

**WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES 112**  
**WOMEN IN SOCIETY**

**BULLETIN INFORMATION**

WGST 112 – Women in Society (3 credit hrs)

**Course Description:**

A social science perspective of women in psychological, sociological, historical, anthropological, economic, and political contexts; the changing roles, images, and institutions.

**SAMPLE COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course is an introduction to women's and gender studies through the disciplines of social sciences, offering an understanding of gender in psychological, sociological, historical, anthropological, economic, and political contexts.

Feminism and gender studies will provide the fundamental framework for understanding personal and social values, ethical decision-making, and social responsibility. The course will be grounded in feminist analysis as both a conceptual framework and as an interdisciplinary methodology.

The course will question individual and societal values and concepts of social responsibility by examining the changing roles, images, and institutions that define and reinforce our understandings of gender both nationally and globally. It will also examine the intersection of gender with race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and other markers of social identity and difference. The course will ask you to analyze how an interdisciplinary feminist approach conceptualizes the roles of women and men in society, as those roles are manifested in communities as well as individual lives.

**ITEMIZED LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**Upon successful completion of WGST 112, students will be able to:**

1. Describe key events in the history of the feminist movement in the United States.
2. Describe feminist methodology as a social science and social justice methodology.
3. Identify ways in which diversity (the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality and other markers of social identity and difference) function in societies, particularly in relation to systems of oppression and privilege.
4. Recognize and apply the values, norms and ideals that guide feminist interpretations of social, ethical and moral issues (such as work, body image, or sexuality).
5. Demonstrate critical thinking skills applied to global and local issues such as universal suffrage, gender equity and racial equality, and reproductive rights.
6. Demonstrate how feminist social practices related to responsibility, accountability, and justice are oriented toward the development of ethical decision making and practice in their lives and the lives of others.
7. Develop feminist strategies for creating a more just and equitable society on both a national and global level.

## **SAMPLE REQUIRED TEXTS/SUGGESTED READINGS/MATERIALS**

1. *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions*, 5th Edition – Susan M. Shaw, Janet Lee (2004)
2. *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting By In America* – Barbara Ehrenreich (2002)
3. Reader, available at Universal Copies

## **SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS AND/OR EXAMS**

1. **Exams:** There will be two exams and a final exam. The final exam is not cumulative.
2. **Analysis Papers:** There will be three short analysis papers.  
Paper questions:
  - a. Inscribing Gender on the Body – due Day 20  
How does the dominant ideology of our culture define beauty?  
How are these definitions enforced?  
How do these definitions threaten women in their bodies?  
How can women resist the beauty ideal?
  - b. Women's Work Inside/Outside the Home – due Day 22  
How does women's unpaid labor in the home maintain systems of oppression?  
Why has legislation requiring equal pay and prohibiting discrimination failed to bring about equality for women in the workforce?
  - c. Activism, Change, and Feminist Futures – due Day 25  
In your experience, are young women "afraid of feminism"? Why or why not?  
What do you think is the appropriate role for men in feminism? Why?  
What two elements of the "Day Without Feminism" (article in Reader) do you think are the most important to achieve? Why? What are some steps that could be taken to achieve them? (Answer all 3 questions)
3. **Worksheets:** For some of the readings and films, there will also be worksheets that will require you both to describe specific material and/or to connect that material to our class discussions.

## **SAMPLE COURSE OUTLINE WITH TIMELINE OF TOPICS, READINGS/ ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS/PROJECTS**

**Day 1** Introduction to course

**Day 2** Introduction to feminist methodology: social science and social justice  
*Readings on methodology:* "Strong Objectivity and Socially Situated Knowledge" (1991), Sandra Harding; and "Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology" (1974/2004), Dorothy Smith [both in course reader]

### ***Segment One: History of the Feminist Movement in America***

**Day 3** Women and Men before the First Wave; The First Wave: Enlightenment Liberal Feminism; The Suffrage Movement  
*Readings:* WVFV Chapter One, pages 6-22 and Article 2 (page 25), Article 85 (page 570)

