Department of Women’s and Gender Studies

Fall 2015

Undergraduate Course Offerings
The way in which we understand womanhood has been structured by the way our society defines and explains womanhood. In this course, we will explain historical definitions of womanhood, and we will analyze how women have performed womanhood over time.

This course reexamines U.S. History through the lived experiences of women from the late 1800s to the present, providing alternate conceptions of what and who constitutes “the U.S.,” and thus “U.S. history.” While we will identify common experiences between different groups of women, we will also notice the differences and divisions among them. We will highlight how women’s identities cannot be separated along lines of gender, race, and class, but intersect to form unique and distinctive experiences.

We use novels and autobiographies, creative works by diverse women, and critical works to support the textbook for this course.

We further investigate how a variety of women have created and responded to shifting and contested cultural, political, and social discourses and events. Positioning ourselves as both students and scholars, we link the historical journey of American women to current social and political conditions surrounding contemporary experiences.

This course meets the FKL requirements for human historical context and humanities.
Our understanding of the past is transformed when considered through women’s experiences. This course reexamines U.S. History through the lived experiences of women from the late 1800s to the present, providing alternate conceptions of what and whom constitutes “the U.S.,” and thus “U.S. history.” While we will identify common experiences between different groups of women, we will also notice the differences and divisions among them. We will highlight how women’s identities cannot be separated along lines of gender, race, and class, but intersect to form unique and distinctive experiences.

We use novels and autobiographies, like Shanghai Girls and The Sweeter the Juice; films, like La Operación and The Pill; as well as poetry, websites, letters, speeches, and even Dr. Seuss comics to examine: Woman Suffrage, Florida Women Making Change, Angel Island Immigration Experiences, Chinese California, Japanese American Internment, Reproductive Injustice, Hawaiian Sovereignty and Colonization, Queering Native America, Mixed Race Inheritance and Self-Making, and September 11th.

We further investigate how a variety of women have created and responded to shifting and contested cultural, political, and social discourses and events. Positioning ourselves as both students and scholars, we link the historical journey of American women to current social and political conditions surrounding contemporary experiences, like voter identification mandates, immigration debates, and the impact of 9/11.

This course meets the FKL requirements for human historical context and humanities.
Let’s talk about sex!

Mainstream America is awash in mixed and often conflicting messages about sex. On one hand we are bombarded by sexually explicit imagery, yet there is a conspiracy of silence when it comes to having frank, honest discussions about sex. In this class we will begin to delve into and pull apart notions about sex and gender from historical, social, cultural, political, and biological perspectives in an effort to create a holistic and interdisciplinary paradigm that more accurately encompasses human experience.

We will touch on topics such as: sexual response, double standards, gender vs. sex, gender roles, masculinity, heteronormativity, gender non-conforming, birth control, sexually transmitted infections, sexy safer sex, sexual expression and variation, and sexual violence/coercion. In addition to spirited discussions, there will be in-class activities, role playing, and videos that will have you hungry for more!

Think of it as the sex education class that you only wish you would have taken in high school… only a lot more fun and thought-provoking! Upon completion, students will have the tools and knowledge necessary to make informed choices about their sexual health. This class also meets the FKL requirement for Social and Behavioral Science.

Gender and sex and power... Oh my!

In this course we develop critical frameworks for thinking about sex, gender, and sexuality. What do these words mean? Are these things “natural” or might they vary by person and time and place? Do our go-to ideas about sex, gender, and sexuality fit all experiences? What other ways of thinking about sex, gender, and sexuality exist – in our culture and in other cultures? Do sex, gender, and sexual orientation matter or are they “just human?” What roles have feminist movements and gender justice movements played in advancing these questions? And what do we make of the backlash that says “feminists are man-haters” or that “real men don’t cry?” In what ways do gender norms control us all?

We also think about the ways that sex, gender, and sexual orientation are constructed and institutionalized – in our friendships and love lives, in our families and kin networks, in our schools and workplaces, in pop culture and politics, and in our culture more generally. Among the issues we might explore are the ongoing debates concerning public and private, the value of feminism and gender justice movements, equality and difference, and the intersection of gender with other axes of identity like class, religion, and race. This course is foundational if you’re going into education, medicine, law, social welfare, journalism, parenthood, or any other career that involves…

Wait for it…! Wait for it…! Working with humans! Why? Because all humans have some relationship to sex, gender, and sexual orientation themselves and in our society. This course draws heavily on the notions that the personal is political and that the political is personal, connecting theory and academic thinking with “real life” and requiring that students become adept at doing the same.

