

WOMEN'S STUDIES

SPRING 2009

GRADUATE COURSE OFFERINGS

The Women's Studies Department's curriculum explores how institutionalized sexism, racism, classism, and heterosexism limit human achievement and dignity--and examines the changes necessary for society to eliminate these limitations. A major goal of the Department of Women's Studies is the reexamination and reevaluation of traditional disciplines in the light of insights provided by feminist thought. Students and faculty engage in an analysis of the extent to which a sexist perspective has determined the content, subject matter, research and theory of various disciplines. Participants in the program are, however, equally committed to moving outside the confines of traditional disciplines to develop new methodologies, new subjects and new theories based on a multidisciplinary approach to the study of women. Finally, the program seeks to encourage students to engage in a reexamination of their own lives and of the world around them. Graduate opportunities include an M.A. in Women's Studies, a dual B.A./M.A. degree for qualified students, and a Graduate Certificate in Women and Public Policy. Other discipline-based concentrations in Women's Studies are also available. For more information, contact the Chair of Women's Studies, SS 341, at 442-4220.

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A WSS 520 (3591) (2 crs)
Advanced Feminist Pedagogy and Theory II
Maia Boswell-Penc
M 1:40-2:35
HU 115

Prerequisite: M.A. Student in Women's Studies or Permission of Instructor.
Continuation of WSS 510. M.A. students participate, under supervision, as mentor/observer/resource persons in WSS 101, Introduction to Feminisms, alongside undergraduate student facilitators. In a collaborative collective format, students analyze practical applications of feminist and critical pedagogy in specific teaching situations. Additional Tuesday-Thursday lab time to be arranged (coordinates with section times for WSS101 and 101Z).

AWSS 530 (8972) (4 crs)
Environmental Justice: Racism, Classism, Sexism
Maia Boswell-Penc
W 9:20-12:10
HU 112

In Environmental Justice: Racism, Classism, and Sexism we will explore how, racism, classism and sexism effect current environmental "events", including environmental policy-making, public health outcomes, and the rhetoric and politics of environmentalism. Surveying the development of environmental awareness among the public, philosophies behind such awareness and resulting shifts

in policy, we will focus on the growth of the environmental justice movement, and will consider how various groups have addressed environmental degradation and justice. Also, under consideration will be a set of related issues: how globalization has effected these events, the feminist critique of science and its impact, relationships between grass-roots activism (for example, native American activists and other Environmental Justice group) and between these groups and more scholarly approaches and contributions by artists, labor-rights groups, religious leaders, animal rights activists, and deep ecologists.

AWSS 545 (9149) (4 crs)

Black Diasporas

Janell Hobson

W 5:45-8:35

FA 114

This course will explore in global perspective concepts of blackness and its relationship to feminist and other women-led and gender-based political movements that have shaped complex discourses on the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, and nationality. We will also expand the geopolitical spheres of Europe, America, Africa, and the Caribbean to traverse different oceanic spaces that include Afro-Asia and, to a lesser extent, "Black Australia." Through these transnational lenses, we will question how blackness, and black femininity in particular, shift meanings in varied locations but also converge in formations of global identities, marginalized experiences, and political movements. Topics covered this semester include history-telling, sex trafficking and migrations, and articulations of "black feminisms" in politics, arts, and popular culture.

For more information, please visit the website: <<http://www.albany.edu/faculty/jhobson/diasporas>>

AWSS 551 (8973) (3 crs)

Gender and Class in Latin American Development

Barbara Sutton

T 2:45-5:35

HU 130

This course explores the interaction between cultural, political, and economic forces that have shaped the lives and histories of women in Latin America since the nineteenth century to the present. What is the impact of colonial legacies? What do globalization processes look like when examined through the lens of Latin American women's realities? What can Latin American women's experiences of state terror teach us about contemporary world politics and militarization? What are some of the paths that lead to feminism in Latin America? How have women in the region contributed to the global women's movement? What have been the impacts of revolutionary struggles and promises of democracy on Latin American women's lives? Throughout this course we will examine how inequalities and ideologies based on gender, race-ethnicity, class, sexuality, and nation influence the conditions of women in different Latin American countries. We will also pay attention to the voices of Latinas inhabiting the cultural and geographical "borderlands" that tie the United States to Latin America. Women's bodies, work patterns, family and intimate relationships, migration experiences, politics and visions of social change will be important sites of analysis and insight. Finally, we will learn about and from the conflicts, solidarity, and creativity that delineate Latin American women's vibrant social movement organizing in local contexts and across national borders.

