

WGS 1010: Fall 2006 Syllabus

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Office Hours: T, 3:30-4:30 p.m.; W 3-4 p.m., TH 1:30-3:30 & by appt.

WGS Program: <http://www.usu.edu/womenstu>

Rebecca West (Irish journalist, novelist & critic): “*I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat, or a prostitute.*” (1913)

Isak Dinesen/Karen Blixen (Danish author): “*I do not think there is any alternative to equality, including moral equality, for men and women...*” (1924)

John Lennon (songwriter, musician, activist): “*Isn't it time we destroyed the macho ethic? . . . Where has it gotten us all these thousands of years? Are we still going to have to be clubbing each other to death? Do I have to arm wrestle you to have a relationship with you as another male? Do I have to seduce her—just because she's a female? Can we not have a relationship on some other level? . . . I don't want to go through life pretending to be James Dean or Marlon Brando.*” (1980)

Ani Difranco (songwriter, musician, activist): “*My idea of feminism is self-determination, and it's very open-ended: every woman has the right to become herself, and do whatever she needs to do.*”

Material to help you learn:

- Sapiro, V. (2003). *Women in American society*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- **E-mail:** Every student is *required* to open and regularly use a USU e-mail account. Class assignments and information will be posted to you via e-mail, and it is your responsibility to check your e-mail daily.
- On-line readings, course handouts, etc.

Course Objectives: What you will learn:

- A critical perspective toward understanding and examining gender and its role in all levels of society and in our everyday lives
- To recognize the subtle forms of gender discrimination that work against both women and men in society and the workplace,
- To develop a perspective that recognizes the importance of gender awareness and

sensitivity, and the socially created gender differences for women and men

- To acquaint you with the relevant theories and principles of feminism
- To develop critical skills to evaluate written and visual narratives related to gender

Course Overview:

Teaching any women & gender studies course raises a number of issues for students. Your opinions related to gender issues may be emotionally and historically charged for many of you. You have strong feelings about your beliefs. Now—I have no intention of trying to change your beliefs or opinions, rather, my goal is to help you reflect on your ideas about gender with a certain critical distance. Inevitably, the course will include some of my own biases and preferences, but I will be open about my preferences. I also want you to keep an open mind and be willing to consider opinions and perspectives that may differ from your own. I encourage you to challenge my preferences or those found in your readings, but with good reasons, having thought about the issues raised.

At the beginning of a women & gender class, students may consider the subject a superficial, obvious topic because they often are unaware of the numerous ways gender ideals and expectations are communicated to us, both explicitly and implicitly throughout our lives. Part of the goal of this course is to help you understand how the dominant understandings of gender affect every aspect of our lives. I want you to consider the interdependence of female and male gender ideals and the consequences of these ideals for both women and men. I hope to provide you with new ways to think about gender that will provide you with the skills to consider the ways you understand gender and where those understandings originated. I want each of us to explore—with a critical eye—the processes and events that led to our personal opinions about gender. Our opinions regarding gender come from somewhere—they don't show up to us delivered by FedEx or in an email message. So we'll all be seeking to understand why we hold certain opinions about gender and reject other opinions. In other words, you'll learn how to “read” and explore gender and how the social construction of gender influences how we see the world and everyone around us.

Now that I've reviewed what WGS 1010 is about, I want to emphasize what the class is *not* about. “Introduction to Women & Gender Studies” is *not* about male-bashing—a term often used to refer to representations of men as egotistical, selfish, macho jerks who do not value women. While there are some men who undoubtedly fit these generalized stereotypes, there are also some women who are egotistical and selfish and don't value men. Sexism affects both women and men and we'll explore these consequences for both sexes.

Finally, many of the topics we cover this semester will be examined through documentary and Hollywood films. We'll consider how media have represented various gender issues and explore how to critique such films. In addition, we will also have several guest speakers who will discuss their expertise in different areas of gender.

