

**WGST 201-05-7523**  
**Women in American Culture**  
**Fall 2013**

\*\*\* REVISED \*\*\*

T, Th 11:00-12:15  
Ekstrom Library W210

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**Course Description and Goals**

This course has four main goals

- to introduce you to feminist analysis as a mode of inquiry that illuminates the position of women in contemporary U.S. culture
- to introduce you to central concepts and tools for critical thinking that will serve you in many different disciplines and contexts
- to enhance your awareness of social problems related to women and the efforts of nonprofit organizations to address these problems
- to improve your communication, leadership and other work-life skills

It is organized around a single central question: What are the historical and contemporary barriers to equality for women in the United States and how can we eliminate them? We will begin with a brief discussion of the history of feminism as a social movement in the United States and the emergence of women's studies in the academy, then discuss feminist theory as one form of critical thinking that can be described and evaluated according to universal standards. We will then turn our attention to the institutions and practices that shape our experiences of gender in everyday life with particular attention to the overlapping inequalities of race/ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation. In order to integrate theory and practice, we will focus particularly on the status of women in Louisville and participate in a student philanthropy project in which we identify and fund a nonprofit organization that seeks to improve the lives of women. Through readings, films, discussion, writing assignments, and philanthropy work, this course should help you:

1. Become familiar with interdisciplinary perspectives on women and gender;
2. Improve critical thinking skills for approaching gender issues within and beyond American culture;
3. Acquire an understanding of the intersection of gender with other structures of power such as race and class;
4. Learn ways to connect theoretical and historical knowledge about gender to women's lived experiences.

***This course fulfills the general education competency requirements for Humanities (H) and understanding cultural diversity (CD2).***

**Readings**

	Honors Women in American Culture Reader	(RDR)
	Richard Paul and Linda Elder, <i>The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools</i>	(handout)
	Additional Readings	(BB)

## Assignments and Grading

	Classroom Participation		15%
	Preparation Exercises		15%
	Philanthropy Project		20%
	Exam 1		25%
	Exam 2		25%

### A note on your textbook . . .

Your textbook is available in hard copy at the University of Louisville bookstore (approximately \$44; you can apply your financial aid directly), or as an e-book from the McGraw Hill on-line store (approximately \$23; you will need a credit card). Instructions on how to order your e-book are posted in the “Course Documents” section of our Blackboard site.

## Assignment Descriptions

### Preparation Exercises

The preparation exercises are designed particularly to help you explicitly identify when you are being asked to use critical thinking tools and concepts in your analysis of course material. At the same time, they should provide you with active reading and study strategies that will help you learn the course content more easily.

Guidelines and grading standards for each preparation exercise will be posted on our Blackboard site.

### Classroom Participation

In order to be successful, this course requires a high level of active participation, in in-class activities and in the grant solicitation and evaluation process. In part, this portion of your grade relies simply on paying attention and contributing to class discussion. You will also be asked to prepare material in advance for five to six in-class activities, and to turn those notes in at the end of the session. These will be very loosely graded on a three-point scale (1-does not meet expectations, 2-meets expectations, 3-exceeds expectations), but effort counts for more than accuracy. Finally, you will be asked to complete an evaluation form for each of your classmates’ grant presentations, as well as a brief evaluation of your peers’ work within your group.

### Philanthropy Project

This semester we have the exciting opportunity to actually get involved and make a difference on some of the issues we’ll be discussing. Through the university’s student philanthropy program, we have been given \$1,750 to invest in non-profit community organizations working on issues related to women and gender. Over the course of the semester, you will research a problem in which gender and/or sexuality plays a role, identify and learn about organizations working on these issues in Louisville, solicit grant applications, and select 2-3 organizations to receive funding in support of their work. There are four written components to this work:

1. An individual reflection on community needs in which you identify two areas you see as most vital to improving the status of female-identified people in the Louisville area and explain why these are the most significant areas for action. (1-2 pp.)
2. An individual report to your fellow group members on an organization of your choice that describes the organization and its mission and advances an argument for why the group should or should not solicit a grant proposal from that organization. (2-3 pp.)

