each unit (not including the Unit 1 Introduction), you will turn in a substantive creative response to the material we have studied and discussed. You may expand on a line of research and write a paper. You may make a movie to illustrate an idea, a social activism tactic, or a story. You may choose to compose a song cycle and make a recording. You may wish to carry out an economic analysis of women's work in some area. You may create a painting or write a play. You may design and implement a survey of peers or professors to understand prevailing opinions on a topic that interests you. You may write a children's book. At least one of your creative responses must be

written, at least ten pages of well-reasoned, spell-checked, proof-read prose thoughtfully discussing some (or all) features of our course experience in that Unit. The first Creative Response is due Wednesday, February 21. The second is due the Monday after Spring Break; the third, on Wednesday, April 4; the fourth, on Wednesday, May 2. The grading scheme will be equally weighted among (1) quality (of construction or design; this is a “how well did you implement it?” assessment); (2) creativity (did you go beyond the parameters of the course, or did you merely summarize a book argument?); (3) articulation of women studies issue (is the heart of your response truly rooted in your learning about and understanding of the course material?). If your grade is not an A or B on the Creative Response, I will return the project to you for revision (without grade) until it achieves an excellent grade.

Unit 1: Introduction to Women Studies and Feminism

Week 1:

Jan 17 (Wed) KS: Why Women Studies?

Reading: Handouts in class.

Begin reading Tobias for next week. Start now. Really.

Week 2: Yeah, this week’s reading is a LOT. Your goal is to get ready to think deeply and broadly about the presentations of our guest lecturers. Hang in there, and do the reading---it’ll pay off as the course progresses.

Jan 22 (Mon) KS: First and Second Wave Feminism

Reading: Tobias, Faces of Feminism, Chapters 1-8.

Jan 24 (Wed) KS: Second and Third Wave Feminism

Reading: Tobias, Faces of Feminism, Chapters 9-15.

Unit 2: Roles and Images of Women: Body, Movement, and Voice

Week 3:

Jan 29 (Mon) Jennifer Cognard-Black: The Gendered Body in Literature

Reading: Winterson, “The Cells, Tissues, Systems and Cavities of the Body” from “Written on the Body”

Handouts from class.

Jan 31 (Wed) Merideth Taylor: Bodystories: Gendering Movement

Reading: Handouts in class with lab exercise

NOTE: THIS CLASS MEETS IN THE DANCE STUDIO, MH 107. Wear loose, comfortable clothing, and be prepared to take off your shoes for in-class activity.

Week 4:

Feb 5 (Mon) Carrie Patterson: Representations of the female body in art

Reading: bell hooks, "Being the Subject of Art"

Feb 7 (Wed) Sandy Ganzell: Women in the Martial Arts

Reading: Maxine Hong Kingston, "The Woman Warrior" from *The Awakened Warrior*, ed. Rick Fields

Diane Skoss, "Maai"

NOTE: THIS CLASS MEETS IN THE DANCE STUDIO, MH 107. Wear loose, comfortable clothing, and be prepared to take off your shoes for in-class activity.

Week 5:

Feb 12 (Mon) Laine Doggett: A Feminist Looks at the Middle Ages: Is that Possible?

Reading: Marie de France, "The Lay of the Two Lovers"

Guillaume de Poitiers, "I Shall Make a New Song"

Bernart de Ventadorn, "Of Course Its No Wonder I Sing"

E. Jane Burns, "Courtly Love: Who Needs It? Recent Feminist Work in the Medieval French Tradition"

Feb 14 (Wed) Deborah Lawrence: Twice as Good as Men: The Role of Women as Patrons and Performers in Italian Renaissance Music

Reading: Prizer, William. "Isabella d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia as Patrons of Music: The Frottola at Mantua and Ferrara." *The Journal of the American Musicological Society* 38, No. 1 (Spring 1985): 1-33. Assigned pages 1-8, 12-13 (top), 18-19, 30.

Prizer, William. "Una 'Virtù Molto Conveniente A Madonne': Isabella D'este as a Musician." *The Journal of Musicology* 17 #1 (Winter 1999), pages 10-49. Assigned pages (according to journal numbering: thus the first page of the article is page 10) 10-13, 18-19, 23-24, 43 (Poem "On the Alabaster Organ")

Unit 3: This Modern American Life

Week 6:

Feb 19 (Mon) Elizabeth Nutt Williams: Motherhood: Myths vs. Realities

Reading: Chodorow, N. (1978) *The reproduction of mothering: Psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender* (pp. 11-39, Why women mother). Berkeley, University of California Press.

Wolf, N. (2003) *Misconceptions: Truth, lies, and the unexpected on the journey to motherhood* (pp. 225-264, Calling it fair). New York, Anchor Books.

Feb 21 (Wed) Celia Rabinowitz: Marriage: Who Is It Good For? Absolutely Everyone or Absolutely No One?

