

WMNS 101: Introduction to Women's Studies

Fall 2014

Instructor: Melissa Govea

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Course Meeting Times: T/TH 9:45-11:10 a.m.

Santa Ana College

Office Hours: By appointment only

CRN: 87329

Required Texts

Please purchase the following texts:

- *Thinking about Women: Sociological Perspectives*, 9th Edition, by Margaret Andersen and Dana Hysock Witham. ISBN: 978-0-205-84095-3.
- *Half the Sky*, by Kristof Nicholas and Sheryl WuDunn. ISBN: 978-0-205-63306-7.

- Additional *required* readings on Blackboard. You are required to check Blackboard every week.

- *Thinking about Women* is on reserve in the library. If you are unable to purchase the textbook due to financial reasons, you must let me know in writing during the first week of instruction. If this is the case, you are required to bring photocopies of each week's reading to class, using the copy on reserve in the library.

Why Study Women's Studies?

Course Description

Women's studies was born out of a critical need to examine the experiences of women in society – from the seemingly private sphere of the home, to the transformation of women's rights at the global level. The topics which we will discuss this semester will be familiar to you: sexuality, female genital cutting, domestic life, rape, race, masculinity, etc.; however, we will be looking at them from unfamiliar angles.

All of us enter this class with some knowledge about these topics. Through class conversations and interactive lectures, we will draw upon our knowledge to learn about the experiences of both men and women. But "Introduction to Women's Studies" will require each one of us to reconsider the things we already know about gender and how it works in the world. This class will have you asking questions about the things you've taken for granted. And it will encourage you to critically examine how you came to understand gender from a particular point of view. More than anything, the goal of this class is to help you develop tools for thinking about, analyzing, and engaging with gender in new ways.

Course Design

This course will provide a "blended learning" experience. This means that we will use a variety of teaching materials, including lectures, discussion, video, and practical exercises. We will make use of intergroup dialogue and experiential learning. Films, songs, magazine articles, and images will play a key role in facilitating our discussions. All of this is designed to create opportunities for you to practice analyzing and critiquing gender.

Lectures will be interactive and attendance is mandatory. You should be prepared to answer questions that ask you to apply what you have read and to engage with other students.

Student Learning Outcomes

In concurrence with college policy and standards for core competency, you may expect to achieve the following Student Learning Outcomes in this course:

- **Communication Skills:** Clear oral and written explanations and evaluations of the difference between sex and gender. Identify, evaluate and construct well-supported arguments concerning the most important issues affecting women within the modern era.
- **Thinking and Reasoning:** Critically analyze through group dialogue and response papers, how the social construction of gender affects the following: language, the family academic education, the media, employment, politics, law, history, religion and health.
- **Diversity:** Explain and critically analyze how race, class, gender and sexual identity affect women's life experiences. Explain, analyze and integrate through written and oral assignments, the various strains of feminist thought (e.g., liberal, socialist, radical, multiracial.)

Communications

When there are announcements, I will post them on Blackboard and send you emails. It is your responsibility to check *both* the Blackboard site and the email account you provided to SAC to keep up with messages from your instructor.

Syllabus

The syllabus is subject to change. If I make changes, I will send an announcement letting you know that there is an updated version of the syllabus posted on Blackboard.

Expectations

This course is designed to make you think. The readings are meant to initiate discussion and a reevaluation of your assumptions about gender and how it operates in the world. Come to class prepared, which means that you have not only read the required readings and completed your assignments, but that you have reflected upon and thought critically about what you have read. As an integral part of the course structure and grading, your *active* and *informed* participation is imperative to your success in this class, which is why participation is weighted so heavily.

We will be referring to the course materials during each class meeting; come to every class with your syllabus, notes, and required texts. Failure to adhere to this policy with this will affect your grade.

In exchange for your preparation and participation this semester, I will make myself available to help you with the material. You are welcome and *encouraged* to contact me throughout the semester to discuss course materials, even if an assignment is not due. I will be happy to meet with you in person or correspond via email.