3. A group presentation and report to the entire class advocating for one of your organizations to receive a grant. This presentation should explain (1) the nature of the issue or problem at hand; (2) a rationale for why this is among the most significant issues to address in Louisville; (3) current best practices or challenges for work in this area; (4) the history, mission, structure, and achievements of the organization; (5) the organization's plan for use of the grant funds; and (6) a rationale for why this organization is effective in addressing the problem you have identified. This assignment requires the use of 4-5 scholarly sources plus course materials to support its discussion of the nature of the problem and current best practices. (5-7 pp.)
4. An individual final reflection on what you have learned about your issue, the grant/philanthropic process, and principles of community action in this field of work. (2-3 pp.)

Guidelines and grading standards for each step of the philanthropy project will be posted on our Blackboard site. You will also have the opportunity to earn extra credit by raising additional funds for the organization you sponsor.

Please note: Your group report must be accompanied by a bibliography and documented using a consistent, recognized reference system. If you are not familiar with a current scholarly reference system, you may use the MLA citation system outlined at: <http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/humanities/english.html>.

You must submit all written assignments in hard copy. I will not accept e-mailed assignments.

### **Exams**

Each exam will be worth one hundred points. The exams will be a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. I will distribute a study guide before each exam and answer any questions you have about the guide in class.

### **Attendance Policy**

Regular attendance is the best predictor of success in a course, and it is the most efficient use of your time for understanding the material we will cover. It is unlikely that you will earn a satisfactory grade without regular attendance.

You will be permitted three unexcused absences. Thereafter, your overall grade for the course will drop 2% for each unexcused absence. I will take attendance at the beginning of class. I will do my best to reflect late arrivals, but make no guarantees that late presence will be recorded. If you arrive late, please check with me at the end of class to be sure your attendance has been recorded.

In order for an absence to be counted as excused, you must provide documentation of medical or personal emergencies (i.e., a doctor's note, a funeral program, a court document). Religious holidays and travel for university-approved activities will be excused according to university policy: Students participating in university-approved activities must provide their schedules in advance of their absences.

### **Policy on Extensions, Make-up Exams, and Late Assignments**

If you miss an exam or do not turn in a paper on time because of an absence, you will receive a zero for the assignment. No make-ups will be allowed. Exceptions to this rule will be granted only in cases of documented medical or personal emergencies, or for religious holidays, and only when you notify me at least one hour in advance of the missed class. If you are unable to send an e-mail ([depeck01@louisville.edu](mailto:depeck01@louisville.edu)), you may reach me or leave a message at my office, 852-1254.

### **Academic Integrity**

The [University of Louisville Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) outlines the code of student responsibility, including the university's policies on plagiarism, cheating, and other violations of academic integrity. ***If you violate the academic code, you will receive a zero for the assignment, and, at the instructor's discretion, you may receive a failing grade for the course and be referred for disciplinary action.*** More information about your rights and responsibilities as a student is available in the [Student Handbook](#), but part of the section on plagiarism follows:

**E. Plagiarism:**

Representing the words or ideas of someone else as one's own in any academic exercise, such as:

1. Submitting as one's own a paper written by another person or by a commercial "ghost writing" service.
2. Exactly reproducing someone else's words without identifying the words with quotation marks or by appropriate indentation, or without properly citing the quotation in a footnote or reference.
3. Paraphrasing or summarizing someone else's work without acknowledging the source with a footnote or reference.
4. Using facts, data, graphs, charts, or other information without acknowledging the source with a footnote or reference. Borrowed facts or information obtained in one's research or reading must be acknowledged unless they are "common knowledge". Clear examples of "common knowledge" include the names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, and the meaning of fundamental concepts and principles in a discipline.

**Blackboard**

Class notes, announcements, study guides, and assignment guidelines will be posted on Blackboard. I will also use the e-mail function on Blackboard to contact the class with announcements if need be. Make sure your Blackboard (Preferred E-Mail Address) e-mail is set to an account you check regularly or that your University of Louisville account forwards your mail to an account you check regularly!

