

## Introduction to Women's Studies

WOST W210-01  
CRN # 11730  
T/TH 10:30-11:45am  
Fall Semester, 3 Credits  
CM 148

Instructor: Dr. Shari Troy  
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Office Hours: M/W 11:00-12:00 &  
2:00-3:00 & by appointment

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## Goals of Women's Studies

- To analyze academic disciplines from a feminist and anti-racist perspective;
- To encourage original scholarship and research about women that takes into consideration gender, race, class, age and sexual orientation;
- To integrate self-exploration with academic skills;
- To provide a non-authoritarian learning environment that values student's ideas and encourages an open exchange of information and opinion;
- To promote an individual and critical approach to learning;
- To promote knowledge of the diversity of women's experiences.

## Course Overview

WOST 210 is an introduction to the discipline of Women's Studies and the academic study of feminist theory. As such, it examines contemporary women's issues, including the relationship of gender to institutions such as work, education, religion, family, sexuality, health and politics. The goal of this course is to critically evaluate and understand the way that sex and gender shape our experiences in society as well as the way they interact with other categories such as race, class, sexual orientation, age, etc. We will also focus extensively on the changing representation of gender in popular culture and the way that it is affected, and in turn, affects perceptions of men and women in American society.

Throughout this course we will be dealing with sensitive materials and topics with which you may not always agree. Women's Studies as a discipline would not exist without that tension, and I ask that you respect the diverse opinions and experience of your classmates. This means not interrupting another's point during class discussions and remembering that it is possible to oppose someone else's ideas or opinions without opposing the individual. Please help to create a comfortable learning environment and remember to keep an open mind. **Occasionally this course will cover sensitive material regarding sexuality, health, body image and violence. If you find this material difficult to handle you should see me to discuss a reasonable alternative.**

This class will use a discussion-based format. Your ideas and opinions are encouraged in this class. I expect that you will come to class prepared (having read the material) and be ready to discuss, explore and share with your classmates. All readings are to be read before the classes on which they appear on the syllabus so that you can knowledgably discuss them.

### **Disability Statement:**

If you have a disability and need assistance, special arrangements can be made to accommodate most needs. Contact the Director of Services for Students with Disabilities, Walb Union 113, 481-6658, as soon as possible to work out the details. Once the Director has provided you with a letter attesting to your needs for modification, bring the letter to me. For more information, please go to <http://www.ipfw.edu/ssd>.

### **Required Texts:**

The following book is available at the bookstore and on reserve in the Helmke Library. All readings are in this text.

Shaw, Susan M. and Janet Lee, Eds. (2009) *Women's Voices Feminist Visions: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, Fourth Edition, New York: McGraw-Hill.

### **Course Policies and Details:**

- Please turn off cell phones and other personal communication devices during class time.
- No papers, exams or assignments will be accepted late, unless under extenuating circumstances and with instructor approval. Those that are accepted late will be at a diminished grade. One grade level for each class period delayed.
- Please bring your textbook with you to each class.
- No incompletes in this course except in the case of documented illness of self or dependent or death in your immediate family.
- If you anticipate arriving to class late or leaving early, please contact me ahead of time. I reserve the right to give and collect in-class assignments at any point during the class. There are no make ups for missed in-class assignments, other than in the case of documented illness of self or dependent or death in your immediate family.

**Academic Honesty and Plagiarism Policy:**

Academic honesty is expected of all students. You are responsible for knowing how to maintain academic honesty and for abstaining from cheating, the appearance of cheating and permitting or assisting in another’s cheating. If you are found to have plagiarized any portion of any written assignment, you will receive NO credit. This includes turning in the same work as a classmate. Cheating and/or plagiarism will result in failing the course and possible further disciplinary action on the part of the university. Please refer to the IPFW Undergraduate Bulletin for a full explanation of the consequences of academic dishonesty at this university.

**Course Requirements:**

Attendance and Participation:

Attendance will be taken each class period. Your presence and active involvement are needed in this class. The more invested and involved you are, the more meaningful your experience will be. Our time together will include group discussions, lectures, in-class assignments and a variety of supplementary materials such as films and speakers designed to help you gain a deeper understanding of the course material. If you miss a class it is your responsibility to obtain the information missed.

