

**Gender Studies 100: Introduction to Gender Studies**  
**Professor Melissa M. Wilcox**  
**MW 2:30-3:50, Olin 210**  
**Whitman College**  
**Spring 2008**

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Office hours: T 2:00-3:30, F 1:00-2:30  
(If you can't make these times, see me  
for an appointment)

**Course summary:**

The goal of Introduction to Gender Studies is encapsulated in the title: to introduce students to the complex, interdisciplinary field that is gender studies today. At Whitman, the Gender Studies program brings together women's and feminist studies, men's and masculinity studies, studies of gender itself, and LGBT/Queer studies. Together, these areas of study cover quite a bit of ground. What holds them together, though, is a shared perspective, a set of lenses through which to view and analyze more traditional fields of study like history, literature, and even the sciences. In this course, we'll consider what those lenses look like and how they work. We'll practice putting them on, and we'll explore how different aspects of the world around us (and we, ourselves) change when viewed through the lenses of gender studies.

*Please note:* In Gender Studies 100 you will be expected to learn, contemplate, critique, and apply the different perspectives of gender studies. If you are unwilling to engage seriously with these perspectives for the duration of the semester, this is not the right course for you.

**Required texts:**

- McCann, Carole R. and Seung-Kyung Kim, eds. *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Hernández, Daisy and Bushra Rehman, eds. *Colonize This! Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism*. New York: Seal Press, 2002.
- Kimmel, Michael S. *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, **Second edition only**. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne. *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*. New York: Basic Books, 2000.
- Valerio, Max Wolf. *The Testosterone Files: My Hormonal and Social Transformation from Female to Male*. New York: Seal Press, 2006.
- Corber, Robert J. and Stephen Valocchi, eds. *Queer Studies: An Interdisciplinary Reader*. Malden, Ma.: Blackwell, 2003.

All texts will also be on reserve in Penrose, and you are welcome to share books with a classmate in order to keep your expenses down.

## Course requirements:

Final grades in this course will be determined as follows:

Take-home exams (2 @ 15 points each).....	30 %
Masculinities group presentation.....	15%
Sex and gender paper.....	20%
Gender fieldwork project.....	20 %
Attendance and participation.....	15 %

Remember to keep all papers I return to you in case there are any discrepancies at the end of the semester. If you keep your papers, you can also track your own grade!

*Exams:* There will be a take-home exam at the end of our unit on feminism, and one at the end of our unit on queer studies; each exam will cover only the unit we've just completed. Exams will be due in the next class session after the exam was distributed. They will be open-book, and will consist of a combination of fill-in or matching questions, short-answer questions, and short essays.

*Masculinities presentation:* During our unit on masculinities, you and three of your classmates will collaborate on a 15-minute presentation on contemporary masculinities in the U.S. You should pick one particular aspect of U.S. masculinities to discuss (e.g., masculinity in ads, sports and masculinity, class and masculinity, the "metrosexual," masculinity and the business suit, etc.). In your presentation, analyze this aspect of masculinity by exploring its characteristics and comparing it to the readings in Kimmel. Your presentation must include visual aids (newspaper or magazine clippings, drawings, images on Power Point, web sites, YouTube clips, etc.), and all four group members must speak for approximately the same amount of time. Presentations will be timed, and running significantly over or under 15 minutes will affect your grade.

*Sex and gender paper:* For this 5-7 page paper you will need to analyze Max Wolf Valerio's *The Testosterone Files* in light of what you have learned in class – especially from our unit on Anne Fausto-Sterling's book, *Sexing the Body*. You may read Valerio at any time before the paper is due, but it would be a good idea to start it sooner rather than later so that you have lots of time to think about it!

*Gender fieldwork project:* This project is the capstone of the course and serves as your final assessment in the class; it asks you to demonstrate your new skills in gender studies by exploring the social construction of gender and sexuality in your own social circles. Your fieldwork assignment is to spend a day "performing" outside your assigned gender in some way (or, if you generally resist such norms, you may try performing *within* them). Find a behavior (activity, body language, speech pattern, dress, etc.) that is clearly marked in a culture around you as *not* something that someone of your gender should be doing, and do it! Be smart about this, though – don't do anything that will deeply offend people or will put you in harm's way. Observe how you feel while performing outside of your gender, and observe the responses you get from others around you. To keep this a useful experiment, you're not allowed to tell the people you'll be observing that this is a class project until after the project is over.

You will present your project as a research poster during our final exam session (Saturday, May 10, from 9:00-11:00 a.m.). In your poster, describe what you chose to do, why you did it, how you felt while conducting your "gender fieldwork," and what kinds of reactions

your project received. Then use the materials we've studied this semester (readings, films, etc.) to analyze your results, focusing especially (but not necessarily exclusively) on the construction and enforcement of gender in society and in yourself. Don't forget: even a negative result, such as no one noticing anything, is still an interesting discovery! If you need to see examples of research posters, wander the halls of the science building – there are research posters on the walls there.