***The instructor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus when necessary to meet learning objectives, to compensate for missed classes, or for similar reasons. Any changes to the schedule of readings or assignments will be announced in class, via the Blackboard e-mail list, and on our Blackboard course site.***

**Weekly Readings, Topics, and Assignments**

	<b>PART I: CRITICAL THINKING, FEMINISM, AND FEMINIST THEORY</b>
Week 1	<b>CRITICAL THINKING / MYTHS AND HISTORIES OF FEMINISM</b>
	<b>Tuesday, August 27</b>
	Introduction to course, syllabus, expectations
	<b>Thursday, August 29</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 1: Untangling the F-Word (RDR, 5-19)</li> <li>• Lisa Maria Hogeland, "Why Young Women Get the Willies," <b>(please print and bring a copy to class)</b> <a href="http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/volunteer/fearoffem.html">http://www.rapereliefshelter.bc.ca/volunteer/fearoffem.html</a> (BB)</li> <li>• Richard Paul and Linda Elder, "The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking," especially pp. 200-209 and 218-19 (RDR)</li> </ul>
	Discussion: Introduction to Critical Thinking

Week 2	<b>FEMINISM AS A SOCIAL MOVEMENT</b>
	<b>Tuesday, September 3</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becky Thompson, “Multiracial Feminism” (RDR, 35-44)</li> <li>• Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement” (RDR, 29-34)</li> </ul>
	<b><i>Preparation Exercise Due: Identify the Elements of Thought in “Multi-Racial Feminism”</i></b>
	Discussion: Feminist Histories
	<b>Thursday, September 5</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 2: “What Is a Theory?,” “Creating Knowledge,” “Socially Lived Theorizing” (RDR, 53-62)</li> </ul>
	Group Work: Feminist Summit Discussion: Characteristics of Contemporary (Third-Wave) Feminism
	<b><i>Classroom Participation Assignment Due: Feminist Summit</i></b>
Week 3	<b>HOW FEMINISTS THINK: THEORIES OF KNOWLEDGE/THEORIES OF GENDER</b>
	<b>Tuesday, September 10</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chapter 2: “What Is a Theory?,” “Creating Knowledge,” “Socially Lived Theorizing” (RDR, 53-62)—review</li> <li>• Women4Women, <i>Benchmark II: A Study of Louisville Women and Girls</i> (BB)</li> </ul>
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feminist Theory as Critical Thinking</li> <li>• Community Board Formation</li> </ul>
	<b><i>Philanthropy Assignment Due: Individual Reflection on Community Needs</i></b>
	<b>Thursday, September 12</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judith Lorber, “The Social Construction of Gender” (RDR, 66-69)</li> <li>• Suzanne Kessler, “The Medical Construction of Gender” (BB)</li> <li>• See-I Entry on Wikipedia: <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SEE-I">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SEE-I</a></li> </ul>
	Watch (before class): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Transgender Basics</i> at <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXI9w0PbBXY">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UXI9w0PbBXY</a></li> </ul>
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender as a social construction</li> <li>• SEE-I practice on gender</li> </ul>
Week 4	<b>HOW FEMINISTS THINK: THE INDIVIDUAL AND THE SYSTEMATIC</b>
	<b>Tuesday, September 17</b>
	Readings:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marilyn Frye, “Oppression and the Use of Definition” (BB)</li> <li>• Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege” (BB)</li> <li>• See-I Entry on Wikipedia: <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SEE-I">http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SEE-I</a></li> </ul>
	Discussion: Connecting the Individual with the Structural
	<b>Thursday, September 19</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jean Kilbourne, “The More You Subtract, the More You Add” (BB)</li> </ul>
	Film: <i>Killing Us Softly IV</i>
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body image and media</li> </ul>
	<b><i>Preparation Exercise Due: Retaining Key Concepts: SEE-ing Oppression and Privilege</i></b>
Week 5	<b>BODIES AND HEALTH / MODELS OF COMMUNITY ACTION</b>
	<b>Tuesday, September 24</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becky Wangsgaard Thompson, "A Way Outa No Way": Eating Problems among African-American, Latina, and White Women,” <i>Gender and Society</i>, 6:4 (Dec. 1992), 546-561. (BB)</li> </ul>
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Body and Beauty Ideals—Comparing Questions, Information and Conclusions in Two Approaches to Body Issues</li> </ul>
	<b><i>Classroom Participation Assignment: Comparing Approaches to Body Issues</i></b>
	<b>Thursday, September 26</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dorothy Allison, “A Question of Class” (BB)</li> <li>• Lila Abu-Lughod, “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others” (RDR, 91-100)</li> </ul>
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Point of View: Intersectionality, Social Location, and Identity</li> <li>• Thinking about Models of Community Action / Criteria for Evaluation</li> </ul>
Week 6	<b>BODIES AND HEALTH</b>
	<b>Tuesday, October 1</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asian Communities for Reproductive Justice, “A New Vision” (BB)</li> </ul>
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comparing frameworks for activism on reproductive issues</li> <li>• What is your organization’s framework for action?</li> </ul>
	<b><i>Classroom Participation Assignment: Comparing Reproductive Activism Frameworks</i></b>
	<b><i>Midterm exam study guide distributed</i></b>