Class Format:

Our class is “student driven”—a pedagogical approach to teaching and learning that encourages students’ ownership of their learning process. What this means is that your assignments are designed to provide you with the opportunities to take leadership roles in the class, including writing discussion questions and leading class discussions. As part of our class focus, my job is not to lecture, but rather, to provide you with the skills you need to think critically about gender issues and to evaluate how gender norms operate on individual and societal levels.

How To Demonstrate What You Learn & Determine Your Course Grade: Your final grade will be based on the following assignments, subject to modifications as necessary:

1. Gender journal 15%
2. Study guides & discussion leader team assignments 20%
3. Photo history & magazine analysis 15%
4. Family oral history 20%
5. Team “Hollywood & History” project & presentation 20%
6. Participation & attendance 10%

Description of Class Assignments (Specific directions for each assignment will be provided.)

1. **Gender journal:** You will keep a weekly journal in which you record your reactions to gender-related issues from class, personal experiences, current events, media, etc. Your journals need to include a **minimum** of two entries per week and will be due every TH during the semester. At the beginning of classes, I’ll ask for volunteers to share their entries with our class. As you formulate your comments, ask yourself what personal opinions you hold that influence your reactions of our readings, films, etc. and what your opinions are based on. Please note that some weeks I will make specific assignments for you will address in your journals.
2. **Weekly team contributions:** During the semester, you will work in teams to write study guides and lead class discussions of the assigned readings, etc. Your team discussion questions, study guides and class discussions need to reflect critical assessment of the articles. As you read these articles/chapters, think of how your team assessment of the readings will help us better understand the issues discussed in the articles and/or push us to think in new directions. Your reactions/responses to the articles will form the basis for our class discussions.
3. **Family oral history :** Select a female member of your family to examine how gender has affected her life over time and how family functions to socialize us into specific gender roles. As part of the oral history, you’ll also write a news analysis of what was happening at specific times during her life and a photo history based on interpreting family photos from her life.
4. **Team “Hollywood & History” project & presentation:** Here you’ll work in teams to analyze how mainstream Hollywood films have depicted women or men who challenge their respective gender norms and compare to historical accounts. The

- team will present its results to the class.
5. **Participation & attendance** : The primary way I evaluate whether you are reading and understanding the gender issues discussed in our readings is through your participation in class. Please come to class prepared to take an active role in class discussions. Since WGS 1010 is student driven, daily attendance and participation are essential and required.
 6. **Optional final exam**: If you are not satisfied with the grade you earned for journals (15%) or your photo/magazine essay (15%), you may take the final exam. If you take this option, the grade you earn on the final replaces your grade for the journals OR essay.

Grading criteria:

Grade A: Exceptional. In addition to meeting the criteria for grades B & C, this work also:

- Demonstrates superior skill and thought, skillful use of language to represent your ideas as a probable, believable and fair interpretation of the specific media issues.
- Provides insights and demonstrates in-depth understanding of the topic, issues, etc.
- Arguments and conclusions are exceptionally well developed, coherent, well-organized.

Grade B: Above Average. In addition to meeting the criteria for grade C, work also:

- Exhibits a thoughtful and thorough understanding of the media issues being examined.
- Shows some insight, critical reflection and creativity in the analysis.
- Arguments/conclusions are organized clearly & very well supported with examples and evidence.
- Fine writing skills.

*Grade C: Average. Meets all of the **minimum** criteria for the specific assignment.*

- Writing errors are minor and language is used correctly.
- Arguments and conclusions are adequately supported with specific examples.
- Work is completed by the deadlines and conforms to page requirements.
- Sources (if required) are cited correctly.
- Demonstrates some insight or critical reflection. Interpretation relies mostly on description. In other words, states the obvious or simply re-states points already made in class/texts/videos, etc.

D or F: Below average: Does not fulfill minimum criteria for a grade of C. Overall, below average work may have one or more of the following problems:

- Excessive writing and/or language errors.
- Work is based primarily on unsupported opinions; fails to use specific examples and

evidence.

- Misses the point of the assignment; lacks depth — demonstrates minimal effort.
- Demonstrates minimal insight, interpretation or critical reflection.
- Work is plagiarized.

