

## **WSS 360 (4009): FEMINIST SOCIAL AND POLITICAL THOUGHT**

<http://www.albany.edu/faculty/jhobson/wss360/fall2005.html>

*This syllabus is subject to change; such changes will be announced in class or on webct.*

Fall 2005

Sessions: Tuesday/Thursday

Time: 1:15-2:35 pm

Place: Humanities 124

Instructor: Dr. Janell Hobson

Office: Social Sciences 344

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00 am – 12 noon

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### **Course Description:**

This course will challenge what constitutes viable feminist thought and action for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By raising the specter of those who benefit the least from the gains of feminism, we will question what it would mean for feminist theory and activism to articulate and define concepts of social justice with marginalized women in mind. We will read and view texts that challenge the centrality of gender in feminist analyses through intersections of race, class, nationality, sexuality, and empire. We will also redefine the political agenda of feminism as we apply a global perspective on women's lives and blur the lines between theory and practice. Above all, we will creatively and collectively join together to imagine a living feminism that permeates our daily lives and influences political power.

### **Online Syllabus:**

An online version of this syllabus has been created to enhance your information and knowledge for this class. The URL (website address) is included at the top of this page, and you are strongly encouraged to visit it on a regular basis (a hyperlink to the online syllabus is also available on our webCT home page). To access webCT, use your net ID (first and last initials followed by the last four digits of your SSN) and your password (first initial, followed by the first four digits of your SSN, and your last initial) to log on. The online syllabus provides you access to hyperlinks to relevant websites and online essays relating to this course.

### **Women's Studies Goals and Learning Outcomes** ([www.albany.edu/ws/ba\\_goals.htm](http://www.albany.edu/ws/ba_goals.htm))

Students will be able to:

1. understand Women's Studies as an academic field of study and research.
2. understand and can use intersectional feminist analysis to explore the bases of social inequalities.
3. understand what it means to place women at the center of knowledge-making.
4. understand how feminist pedagogy may be different from other forms of teaching and learning.
5. understand the dynamic relationship between Women's Studies and feminist social action.

### **Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:**

This course will parallel departmental goals and objectives in that students will:

1. integrate diverse studies through an interdisciplinary framework.
2. dismantle the intersecting ideologies of racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, ableism, etc.
3. conceptualize social justice beyond gender equity and towards community and human dignity.
4. fully participate in the teaching process as active learners, peer educators, and public scholars.
5. integrate scholarship in the classroom with activism beyond these walls.

**Required Texts (available at Mary Jane Books):**

Gaspar de Alba, Alicia. 2005. *Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders*.

Lin, Maya. 2000. *Boundaries*.

Shiva, Vandana. 2005. *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace*.

Sudbury, Julia, ed. 2004. *Global Lockdown: Race, Gender, and the Prison Industrial Complex*.

Course Packet – available at Shipmates (in Stuyvesant Plaza and hereafter abbreviated in course schedule as CP).

**Recommended Text:** Strunk et al. 2000 edition. *The Elements of Style*.

**Course Requirements***Class Participation* (20 points)

Participation includes your regular attendance and contributions to classroom discussions and the webCT discussion board. Attendance will officially be taken immediately after the drop/add period. You are allowed **3 unexcused absences**; however, if you go over this number, you stand to **lose 2 points for each additional absence** from your final grade. In addition, you will be penalized for tardiness and, therefore, you stand to **lose 1 point for each additional lateness** that exceeds three. Excused absences will only be granted in cases of documented illness and emergencies. **Two bonus points toward your final grade for perfect attendance!!** Perfect attendance means that you have never missed a single class (whether this is excused or not – including for illnesses and emergencies), nor have you ever arrived late nor left early for any reason. If you attend every single session, from the beginning of class time to the end, and if you are respectful in class, and contribute to discussions, **then and only then** will you receive bonus points for perfect attendance.

*Pop Quizzes* (25 points)

Scheduled throughout the semester and unannounced; you will have as many or as few quizzes, depending on how regularly everyone in class keeps up with their reading assignments.

