

Gender Studies 100: Introduction to Gender Studies
Professor Melissa M. Wilcox
TTh 1:00-2:20, Maxey 121
Whitman College
Fall 2011

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Office hours: Tu 9:00-10:30, Th 10:30-12:00
(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:

- Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim, eds. *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. **Second edition only**. New York: Routledge, 2010.
- Daisy Hernández and Bushra Rehman, eds. *Colonize This! Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism*. New York: Seal Press, 2002.
- Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*, **Third edition only**. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality*. New York: Basic Books, 2000.
- Max Wolf Valerio, *The Testosterone Files: My Hormonal and Social Transformation from Female to Male*. New York: Seal Press, 2006.
- Nikki Sullivan, *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*. New York: New York University Press, 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 and class in ads; sports, race, and masculinity; masculinity in religion; masculinity and clothing; 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 (Tuesday, December 13, from 1:00-4:00 p.m. – *notice that this is three hours*). 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 exams 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.**

*** Please do each day's reading *before* coming to class.***

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*

QT = *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*

UNIT 1 – FEMINIST AND WOMEN'S STUDIES

Week 1: Introductions and Early Feminisms

Tuesday, 8/30: What is feminism?

No reading

Thursday, 9/1: Beginnings: First-wave feminism

Read: CL – First-wave feminism

FT – Akiko, Aflatun

Week 2: Second-wave feminism

Tuesday, 9/6: Second-wave feminist activism and its precursors

Read: Syllabus

FT – Beauvoir, Martinez, Kreps, “No More Miss America!”, Lorde, hooks

CL – Walker

Thursday, 9/8: Epistemology

Read: FT – Anzaldúa, Hartsock, Narayan

Week 3: Feminist themes

Tuesday, 9/13: Intersections and coalitions

Read: FT – Pratt, Mohanty

CL – Reagon

Thursday, 9/15: Activism

Read: FT – Feinberg, Marcus, Ong

Film: *The Shape of Water* (dir. Kum-Kum Bhavnani, 2006, 70 min.)

Week 4: Third-wave feminism

Tuesday, 9/20: Globalization

Read: FT – Salazar-Parreñas, Abu-Lughod, Sinha

Thursday, 9/22: Re-thinking gender

Read: FT – Delphy, Butler, Connell

Sign up for groups and dates for masculinities presentation

Week 5: Feminism in action

Tuesday, 9/27: Living the intersections

Read: CT – Group A – Horn-Miller, Mody, Darraj, Leong
Group B – Sethi, Hurdis, Salaam, Riley

Thursday, 9/29: Feminism in Walla Walla – Panel discussion

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

Take-home exam #1 available on CLEo at the end of class

UNIT 2 – MEN’S AND MASCULINITY STUDIES

Week 6: Roots of U.S. masculinities

Tuesday, 10/4: Beginnings

Read: MA Introduction, Ch. 1

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

Thursday, 10/6: Nineteenth- and early twentieth-century masculinities

Read: MA Ch’s 2, 3

→ **Take-home exam #1 due in your CLEo drop box by 1:00 p.m.**

Week 7: Nineteenth-century masculinities

Tuesday, 10/11: Fall Break – great time to read Valerio!

Thursday, 10/13: Gender shifts

Read: MA Ch’s 4, 5

Week 8: Twentieth-century masculinities

Tuesday, 10/18: Mid-century masculinities

Read: MA Ch’s 6, 7

Thursday, 10/20: Masculinities and feminism

Read: MA Ch’s 8, 9

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

Week 9: Contemporary masculinities

Tuesday, 10/25: Angry white men?

Read: MA Ch. 10, Epilogue

Thursday, 10/27: Sexes and genders

Read: SB Ch’s 1, 2

UNIT 3 – THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER AND SEX

Week 10: How many sexes are there?

Tuesday, 11/1: Intersexuality

Read: SB Ch’s 3, 4

Film: *XXY* (dir. Lucia Puenzo, 2008, 91 min.)

Thursday, 11/3: Gender Studies Annual Research Roundtable: Guest speakers!

Read: CL – Roundtable Papers. Please come with questions for our speakers.

Extra credit opportunity! Come to the evening Roundtable – 7:30 tonight in the Olin Faculty Lounge.

Week 11: Explaining sex and gender through biology and chemistry

Tuesday, 11/8: Biology and gender

Read: SB Ch's 5, 6

Finish film

Thursday, 11/10: 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.)

Week 12: Gender, sexuality, science, and society

Tuesday, 11/15: The biological and the social

Read: Finish SB

Start film for Thursday

Thursday, 11/17: LGBT Communities and Activism

Read: QT – Preface, Ch's 1, 2

Watch: *Stonewall Uprising* (dir. K. Davis and D. Heilbroner, 2011, 90 mins)

November 19-November 27: Thanksgiving Break!

UNIT 4 – LGBT AND QUEER STUDIES

Week 13: Queer theory – Ideas and activists

Tuesday, 11/29: Shaping queerness I

Read: QT – Ch's 3, 4

→ **Sex and gender paper due in your CLEo drop box by 1:00 p.m.**

Thursday, 12/1: Shaping queerness II

Read: QT – Ch's 5, 6

Week 14: Queer theory II – Bodies and cultures

Tuesday, 12/6: Queer sex

Read: QT – Ch's 7, 9

Thursday, 12/8: Queer readings

Read: QT – Ch. 11

CL – Pugh and Wallace

Take-home exam #2 available in class

Tuesday, December 13: Take-home exam #2 due in your CLEo drop box by 1:00 p.m.

Gender Fieldwork Project poster session in our usual room from 1:00-4:00. Notice that this is three hours!