

WGS 120.01

Women, Gender, and Society

Instructor: Dr. Stacia Kock
Office: 232 Rachel Cooper Hall
E-mail: skock@ilstu.edu
Phone: (309) 438-3286
Office Hours: Tuesday/Thursday 2:00-4:00pm or by appointment

Accessibility Statement: Any student needing to arrange a reasonable accommodation for a documented disability should contact Disability Concerns at 350 Fell Hall, (309) 438-5853, or visit the website at www.disabilityconcerns.illinoisstate.edu.

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the interdisciplinary scholarship of Women's and Gender Studies (WGS). As such, it adheres strongly to the overall mission statement of ILSTU's Women's and Gender Studies Program:

A strong and viable women's and gender studies program is essential to the University's mission to provide a high-quality liberal arts education. Our undergraduate minor and graduate certificate programs enhance any major and prepare students to think critically about gender and its intersections as they become global citizens who value lifelong learning and social justice.

This course is designed to give students with diverse backgrounds and disciplines a basic understanding of the debates and perspectives discussed in the field of WGS as well as the larger theoretical scope of feminism. The course examines how systems of gender shape societies around the world; thus, the course draws on both US and global perspectives. Further, the course looks at how individual and collective actions transform the gendered systems of a society; as a result, the course critically addresses various social activist responses to gender issues from both historical and contemporary timeframes.

The class foregrounds concepts of gender, race, class, and sexuality, and addresses the materiality of various oppressions as they intersect with critical areas of identity and thought. The class incorporates diverse sources such as personal narratives, research studies, and films to learn how to analyze forces that shape women and men's lives. The course seeks answers to questions such as: What is gender? What is feminism and is it still relevant today? How are issues of femininity, masculinity, and sexuality constructed and defined differently across institutions and cultures?

This course counts for the WGS Minor: The minor in Women's and Gender Studies enhances any undergraduate major by integrating a working knowledge of gender issues with the student's field(s) of study. The **21 credit hours required for the minor** are drawn from diverse academic disciplines. For more information please contact our WGS advisor Dr. Stacia Kock, or visit our webpage: <http://wgs.illinoisstate.edu/academics/undergrad/>

Course Objectives:

Upon the successful completion of this course, students will have acquired introductory knowledge of:

- 1) Core concepts of the Women's and Gender Studies discipline and of basic feminist literature in the U.S. and other global contexts.
- 2) The ways in which social institutions and meanings about gender, race, class, and sexuality mutually inform one another
- 3) The range of feminist perspectives related to concepts including: power, privilege, oppression, and intersectionality
- 4) How to develop and incorporate a critical interdisciplinary framework in discussions, writing, and reading.

Required Texts:

Feminist Frontiers, edited by Verta Taylor, Nancy Whittier, and Leila Rupp (FF)
Additional Readings located on ReggieNet (RN)

Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation 20%
Short Answer Response Essays 15% each – 30% total
Social Justice Group Project 15%
Midterm Exam 15%
Final Exam 20%

Attendance and Participation – 20%

Attendance is critical to developing enriched class discussions; therefore, students should plan on attending class ready to discuss the assigned readings. Students are allowed two “freebie” absences for which they do not need to notify me of the missed class. Any absence after that will result in a loss of 1 point off your total participation grade. Attendance will be taken at the start of class. Those entering class after the first 10 minutes will not be recognized as present and will be marked as absent; therefore, it is in your best interest to arrive **ON TIME**. If a student is going to be late due to a scheduling conflict, they should notify me at least 2 hour prior to class.

Part of active class participation includes bringing the assigned readings with you, coming to class ready to discuss those assigned readings, and engaging in class discussion. In addition, throughout the semester I may assign small, informal tasks or writing assignments for you to complete and points from these completed activities will be factored into the final participation grade and cannot be made-up. Pop quizzes also may be administered throughout the semester as a means to ensure completion of assigned readings and understanding of course concepts. Quiz points will be factored into the final participation grade. Points from pop quizzes cannot be made-up, therefore students who are absent on a quiz day must try and make-up lost points from extra participation on future class meetings.

Lastly, as a way to facilitate active participation in the course, students are asked to respond to instructor-posted prompts each week on our course ReggieNet page. Sometimes the prompts will ask that you respond to a specific question about the course topic, while other prompts may ask that you pose your own question about an assigned text. Engagement on the ReggieNet page is an expected component of your class participation; thus, failure to demonstrate engaged participation will result in a loss of points from your overall participation grade.

Short Answer Response Essays – 15% each – total of 30%

Students are required to respond to **2** out of the **3** Short-Answer Response (SAR) prompts listed in the syllabus. For each paper, please write a 2-4 page response (unless otherwise prompted) that concisely and clearly articulates your informed opinion on the topic-matter. Students should follow the grading rubric (see **Appendix A**) for specific detail about the assignment.

