

**Introduction to Women's Studies (WMST 1080-01)**  
**Fall Semester 2009 T/R 1:20-2:40 CR 129**

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**Required Texts:**

- Women's Voices, Feminist Visions, 4th edition* by Susan M. Shaw and Janet Lee
- WyoWeb files
- Online readings

**Course Description**

Introduction to Women's Studies examines the social construction of gender in the contemporary United States, and covers a range of topics using various feminist perspectives and methods. Daily, we react and respond to gender norms and cues in thousands of little, and not-so-little ways. This course is designed to help us analyze these structures and our participation in them. We'll interrogate both material and abstract entities such as identity, subject position, performance of gender, bodies, sexuality, health, relationships and households, violence against and by women, work, crime, the military, masculinities, the environment and women's movements for change. And we'll maintain an awareness of the ways in which race, ethnicity, and class contribute to the discussion and analysis of each of these topics.

**By the course's completion, hopefully students will:**

- delineate differences and similarities among women of different classes, ethnic groups and national experiences
- articulate ways in which women are and have been portrayed in and through culture; understand how these portrayals contribute to an individual's lived experience and sense of "self."
- develop a historical context for women's and gender studies, acknowledging that in the past 40 years there has been an explosion of information and theory that challenges previous assumptions about the roles and status of men and women, and how this explosion has provided the foundation for several important social movements
- recognize the dynamics of oppression

**Grading**

Paper 1	20%
Paper 2	20%
Autobiography I	10%
Autobiography II	10%
Journals	10%
Sheroes Presentation	10%
Class Participation	20%

**Grade Scale:**

A = 96	B = 86	C = 76	D = 66
A- = 93	B- = 83	C- = 73	F = 55
B+ = 89	C+ = 79	D+ = 69	Failure to complete assignment = 0

**Attendance Policy:** Class attendance is crucial. You may miss **two classes** for any reason, university excused or otherwise, without affecting your class participation grade. For any absences after that, you must contact me for instructions on how to make up that day's class participation, or your **total** class participation grade will be **reduced by one letter grade**. If a written assignment is due the day you are absent, you must still turn it in. If you do miss class, please contact a classmate to find out what we covered that day.

**Due Dates: Written Assignments must be submitted electronically as ATTACHMENTS (doc, docx, or rtf) by the beginning of the class period on the day they are due.** Grades for late assignments will be reduced by one letter grade for each day late. I do grant extensions for compelling circumstances, but you must contact me at least 24 hours in advance of the due date. You will not be able to re-do any assignment. There are two extra credit options. *Completing an extra credit option will add anywhere from 3 to 6 points to one of your papers.*

**Disability Statement:** If you have a physical, learning, or psychological disability and require accommodations, please let me know as soon as possible. You must register with, and provide documentation of your disability to University Disability Support Services (UDSS) in SEO, room 330 Knight Hall, 766-6189, TTY 766-3073.

**REQUIREMENTS:**

If you have any questions about assignments, grading procedure, or the like, please contact me in person or via e-mail right away. I am happy to go over any of these. Below you will find *general* grading guidelines for each requirement. As they indicate, I grade based on development, visible effort, and application of the skills & concepts we cover in class. Standards of English language always apply—grammar, diction, etc. will affect the quality and clarity of your papers and projects (but do feel free to break with these standards for obvious creative purposes!). Not every skill or piece of editorial advice offered in class discussion will apply to every project, so please parse these as suits your particular needs. If you find yourself a bit unsure, get in touch and I'll be glad to help!

*Class Participation:* Participation is key; see attendance guidelines!

**D:** showing up and staying awake

**C:** contributing on occasion, basically on topic, and reflecting a decent amount of cumulative knowledge and skill based on previous discussions

**B:** contributing regularly, on topic, reflecting a solid cumulative knowledge and skill, offering insight or advice that may benefit classmates in their understanding

**A:** contributing each class, on topic and expanding the range of our topic, reflecting an excellent retention of knowledge and skill level, offering particularly remarkable insight and advice that benefits classmates in their understanding & critical thought

Leading Class Discussion: The texts we're reading this semester may strike you exciting, challenging, strange, irritating, baffling, remarkable, gritty, peculiar, unsettling, invigorating, or all of the above. Taking turns leading the class discussion will help us incorporate our varied perspectives and reading styles

1. Please prepare three complex discussion questions for the work you are assigned.
2. You will *e-mail a copy of these questions* to me by the beginning of the class.