*Note:* This can be an “old hat” or uncomfortable project for people who identify as genderqueer or transgendered. If that includes you, you have three options: 1) do the project as written (remember that there are many ways to challenge your socially assigned gender); 2) analyze a recent experience in which you publicly violated gender norms (in other words, use your existing experiences rather than creating a new one); 3) come see me in office hours to talk about alternative projects.

*Class participation:* Since the readings and the class sessions in this course complement rather than repeat each other, it is extremely important that you be in class, on time and prepared, each day. Please do the day's reading before coming to class, and be prepared to discuss and ask questions about the reading assignments. You are expected to bring the day's reading materials, or detailed notes on the reading, to class each day. **Students who miss more than four class sessions without informing me in advance will automatically lose at least 50% of this portion of their grade.**

### **Course policies:**

*Students with disabilities:* If you have a disability and need my help in making this course fully accessible to you, please feel free to contact me, either in person or through the Academic Resource Center (527-5213). I'll be happy to help in whatever way I can. If you suspect you have a learning difference but have not had your suspicions confirmed, the Academic Resource Center can help you to identify that difference and figure out how to adjust your learning style accordingly. *The only thing wrong with a learning difference is an inflexible educational system.*

*Inclusive language:* Inclusive language is the use of accurate and unbiased gender terminology, and it is required in this course. It's important for a number of reasons. For one thing, language shapes how people think. When religious studies was considered to be the study of the beliefs of *man*, for instance, people (usually male scholars) tended to study male writers, male believers, male religious leaders, and so on simply because it didn't occur to them to study women as well. As a result, they had a less accurate understanding of religion than we have today. “Humanity” and “humans” are gender-inclusive terms; “man” and “men” are not.

Non-inclusive language also can be misleading, inaccurate, or vague. Traditional formal English, for example, requires that you use the singular pronoun “he” as a generic pronoun. Thus, you might say that “when a new member is initiated into the secret society, he must undergo several hours of ordeals.” People who read that sentence are left wondering whether “he” includes women or whether this secret society is for men only. The solution? When you use singular generic terms (like “one,” “anyone,” “a person,” etc.), use the combined pronoun “she or he.” Or, for a less awkward sentence, simply use a plural noun (“people,” “initiates,” “members,” etc.), because English has a non-gendered plural pronoun (“they”).

I am always happy to help you find more inclusive language for what you want to say – see me in office hours if you'd like assistance with this.

*“Late fees”*: There will be no make-ups for a missed presentation (either the masculinities presentation or the final poster session). Late quizzes will receive half credit. Late papers will lose 5 points for each day past the deadline, including weekends.

*Academic dishonesty*: Honesty is an integral part of academic learning; any form of cheating expresses gross disrespect for the efforts of your teacher, the hard work of your classmates, and your own privilege in having access to a quality education. I will not hesitate to report and pursue incidents of suspected academic dishonesty, including plagiarism and copying others’ assignments. **The maximum penalty for academic dishonesty is permanent expulsion from Whitman.**

**This class is an educational safe zone. It welcomes and respects the viewpoints of students of all sexual orientations and genders as well as all races, ethnicities, religions, social statuses, and abilities. All members of this learning community are expected to treat each other with respect and dignity, and to listen especially carefully to the voices of cultural and social minorities.**

## Course Schedule

→ **Watch for the arrows! They tell you when an assignment is due.**

### Guide to abbreviations

CL = Supplemental reading available on the class CLEo site

FT = *Feminist Theory Reader*

CT = *Colonize This!*

MA = *Manhood in America*

SB = *Sexing the Body*

QS = *Queer Studies*

### UNIT 1 – FEMINIST AND WOMEN’S STUDIES

#### **Week 1: Introductions, first-wave feminism**

Monday, 1/14: What is feminism?

No reading

Wednesday, 1/16: Beginnings – first-wave feminism

Read: Syllabus

CL – First-wave feminism

FT – Aflatun

#### **Week 2: Rise of a new wave**

Monday, 1/21: *MLK Day; Whitman symposium*

*Extra credit opportunity!*

Wednesday, 1/23: Early second-wave feminism

Read: FT – Beauvoir, Martinez, Kreps, “No More Miss America!”, Bunch,  
Combahee River Collective

#### **Week 3: Second-wave feminism**

Monday, 1/28: Theorizing in the second wave

Read: FT – Lim, Wittig, Hartsock

CL – Gilligan (pp. 24-39 and 62-63 only)