Social Justice Group Project – 15%

An integral part of Women's and Gender Studies is the connection of theory to praxis. Much of what is discussed throughout the semester connects in some way to a social justice issue/initiative. In order to demonstrate an understanding of WGS's connection to social justice issues, students will complete a Social Justice Group Project. During week 9, students will be divided into small groups, select a WGS-relevant social justice issue, and work to create a feasible initiative/project/event on the issue for the ISU campus community. Students should work as a collective to divide responsibilities, find resources, and create relevant materials for the initiative/project/event to present to the class (materials may include advertisements, sample brochures, sample buttons/stickers, fact sheets, etc.). Groups will then "pitch" their project proposal to the class attempting to garner interest and support for the project as if it were an actual campus event. In addition, individual group members will turn in a 2-3 page reflection on their experience working with the group project. More specific information about the project and paper will be distributed during week 9.

Midterm Exam – 15%

During week 6, students will complete a midterm exams consisting of a combination of a matching section, multiple choice, and short answer questions. Students with documented need for additional time must speak with me at least one week in advance of the exam to coordinate with Disability Concerns.

Final Exam – 20%

During finals week, students will complete a comprehensive final exam covering all major concepts/terms introduced during the semester. The exam will consist of a combination of multiple choice, short answer, and an essay question. Students with documented need for additional time must speak with me at least one week in advance of the exam to coordinate with Disability Concerns.

Important Course Information

Grading Scale:

Students will earn their grade based on the following grading system:

A (90-100%) B (80-89.9%) C (70-79.9%) D (60-69.9%) F (59.99% - below)

Discussion Guidelines:

Discussions in this class will often deal with personal and sensitive material. All students are reminded to treat the opinions of others with respect and to rely on a critical WGS lens when framing and presenting their points. While we will learn that the personal can be political, students should practice *concise* story sharing and keep the discussion of personal experiences connected to class texts, lecture, etc. I reserve the right to terminate discussion should questions/comments become disruptive in nature. Students are encouraged to visit my office hours to discuss any topic in further detail and also encouraged to continue discussions with peers outside of the class space.

Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated in the classroom. Disruptive behavior includes arriving late to class, sleeping, reading newspapers or other non-class related texts including social media, emails, text messages, etc. Repetitive and serious disruptive behavior (e.g. fighting, using profanity, personal or physical threats or insults, damaging property) may result in your removal from class in accordance with the policies and procedures outlined in the ISU's *Code of Student Conduct* and in consultation with *Community Rights and Responsibilities* in the Dean of Student's Office.

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student's placement of his or her name on any academic exercise shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student's own thought, effort, and study. Students who have questions regarding issues of academic dishonesty should refer to the University regulation which outlines unacceptable behaviors in academic matters. It is the student's and faculty's responsibility to uphold the principles of this course. Academic Integrity is required of you the student, and myself the instructor. Academic Integrity should be used in preparation of this course, in class time, regarding exams, and with regarding to written assignments.

Cheating, plagiarism and any other form of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Any evidence of plagiarism will result in a failing grade on that assignment as well as filed paperwork with Community Rights and Responsibilities. Please refer to the Code of Student Conduct by which all students are expected to abide.

Whether intentional or not, improper use of materials can be considered a violation of the academic honesty. If you are unsure as to what is permissible, please contact me. You may also see the "*Examples of Academic Dishonesty*" list on our course ReggieNet page for more information.

ReggieNet Usage:

This course utilizes an assigned course page on ReggieNet to convey updated information about the course schedule, materials, and discussion forums. Students should check the course page *at minimum* once a week to:

1. Access assigned readings (marked as RN) for class (located under the *Resources and Materials* tab)
2. Check for updates about any changes to the course schedule, canceled classes, etc.
3. Receive information about events on campus that may be of interest to your WGS learning process
4. Respond to posted discussion prompts (located under the *Discussions* tab)

Support Services:

The **Julia N. Visor Academic Center**, a division of University College, provides the following *free* services for students:

- Tutoring in a variety of academic subject areas, including support for many of the courses in the Inner Core of the General Education program.
- One-on-one writing assistance to anyone in the University community. Appointments can take place in the Visor Center or on Skype.
- Study skills assistance individually and in small groups, as well as study skills workshops, for students who want to improve their ability to achieve academic success.
- A variety of academic support programs targeted to help students achieve their full academic potential.

The center is located at Vrooman 012 (between Manchester and Hewett dorms). They can be reached by phone at (309) 438-7100 or by visiting their website at www.UniversityCollege.IllinoisState.edu/tutoring.