This course meets the FKL requirement for social and behavioral science.
We are our environments. We concurrently create, consume, and are consumed by the images and messages about difference that bombard us every day. In Women, Environment, and Gender, students excavate and analyze their individual and collective experiences of sex, gender, race, socioeconomic status, sexuality, dis/able-bodiedness, age, and nationality in and through the lenses of the very environments we create and perpetuate. Students accomplish this all while having this multisensory, multimedia 100% online class count as an Exit Requirement Major Works, an FKL Natural Science (NS) Life Science core, and/or an Environmental Policy Concentration course!

In WST 3324, students will learn course content ranging from feminist and critical race theories to environmental and socioeconomic oriented scholarship, and from historically situated narratives to literature centered on difference, and apply it to their life experiences. Through these reflective and reflexive applications, students will illustrate in their course assignments how theory and practice inextricably coalesce in Women’s and Gender Studies. This 100% online learning experience will give students the rare opportunity to discover strategies of resistance and subversion while gaining tools that will empower us to positively change our environments, to create a brighter 21st century for all. Join us on this journey of a lifetime!
Oral history is a primary method for women’s and gender studies and ethnic studies that contests historical silences and racist, patriarchal, homophobic, and capitalist othering of various communities. Oral historians, as community activists, create spaces in which knowledge production, history, education, and self are reclaimed and created through the relationship between lived experience, memory, and voice.

This course will provide a comprehensive introduction to the theories, methods, ethics, practices, and presentations of oral history through documents in various media, including the written, oral, aural, visual, spatial, and performed. In this class we will address and analyze others’ oral histories through readings and class discussions, as well as produce our own oral history projects. Texts range from the WPA slave narratives, to queer Latin@ San Francisco histories, to using oral history in classrooms, museums, and prisons.

Course objectives include: understanding the role of oral history in women’s, LGBTQ, and people of color histories and communities; considering the politics and ethics of conducting oral histories; addressing the uses and presentations of oral history; and producing and sharing a responsible and reflexive oral history project.
What do women want and need to be fully engaged citizens of our world? If your answer to this question is social justice, or the opportunity to be treated as peers in all aspects of social life, then this is the class for you. More importantly, if you want to talk about strategies to create social justice for women transnationally, welcome to the conversation!

All of the assignments and the materials in the course address two goals: recognizing and contextualizing women’s experiences of social injustice cross-nationally, and exploring local, transnational, and global efforts to enhance social justice for women. To do this we analyze the effects of patriarchy, fundamentalism and global capitalism on girls’ and women’s lives through a critical read of insider and journalistic accounts from Afghanistan, Israel and China, such as *The Underground Girls of Kabul*. We then turn to women’s experiences in other locales, conducting an exploration of health inequalities, educational (mis)opportunities, family rights, reproductive justice, and violence and trafficking. Our readings, films and presenters will take us around the globe to consider the complexities and realities of women’s existence, survival, empowerment, and success, and then we’ll return to the United States to query this nation’s role in women’s global social justice. Assignments in the class include weekly essays (instead of a research paper), a take-home final exam, and a culminating full-class social justice activity that will bring together our understandings of the limitations and potentialities of social justice, for women.
Writing by women of color is one of the primary ways that formerly marginalized and silenced voices find space for public expression. Whether women took to diaries, journals, scraps of paper, magazines, poetry, or the novel, women have taken up their pens to write and allow readers of all ages to enter into the sacred space of thought-sharing.

In this course, we will celebrate the opportunity for women to find their literary voices in diverse, intriguing, and enlightening forms.

Using novels by Louise Erdrich, NoViolet Bulawayo, Chimamanda Adichie, Sandra Cisneros, Toni Morrison, and Edwidge Danticat, we will read, discuss, and analyze the writing of women of color as a form of active resistance to hegemony, racism, sexism, and silencing. Some of the questions we will explore include, what are the similarities between women of different ages, classes, and ethnic backgrounds, how is writing a form of liberation, and what images do female writers offer of their experiences. This course is largely discussion-based, so diverse voices are welcome to join the conversation.

As we explore familiar and unfamiliar voices, there will be opportunities for strengthening the connection between what we read, how we feel, and how we understand the world in which we live. There will be moments of amusement, but also moments of profound sadness, as we trace the journeys of women over time, space, and place.