All but one of the DVDs and videos screened in class are also on reserve in the Helmke Library.

**Grading Criteria:**

Your performance will be measured on the following elements:

- 1. Participation, attendance and in-class assignments . . . . .100
- 2. Response papers - 8 @ 50 pts. each . . . . .400
- 3. Theatre Critique . . . . . 100
- 4. Midterm Exam . . . . .100
- 5. Final Exam.. . . . . 200
- 6. Oral Report and Abstract . . . . .100

Total:1,000 possible points

## **Grading Scale:**

Your final grade will be calculated as a percentage of total points earned out of the possible 1,000 points. The final grading scale will be as follows:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	below 60%

## **Grading Criteria:**

All writing assignments and exams will be graded based upon

- application of knowledge
- quality of critical thinking and analysis, and
- accuracy of spelling and grammar.

## **Mechanics for Written Assignments:**

- All written assignments must be typed in black ink, double spaced, using
- 12 point font. (No fancy fonts or script allowed).
- Pages are to be numbered in the upper right hand corner.
- Staple your paper in the upper left hand corner.
- Provide a heading with the title of the assignment and your title in the
- upper left hand corner of your first page. No separate title page is
- needed.

*Example:*

Your Name:

Date:

Title of Assignment: (i.e. Response Paper # 1)

Your Title:

## **Explanation of Graded Elements:**

### **Participation, Attendance and In-Class Assignments**

Students are allowed two unexcused absences. Students will receive 3 points for each class period for which they attend and actively participate (84 points). Active participation means students are listening, taking notes, asking/responding to questions, participating in discussions, active in small group work and have completed and turned in any in-class assignments. 10 extra credit points will be awarded to each student who earns all attendance/participation/in-class assignment points, for a total of 100 points.

A variety of in-class assignments will be given. The purpose of these exercises is to enable students to engage more deeply with the material we are reading/thinking about and to encourage an active format, rather than relying solely on lectures. In-class assignments may also be used to verify attendance. These assignments may not be made up, even if missed due to lateness or leaving class early.

### Response Papers

The 2-3 page response paper is an opportunity for students to demonstrate their understanding of, and ability to analyze, course content using a women's studies theoretical perspective. The response paper topic will be given to students one week prior to the due date. Students will be asked to use critical analysis in answering the question presented.

### Theatre Critique

Students in this course are required to attend the IPFW Theatre Department's fall production of *Urinetown: The Musical*. You will write a 3-4 page critique about this production from a feminist perspective. The object of this exercise is to use the concepts and ideas we are learning to assess the play. An important part of this course is to become aware of the impact of popular culture on us and our society. This contemporary musical provides an opportunity to examine a number of feminist issues as they are expressed in the theatre. *Urinetown* will be presented at the Williams Theatre on the IPFW campus. Tickets to all IPFW productions are free with your IPFW student ID. Tickets can be reserved at the box office by calling 481-6555. If you are unable to attend this one-time performance because of a job, speak with me right away to arrange a suitable alternative. Dates of the performance are Oct. 2, 3, 8, 9, 10 at 8 p.m. and Oct 11 at 2 p.m. Attendance is mandatory.

### Midterm Exam

The midterm exam will consist of two parts. The first part will be comprised of multiple choice questions worth 40 points. The second part will be a series of short answer essay questions worth 60 points. A study guide will be provided prior to the exam.

### Final Exam

The final exam will follow the same format as the midterm exam but will be longer and will include an additional section with longer essay questions. Point values for each of the sections will be adjusted to equal 200 points total.

If a student has a conflict with a scheduled exam, the instructor must be notified immediately. Failure to show up for an exam without prior notice will result in a failing grade.

## Oral Report and Abstract

Students will be required to research one area of women's studies in more detail. Each student must do original research that is not duplicated by another student. No less than three scholarly sources are to be used. Web sources must be academic in nature and may account for no more than one of your sources. Students will present their findings in a 7-10 minute oral report for the rest of the class. Students will hand in a one page abstract of their findings, which will include a Works Cited page listing all sources used. The Works Cited page will adhere to the format in the *MLA: Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. (This book is available at Helmke Library and in the book store). Every student will make a copy of their abstract for each of the other students in the class. The assignment will be graded in two parts, with 50 possible points for the oral presentation and 50 possible points for the abstract. Detailed instructions will be given prior to the due date.