Mental Health Resources: Life at college can get very complicated. Students sometimes feel overwhelmed, lost, experience anxiety or depression, struggle with relationship difficulties or diminished self-esteem. However, many of these issues can be effectively addressed with a little help. Student Counseling Services (SCS) helps students cope with difficult emotions and life stressors. Student Counseling Services is staffed by experienced, professional psychologists and counselors who are attuned to the needs of college students. The services are FREE and completely confidential. Find out more at www.counseling.illinoisstate.edu or by calling (309) 438-3655.

Sexual Assault Survivor's Resources: The University is committed to both supporting students' well-being and safety and acting to ensure the safety of our campus community. All university faculty and staff are mandated by Federal law to report acts of sexual violence/assault, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking and sexual harassment so the University can respond and investigate. Only Student Counseling Services staff and the university psychiatrist are not required to report. Victims of such incidents are free to choose their level of involvement in University and/or police investigations. There is an extensive network of support resources for survivors of such incidents; talking with someone about what happened aids recovery and adjustment.

Reporting options:

- ISU Police 911 or (309) 438-8631
- Non-criminal reporting options: Equal Opportunity Office (309) 438-3383. Or EqualOpportunity.IllinoisState.edu
- Sexual Assault Prevention and Survivor Services (Student Counseling Services): (309) 438-3655 or counseling.illinoisstate.edu (free and confidential).

Other Class Policies:

General Classroom Etiquette: It is inappropriate to **tape/record** classroom activity unless previously agreed upon by the instructor. **Laptop** use is allowed for note-taking or PDF access, but must not interfere with class discussions or the learning of other students. Please see the **Discussion Guidelines** above for more information about the course policy on electronics usage.

Readings: Students are expected to have copies of each required reading to class in order to facilitate discussion. Students may bring hard copies of the text, or have electronic copies uploaded on their laptop or tablet. Students who do not bring copies of the assigned reading to class are subject to point penalty from their participation grade.

Schedule Conflicts: Students must notify me as soon as possible about any University-recognized scheduling conflicts. Only those students who notify me in advance will have the opportunity to reschedule assignments/class discussions.

WGS 120.01 Schedule and Assignments

FF= Feminist Frontiers

RN = ReggieNet

Note: Please come to class prepared to discuss the reading listed for that day.

*** I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus at any time, if the need arises.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Reading Due</u>	<u>Assignment Due</u>
Tuesday, 1/13	Introduction to course		
Thursday, 1/15	Defining WGS and Feminism	FF – Part I: Introduction RN – bell hooks	
Tuesday, 1/20	Intersectionality and Identity	FF – Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill (p. 70)	
Thursday, 1/22	Intersectionality and Identity	FF – Audre Lorde (p. 22) FF – Peggy McIntosh (p. 11)	
Tuesday, 1/27	Gender and Sex Differences	FF – Judith Lorber (p. 33) RN – Julia Serano (optional)	
Thursday, 1/29	Gender and Sex Differences	RN – Anne Fausto-Sterling	
Tuesday, 2/3	Sexualities and Heteronormativity	FF – Karin Martin and Emily Kazyak (p. 153)	
Thursday, 2/5	Sexualities and Heteronormativity	RN – Suzanne Pharr	
Tuesday, 2/10	Gender Socialization	FF – Part II: Gender, Culture and Socialization (p. 99) RN – Shira Tarrant	
Thursday, 2/12	Gender Socialization	RN – Audrey Bilger	SAR Option #1 Due

Tuesday, 2/17	Midterm Exam		MIDTERM EXAM!
Thursday, 2/19	The Body and Body Politics	RN: Leah Laskshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha	
Tuesday, 2/24	The Body and Body Politics	FF – Becky Wangsgaard Thompson (p. 340)	
Thursday, 2/26	The Body and Body Politics	FF – Josee Johnston and Judith Taylor (p. 115)	
Tuesday, 3/3	The Body and Body Politics	FF – Ingrid Banks (p. 142)	
Thursday, 3/5	International Women’s Day	Reading TBA	SAR Option #2 Due
	SPRING	BREAK!!	
Tuesday, 3/17	Gendered and Sexual Violence	RN – Latoya Peterson	
Thursday, 3/19	Gendered and Sexual Violence	FF – N. Tatiana Masters (p. 398)	
Tuesday, 3/24	Gendered and Sexual Violence	FF – Kimberle Crenshaw (p. 414)	
Thursday, 3/26	Gendered and Sexual Violence	Reading TBA	
Tuesday, 3/31	Gender and Work	FF – Christine Bose and Rachel Bridges Whaley (p. 197)	