Grade Negotiations: In order to be fair to everyone in the class, I do not negotiate grades. Please don't ask to be an exception to this policy. I also do not give incomplete grades except for reasons stated in university policy.

Course Policies:

• **Attendance:** This course is about reading, thinking, viewing, listening and talking. Everyone is expected to attend every session of the class and to participate in discussions in class and in their teams. Please don't be late or leave early—both will count as absences. Please inform me ahead of time if you have to miss class for a university-excused absence. If you miss more than two days of classes, your final grade may be reduced accordingly.

If you miss any of your meetings for your team assignments, you will receive a zero for that assignment (F). No excuses—period. For example, showing up at the wrong place for your team meeting is not an excuse. It's your responsibility to know where and when your team is meeting and then be there on time with your work for the meeting completed.

• **Assignments:** In order to receive a passing grade for WGS 1010, you must complete all of the course assignments.

• **Deadlines:** Are final. That's why they call them *deadlines*. No make-ups, no exceptions. Computer-related problems do not count as excuses for submitting late assignments. It's your responsibility to back up your work to avoid such problems.

• **Decorum:** We're all in this together. That means that we will need each other to succeed. And that means that everyone is expected to treat everyone else with fairness, courtesy and honesty. Please apply the Golden Rule—Don't whisper in class. Don't bring your lunch. Don't sleep in class.

Your attitude toward the course and the material we cover is also an important part of the class. Every class has its norms, and an important norm in our class is a willingness to be open to and considerate of the thoughts and ideas of your classmates. The course content and assignments are not emphasizing *what* to think, rather, *how* to think critically about gender. Let's say we have 30 people in our class—that means we will have at least 30 different perspectives toward the readings, etc., based on our individual life experiences. Although you may disagree with the thoughts and perspectives of others, including your professor, it is essential that we all respect each others' views and beliefs. All viewpoints are valid and important—one view is not more valuable than another.

Other norms for WGS 1010 are: consideration, respect, non-judgment, courtesy and attentiveness. In addition to regular attendance, your final grade will reflect how closely you

choose to adhere to these norms. Finally, if your behavior is disruptive to the class, your final grade may be reduced. I am the final arbiter about these matters.

Other Stuff

- **Conferences:** Please make an appointment with me to discuss your progress and any problems or concerns you may be having in the course.
- **Academic Honesty:** The University expects students and faculty alike to maintain the highest standards of academic honesty (for a complete definition, see University Catalogue or the Code of Policies and Procedures for Students at Utah State University, Article V, Section 3). The policy states: "[C]heating, falsification or plagiarism can result in warning, grade reduction, probation, suspension, expulsion, payment of damages, withholding of transcripts, withholding of degrees, removal a class, performance of community service, referral to appropriate counseling" or other penalties as the university judiciary may deem appropriate. Students who hand in similar or identical work will receive an "F" regardless of who copied from whom. If you have any questions about what's acceptable work under strict codes of academic honesty, see the USU Code of Policies and Procedures for Students, or consult your professor. Any suspicious work may be submitted to a database that compares student papers to other student and published work in a web database. FYI: Plagiarism and how to avoid it: <http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml>
- **Disability accommodations:** If a student has a disability that will likely require some accommodation by the instructor, the student must contact the instructor and document the disability through the Disability Resource Center (7-2444), preferably during the first week of the course. Any requests for special considerations relating to attendance, pedagogy, taking of exams, etc. must be discussed with and approved by the instructor. In cooperation with the Disability Resource Center, course materials can be provided in alternative formats.
- **Please note:** As part of our course requirements, we will be viewing several documentaries and films that deal with gender issues in American society over time. Some of that may occasionally contain content that includes profanity, violence, sexuality or other matter that some students may find uncomfortable. FYI: Approximately 70-80% of Hollywood films are R-rated.