*Student Conference Project* (25 points)

In collaboration with my graduate seminar on Feminist Theory (WSS 565), which will organize a student conference around student paper/project presentations, you will be expected to participate by contributing creative projects, based on our own class theme, to be presented to the conference audience and on a website. We will hold an in class exercise on **September 22** to engage feminist theory in the realm of creative expression and collaboration. This meeting will also serve as a springboard from which student groups can begin collaborating on the conference project. As a class, you will be divided into **four groups (collectives)**, which will collaborate on one of the following creative works:

- **Exhibit Collective: “Reclaiming the Women’s Building.”** Connecting with SUNYA’s year-long theme of “Architecture: the Art of the Everyday,” this collective will explore the politics and feminization of “space,” “community,” and “ownership” by collaborating on both the artistic and activist possibilities in the renewal and restoration of the Women’s Building, located at 79 Central Avenue, for the women’s community in the Albany area. The completion of this project will be celebrated on Wednesday, **November 30**, in an opening exhibit and reception, beginning at 6 pm, with a preview before class on **Tuesday, November 29**. The reclamation exhibit may include creative window and wall decorations, murals, etc. Also, prepare an exhibition catalog or brochure to be distributed to the audience. A print version of the exhibition catalogue is due on the same day as your exhibit preview before class; the completed website, featuring your exhibition catalogue and picture(s) of the women’s building project, is due on a CD the week of **December 6**.

- **Food Collective: “Living Feminism: A Virtual Cookbook.”** This collective will work on organizing a luncheon for the student conference, 12 noon in Humanities 354 on Friday, **December 2**, which may feature dishes from student recipes. These recipes must also be included on a website,

created by the collective, in the style of a virtual cookbook. The *Living Feminism: Virtual Cookbook* (see online syllabus hyperlink) was created by the WSS 360 Fall 2004 class, and your group has an opportunity to build on this project by creating a “second edition.” Each student in the collective must contribute a recipe and a narrative (2-4 pages, typed and double-spaced), which describes the “politics of food” – either in terms of the global/historical exchange of ingredients in the dish and/or in terms of the preparation and reception of a meal as an act of everyday feminist resistance. You may be as creative as you wish with the narrative, but the larger politics of food distribution and social justice, as well as cultural heritage and gender roles in the preparation of food, must be addressed. The luncheon should also reflect issues of feminist politics in a way that conference participants and audience members grasp the themes, that recognizes food preparations and presentations as genuine works of art, and that also celebrates communal nourishment within an academic setting. The collective is expected to meet outside of class time to plan this conference luncheon. In addition, the collective will be responsible for presenting a “Hunger Banquet” in class on **Tuesday, November 22**, in the style of Oxfam’s project (see online syllabus hyperlink: [www.hungerbanquet.org](http://www.hungerbanquet.org)) for the purposes of raising social justice issues surrounding food politics. Your online cookbook should include an introductory essay that explores the differences between preparing a “Hunger Banquet” and preparing a luncheon “open to the public.” Print versions of the collective recipes are also due on this date; the completed website is due on a CD the week of **December 6**.

- **Performance Collective.** This collective will work on the creation of a performance that espouses “feminist” ideas or presents a “creative response” to any of the texts studied in this course. In Fall 2004, the performance collective presented a mock beauty pageant, titled “Ms. Understood 2004” (see streamed video on webCT), which critiqued the false images of women and promoted feminist ideals. The collective may choose to continue in this vein of performative critique by presenting another mock beauty pageant. The performance may also attempt something new and different altogether (e.g. a sweatshop awareness fashion show?), such as a *variety show*, a *dance performance*, a *music performance*, a *multimedia performance*, an *absurd/comedy* or *avant-garde theater*, or a series of *skits/vignettes/character-sketches*. You must give a **Dress Rehearsal** in class on **Thursday, December 1**. The **public performance** will take place later that evening in Humanities B39, 7 pm. The performance must clock in between **60-75 minutes** (no more, no less). So, please time it during practice runs. The collective is expected to meet outside of class time. Also, prepare a performance program to be distributed to the audience. A print version of the collective’s script must be turned in the same day of your dress rehearsal in class. A completed website featuring the script, the program, and picture(s) and/or digitized video from the performance, is due on a CD the week of **December 6**.

- **Poetry Collective: “Reclaiming Our Spaces.”** This collective will compose and perform a series of original poems that relate to themes explored in this class, especially as it connects with the Exhibit Collective’s work on reclaiming public/private spaces. The collective should begin and close these series of original poems with a group poem while each member gives a solo reading of her/his poems. As part of the celebration of the renewal of the Women’s Building, the poetry collective will perform during the opening exhibit on Wednesday, **November 30**, to celebrate both the women’s community and the opening of the Women’s Studies student conference. The collective must give a rehearsal in class on Tuesday, **November 29**. Print versions of the collective’s poems must be turned in that day. A completed website, featuring these poems – perhaps in hypertext format - and picture(s) and/or digitized video from the performance at The Women’s Building, is due on a CD the week of **December 6**.