The grade for this assignment will be factored into your total class participation grade. Your grade will improve if you use the terms of discourse from our list.

**My text and date are:**

- D:** failure to engage the text on a basic level; failure to prepare coherent questions
- C:** basic engagement of the text; competent questions reflecting adequate cumulative knowledge of our class tools & concepts
- B:** thorough engagement of the text; thought-provoking questions reflecting strong cumulative knowledge of our class tools & concepts
- A:** excellent engagement of the text; challenging questions reflecting exceptional cumulative knowledge of our class tools & concepts

Journals: Your journal will feed your autobiography. After each class, please type one single-spaced page detailing your response to class discussion, your understanding and response to the readings, and how these inform what you experience as your own sex & gender. Journals will be graded on the basis of length and comprehension. Journals will NOT be graded based on opinion—your journal, your opinions! You need not complete journal entries on the day a written assignment is due, but please note the date and the assignment that was due. **I'll collect journals a few times via e-mail. I will announce the collection in class, and you will have until midnight to send me your journal.**

- D:** doesn't meet length requirements; doesn't demonstrate awareness of class discussion or readings
- C:** meets length requirements; demonstrates adequate comprehension of class discussion & readings; adds at least one original, complex opinion or question
- B:** meets length; thoughtfully reflects on class discussion & readings, adding original opinions & questions that demonstrate strong critical thinking skills
- A:** meets length; excellent reflection on class discussion & readings; offers original opinions & questions that show exceptional critical thinking skills

Gender Autobiography: Your autobiography consists of two separately graded parts. This is NOT your life story, no matter how compelling that may be. This is your **GENDER STORY**. A hint to keep you on track: be sure each paragraph relates explicitly to the experience of being/becoming a girl/woman/boy/man/gender variant individual. In each case, your autobiography will be improved by metaphor, experiments

in form, imagery, dialogue, and other such elements that make for an enjoyable, persuasive piece of literature.

*Part I, 5 pages due 10/1 via e-mail:* Part I of your autobiography will riff off our in-class gender writing. You will tell the story of your journey through gender. When did you first become a girl? A boy? How did you know? How would you evaluate your own performance of gender? How did your family contribute to your gender performance? Do you celebrate traditional roles? Do you gender bend? Do you think you're a macho dude, a girly girl, a metrosexual, a tomboy? How do you relate to these terms? Are there things about your sex or gender you believe essential or innate? Etc.

-In this written assignment, you must include at least *one* term from our list, *highlighted* and used appropriately and accurately.

*Part II 5 pages due 12/3 via e-mail:* Part II of your autobiography will retell your story at the end of our semester, and should employ the critical skills we've developed over the course of the semester. Has this class changed your reflections on girlhood, boyhood, womanhood, manhood, gender variance, intersexuality, tomboys, girly girls, macho men, etc.? Has it confirmed any of the views you originally held? What do you envision for your future? If you plan to have children, what will you teach them about sex & gender? What do you wish you were taught when you were young? What do you like best about being your gender? How do you think your life would've been/would be different if you were a different gender? Have you learned anything about people of other genders that will change the way you relate to them? Etc.

-In this written assignment, you must include at least *two* terms from our list, *highlighted* and used appropriately and accurately.

**D:** fails to reflect time, effort, and adequate response to the guidelines

**C:** responds adequately to guidelines; keeps gender in focus; thoroughly developed

**B:** well-polished; strong execution of guidelines; interrogates your journey through gender thought provokingly

**A:** exceptional development and response to guidelines; analyzes and narrates your journey through gender in a remarkable fashion; experiments with form

*Paper 1 5-7 pages, Due 10/27 via e-mail:* Choose ONE novel, story, poem, performer, public figure, tv show, film, or song. Relying on our readings, and the perspectives and methods we've thus far discussed, develop a thesis about the way this work upholds or challenges gender stereotypes or gender norms. Base your thesis statement on this model (but feel free to enhance the model as suits your paper!):

1. State the specific gender stereotype(s)/norms your work upholds or challenges
2. Advance a precise argument about how the work does this

-Note, you may very well need two sentences!