Thursday, 4/2	Gender and Work	FF – Miliann Kang (p. 207)	SAR Option #3 Due
Tuesday, 4/7	Group Work Day		Come to class prepared to work on your group presentation
Thursday, 4/9	Political Exclusion	RN – Drude Dahlerup	
Tuesday, 4/14	Reproductive Rights	FF – Andrea Smith (p. 372)	
Thursday, 4/16	Reproductive Rights	FF – France Winddance Twine (p. 365)	
Tuesday, 4/21	Group Presentations		
Thursday, 4/23	Group Presentations		
Tuesday, 4/28	Moving Forward	FF – Pamela Aronson (p. 517) FF – Moya Bailey and Alexis Pauline Gumbs (p. 553)	
Thursday, 4/30	Final Exam Review		Come to class prepared to review materials for the final exam

FINAL EXAM SCHEDULED FOR _____

Appendix A – Short Answer Response Essays

Assignment Details and Grading Rubric

Your short-answer response essays are a means for you to integrate yourself in conversation with the authors, texts, and class discussion. While they are scholarly writing insofar as they are graded according to the thoughtfulness of your response and the connections you make to the class texts, they also allow you space to reflect your own opinions, ideas, concerns, revelations about the subject material. There is no right or wrong “answer” for these response essays, and each student is entitled to express their opinion on the subject at hand. Make sure, though, to place your opinion in conversation with our class texts, discussion, lecture; in other words, students should avoid blanket statements like “I believe... I think...” and instead try to thoughtfully construct your opinion piece as a scholarly response to the specific topic.

Students are required to cite/reference at least one course reading/film as evidence to support their response. Students are also encouraged to use course discussions, other class readings, and outside sources (relevant news articles, pop culture references, other scholarly texts) as additional evidence. **Please note: all** cited materials must be properly referenced in either footnotes or a works cited page, using either MLA, Chicago, or APA style.

Essays should be saved as a word document and uploaded to the course ReggieNet page no later than the start of class on the listed due-date (so if the paper says it is due on Tuesday, 02/03, then you should upload it to ReggieNet no later than 12:35pm on the 3rd). Any paper uploaded after 12:35pm will be marked as late by -1 points and continue to be penalized by -1 point for each additional day it is late.

The 2-4 page short-answer response essays will be graded according to three main criteria: 1) depth and thoughtfulness of response content; 2) incorporation of class texts as evidence including explicit reference to at least one class text/film; and 3) writing mechanics (including grammar, organization, citations). In order to receive full points in each section, students must demonstrate an outstanding effort in developing and presenting their opinion response.

1) Thoughtfulness of response content (10 points)

- a. The overall thesis and main points of argument are clear.
- b. Author presents opinion in concise fashion (not overly wordy)
- c. Paper features content that demonstrates deeper processing of issue than superficial commentary. Paper features the development of a critical, thoughtful WGS lens.

2) Link to class texts, authors, discussions (10 points)

- a. Student clearly informs their opinion with class authors, films, and discussions by explicitly referencing *at least one* course reading/film in their paper.
- b. Reference to course material goes beyond simply mentioning the author and instead demonstrates ability to converse and respond to author’s points in relation to student’s own opinion.

3) Writing Mechanics and Structure (5 points)

- a. Sentences contain no grammatical errors or spelling issues
- b. Paper is visible organized and clearly presented
- c. Paper uses plain language so all audience could comprehend author’s argument. Paper avoids overreliance on simple 1st person language like “I believe”, “In my opinion”, etc.
- d. Student correctly and consistently cites authors/films from class using a citation style of their choice.

SAR Essay Options and Due-Dates

SAR Option #1:

For this paper, discuss the various ways in which you “see” and “do” gender in your daily life. How does gender fit in your daily life and how do you see both yourself and others “doing” gender on a daily basis? Where do you think learned such behavior (i.e.: what influences/d your understanding of gender)? Lastly, what do your observations tell us about gender as a way of categorizing society? This paper is due by 12:35pm on Thursday, 2/12.

SAR Option #2:

For this paper, please answer the following question: “what bodies matter and why?” You might consider explaining how we know which bodies are preferred and which are not, or explain where we see examples of acceptance/rejection of specific bodies. Keep in mind that while you should use class discussion and texts to help inform your response, your paper should present an *original* argument. This paper is due by 12:35pm on Thursday, 3/05.

SAR Option #3:

For this paper, please explain why gendered and/or sexual violence remains such a large problem in society today. Here you can reflect on some of the reasons we explored in class and explain if you agree or disagree with any of those reasons, or you may offer up your own explanation. Regardless, make sure that your response is grounded in a critical WGS framework. This paper is due by 12:35pm on Thursday, 4/02.