A WSS 590 (5000) (4 crs)

Research Seminar in Women's Studies

Virginia Eubanks

W 4:15-7:05

BA 209

How do we do feminist and anti-racist research? It is clear that there is no one answer (or method), since feminist and anti-racist scholars are hard at work in all the traditional disciplines. One goal of this course, therefore, is to familiarize students with a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods for researching women's experience, investigating social and institutional structure, interpreting others' data, and unearthing possibilities for intervening in the existing order. But research does not just concern methodological practices. It also involves epistemology – theories about knowledge construction – and issues of whose knowledge is validated. So, a second goal of this course is to acquaint students with current discussions of feminist epistemology, including critiques of science and the development of empiricist, standpoint and poststructural epistemologies. The final goal of this class is to provide students with hands-on experience with some of the joys and sorrows of *actually doing* research, including: designing and conducting an interview, using the internet and electronic databases in research, critically interpreting numerical data from secondary sources, using discourse analysis to make sense of 'text and talk', performing ethnographic observation, and writing a research proposal.

A WSS 597 (1-4 crs)
Independent Study
ARR

Study in an area of special interest not treated in course currently offered. Work performed under the direction of a professor chosen by the student on a topic approved by the program. May be repeated with approval. Not open to undergraduates.

A WSS 599 (7995) (3 crs)
Transmedia Storytelling
Vivien Ng
M 5:45-8:35
SL-G20

In this semester we learn how to use a variety of media--digital videos, interactive web pages, Google maps, 2-D animation--to create a set of short stories about the 1854 cholera outbreak in London. The main source is Steven Johnson's fascinating account, *The Ghost Map: The Story of London's Most Terrifying Epidemic--and How It Changed Science, Cities, and the Modern World*. In addition to this eminently readable secondary source, we tap primary sources in archives such as the Michigan State University John Snow Archive (<http://matrix.msu.edu/%7Ejohnsnow/>) and the UCLA Department of Epidemiology John Snow site (<http://www.ph.ucla.edu/epi/snow.html>). While we all learn how to make digital videos, interactive web pages, Google maps, 2-D animation, students may choose to hone their skills in one medium and apply those to create a compelling short story about an aspect of the cholera outbreak. At the end of the semester, all the stories will be featured in a website created for this course.

There are no prerequisites except for a curiosity to learn and willingness to work hard.

The course is taught in a workshop format.

A WSS 599 / A ENG 585 (9147) (9073) (4 crs)
Special Topics: Appalachian Writers/Appalachian Stories
Marjorie Pryse
W 4:15-7:05
UH 107/108

The premise of this course emerges from the convergence of culture, language, geography, modernization, representation, and environmentalism in shaping the contrast between the outsider's view of Appalachia and attempts by Appalachian writers and activists themselves to define their heritage, claim their identity, and explore the social and economic tensions that the region brings into relief. Although the majority of readings for the course will focus on fiction from the 1880's to the 1980's, about a third will explore interdisciplinary constructions of Appalachia, with an emphasis on the role coal mining has played in the economy and political structure of the region. Students will have free rein to explore the cultural study of Appalachia in at least one of two out-of-class papers. Documentary film and some attention to Bluegrass music will supplement discussion of literary and non-fiction texts. Class discussion and group work will organize the course format and students should anticipate a final exam as well as out-of-class writing. AWSS 585 is cross-listed with English.