Reading: Coontz, "The Radical Idea of Marrying for Love" (plus endnotes)

Coontz, "The Invention of Marriage" (plus endnotes)

Coontz, "The Perfect Storm: The Transformation of Marriage at the End of the Twentieth Century" (plus endnotes)
Card, "Against Marriage"

Week 7: Women Studies Colloquium

Feb 26 (Mon) KS: Princesses Live Happily Ever After

Reading: Steinem, "Sex, Lies, and Advertising," WCS pp 192-204
NY Times opinion piece
VIEW Legally Blonde

Feb 27 (Tues):

4:30pm Cole Cinema, Jennifer Tickle "From Runaway Brides to Rose Ceremonies"

Feb 28 (Wed):

4:30pm Cole Cinema, Jim De Seve "Tying the Same-Sex Knot: What's at Stake for Same-sex Couples and Why You Should Care"

6:00pm usual class time: KS will be having dinner in the Great Room, the class is invited to join her for food and discussion

8:00pm Cole Cinema, Stephanie Coontz "Courting Trouble? The World Historic Transformation of Marriage"

Mar 1 (Thur):

4:30pm Cole Cinema, Claudia Card "Gay Divorce: Thoughts on the Legal Regulation of Marriage"

8:00pm Cole Cinema, Roundtable Panel

Week 8:

Mar 5 (Mon) KS: Women's Work? Women in Mathematics

Reading: Henrion, "Women in Mathematics: The Addition of Difference"
Case and Leggett, "Complexities: Women in Mathematics"

Mar 7 (Wed) Andrew Cognard-Black: The Sexual Division of Labor

Reading: Lorber, "The Social Construction of Gender," WCS 10-19

Papanek, "Family Status Production: the 'Work' and 'Non-Work' of Women,"

Video clip from Dateline (shown in class)

Spring Break:

Mar 12 (Mon) SPRING BREAK: no class

Mar 14 (Wed) SPRING BREAK: no class

Unit 4: Women and Culture

Week 9:

Mar 19 (Mon) Ruth Feingold: Gender, Space, and Power

Reading: Mernissi, "Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girl"

Mar 21 (Wed) Anna Bedford: Third World Feminism

Reading: Weil Davis, "Loose Lips Sink Ships,"

Mikell, "African Feminism: Toward a New Politics of Representation"

Video clip from Rites of Passage (shown in class)

Week 10:

Mar 26 (Mon) Adriana Brodsky: Constructing the State, Defining Gender

Reading: Guy, "Dangerous Women" from *Sex and Danger in Buenos Aires*;

Caulfield "Getting into Trouble: Dishonest Women, Modern Girls, and

Women-Men in the Conceptual Language of Vida Policial, 1925-1927"

Mar 28 (Wed) Joanne Klein: Mediated Women: Dismantling the Master's Narrative on Screen

Reading: hooks, "good girls look the other way"

Sturken and Cartwright, Postmodernism and Popular Culture, *Practices of*

Looking (Chapter 7)

VIEW film *Girl 6*

Unit 5: Medicine, Science, and Women

Week 11:

Apr 2 (Mon) Jennifer Tickle: Women and Mental Disorder/Mental Health

Reading: Kohen, D. (2000) Introduction. In D. Kohen (Ed.), *Women and mental health* (pp. 1-16). Philadelphia, PA: Routledge.

Holmshaw, J. & Hillier, S. (2000) Gender and culture: A sociological perspective to mental health problems in women. In D. Kohen (Ed.), *Women and mental health* (pp. 39-64). Philadelphia, PA: Routledge.

Seeman, M. V. (2004) Relational ethics: When mothers suffer from psychosis. *Archives of Women's Mental Health*, 7, 201-210.

Handouts on characteristics of mental disorders (in class).

Apr 4 (Wed) Katie Gantz: Reinventing Hysteria: Spectacle, Photography, and the Female Body in 19th Century Paris

Reading: Bezier, "The Doctor's Tale: Nineteenth-Century Medical Narratives of Hysteria"

Week 12:

Apr 9 (Mon) Angela Johnson: Women of Color in Science

Reading: Johnson, "Unintended consequences: How science professors discourage women of color"

Apr 11 (Wed) Sybol Cook Anderson: Recognizing Difference: A Moral Imperative

Reading: Harvey, J. "Social Privilege and Moral Subordination." *Journal of Social Philosophy*. Summer 2000. 31(2): 177-188.

Anderson, et al. "Combating Civilized Oppression"

Week 13:

Apr 16 (Mon)

4:40 NSM Colloquium: Sheila Tobias (in SB 106)

6:00 class Sheila Tobias: Gender Equity in Mathematics

Reading: La Campagne et al. "Gender Equity in Mathematics"

Tobias, "Confronting the Patriarchy"

ST Notes from Summers' Talk

Apr 18 (Wed) Kate Norlock: Care

Reading: Noddings, "Caring" pp. 7-29 (especially pp. 7-15)

Gilligan, "Moral Orientation and Moral Development, pp. 31-46

(both anthologized in Virginia Held's *Justice and Care: Essential*

Readings in Feminist Ethics)

Week 14:

Apr 23 (Mon) Sybol Cook Anderson, Angela Johnson, Kate Norlock: Panel Discussion, Women in Science

Apr 25 (Wed) KS: Facing Forward and Building Community

Reading: bell hooks, "Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression," WCS pp. 541-550

Srilatha Batliwala, "The Meaning of Women's Empowerment: New Concepts from Action," WCS pp. 576-587

VIEW Thelma and Louise

Exam Week:

May 7 (Mon) KS: Discussion of our Survey of Women Studies

Come prepared to spend an hour re-visiting our course material, and then another hour writing a thoughtful, personal (intellectual, emotional, and physical) assessment of what impact the class has had on you. Are you experiencing school, work, and life differently now? What faculty visits particularly resonated with you? Which class discussions changed your view or opened new avenues of thought?