

Professor Leslie Petty  
Office Hours: MWF 3-4  
Palmer 311  
843-3981  
pettyl@rhodes.edu

### **WS 200: Introduction to Women's Studies**

Women's Studies is an interdisciplinary field that draws on ideas from the humanities, social and natural sciences in order to analyze how humans construct notions about women, gender and sex and how these notions in turn affect the lived experiences of both men and women. In this introduction to the field, we will focus on understanding the concept of gender as a social construct and also examine how this concept is inextricably linked to and complicated by other factors such as ethnicity, sexuality, class and age (among other things).

The first half of the course will be devoted to "classic" texts of Western feminism, and we will progress by considering questions of diversity, sexuality and economics. We will also investigate the link between gender and popular culture in order to interrogate the "common sense" notions about sexuality that it both promotes and undermines. The second half of the course will have a significantly different focus. After spring break, we will consider "Women's Studies" as a mode of intellectual inquiry that has transformed almost all academic disciplines. During this segment, several Women's Studies faculty from across Rhodes's campus will teach class sessions in order to model for you how gender study informs their research and pedagogy.

### **Required Texts**

Ehrenreich, Barbara. *Nickle and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America*.  
MacNabb, Elizabeth, et. al. *Transforming the Disciplines: A Women's Studies Primer*.  
Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*.  
Course Packet  
Reserve Readings/Handouts

### **Assignments**

Midterm	25%
Essay (4-6 pgs.)	20%
Final Project (includes 5 response papers and a summary essay)	40%
Reading Journal	10%
Participation	5%

We will discuss these assignments more fully during the course of the semester. Please note: You cannot receive a passing grade for this course unless you complete all major assignments. Any of the following will result in an "F" for the course: failure to take an exam, submit a reading journal more than twice, or turn in an essay or the final project.

### Journals

I will ask you to keep an informal reading journal in which you reflect upon and respond to a minimum of one reading per week. Responses should aim at 3-4 paragraphs. I will collect these from time to time and will give you one class day's advance warning. The journals may either be notebooks with handwritten entries (as long as your handwriting is legible) or typed pages in a folder.

### Attendance Policy

You are expected to be in class every day. Being "present" means not just physically in the room; you are to be alert and prepared. Anyone not alert (i.e. sleeping, reading the paper, working a crossword) will be counted absent, as well anyone clearly not prepared to participate. If you must miss class, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed and what, if anything, you need to make-up. **If you have more than 3 absences (for any reason other than a school sanctioned event) your final grade will be penalized 1/3 of a letter for each additional absence.** Excessive absences (i.e. more than 6) could result in an "F" for the course.

### Assignment Submission Policy

Essays and journals are due at the beginning of class unless otherwise specified. Late papers will be penalized 1/3 letter grade per day. Except in the case of documented illness or family emergency, papers more than a week late will receive a failing grade. If you believe you have a legitimate reason for missing a deadline, talk to me beforehand to make alternate arrangements. Also, please note that essays and response papers must be typed, double-spaced with an inch-margin, stapled, and adhere to MLA standards in both layout and documentation. See me if you have questions about MLA or need further information.