Possible areas for research may include, but are certainly not limited to:

- How we learn gender
- Issues of privilege and inequality
- Gender and the body
- Gender and family
- Gender and work
- Politics of choice (i.e. the stay at home mom/dad vs. the CEO)
- How women can create their own culture or challenge current systems
- Women and activism
- Women and theatre
- More ideas for areas of research will come up as we learn together this semester.

I am hoping that this assignment will mark the beginning of your interest and engagement with a topic that you will be able to expand on in future women's studies courses or in upcoming courses in other departments at IPFW. The oral presentation and the written abstract are designed to assist students in learning how to present their ideas in an academic forum, as well as expanding the knowledge of women's studies issues for their classmates.

## Course Calendar

*Note: The course calendar may be revised if necessary. Any changes will be announced in class. All readings refer to Shaw & Lee and should be completed before class on the day listed. Handouts may be provided in class as necessary.*

Week 1	Tues	8/25	Intro to Course, Expectations and Syllabus
	Thurs	8/27	Read: pp. 25-27
Week 2	Tues	9/1	Women's Studies Perspectives and Practices Read: pp 1-24, 28-57 <b>Due: Response Paper 1</b>
	Thurs	9/3	Discussion cont.
Week 3	Tues	9/8	Systems of Privilege and Inequality in Women's Lives Read: pp. 59-123
Week 3	Thurs	9/10	<b>Due: Response Paper #2</b>
Week 4	Tues	9/15	Learning Gender in a Diverse Society Read: pp. 124-169 Film: <i>Tough Guise</i>
	Thurs	9/17	<b>Due: Response Paper #3</b>
Week 5	Tues	9/22	Sex, Power & Intimacy Read: pp. 170-221
	Thurs	9/24	Discussion, Cont. <b>Due: Preliminary Topics for Oral Report</b>
Week 6	Tues	9/29	Inscribing Gender on the Body Read: pp. 223-294 Film: <i>Killing Us Softly 3</i>
	Thurs	10/1	<b>Due: Response Paper #4</b>
 <b>Note:</b> <i>Urinetown, The Musical</i> at Williams Theatre, Oct. 2,3,8,9,10 @ 8:00 p.m. and Oct 11 @ 2:00 p.m.			
Week 7	Tues	10/6	Health and Reproductive Rights Read: pp. 296-376
	Thurs	10/8	Film: <i>From Danger to Dignity: The Fight for Safe Abortion</i> <b>Due: Topic for Oral Report and List of Possible Sources</b>
Week 8	Tues	10/13	<b>NO CLASS – Fall Break</b> Family Systems, Family Lives
		10/15	Read: pp. 378-424 <b>Due: Theatre Critique</b>
Week 9	Tues	10/20	Women's Work Inside and Outside the Home Read: pp. 426-427
	Thurs	10/22	MIDTERM EXAM

Week 10	Tues	10/27	Women Confronting and Creating Culture <i>Film: Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes</i> Read: pp. 498-553
	Thurs	10/29	<b>Due: Response Paper # 5</b>
Week 11	Tues	11/3	Resisting Violence Against Women Read: pp. 555-610
	Thurs	11/5	<b>Due: Response Paper # 6</b>
Week 12	Tues	11/10	State, Law, and Social Policy Read: pp. 611-667
	Thurs	11/12	
Week 13	Tues	11/17	Religion and Spirituality in Women's Lives Read: pp. 669-705
	Thurs	11/19	<b>Due: Response Paper # 7</b>
Week 14	Tues	11/24	<i>Film: The Education of Shelby Knox</i>
		11/26	<i>No Class, Thanksgiving Break</i>
Week 15	Tues	12/1	Activism Change and Feminist Futures Read: pp. 707-
	Thurs	12/3	<b>Due: Response Paper # 8</b>
Week 16	Tues	12/8	<b>Due: Abstracts, Oral Presentation</b>
	Thurs	12/10	Oral Presentations, cont. and Wrap Up
Week 17	Tues	12/15	Final Exam 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m., in CM 148