	<b>Thursday, October 3</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue 2: Should the Cervical Cancer Vaccine for Girls Be Compulsory? (RDR, 126-59)</li> </ul>
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debate: Should the HPV vaccine be compulsory?</li> <li>• What is the status of the HPV vaccine in Kentucky?</li> </ul>
	<b><i>Classroom Participation Assignment: Comparing Arguments for and against Compulsory HPV Vaccination</i></b>
Week 7	<b>EXAM WEEK!</b>
	<b>Tuesday, October 8</b>
	<b>NO CLASS—MID-TERM BREAK</b>
	<b>Thursday, October 10</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None—Study for exam 1</li> </ul>
	<b><i>EXAM 1</i></b>
Week 8	<b>WOMEN, FAMILIES AND WORK</b>
	<b>Tuesday, October 15</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heather Boushey, “The New Breadwinners,” <i>The Shriver Report: A Woman’s Nation Changes Everything</i> (Maria Shriver and the Center for American Progress, 2009), <a href="http://www.shriverreport.com/awn/economy.php">http://www.shriverreport.com/awn/economy.php</a> (BB)</li> <li>• Stephanie Coontz, “The Myth of Male Decline,” <i>New York Times</i>, September 29, 2012, <a href="http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/30/opinion/sunday/the-myth-of-male-decline.html">http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/30/opinion/sunday/the-myth-of-male-decline.html</a> (BB)</li> </ul>
	Discussion: Women’s Work: Job Segregation, Wage Differentials, Bias in the Workplace
	<b><i>Philanthropy Assignment Due: Individual Reports on Community Organizations</i></b>
	<b>Thursday, October 17</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ann O’Leary and Karen Kornbluh, “Family Friendly for All Families: Workers and Caregivers Need Government Policies that Reflect Today’s Realities,” <i>The Shriver Report: A Woman’s Nation Changes Everything</i> (Maria Shriver and the Center for American Progress, 2009), <a href="http://www.shriverreport.com/awn/government.php">http://www.shriverreport.com/awn/government.php</a>. (BB)</li> </ul>
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss individual proposals, decide on organization to solicit</li> <li>• Outside of class group work—send your solicitation letter</li> <li>• Mommy Track, Mommy Tax: Balancing Family and Work</li> </ul>
Week 9	<b>WOMEN, FAMILIES AND WORK</b>