This course satisfies the exit FKL and Gordon Rule requirements.
How are social inequalities manifest in women’s health? What roles do race, class, sexual orientation, or geography play in how we manage healthcare? How does gender matter when we are working through questions of genetic testing? How do corporate profits influence our treatment of cancer, pregnancy, and breast-feeding?

WST 4320: Politics and Issues in Women’s Health addresses these questions and more as we examine the system of healthcare in the United States, and look at issues of women’s health from a global perspective. We will examine issues of health in the workplace (including when the workplace is the home), as well as debates over whether we should be concerned about an “obesity epidemic” or whether we should work toward fat acceptance. We will work to understand the ways that domestic violence and rape are health issues, and look at the treatment of lesbians and transgendered people in the healthcare system. We will look at how our culture treats aging women (who make up a majority of the aged population), investigate the culture of cosmetic surgery, and examine the ugly facts about dangerous beauty products.

This course fulfills the University FKL requirement in Social and Behavioral Sciences Core Courses, counts toward the Social and Behavioral Health Sciences Concentration in the Health Sciences major, and counts toward both the major and minor in Women’s and Gender Studies.
Feminism refers not only to a political movement for equality and justice, but also to a dynamic range of critical perspectives—or theories—that provide new ways of understanding the world. In this course we will explore key contributions in the field of contemporary feminist theory. Topics covered will include: sex/gender; “women” as a category of analysis; intersectionality; standpoint epistemology; postcolonial and transnational feminist frameworks; feminist media studies; queer theory; performativity; intersex and transgender; and feminist critiques of science, medicine, global capitalism, and popular culture. Throughout the course, we will also examine the relationship between feminist theory, activism, and politics.
As a WGS major, you encounter so many different ideas and concepts that it can be difficult to bring it all together. In Capstone we will do just that -- pool our individual WGS strengths and backgrounds into a community whole and puzzle out what it all means for us as individuals and as a collective -- in creative, academic, queer, feminist, and other ways.

We'll explore quandaries like:

- Am I selling out if I major in WGS and then take a “regular job” that doesn’t have much to do with WGS?
- What if I’m applying for a job and I think my feminist work might count against me?
- How can I enact my feminist, queer, and progressive principles in my daily life, like in a real way?
- I really like the idea that “the master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house” but jeez… I got bills to pay!
- How exactly does intersectionality or positionality or self-reflexivity or any of those other WGS concepts apply when I’m graduated and trying to create a post-college life?!

We’ll consider these and other questions through hands-on approaches that challenge traditional patriarchal ways of thinking and life-planning. We’ll touch base with feminists, queers, and others who are “living their ethics” in a variety of venues. In addition we’ll do hands-on activities to build our "professional portfolios" -- fancy talk for job application letters, resumes, and statements that you can use in job, grant, and graduate school applications.

Be prepared for some intense and intensive discussions and life-prep!
What the heck is an internship?!

- Do you ever wonder, "What will I do with a WGS degree?!"
- Do you want some real world experience putting your WGS knowledge into action?
- Do you want a rockin’ resume when you start applying for jobs or graduate school?

A WGS Internship is your chance to connect your educational experiences with feminism and social justice in a professional business and non-profit environment beyond the classroom. Um. Okay. What does that mean?

It means -- You’ll work on-site with a local organization for the entire semester -- earning 1-3 hours of academic credit that count toward your degree and toward graduation (oh yeah!), contributing to the success of our communities (um social justice for the win!), and gaining valuable skills for your own career (skills to pay the bills!) -- all within the context of a feminist and social justice framework. Yeah, that's right! REAL WORLD experience with a FEMINIST flavor!

And best of all, the internship is keyed to YOUR specific career interests and skills, with Dr. Wendland helping you along the way to sort your internship experiences into valuable job skills. And don't worry! A moment of frustration can become a key skill on your resume. If you find out that "Ew, yeah... I don't like working with children after all," then that helps us discuss your job search. Regular check-in chats with Dr. Wendland keep the whole experience focused on your success.

WGS Interns have made connections with important Florida politicians, lobbied the state legislature, assisted with ACA “Obamacare” education, written sex-positive blogs, become trained self-defense instructors, done art therapy with young girls, organized food banks, developed outreach presentations for young voters, assisted Latino/a immigrants, web designed for a sexual assault crisis center, and more. And here’s the thing – THOSE experiences help YOU meet the CONTACTS you need on the job market!

To learn more (even if you're still not quite sure what an internship is!), drop Dr. Wendland an email at miltonw@usf.edu