#### EXAMPLES:

1. While *America's Next Top Model* reinforces any number of damaging beauty ideals, it simultaneously alters our cultural assumptions about women by documenting the models' performance in extremely challenging conditions, and the intelligence and strength such performance requires.
2. When M.I.A.'s *Galang* first appeared, a number of music critics claimed that a *girl* could not have actually performed and produced these cuts. From her hit single "Paper Planes" to performing nine-months pregnant at the 2009 Grammy Awards, this multi-talented woman proves critics embarrassingly wrong.
3. Though men are taught to hide their emotions, to stay tough in the face of adversity, some of our most beloved masculine icons have been the very men who aren't afraid to show their soft sides. Dave Matthews's soulful songwriting demonstrates that a man can have a heart and wear it on his sleeve.

#### ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

- In this paper, you must include *at least three* terms from our list, used *appropriately and accurately*, and *highlighted* in the final draft you turn in to me.
- Please use *at least three* quotes from our readings to support your argument.

**D:** some effort, but failure to meet basic requirements of the assignment

**C:** meets basic requirements; demonstrates basic analysis & application of tools & concepts covered thus far in class; employs adequate support/evidence; decent grammar & writing skills; good critical thinking skills

**B:** demonstrates thorough analysis & application of tools & concepts; employs strong support/evidence; thought-provoking writing & critical thinking skills

**A:** demonstrates exceptional analysis & application of tools & concepts; provides remarkably compelling support/evidence; complex writing & critical thinking skills

Paper 2 5-7 pages, Due 11/24 via e-mail: You will have two choices. In either case, your paper must concern itself with ONE of the following themes:

- personal safety
- women athletes
- women in the military
- family pressures
- gender across class lines
- heterosexual/gay & lesbian spaces
- reproductive volition
- the workplace
- violence committed by women
- motherhood/fatherhood
- flirtation and objectification
- ecofeminism
- new forms of masculinity
- or a theme of your own, which I will need to approve in advance

CHOICE 1: Attempt to do a Gender Bender exercise (see attached guidelines)

CHOICE 2: Analyze how a specific public space produces, reinforces, polices, and/or challenges cultural construction of gender roles. For this option, you must choose a literal space: the gym, a restaurant, the mall, Prexy's Pasture, the library, the nail salon, a garage...

Base your thesis statement on this model (but feel free to enhance the model as suits your paper!):

1. Introduce the theme you will be discussing
2. Briefly describe the gender bender activity or public space you chose to analyze
3. Advance a specific argument about what you learned from your activity or observation as it relates to the them you have chosen

#### EXAMPLES:

1. While women lawyers, doctors, and business executives have become much more commonplace in recent decades, women mechanics are still few and far between. For my gender bender exercise, I chose to accompany my friend Jack to his auto repair class at Wyoming Technical Institute. There were no other women in the classroom, and some of the men appeared to doubt my capacity to complete the hands-on assignment, but I learned that this is a field that women can excel in, and one which women might find personally and financially rewarding.

2. Recently, I read an article about co-parenting in the *New York Times*, and I began to wonder what parenting looks like for an average Laramie family. Are more dads getting involved in the child-rearing? Are more moms working full-time? On a sunny Thursday afternoon, I took my three-year-old niece to the park, and what I saw...

#### ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:

-In this paper, you must include *at least three* terms from our list, used *appropriately and accurately*, and *highlighted* in the final draft you turn in to me.

-Please use *at least three* quotes from our readings to support your argument.

Graded on same model as Paper 1.

Image Presentation 3-5 minutes due 10/8: Choose an advertising image that uses a human body to market its product. You will present this image to the class and answer the following questions thoughtfully, completely:

- Which stereotypes it appears to uphold or challenge
- Is it exoticizing and/or objectifying its subject? How so?
- What's the best possible outcome of an image like this?
- What's the worst possible outcome?
- Who is this image aimed at? (Ie Who would find it attractive? Offensive?)