Guidelines for Written Assignments

- Typed, 12 pt. font, double-spaced papers (APA or MLA style) are required for all assignments.
- Grades you earn are based on thoroughness, clarity and insight. Use specific examples to support your ideas and conclusions.
- Avoid extended quotations. Most can be cut down and paraphrased. I'm looking for your original thought and synthesis of information/data, not just regurgitation of what others have said.
- Spelling/syntax/grammar/punctuation/style errors lower your score. Errors of fact

result in failure for the assignment. So proofread carefully. And then proofread a second time! FYI: Proofreading tips for common writing errors:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets.shtml>

- English Department Writing Center: You may schedule an appointment with the Writing Center by phone (797-2712) or on-line (<http://writingcenter.usu.edu/>). The Writing Center is located at RBWest 104. There is a small fee for this service.
- Information/data or quotation or opinion or statement of fact taken from any other source must be attributed using APA or MLA style. You may paraphrase statements of others, but must cite the source; if the material is quoted (i.e., from newspapers, books, TV, etc.), it must be placed in quotes, cited with complete accuracy, and cited completely. Failure to give full credit to your sources of information may be considered plagiarism

Schedule : This is our tentative schedule of readings and assignments. A student-driven class often results in adjustments to our readings and other articles will be added during the semester. Be sure to click on the links for all of the pages for the on-line articles. Also, if the link doesn't work, **please cut & paste the URL**. The syllabus with URLs for most online readings is available on-line: <http://www.usu.edu/womenstu/web/faculty.htm> OR <http://www.usu.edu/journalism/faculty/cooper/>

Week 1: Course overview

Aug. 29 Why Women & Gender Studies?

Aug. 31 Chapter 1

Bra-Burning & other feminist myths & urban legends

<http://www.snopes2.com/history/american/burnbra.htm>

Definitions of feminism

<http://www.tolerance.org/teens/pq/tellstoryResponses.jsp?p=0&ar=8>

<http://ntb.stanford.edu/quotes.html>

Week 2: Feminism & Women's Rights

Sept. 5-7` Chapter 15 & *Iron-Jawed Angels* (docudrama)

“Alice Paul”

http://womenshistory.about.com/od/paulalice/p/alice_paul.ht

“ U.S. Suffrage Movement Timeline”

<http://www.rochester.edu/SBA/timeline1.html>

“Winning the Vote: American Woman Suffrage Timeline ”

<http://womenshistory.about.com/library/weekly/aa031600a.htm>

Week 3: Societal Understandings of Gender & Feminism

Sept. 12 Chapter 2

“Kinds of Feminism” http://www.uah.edu/woolf/feminism_kinds.htm

“Too late for Prince Charming...” <http://msnbc.msn.com/id/12940202/site/newsweek/>

“Marriage by the Numbers: Twenty years since the infamous terrorists line...”

<http://msnbc.msn.com/id/13007828/site/newsweek/>

Sept. 14 **Gender, feminism and multi-culturalism**

Additional readings TBA

“White Privilege: Unpacking the invisible backpack” (Peggy McIntosh)

<http://seamonkey.ed.asu.edu/~mcisaac/emc598ge/Unpacking.html>

“Black suffrage and the struggle for Civil Rights” (will send by email)

Civil Rights, Black women & entertainment industry—Dorothy Dandridge

http://www.gale.com/free_resources/whm/bio/dandridge_d.htm

Freedom on My Mind & A Passion for Justice (documentaries)

• *Name of woman for oral history assignment due. Include typed, 1-page paper describing why you selected this family member.*

Week 4: Defining Gender for Women & Men

Sept. 18 *Last day to drop without “W” notation on transcript*

Sept. 19 Meet in library 155 for magazine search session with Ms. Britt Fagerheim

“*Feminine Mystique*,” Chapters 1 & 2

<http://www.h-net.org/~hst203/documents/friedan1.html> (#1)

<http://coursesa.matrix.msu.edu/~hst203/documents/friedan2.html> (#2)

Sept. 21 Chapters 3 & 4, Chap. 11, pp. 354-373

“Reflections on male-bashing”

Masculine identities—readings TBA

Tough Guise (documentary)

Week 5: Gender & Media

Sept. 26 Chapter 8—*Team Discussion #1 (& study guide)*

“Not a Pretty Girl”—Ani DeFranco:

<http://www.seeklyrics.com/lyrics/Ani-Difranco/Not-A-Pretty-Girl.html>

Women’s representation in the media (documentary)

Sept. 28 **Media, Gender & Body Image**

“Chubbie hubbies”

<http://www.recordonline.com/archive/2003/05/10/buz10.htm>

“Men, muscles and body image”

<http://www.cnn.com/2000/HEALTH/mayo/07/27/men.muscles/>

“Masculinity & advertising”

http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/issues/stereotyping/men_and_masculinity/masculinity_advertising.cfm

“The male body ideal that isn’t”

<http://www.montana.edu/news/1015951400.html>

“TV’s one-size-fits-few message floods island”

<http://web.gosanangelo.com/archive/99/may/28/opinion2.htm>

“Media . . . teen-age girls”

<http://www.cnn.com/HEALTH/9911/14/girls.weight/>

“Eating disorders & their precursors”

http://womensissues.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?site=http://www.nationaleating_disorders.org/p.asp%3FWebPage%5FID=286%26amp%3BProfile%5FID=41138

“Body image and media”

<http://www.region.peel.on.ca/health/commhlth/bodyimg/media.htm>

“Women have poorer body image than men”

http://rx.magazine.tripod.com/bn_20010510elin016.htm

“Adios Barbie”: Click on the link “Feed the model” <http://www.adiosbarbie.com>

“Media effect...”: http://www.mediafamily.org/facts/facts_mediaeffect.shtml

“Thin’ explores secret lives of women who purge”

http://www.sltrib.com/search/ci_3441969

Week 6: Gender: Health, Fitness & Beauty

Oct. 3 Chapter 6

Beauty Pageants (documentary)

“There she was. There she goes...Miss America” (will send by email)

• *Magazine & photo analysis due Oct. 3*

Oct. 5 **Gender, Education & Law**— *Team discussion #2 (& study guide)*

Chapters 5 & 9

“The Trouble with Boys”

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/10965522/site/newsweek/>

“Mommy, I know you”

<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/10965127/site/newsweek/>

“Well-behaved scholar makes history” (Will send by email)

Week 7: Gender & Religion—Chapter 7—*Team discussion #3 (& study guide)*

Oct. 10 *The Need to Know* (documentary)

Oct. 12 Guest Speaker: Julie Hollist, “Myth of the Ideal Mormon Women”

Week 8: Family & Gender Issues—*Team discussion #4 (& study guide)*

Oct. 17 Chapter 11, pp. 374-383; Chapter 13.

USU student marriage rate

http://www.hardnewscafe.usu.edu/news/localnews/122005_90percent.html

“Listen up, Utah girls”

http://www.hardnewscafe.usu.edu/artlife/culture/113005_mrsdegree.html

“He Thinks He’ll Keep Her”—Mary Chapin Carpenter: (cut & paste URL)

<http://www.cowboylrics.com/lyrics/carpenter-mary-chapin/he-thinks-hell-keep-her-5180.html>

Oct. 19 **Women & Politics** (readings TBA)

Guest speaker: TBA

“Women achieving more politically”

<http://www.thewhitehouseproject.org/v2/press/2006/June/2006-06-20-AP.html>

Gender & Communication, Chapter 10

Week 9: Gender & Work Issues

Oct. 22 Chapter 14. *Team discussion #5 (& study guide)*

“UT among highest in gender wage gap”

http://www.sltrib.com/utah/ci_3110648

“Women are charging up the corporate ladder ... unseen by the next generation”

<http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/0227/p09s01-coop.html>

Women & Science

http://www.sltrib.com/homeandfamily/ci_3100700

http://www.sltrib.com/homeandfamily/ci_3102250

http://www.sltrib.com/healthscience/ci_3104985

- *Talking from 9-5* (documentary)
- *The Life & Times of Rosie the Riveter* (documentary)