\*\*You must sign up for one of these collectives; the collective will turn in a 1 or 2 page Conference Project Overview (typed and double-spaced) on Thursday, **September 29**, and create a home page for the collective’s website, turned in on a CD the week of **November 8**.

*Final Project* (25 points)

Choose one of the following projects according to your interests and strengths:

- Option A (Development Essay): You may opt to develop the creative work done for your collective into an individual submission that mixes creativity with a critical essay (8-15 pages, typed and double-spaced) for the undergraduate e-journal, [transcending silence...](#). A poetry collective member may create a poetry essay (mixing up to 5 original poems with a critical essay expanding on the same themes); a food collective member may expand on the recipe narrative; a performance collective member may submit an expanded monologue, dialogue, or play based on the performance (the collective may also choose to submit the performance script on their own). An exhibit collective member may explore the theme of the “built environment” through a personal essay on the Women’s Building project, or another essay topic of the same theme. The first draft is due the week of **October 25**. Then, a revised draft, in digital or hypertext format, is due Thursday, **November 17**. We will participate in a web design workshop on Tuesday, **November 1**, to familiarize students with constructing websites and enhancing writing through hypertext formats. The third and final draft must be ready for submission to the e-journal. It must include 3 hard copies and a digital, hypertext version on CD, due on Monday, **December 12, 4 pm** (in my office, SS 344). Your submission must include a personal statement and an abstract (200 words, or 4-8 sentences) describing your manuscript. Your name should only appear on a cover sheet (including manuscript title and contact information - phone, email, and mailing address). Be sure to number subsequent pages, beginning with the first page of your manuscript, in the top right hand corner.
- Option B (Final Exam): You may opt to take a final exam, on Wednesday, **December 14**, 10:30-12:30, which will consist of three parts: Part I (long answers), II (quote identification and analysis), and III ([annotated bibliography](#) – of 10 secondary sources on a subject of interest relating to this course). Of these sources, 5 must be academic journal articles, 2 academic book or anthology chapters, 2 critically reliable websites, and 1 course text (article, book, or film relating to the topic of your annotated bibliography). In your annotations, provide a brief summary and analysis (150 words) of main arguments in each source; list citations in [Chicago](#) style. Bring your annotated bibliographies on the day of the exam, which must be turned in (and stapled) with parts I-II of your final exam.

To prepare for your final project assignment, you will need to choose Option A or B by **September 20**. Explain your choice in a 1-3 page proposal (typed and double-spaced): 5 points. Only those projects for Option A that receive an A- or higher will be forwarded on to the e-journal (and only if authors express interest). Bonus 2 points added to those who submit a 200-word abstract of their Option A project for the student conference by the **October 28, 2005** deadline (1 additional point if abstract is accepted). Email abstracts to [jhobson@albany.edu](mailto:jhobson@albany.edu).

### Expectations, Format, and Policies:

- This course will be structured primarily around discussions and occasional lectures.
- Please come to class with reading materials; you are expected to have read them prior to class, so be prepared to discuss them or to be quizzed on them.
- Films and videos will be screened on the dates listed in the schedule; you have the option of viewing these ahead of time but it is not required.
- Due to the contents of this course, sensitivity and respect for all are a must. If you engage in disruptive behavior (i.e., delivering insults, using vulgar expressions, doing work or having conversations not related to this class, not turning off cell phones, beepers and pagers, or walking out in a way that disrupts class) then **3 such incidences = 1 unexcused absence**. (Please see Attendance Policy)
- Whenever you have concerns over a grade assigned, please contact me no less than 24 hours after receipt of your grade. Please only send emails to schedule an appointment, not to discuss concerns with the course.

- Late assignments will result in 5 points deducted from your grade for each day late; no extensions will be granted with the exception of documented emergencies. In addition, plagiarism (see hyperlink definition) is a violation of university policy; any errors in citations and use of work that is not your own will result in a failing grade for assignments.
- All assignments turned in must also be posted on webCT to foster a community of shared learning.