-In this presentation, you must include at least *one* term from our list, used appropriately and accurately.

-You must *e-mail a copy of your presentation notes* by the beginning of this class.

-The grade for this assignment will be factored into your total class participation grade.

**D:** thrown together; does not reflect time or effort; does not read images well

**C:** demonstrates adequate thought and effort; reads images adequately well

**B:** demonstrates thorough thought and effort; analyzes images well

**A:** demonstrates great thought and effort; surprising and exceptional analysis

*Sheroes of the Revolution Trading Card & Presentation 3-5 minutes due 11/12:* What's a shero?

Someone who's done significant work to improve gender or sexuality equality, someone who's challenged sex/gender/sexuality stereotypes, someone who has improved the quality of women's lives locally or globally, etc.

1. Discover a shero and,

2. based on the theorist trading cards at this Web site:

<http://www.theorycards.org.uk/main.htm>, create a trading card

3. design a card that lists his/her accomplishments, powers, etc.

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS:**

-While completing this assignment, consider how performance art, theatrics, camp, burlesque, and other seemingly outlandish tactics have helped activists subvert, alter, or draw attention to the dynamics of oppression. Why might such tactics come in just as handy as more conventional academic or journalistic arguments?

-In this presentation, you must include at least *two* terms from our list, used appropriately and accurately

-In this presentation, choosing a less obvious suspect will net you a higher grade...Susan B. Anthony is indeed an important figure, but consider the less famed figures whose work may have been at least as important

**D:** thrown together; does not reflect time or effort; does not accurately represent the shero you've chosen; fails to follow trading card format

**C:** meets requirements; adequately represents your shero

**B:** demonstrates thorough thought and effort; effectively communicates your shero's story and importance

**A:** demonstrates great thought and effort; surprising and exceptional communication of your shero's story and importance

## **Other Policies**

-I will communicate with you via your WyoMail address (\_\_\_\_@uwyo.edu). Please check your inbox regularly for important updates.

-You are responsible for keeping copies of all papers and assignments.

-I will expect documentation and works cited, preferably in **MLA format** <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/> on all written assignments. Failure to cite and/or assemble a works cited page could result in a failing grade.

-Please remember that the university advises that you spend at least 3 hours working outside of class for each hour you spend in class. I've kept that ratio in mind as I assembled our syllabus.

-For more information on your responsibility as a student and the instructor's responsibility to you, please see the following web page:

[http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/a&s/Current/2005Stud&TeachersWorking%20Together\(7-29-05\).doc](http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/a&s/Current/2005Stud&TeachersWorking%20Together(7-29-05).doc)

## **Academic Honesty**

*From the University's standard policy:*

The University of Wyoming is built upon a strong foundation of integrity, respect and trust. All members of the university community have a responsibility to be honest and the right to expect honesty from others. Any form of academic dishonesty is unacceptable to our community and will not be tolerated. Teachers and students should report suspected violations of standards of academic honesty to the instructor, department head, or dean. other university regulations can be found at:

<http://uwadmnweb.uwyo.edu/legal/universityregulations.htm>

## **Class Schedule and Assignments**

Subject to change, with advance notice. All readings from *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions*, hereafter referred to as *WV*, all readings from our WyoWeb files referred to as *WWF*.

### **Week 1**

Tue. 8/25      What is Women's Studies?, Syllabus review, Basic terms and definitions

Thur. 8/27      *WV*: Ch. 1 Women's Studies: Perspectives and Practices  
*WV*: Readings 2, 4, 6

### **Week 2**

Tue. 9/1      [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radical\\_feminism](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Radical_feminism)  
<http://www.feministezine.com/feminist/modern/Black-Feminist-Statement.html>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riot\\_grrrl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riot_grrrl)  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/08/08/opinion/08herbert.html>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SCUM\\_Manifesto](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SCUM_Manifesto)  
<http://blog.iblamethepatriarchy.com/extra-credit/scum-manifesto/>