“Rosie the Riveter” articles

<http://web.uccs.edu/history/student%20presentations/alivia/>

<http://www.loc.gov/rr/program/journey/rosie-transcript.html>

http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/list/126_rosi.html

“What did you do in the war, Grandma?”

http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/WWII_Women/tocCS.html

Women at War: Redstone's WWII Female "Production Soldiers"

<http://www.library.csi.cuny.edu/dept/history/lavender/redstone.html>

Oct. 24 **Gender & Work Issues: Women in the Military**

Guest Speaker: Brandi Harline

“Army specialist refuses to return to Iraq”

<http://www.registerguard.com/news/2006/06/13/a1.arrest.0613.p1.php>

“Tailhook scandal” Sexual harassment in Navy

http://www.gale.com/free_resources/whm/trials/tailhook.htm

Additional readings TBA

Week 10 Gender & Sports

Oct.31 *Last day to drop without drop form & “WF” on transcript*

Oct.31 *Dare to Compete* (documentary)

“Baseball/African American women”

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2006/03/12/ING4THKSUN1.DTL>

“Women’s Pre-Title IX sports history in the U.S.”

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/history/article.html?record=769&send=1>

“ Title IX and the Growth of Women’s Athletics”

http://www1.cuny.edu/portal_ur/content/womens_leadership/title_athletics.html

“ Playing Fair: A guide to TITLE IX ...”

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/geena/record.html?record=829&send=1>

“Title IX AT 30...Still room for Improvement”

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/disc/article.html?record=902&send=1>

“Women ski jumpers denied Olympic opportunities”

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/geena/unbel.html?record=10&send=1>

“Posting up in the Pink Ghetto: Is the sports work force a level playing field”?

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi->

[bin/iowa/issues/disc/article.html?record=884&send=1](http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/disc/article.html?record=884&send=1)

Nov. 2 *Playing Unfair* (documentary)

“Gender equity and the black female in sport”

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/disc/article.html?record=869&send=1>

“Too sexy for their own good”?

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/media/article.html?record=1064&send=1>

“Swimsuits, sex objects and today’s female athlete”

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/media/article.html?record=799&send=1>

“Media coverage of women’s sports”

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/media/article.html?record=965&send=1>

“ The importance of language”

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/disc/article.html?record=872&send=1>

“(Dis)Empowering images? Media representations of women in sport”

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/media/article.html?record=881&send=1>

“Lack of news coverage for women’s athletics”

<http://www.womenssportsfoundation.org/cgi-bin/iowa/issues/media/article.html?record=807&send=1>

Week 11 Gender & Sexuality Issues — *Team discussion #6 (& study guide)*

Nov. 7 Chapter 12 & *Defending Our Lives* (documentary).

UT rape statistics

http://www.sltrib.com/utah/ci_2935199

http://www.sltrib.com/opinion/ci_2943170

Tori Amos—“Me & a Gun”: <http://www.hereinmyhead.com/collect/earth/le11.html>

Dixie Chicks—“Goodbye Earl”:

<http://www.cowboylyrics.com/lyrics/dixie-chicks/goodbye-earl-10447.html>

“Week in the life of a CAPSA counselor” (Lexie Kite, USU JCOM senior)

Nov. 9 Guest Speakers: CAPSA, SAAVI

Week 12 International Gender Issues

Nov. 14 Guest Speaker: Professor Susan Mannon, Sociology

Readings TBA

“Tipping points: Are women advancing?” (Will send by email)

Nov. 16 Guest Speaker: Sarah Cozzens (WSG student)

“Gender imbalance in China” (will send by email)

• *Oral histories due*

Week 13 International Gender Issues

Nov. 21 *Postcards from the Future & Beneath the Veil* (documentaries)

Nov. 22-24 Thanksgiving Break

Week 14 Contemporary Women in male-dominated careers

Nov. 28-30 **Women in Media Industries**

Righteous Babes, Women in Country Music & In Her Own Image (documentaries)

Readings TBA

• *Journals due*

Week 15 Team Presentations—“History & Hollywood”

Dec. 5-7

Final Exam (Optional)

Thurs. Dec. 14 9:30-11:20