Wednesday, 1/30: Intersections and coalitions

Read: FT – hooks, Yamada, Anzaldúa, Lorde, Rich

CL – Walker

#### **Week 4: Third-wave feminism**

Monday, 2/4: Transitions

Read: FT – Delphy, Collins, Haraway, Mohanty

Wednesday, 2/6: Theorizing the third wave

Read: FT – Basu, Correa and Petchesky, Butler

Sign up for groups and dates for masculinities presentation

Thursday, 2/7: *Jackson Katz talk – Extra credit opportunity!*

Friday, 2/8: *Jackson Katz men’s workshop*

**Week 5: Feminism today**

Monday, 2/11: Living the third wave

Read: CL – Budgeon

FT – Lee

CT –López, Austin

Film: *Killing Us Softly* (dir. Jean Kilbourne, 2000, 34 min.)

**Monday, 2/11: Movie Night! *The Way Home* (dir. Shakti Butler, 1998; 92 min.)**

Tuesday, 1/12: Keith Boykin talk at 7:30 p.m. – *Extra credit opportunity!*

Wednesday, 2/13: Living the intersections

Read: CT – Group A – Horn-Miller, Mody, Darraj, Leong

Group B – Sethi, Hurdis, Salaam, Riley

**Week 6: Feminism in action**

Monday, 2/18: Presidents' Day – *no class*

Wednesday, 2/20: Feminism in Walla Walla – Panel discussion

Read: CT – Weiner-Mahfuz, Smith, Brooks, Ballí

Take-home exam #1 available in class

**UNIT 2 – MEN'S AND MASCULINITY STUDIES****Week 7: Roots of U.S. masculinities**

Monday, 2/25: Beginnings

Read: MA Introduction, Ch. 1

Film: *Tough Guise* (dir. Jackson Katz, 1999, 82 min.)

→ **Take-home exam #1 due**

Wednesday, 2/27: Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century masculinities

Read: MA Ch's 2, 3

**Week 8: Twentieth century masculinities**

Monday, 3/3: Gender shifts

Read: MA Ch's 4, 5

Wednesday, 3/5: Mid-century masculinities

Read: MA Ch's 6, 7

***SPRING BREAK: MARCH 8 THROUGH MARCH 23 – Read Valerio in entirety***

**Week 9: Contemporary masculinities**

Monday, 3/24: Masculinities and feminism

Read: MA Ch's 8, 9

Film: *Beyond Beats and Rhymes* (dir. Byron Hurt, 2006, 62 min.)

Wednesday, 3/26: Angry white men?

Read: MA Ch. 10, Epilogue

**UNIT 3 – THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER AND SEX****Week 10: How many sexes are there?**

Monday, 3/31: Sexes and genders

Read: SB Ch's 1, 2

Wednesday, 4/2: Intersexuality  
Read: SB Ch's 3, 4

**Week 11: Explaining sex and gender through biology and chemistry**

Monday, 4/7: Biology and gender  
Read: SB Ch's 5, 6

Wednesday, 4/9: Chemistry and gender  
Read: SB Ch's 7, 8 (*to p. 216 only*)  
Film: *100 Percent Woman* (dir. Karen Duthie and Diana Wilson, 2004, 60 min.)  
I will be out of town; please watch this film in class or on your own.

**Week 12: Gender, sexuality, science, and society**

Monday, 4/14: The biological and the social  
Read: Finish SB

*Tuesday, 4/15: Undergraduate conference – Extra credit opportunity!*

**UNIT 4 – LGBT AND QUEER STUDIES**

Wednesday, 4/16: The Q word – Queer lives and communities (Guest panel)  
Read: CT – Piepzna-Samarasinha  
FT – Gopinath, Aguilar-San Juan  
QS – Chase

**Week 13: Queer studies**

Monday, 4/21: Queer histories  
Read: QS – Umphrey, Duggan, Howard  
→ **Sex and gender paper due in class**  
Wednesday, 4/23: Queer identities  
Read: QS – Cohen, Hale, Brody

**Week 14: Sex, gender, and society**

Monday, 4/28: Queer publics  
Read: QS – Shah, Halberstam, Berlant and Warner  
Film: Selections from *The Brandon Teena Story* (dir. Susan Muska and Gréta Olafsdóttir, 1998, 88 min.)  
Wednesday, 4/30: Transnational sexualities  
Read: QS – Robertson, Gopinath, Boellstorff  
Film: *Shinjuku Boys* (dir. Kim Longinotto and Jano Williams, 1995; 53 min.)

**Week 15: Social construction**

Monday, 5/5: Social constructions of gender and desire  
Read: QS – Kipnis, Kulick  
Take-home exam #2 available in class

**Saturday, May 10: Take-home exam #2 due in class at 9:00 sharp. Gender Fieldwork Project poster session in our usual room from 9:00-11:00.**