Thur.. 9/3      *WV*: Ch. 2 Systems of Privilege and Inequality  
In-class gender writing

### **Week 3**

T. 9/8      <http://blog.iblamethepatriarchy.com/patriarchy-blaming-the-twisty-way/>  
*WV*: Readings 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17

R. 9/10      *WV*: Ch.3 Learning Gender in a Diverse Society  
*WV*: Readings 20, 21, 25

### **Week 4**

T. 9/15      *WV*: Ch. 4 Sex, Power, and Intimacy  
*WV*: Readings 26, 31, 33

R. 9/17      *WV*: Ch. 5 Inscribing Gender on the Body  
*WV*: Readings 34, 36, 43

### **Week 5**

T. 9/22      *WWF*: Judith Butler "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution"  
Resource links: <http://www.theory.org.uk/ctr-butl.htm>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judith\\_Butler](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judith_Butler)

R. 9/24      *WWF*: Anne Fausto-Sterling "That Sexe Which Prevaileth"

### **Week 6**

T. 9/29      *WV*: Ch. 6 Health and Reproductive Rights  
*WV*: Readings 45, 51

R. 10/1      **Autobiography Part I Due**

### Week 7

T. 10/6 Film: *Killing Us Softly 3*  
<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-1993368502337678412>  
Article: <http://www.pbs.org/kued/nosafeplace/articles/nightmare.html>

R. 10/8 Image presentations

### Week 8

T. 10/13 *WV*: Ch. 7 Family Systems, Family Lives  
*WV*: Readings 53, 56, 58  
<http://bitchphd.blogspot.com/2004/07/feminism-101.html>

R. 10/15 TBA

### Week 9

T. 10/20 Thesis workshop for Paper 1

R. 10/22 *WV*: Ch. 8 Women's Work Inside and Outside the Home  
Readings 59, 61, 63  
<http://bitchphd.blogspot.com/2004/12/gosh-i-miss-my-husband.html>

### Week 10

T. 10/27 **Paper 1 Due**

R. 10/29 *WV*: Ch. 9 Women Confronting and Creating Culture  
Readings 66, 71, 72, 74

### Week 11

T. 11/3 WWF: Gwendolyn Brooks "The Mother,"  
WWF: Lara Glenum [title TBA]  
WWF: Toi Derricotte from "Natural Birth"  
<http://www.momsrising.org/aboutmomsrising>  
<http://www.momsrising.org/crisis-bias>

R. 11/5 *WV*: Ch. 10 Resisting Violence Against Women  
*WV*: Readings 77, 80, TBA

### Week 12

T. 11/10 WWF: Donna Haraway "Situated Knowledges"

R. 11/12 Sheroes of the Revolution presentations

### Week 13

T. 11/17 *WV*: Ch. 11 State, Law, and Social Policy  
*WV*: Readings: 87, 88, 90

R. 11/19 *WV*: Ch. 12 Religion and Spirituality in Women's Lives  
*WV*: Readings 93, 98

**Week 14**

T. 11/24 **Paper 2 Due**

R. 11/26 Thanksgiving Break—No Class

**Week 14**

T. 12/1 *WV*: Ch. 13 Activism, Change, and Feminist Futures  
*WV*: Readings 100, 102, 106

R. 12/3 **Autobiography Part II Due**

## WMST 1080: Gender Bender Paper

You may begin this assignment in one of two ways:

1. In a familiar public place, alter your performance of gender in some obvious ways: change the way you dress, sit, speak, and move. You may take this as far as drag, or attempt a more subtle shift along the gender spectrum.
2. Do something you have never done before because of gender expectations: change the oil in your car, complete a Martha Stewart style craft project, get a manicure, pluck your eyebrows, don't pluck your eyebrows, apply for a job not often held by someone of your gender, ask your partner to switch gender roles for the weekend, etc.

You will produce a “before,” “during” and “after” narration of this event.

**BEFORE:** For example: What were your expectations? Were you excited? What seemed fun about this activity? Were you afraid of this activity? What seemed daunting about it? Why do you think you felt this way?

