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GSST 200-01, Introduction to Gender and Sexuality Studies, Spring 2013

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GSST 200: Introduction to Gender and Sexuality Studies Spring 2013

Gender and Sexuality Studies is an interdisciplinary department that draws on ideas from the humanities, social and natural sciences in order to analyze how humans construct notions about gender and sex and how these notions in turn affect the lived experiences of men and women. In this introduction, 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). We will also investigate the historical trajectory of the discipline, seeing how conversations about gender and sexuality have changed (or not) over time.

The course will primarily be devoted to key concepts in the study of gender and sexuality and to “classic” texts of Western feminism. We will proceed roughly chronologically, tracing the way gender and sexuality studies increasingly intersects with the study of race, class and nation. 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. In the final weeks of the semester, we will shift gears, considering “Gender and Sexuality Studies” as a mode of intellectual inquiry that has transformed almost all academic disciplines. During this segment, several GSST faculty members will teach class sessions in order to model for you how the study of gender and sexuality informs their research and pedagogy.

Required Texts

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*.

The syllabus requires that you read several shorter texts that will be available electronically in our public folder. Generally, the file name will be the author's last name and an abbreviated version of the title. **You should consider these required reading for the class, which means that it is mandatory that you not only read them but print them out and bring them to class.** I cannot stress this strongly enough. Failure to do so will quite negatively affect your participation grade.

Assignments

Exam 1	15%
Exam 2	20%
Exam 3	20%
Final Project (includes 4 response papers and a summary essay)	25%
Presentation	15%
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.

Attendance Policy

You are expected to be in class every day. Being “present” doesn’t just mean physically being in the room; you are to be alert and prepared. Anyone not alert (i.e. sleeping, reading the paper, working a crossword, etc.) will be counted absent, as will 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. **After 3 absences (for any reason), you will lose 1/3 letter grade for each subsequent absence. If you have more than 6 absences, you will fail the course.** Chronic tardiness will count towards absences.

Participation

This course is a seminar and requires the active and engaged participation of every member of the class. Make sure you read each day’s assignment carefully and come to class with questions or comments to bring to the discussion. Often the most productive questions are ones that work to pinpoint what is difficult about a particular reading. We will often talk about sensitive or controversial topics, so it is imperative that you treat your classmates with respect at all times.

Cell Phones and Laptops

I should never see or hear your cell phone, nor should I be aware of it vibrating. Please turn your phones off before you enter the room. Be warned that I reserve the right to answer any phone that rings in my class and that if I see you texting or checking your phone, you’ll be counted absent for that day. I am happy for you to use laptops for taking notes, etc. However, if I discover that you are on the internet for any reason (other than my asking you to look something up) or you are doing something on your laptop that distracts you from class participation, then you will be counted absent that day, and I’ll ask you not to bring your laptop back.

Presentations, Exams and Essay Submission Policy

This course is an unusual one for me, in that almost all of your major grades come from exams and in-class presentations. Obviously, it is not possible for you to turn these assignments in “late,” but you should know that I will not give alternate exam times unless you have a documented illness or other (documented) emergency. The only other exception is school-sanctioned travel during the time of the exam (i.e. Mock Trial, sporting events, etc.). I encourage you to put your exams on your calendars now, so you know when they are coming. As for your presentation, use common sense and sign up for a day that you know you will be in class. Presentations also cannot be “made up,” for obvious reasons. Your final project will be due on Wednesday, May 1 at 5:30 p.m. It will be penalized 1/3 letter grade every day it is late.

Academic Honesty

Every assignment that you submit must be your original work, written specifically for this class, and it must clearly and properly cite any sources you used in writing it. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please do not hesitate to ask. I am bound by the honor code to turn in any work I suspect of being plagiarized to the honor council, and I will not have a conversation with you before doing so. Therefore, it is best to approach me with any concerns before the assignment is submitted. If you plagiarize an essay or other assignment, in part or whole, you will fail the course in addition to any punishment meted out by the Honor Council. Please see the English Department policies attached to this syllabus for a further elaboration of the course plagiarism policy.

Reading Schedule

January

- Th, 10: Introductions
- T, 15: Peggy Orenstein, "Should the World of Toys Be Gender Free?" [handout]; Judith Lorber, "The Social Construction of Gender"; Anne Fausto-Sterling "Pink and Blue Forever," and "The Dynamics of Pink and Blue" (both bundled in one document entitled "Fausto-Sterling _ Pink and Blue")

FIRST-WAVE FEMINISM AND THE "MIDDLE YEARS": HISTORICAL UNDERPINNINGS OF GSST

- Th, 17: Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Address to the Seneca Fall Convention" and "Declaration of Sentiments" (1848); Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I a Woman" (1851) (Today I will also lecture on first wave feminism.)
- T, 22: Frances Willard, "Home Protection," (1876); Stanton, "The Solitude of Self" (1892)
- Th, 24: Ida B. Wells, "Southern Horrors" (1892)
- T, 29: Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, Chapters 1-3
- Th, 31: Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, Chapters 3-end

February

- T, 5: **Exam 1**

SECOND WAVE FEMINISMS: GSST COMES OF AGE

- Th, 7: Simone de Beauvoir, Selections from the *The Second Sex*
- T, 12: Betty Friedan, from *The Feminine Mystique*: "The Problem that Has No Name," and "The Happy Housewife Heroine"
- W, 13: **View !Women, Art Revolution**
- Th, 14: Pat Mainardi, "The Politics of Housework"; (Today I'll also lecture about second wave feminism.) Discuss *!Women, Art Revolution*
- T, 19: bell hooks, from *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*: "Racism and Feminism"; Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools"
- Th, 21: Alice Walker, "In Search of Our Mother's Gardens," Gloria Anzaldua, selections from *Borderlands*
- T, 26: Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality"
- Th, 28: **Presentations**

March

T, 5 **Exam 2**

Th, 7: **Presentations**

T, 12: **Spring Break**

T, 14: **Spring Break**

THIRD WAVE FEMINISM, SEXUALITY AND MASCULINITY STUDIES: GSST IN THE LAST 20 YEARS

T, 19: Rebecca Walker, "Becoming the Third Wave" (from *Ms.* magazine, Jan/Feb. 1992); Another reading TBA. (Today I will also lecture on third wave feminism)

Th, 21: **Presentations**

M, 25: View *Miss Representation*

T, 26: Wolf, excerpts from *The Beauty Myth*; Discuss *Miss Representation*

Th, 28: Nancy Fischer, "Purity and Pollution"; Anne Fausto-Sterling, "Thinking about Homosexuality"

April

T, 2: Riki Wilchins, "It's Your Gender, Stupid!"; Leslie Feinberg, "We Are All Works in Progress"
Michael Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia"

Th, 4: **Easter Break**

T, 9: Kimmel, selections from *Manhood in America*; Susan Alexander, "Stylish Hard Bodies: Branded Masculinity in *Men's Health* Magazine"

Th, 11: **Exam 3**

THE STATE OF THE FIELD: GSST AT RHODES

T, 16: **Guest Lecturer / Presentation**

Th, 18: **Guest Lecturer / Presentation**

T, 23: **Guest Lecturer / Presentation**

Th, 25: **Guest Lecturer**

Final Project Due: Wednesday, May 1 at 5:30 p.m. outside my office door