**Day 4** The First Wave: Enlightenment Liberal Feminism (continued)

- Readings:* "Solitude of Self," Elizabeth Cady Stanton [reader] and "Declaration of Sentiments" [reader]  
 In-Class Film: *Seneca Reflections* [reader worksheet]
- Day 5** The First Wave: Women's Religious Oppression; Challenges from Excluded Women's Rights  
*Readings:* WVFV Article 92 (p. 609), "The Antislavery Movement and Women's Rights" [reader]  
 In-Class Film: *Votes for Women*
- Day 6** In Between the Waves: The Early Birth Control Movement in America  
*Readings:* WVFV Activist Profile: Margaret Sanger (p. 295), Article 46 (p. 310); "Family Limitation," Margaret Sanger (1917) [reader]
- Day 7** The Second Wave of Feminist Movement in America  
*Readings:* WVFV Chapter One, pages 1-6, Historical Moment: The Feminine Mystique (p. 367), WVFV: Articles 1,2 (pp. 23-27); *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan excerpt [reader]
- Day 8** The Second Wave of Feminist Movement in America (continued)  
 In-Class Film: *The Pill* [reader worksheet]
- Day 9** The Third Wave of Feminist Movement in America  
*Readings:* WVFV, p. 12, Article 106 (pp. 673-674)
- Day 10** Patriarchy and Inequalities (and review of methodology)  
*Readings:* "Stone by Stone," Carol Lee Flinders [reader]  
 Exam Review
- Day 11** **Exam #1**
- Segment Two: Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality – A Conceptual Framework***
- Day 12** A Framework for Understanding Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality (intersectional analysis)  
*Reading:* WVFV Chapter 2, pages 42-59 and Articles 9, 17 (Disability), 90 (Rethinking Women and the Afghan Conflict)
- Day 13** Race  
*Readings:* WVFV Articles 13, 14, 40  
 In-Class Film: *Race: The Power of Illusion*
- Day 14** Sexuality  
*Readings:* WVFV Chapter 4, pages 163-180 and articles 29, 31, 34  
 In-Class Film: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk (part 1)
- Day 15** Sexuality (continued)

In-Class Film: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk (part 2)

**Day 16** Class

*Readings:* WVFV Article 15; “Last Shame in America” [reader]  
In-Class Film: *Corridor of Shame*

**Day 17** Gender

*Readings:* WVFV Chapter 3, pages 105-120, Articles 19, 20

**Day 18** Global and Local

*Readings:* WVFV articles 18 (Report from the Bahamas), 44 (China), 49 (A Global Health Imperative)  
Exam Review

**Day 19** Exam #2

***Segment Three: Thinking Key Issues, Working to Create a Just Society—Feminism in the World***

**Day 20** Inscribing Gender on the Body

*Readings:* WVFV Chapter 5, pages 213-233, Articles 36, 37, 41  
In-Class Film: Killing Us Softly III (Jean Kilbourne)

**Analysis Paper #1 DUE**

**Day 21** Resisting Violence Against Women

*Readings:* WVFV Chapter 10, ALL (intro and articles)

**Day 22** Creating and Confronting Culture

*Readings:* WVFV Chapter 9, ALL (intro and articles)

In-Class Film: *bell hooks*

**Analysis Paper #2 DUE**

**Day 23** Women’s Work Inside and Outside the Home

*Readings:* WVFV Chapter 8

In-Class Film: *The Motherhood Manifesto*

**Day 24** Women’s Work (continued)

Film discussion and in-class activity

**Day 25** Activism, Change, and Feminist Futures

*Readings:* WVFV Chapter 13 ALL (intro and articles)

**Analysis Paper #3 DUE**

**Day 26** Discussion of Barbara Ehrenreich’s *Nickel and Dimed*

**Day 27** Barbara Ehrenreich (continued)

**Day 28** Exam Review

Final exam: according to University exam schedule