	<b>Tuesday, October 22</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issue 4: Is the Gender Wage Gap Justified? (RDR, 176-196)</li> </ul>
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Debate: Is the gender wage gap justified?</li> </ul>
	<b><i>Classroom Participation Assignment: Comparing Analyses of the Wage Gap</i></b>
	<b>Thursday, October 24</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gwendolyn Mink, “The Lady and the Tramp (II): Feminist Welfare Politics, Poor Single Mothers, and the Challenge of Welfare Justice,” <i>Feminist Studies</i>, 24:1 (Spring 1998), 55-65. (BB)</li> <li>• James P. Ziliak, “Introduction,” <i>Welfare Reform and Its Long-Term Consequences for America’s Poor</i>, ed. James P. Ziliak (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-21. (BB)</li> </ul>
	Discussion: Public Policy, Families, and Poverty
Week 10	<b>WOMEN, FAMILIES, AND WORK / VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN</b>
	<b><i>Monday, October 28 is the last day you can withdraw from the course without petitioning</i></b>
	<b>Tuesday, October 29</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo, “Preface” and “Maid in LA,” <i>Domestica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadow of Affluence</i> (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), ix-xxii, 29-61. (BB)</li> </ul>
	Film: <i>Maid in America</i>
	Discussion: The Gendered Work of Care in Global Perspective
	<b>Thursday, October 31</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Michele McKeon, “Understanding Intimate Partner Violence” (BB)</li> <li>• Kimberle Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color” (BB)</li> </ul>
	Discussion: Understanding Violence Against Women
Week 11	<b>VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN</b>
	<b>Tuesday, November 5</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soraya Chemaly, “Rape Has a Purpose,” <i>Huffington Post</i>, January 5, 2013, <a href="http://www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/syrian-rape-and-chemical-_b_2370638.html">http://www.huffingtonpost.com/soraya-chemaly/syrian-rape-and-chemical-_b_2370638.html</a> (BB)</li> <li>• Soraya Chemaly, “Forget Tosh—The Outrage Isn’t the Joke, It’s the Laughter,” <i>Huffington Post</i>, July 15, 2012 (BB)</li> <li>• Ariel Levy, “Trial by Twitter,” <i>New Yorker</i>, August 5, 2013 (BB)</li> </ul>



	Film: <i>Tough Guise</i> (excerpts)
	Discussion: What Constitutes Rape Culture?
	<b>Thursday, November 7</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mimi Kim, “Alternative Interventions to Violence” (BB)</li> <li>• N. Tatiana Masters, “‘My Strength Is Not for Hurting’: Men’s Anti-Rape Websites” (BB)</li> </ul>
	Discussion: Ending Violence Against Women
Week 12	<b>SEX AND SEXUALITIES</b>
	<b>Tuesday, November 12</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBA</li> </ul>
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sex and sexualities</li> </ul>
	<b>Thursday, November 14</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual/group readings on grant topic area</li> </ul>
	Discussion: Group work on proposals
Week 13	<b>PHILANTHROPY PROJECT WEEK!</b>
	<b>Tuesday, November 19</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women of ACE, Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, “Voices” (BB)</li> <li>• Individual/group readings related to philanthropy project</li> </ul>
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant award presentation 1</li> <li>• Grant award presentation 2</li> <li>• Grant award presentation 3</li> <li>• Grant award presentation 4</li> </ul>
	<b>Thursday, November 21</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ai-Jen Poo, for Domestic Workers United, “Organizing with Love: Lessons from the New York Domestic Workers Bill of Rights Campaign” (BB)</li> <li>• Individual/group readings related to philanthropy project</li> </ul>
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grant award presentation 5</li> <li>• Grant award presentation 6</li> <li>• Grant award presentation 7</li> </ul>

Week 14	<b>SEX AND SEXUALITY</b>
	<b>Tuesday, November 26</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TBA</li> </ul>
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sex and sexualities</li> <li>• Grant awards decisions</li> </ul>
	<b><i>Preparation Exercise 3 Due: Exam Questions</i></b>
	<b>Thursday, November 28</b>
	<b>NO CLASS—THANKSGIVING BREAK</b>
Week 15	<b>FEMINIST ACTIVISM</b>
	<b>Tuesday, December 3</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kalpana Krishnamurthy, “The Next Wave: Feminism, Philanthropy, and the Future,” in <i>Women, Philanthropy and Social Change</i>, ed. Elayne Clift (Tufts, 2007), 271-80. (BB)</li> </ul>
	Discussion:
	<b><i>Final Exam Study Guide Distributed in Class</i></b>
	<b>Thursday, December 5</b>
	Readings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None—review</li> </ul>
	Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exam study guide questions</li> <li>• Celebration ceremony</li> </ul>
	<b><i>Philanthropy Assignment Due: Individual Reflection on Community Action</i></b>
Week 17	<b>Tuesday, December 17, 11:30-1:00</b> (please note that the period for this exam is one hour shorter than the official exam period)
	<b><i>EXAM 2</i></b>