### Due Dates

Sept. 20	Final project proposal: Option A or B.
Sept. 29	Collective Project Overview.
Oct. 25-27	Option A – first draft.
Oct. 28	Email paper abstracts for student conference.
Nov. 1	Web design workshop.
Nov. 8	Collective Website homepage.
Nov. 17	Option A – second draft.
Nov. 27-Dec. 2	Collective Project and Presentations.
Dec. 6-8	Collective Website.
Dec. 12	Option A (Final Version).
Dec. 14	Option B (Final Exam).

### Letter-Grade Equivalents:

A = 100-93	A- = 92-90	B+ = 89-86	B = 85-83	B- = 82-80
C+ = 79-76	C = 75-73	C- = 72-70	D = 69-65	E = Below 65

### Course Schedule

#### INTRODUCTION

Aug. 30	Course overview and introduction.
Sept. 1	CP: (1) Who is Your Mother? Red Roots of White Feminism.

#### UNIT ONE: SEXUAL (GEO) POLITICS

Sept. 6	CP: (2) Women's Equality and National Liberation; (3) Sexuality and Sexual Politics: Conflicts and Contradictions for Contemporary Middle Eastern Women.
Sept. 8	CP: (4) How Men Have (a) Sex.
Sept. 13	CP: (5) Dis Place: The Space Between.
Sept. 15	CP: (6) Queerness, Disability, and <i>The Vagina Monologues</i> .

#### UNIT TWO: SITES OF VIOLENCE

Sept. 20	Video: <i>What I Want My Words to Do to You</i> . <b>Due: Proposal (Option A or B)</b>
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- Sept. 22 Collectives: Formation and Goals.
- Sept. 27 CP: (7) Cross-cultural Connections, Border-Crossings, and “Death by Culture.”
- Sept. 29 Video: *Señorita Extraviada*.  
***Due: Conference Project Overview.***
- Oct. 4 holiday – no class.
- Oct. 6 *Desert Blood: The Juarez Murders.*

### UNIT THREE: DEVELOPING EARTH CONSCIOUSNESS

- Oct. 11 *Boundaries.*
- Oct. 13 holiday – no class.
- Oct. 18 *Earth Democracy.*
- Oct. 20 Video: *Love, Women, and Flowers.*

### UNIT FOUR: CRIME, SURVIVAL, AND RESISTANCE

- Oct. 25 Film: *Maria Full of Grace.* (continued screening on Oct. 27)  
***Due: First Draft (Option A) – include abstract for student conference***
- Oct. 27 *Global Lockdown* (hereafter abbreviated as GL): introduction; chapter 11.
- Nov. 1 Web Design Workshop.
- Nov. 3 GL: chapters 1, 8-9, 13, 16, 20.
- Nov. 8 Film: *Monster.* (continued screening on Nov. 10)  
***Due: Collective Website (Home Page).***
- Nov. 10 GL: chapters 2, 5.

### UNIT FIVE: EMANCIPATING THE BODY

- Nov. 15 CP: (8) Integrating Disability: Transforming Feminist Theory.
- Nov. 17 Video: *Mama Wabunzi.*  
***Due: Second Draft (Option A)***

### UNIT SIX: PRACTICING THEORY

- Nov. 22 Food Collective’s Hunger Banquet. (Turn in Recipes)

- Nov. 24            holiday – no class.
- Nov. 29            Exhibit Collective: Exhibit Preview. (Turn in Exhibit Catalog)  
Poetry Collective: Rehearsal. (Turn in Poems)
- Dec. 1              Performance Collective: Dress Rehearsal. (Turn in Script and Program)

***Student Conference:***

November 30, Wednesday, 6 pm – The Women’s Building, 79 Central Avenue  
Exhibit Collective opening exhibit: “Reclaiming the Women’s Building.”  
Poetry Collective performs at the Women’s Building for an evening of poetry.

December 1, Thursday, 7 pm – Humanities B39  
Premiere of the Performance Collective.

December 2, Friday, 10:30 am -5 pm – Humanities 354  
Graduate Student Conference, including Luncheon coordinated by the Food Collective.

December 3, Saturday, 12 noon-3 pm – The Women’s Building  
Roundtable Discussion: “Bridging the Academic and Activist Divides in Feminism.”

**CONCLUSION: REVOLUTIONIZING ACTIVISM AND PEDAGOGY**

- Dec. 6              Online: “The Revolution Will Not Be Funded.”  
***Due this week: Collective Websites.***
- Dec. 8              Course review.
- Due December 12, 4 pm** (my office in Soc. Sci. room 344): final drafts for Option A.
- Dec. 14             Final exam, 10:30 am – 12:30 pm.