INTRODUCTION TO GENDER AND WOMEN’S STUDIES

Proposed Syllabus

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to major concepts and debates in gender and women’s studies, exploring how a feminist lens changes how we see the world. It traces the history of feminist activism and thought through a variety of classic statements, more recent studies, and original texts. The first half of the course addresses historical and theoretical developments, while the second half applies these tools to selected topics in feminist analysis. The goal is to examine – through materials drawn from a range of different academic disciplines and activist, journalist, and personal accounts – how sex and gender structure society, in interaction with a host of other identities, including race, class, sexuality, and ability, both nationally and globally.

Course Requirements

The course seeks to foster learning through active reflection over course materials, both inside and outside the classroom. To this end, grades are calculated based on the following sets of assignments:

- **Class participation** (15%) This is a discussion-based course, and as such, students are expected to come to class prepared and to participate actively in all class discussions.
- **Gender history interview** (5%) This assignment involves interviewing a woman over the age of 40 on her experiences as a woman and her views on feminism and gender equality.
- **In-class midterm** (25%) This exam will cover materials from the first half of the course on the history of feminist movements and theories of sex and gender.
- **Discussion leader** (10%) Students, either individually or in groups, will be responsible – together with the course instructor – for leading a topics session during the second half of the semester.
- **Film critique** (15%) Students will select any major motion picture – in theaters or on DVD – and analyze it from a feminist perspective in a 3-5 page essay, paying attention to how the roles of women and men are portrayed and what meaning these have for the story as a whole.
- **A take-home final exam** (30%) This exam will integrate materials from the semester as a whole, asking students to use theoretical materials from the first half of the semester to analyze and critique how topics from the second half of the semester have traditionally been understood.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

Monday: Introduction

No assigned reading – discussion of course aims and introduction to feminism and gender studies.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF FEMINISM AND TODAY’S FEMINISM

Wednesday: First Wave Feminism


In class: clips from One Woman, One Vote

Week 2

Monday: Second Wave Feminism


Wednesday: Third Wave Feminism


GENDER AND SEX AS SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS

Week 3

Monday: Theorizing Sex and Gender


Wednesday: Marxism and Feminist Theory


**Week 4**

**Monday: Race and Gender**


**In class:** clips from *My Feminism*

**Wednesday: Intersectionality**


**Week 5**

**Monday: Sexuality and Gender**


**Wednesday: Theories of Masculinity**


**Week 6**

**Monday: Constructing Sex**


Wednesday: Gender as Performance


Week 7

Monday: Transgender Studies


In class: clips from *TransGeneration*

Wednesday: MIDTERM EXAM

TOPICS IN FEMINIST AND GENDER ANALYSIS

Week 8

Monday: Marriage and the Family


In class: clips from *Tying the Knot*

Wednesday: Motherhood and Mothering


**Week 9**

**Monday: Reproductive Rights**


**Wednesday: Abortion**


*In class*: clips from *Middle of Everywhere*

**Week 10**

**Monday: Health**


**Wednesday: Body Image**


**Week 11**

**Monday: Violence Against Women**


In class: clips from Sin by Silence

Wednesday: Rape and Sexual Assault


Week 12

Monday: Work and the Workplace


Ledbetter v. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. and Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act

Wednesday: The Global Economy


Week 13

Monday: Prostitution and Sex Work


In class: clips from Performing the Border
**Wednesday: Sex Trafficking**


**Week 14**

**Monday: Sports**


**Wednesday: Military Integration**


**Week 15**

**Monday: Politics**


**In class:** clips from *Running in High Heels*

**Wednesday: Feminisms and Empowerment**