The reading list for the course will likely include the following novels: Rebecca Harding Davis, Life in the Iron Mills (1861); Mary Lee Settle, Charley Bland (1989); Mary Noailles Murfree, In the Tennessee Mountains (short stories, 1884); Murfree, In the 'Stranger People's' Country (1891); Grace MacGowan Cooke, The Power and the Glory (1909); Chuck Kinder, Snakehunter (1973); Cormac McCarthy, Child of God (1973); Lee Smith, Oral History (1983); and Mary Lee Settle, Charley Bland (1989). In addition, the course will include journalist Michael Schnayerson's Coal River (2008), and likely include excerpts/segments from Mari-Lynn Evans, Holly George-Warren, and Robert Santelli, eds., The Appalachians: America's First and Last Frontier (2004) and Elizabeth S. D. Engelhardt, Beyond Hill and Hollow: Original Readings in Appalachian Women's Studies (2005).

A WSS 599 (9249) (2 crs) (8W2)

Topics in Women's Studies

Staff

T 5:45-9:45

SL-G12

Consideration of topics or issues in women's studies selected on the basis of faculty and student interest. May be taken more than once with different content. Potential topics include seminar in sex role development or cross-cultural study of women. Consult schedule for specific title.

AWSS 641 / AHIS 640 (9167/8676) (4 crs)

Seminar in Gender and Society

Iris Berger

T 4:40-6:40

HU 125

This seminar will focus on gender history, which emerged during the late 1960s and early 1970s as women's history. In recent years, however, it has expanded to include the history of men and masculinity and the ways that social and political institutions reflect gender divisions in their assumptions and organization. Students will be encouraged to consider projects in these newer areas of gender history, as well as topics in the history of women. Course work will include introductory readings on gender history, visits to collections of primary source material in the Capital District, and completion of an original research paper of 25-30 pages. Because much of the most easily accessible primary material focuses on New York State, most students will be doing local and/or regional U.S. history topics. But, in the past, students have also worked with sources located in New York, Boston, Washington, D.C. and elsewhere.

A WSS 645 / SOC 645 (9161/5971) (3 crs)

Race, Gender and Work

Karyn Loscocco

W 4:15-7:05

HU 112

One of the most important ways that race and gender affect people's lives is through work. In this course we examine how gender and race structure occupations, workplaces, and work-family dynamics. The course will be divided into study of 1) multilevel social processes that lead to poverty, occupational segregation, unequal wage and career trajectories, different organizational dynamics, and unequal quality of work and family lives and 2) the influences of race and gender on how people organize, experience, and interpret their work lives. Throughout the course we will link academic research to discussion of social policy. Though we will focus on women and men of color and white women as targets of work inequality, we will discuss the dynamics of masculinities and of white privilege. Focus is on the contemporary United States, but we will incorporate studies from other countries to deepen our understanding of race, gender, and work.

This course is appropriate for students from any social science, professional, or humanities discipline seeking a better understanding of how race and gender structure work, organizations, social policy, and work-family lives. Students are encouraged to write term papers that draw from their own interests and disciplines. Sociology students preparing for comprehensive exams in gender, race, work or organizations have found it useful.

A WSS 689 (1-4 crs)
Master's Project Proposal Writing
ARR

Preparation and planning for M.A. Final Project, under direction of M.A. committee. This independent study course is optional for those planning to take WSS 690 the following semester. Prerequisite: Admission to M.A. program in Women's Studies and permission of Women's Studies Graduate Faculty Advisor.

A WSS 690 (3-4 crs)
MA Final Project
ARR

After completing 14 credits in the Master's program, each student will choose one of four options for her/his final project: (1) a three-hour written examination based on a reading list of 25-30 texts; (2) a 40-50 page paper of feminist scholarship; (3) a community action project; or (4) a creative project. Each final project will be assessed by a two-person faculty committee and by the Graduate Advisor. May not be repeated for credit. Students may enroll during their final semester of course work.

A WSS 697 (1-4 crs)
Advanced Independent Study
ARR

Study by a student in an area of special interest not treated in courses currently offered. Work performed under direction of a professor chosen by the student on a topic approved by the department. May be repeated with approval. Prerequisite: permission of instructor.

A WSS 797 (1-4 crs)
Advanced Independent Study
ARR

Study in an area of special interest not treated in course currently offered. Work performed under the direction of a professor chosen by the student on a topic approved by the program. May be repeated with approval. Not open to undergraduates.