**DURING:** Explicitly narrate the activity. You may want to take notes or bring a voice recorder. What does it feel like to do this? What are you most aware of? Is your awareness exaggerated? Are people staring at you? Which parts do you think you perform well, and which parts do you think you're flubbing?

**AFTER:** What did you learn about yourself or gender-based attitudes? Any surprises? Considering the intense social construction of gender, how free are our choices? How difficult is it to make the uncommon choice? How does one, if s/he wishes, alter the social fabric?

You may not narrate a Gender Bender experience you've had in the past. You must choose and perform a new task unique to this assignment.

### **EXTRA CREDIT Option 1: WMST 1080: Film Response Guidelines**

Your finished response should be 2 pages, double-spaced and typed and submitted VIA E-MAIL AS AN ATTACHMENT.

Do NOT aim to summarize the film. Instead focus your analysis on the film's content.

**Section I: Pre-analysis Statement:** Before you watch the movie, consider what effect your gender, age, location, race, sexual identity and/or class will have on your reaction to the movie. Speculate on whom this film was meant to appeal? Consider; films often encourage you to engage in *reflexivity* and *empathy*, the process of putting yourself in someone else's shoes. They also often serve to reinforce the status quo, to win you over to the status quo.

**Section II: Free Writing:** Immediately after watching the movie, spend ten minutes writing down your response to the performance of sex and gender in the film. Write as swiftly as you can, and don't worry about making linear sense—record all your sensations, associations, theories, inklings, etc. If you have trouble getting started, you might focus on questions like these: What sort of space did the filmmaker create? Did I feel welcome in it? What did it provoke in me? Did I feel nervous, excited, disgusted, warmed? Did the film manipulate me, or resonate with me?

**Section III: Analysis:** Pick one way in which the film deploys or challenges sex and/or gender norms. Was it successful, and how did it affect your response? Did your emotional response to the film seem in accordance with your intellectual analysis? Did your original perspective change? Or did it remain the same? Why or why not?

**EXTRA CREDIT Option 2: WMST 1080: Event Response Form**

please submit your responses via e-mail as an attachment—you may download a copy of this form on our WyoWeb files page

*Those in attendance were:*

Men     Women     Girls     Boys     Infants

White     Black     Latino/a     Asian     Native American

Gay     Lesbian     Bisexual     Polyamorous     Hetero

Female     Male     Intersexed

Working Class     Middle     Wealthy     Below Poverty Line

Other:

2. *For each category you checked, what privileges were members of that category afforded by the event?*

3. *For each category you checked, what fears/risks were members of that category subject to?*

4. How did your subject position (that is, your race, class, gender, sex, sexuality, ability/disability, ethnicity, religion, etc.) inform your participation in and enjoyment of the event?

## WMST 1080 Fall 2009 Partial List of Terms of Discourse

\*\*\*Please note that you are responsible for defining these terms on your own, via our class discussions and your readings, and that we may add terms to the list as the semester goes. I will occasionally ask you to share your definitions in class, so please bring them with you. You will be required to use these terms of discourse in your assignments, so please be sure you understand how to use them. These terms will be used in courses you take across the disciplines, and provide a base knowledge for subsequent WMST courses.

Be able to define, and name an idea, a theorist and dates associated with:

First wave feminism

Second wave feminism

Third wave feminism

Describe the difference between causation and correlation:

Describe the difference between quantitative and qualitative research:

Describe the differences between constructionist and essentialist ideas about women:

androcentrism

subjectivity

subject position

discourse

epistemology

post-feminism

post-colonial feminism

ecofeminism

radical feminism

liberal feminism (and liberal policy feminism)

cultural feminism

the male gaze

the symbolic order

intersectionality

matrix of domination

subaltern

subalterity

marginalize

ghettoize

hegemony

the “second shift”

the “mind/body split”

phallogentrism

matriarchy

matrilineal

heterosexism

standpoint epistemology

identity politics

ableism

white/male/heterosexual/etc. privilege

**WMST 1080: Questions and Definitions**

Please define the following:

Sex:

Gender:

Feminism:

Feminist:

Man-hater: