Department of Women’s and Gender Studies

Fall 2016

Undergraduate Course Offerings

For questions about permits, course registration, and degree requirements please make an appointment to see your academic advisor by visiting http://usfweb.usf.edu/escheduler/student.aspx.
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.
WST 3311: Issues in Feminism

Kim Golombisky, Ph.D.
Mondays, 5:00—7:45 PM (CRN 81555) in Fall

This introductory-level course provides you with an overview of the major “issues” that most students will face in their own lives in terms of experiences, privileges, and oppressions across nationality, culture, class/caste, race, ethnicity, ability, sexuality, religion, and more. “Issues” here means topics, problems, questions, and debates that feminists consider important to improving the lives of people and their societies worldwide. Students examine ways that social, cultural, and political institutions directly affect their own lives. The goal is get the basic knowledge to decide what issues resonate and where students stand on those issues. Major topics include education, politics, voting rights, family, work, sexual harassment, violence, pornography, sex, reproduction, abortion, beauty, language, and science, among others. By the end of the semester, the successful student will have engaged with at least one issue as a volunteer, citizen, activist, or participant. This course is part of the University of South Florida's Foundations of Knowledge and Learning (FKL) Core Curriculum. It is certified for the Core Area Social and Behavioral Sciences and for Human and Cultural Diversity and Inter-relationships Among Disciplines.
WST 3412: Women in the Developing World

Sabah Uddin, Ph.D.
Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:30—10:45 AM (CRN 92103)

This course presents a cross-cultural study of women’s lives in the global developing world by analyzing the ever changing roles, opportunities and expectations of women and men in the Global South as their societies encounter change associated with development, and the resultant impact this has on gender relations and power. Students will explore the economic, cultural and political forces affecting women’s lives in comparative contexts, the interconnection between gender, development and social reconstruction in various regions in the world and investigate how women’s participation in social movements articulate the desire for equality.

This course is rooted in an interdisciplinary approach and is intended for students to understand the differences between the lived experiences of women in these societies, to recognize the intersections of identity based on race/ethnicity, religion, class, gender and citizenship in a transnational context and to develop an awareness of global women’s issues.
WST 3324: Women, Environment, & Gender

Zoe DuPree Fine, M.A.
Offered completely online (CRN 89152)

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!
WST 4262: Literature by Women of Color in the Diaspora

Rondrea Mathis, Ph.D.
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2–3:15 PM (CRN 85485)

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 try to understand the ways that domestic violence, rape, and human trafficking 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.

WST 4320 will be offered fully online in Fall 2016. It 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.
Black women on television and/or film in the early 1900s were mainly limited to roles as maids and mammies. Movies such as Gone With the Wind and Imitation of Life offered a particularly limited (and damaging) image of Black womanhood.

As this country moved into the contemporary era, though, these depictions have become more modernized, but in many ways, the stereotypical portrayals remain. In this course, which will analyze film, television, and media, we will explore Black women's presence in both historical and modern-day media.

This course will use film and television as the primary course texts but will also integrate cultural criticism as a means of analysis.
Crime – from image to rhetoric – is everywhere. Television shows about crime are on every night of the week. “Real” crime dramas play out in popular media and in the news. At the same time, there are lots of concerns about the effects of crime on victims and society, and we also wonder about the outcomes of crime, such as how justice is “served.” Is justice fair or biased? We think we know the answer to that question, but do we? And we think we know who are the criminals and who are the victims. But the world is not a television show.

In Gender, Crime and Justice we consider each of these issues: media portrayals, criminal involvement, victimization, and justice. But our focus is narrow, because we target our analysis on the effects of gender on each of these topics: How are criminals portrayed as gendered actors in popular culture? How do our conceptualizations of gender and our gendered lives affect the choices we make to engage in crime? How does gender affect victimization patterns and experiences? How does gender shape the patterns of enforcement and punishment? Our task this semester will be to make gender transparent as we assess its effect on crime and justice. Join me as we explore crime and justice through the lens of gender!
In this course we will explore sex work and human trafficking in the sex industry on both theoretical and practical levels within global and local contexts. Combining theories on gender, sexuality, and race with major theories about sex work and human trafficking in the sex industry, students will apply these concepts to real-world applications within sex work and anti-trafficking organizations and policies. Students will gain an understanding of the complexities involved in sex work and trafficking in the sex industry. In addition to examining how arguments surrounding sex work and trafficking in the sex industry are constructed and shaped by the contexts in which they are written, students will demonstrate their understanding of these theories by using them in their own arguments about sex work and human trafficking. Students will critically analyze an aspect of sex work or trafficking in the sex industry that illustrates the depth and breadth of their knowledge.

Jill McCracken, Ph.D.

Thursdays, 5—7:45 PM (CRN 91940) in Fall
As a WGS major, you encounter so many different ideas and concepts that it can be difficult to bring it all together. But don’t worry, because that’s what Capstone is for! In this course we will explore the relationship between our WGS backgrounds and values and the logistical realities of employment, graduate school, and daily life more generally. We will do this by asking and answering questions like: How does intersectionality, positionality, self-reflexivity, or any other WGS concept apply to my post-graduation life?

We will consider this and other questions through hands-on approaches that challenge traditional patriarchal ways of thinking and life-planning. We will engage in hands-on activities to: 1) complete “WGS major reflection portfolios” (reflecting on assignments from previous points in your time as a WGS major) as well as 2) build our "professional portfolios" (job application letters, resumes, personal statements, and mock interviews). In addition, we will talk with people who are “living their ethics” in a variety of venues in order to see what that really looks like.
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

Milton Wendland, Ph.D.
Select meeting dates (CRN 89838 in Fall)