Grading

Assignment	Points	Percentage*
Attendance and Participation	100	14.7%
Weekly Reading Logs	60 (10 points each)	8.8% (total)
Discussion Questions	20	3%
Critical Reading & Thinking Groups	50	7.4%
Project-Based Learning Activities	50	7.4%
Half the Sky Presentation	100	14.7%
Exams (Three)	300 (100 points each)	44.1%
Total Assignments	680	100%

*Percentages are rounded. Grades should be calculated independently for the utmost accuracy

Attendance

Attend every class. Because this course covers a wide breadth of materials over a short amount of time, you will be at a disadvantage if you miss a class; however, I recognize that life is unpredictable, so you are allowed a maximum of two *excused* absences. In order for an absence to be considered excused, you must provide *formal written documentation*, e.g., if you are ill, you must provide a doctor's note. Any absence without formal documentation is considered unexcused and will count against your grade. If you know you are going to be absent ahead of time, let me know as promptly as possible. Absences for religious observances are excused; however, if you expect to miss a class because of a religious observance, you must notify me within the first two weeks of the semester. You may *not* make up any missed in-class activities/papers. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain class notes from one of your peers and to keep abreast of class happenings.

Participation

It is of the utmost importance that you not only attend each class, but that you participate in an *active* and *informed* way. This means that you come to class having *read* and *critically thought* about the materials. Your participation will be measured in three ways:

- 1) Your thoughtful contribution to class discussion
- 2) Your ongoing communication with me throughout the semester*
- 3) The submission of in-class assignments

* Communication with me may be made via email, or a conversation on the phone or in person. Emails and conversations that count for participation include: questions, links to relevant articles and current events, and reflection on the course.

Assignment Directions

All assignments turned into the instructor should be typed 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, have one-inch margins, and have proper grammar and spelling. Multiple page papers must be stapled. Please type your name, date, and class section at the top of the first page. **Assignments are due at the very beginning of class.**

Any cited work must be cited correctly according to ASA (American Sociological Association) standards. You may NOT use any type of text lingo (OMG, LOL, U, etc.); if used, zero will be assigned as the grade for the assignment.

Weekly Reading Logs – To be Completed Weekly; Collected at Random Six Times in the Semester

Because women's studies was born out of the need to create a bridge between more "personal," lived experiences and more "abstract," academic concepts, it is critical that we attempt to also draw the relationship between our personal experiences and the material we discussed in class. The weekly reading logs will ask you to identify important concepts, theories, key terms, and write a personal reflection. The reading logs may be found on Blackboard; their structure will differ for *Thinking about Women* and *Half the Sky*. You may not edit this document, unless it is to provide more space for you to write your answers; all sections on the reading log must be present and completed. The student is expected to print these out and complete them weekly. These weekly reading logs will serve as the student's study guide. No study guide will be given to you; thus, there is personal incentive for you to thoroughly complete these. You are to complete these every week and bring them to class. The reading logs will be collected on six random Thursdays throughout the course of the semester at the very beginning of class. No late reading logs will be accepted; be present and on time to class. Reading logs

are worth ten points each and are graded on a credit/no-credit basis. Incomplete or partial reading logs will receive a zero.

Critical Reading and Thinking Groups

This course requires one to think critically about the world through employing the *sociological perspective* to think about the world in which he/she lives. Throughout the semester, various handouts (contemporary articles, academic journal articles, song lyrics, spoken word, images, social theory, etc.) will be distributed to the class. Students will break into groups to discuss and *critically analyze* the distributed materials. While the CTRGs are designed for students to engage in intellectual dialogue, students will independently complete and submit a textual analysis form for each Critical Reading and Thinking Group in which he/she participates. These forms will be handed out in class and may also be found on Blackboard.

For each Critical Reading/Thinking Group in which the student participates, he/she will turn in the textual analysis form, upon which he/she will be graded. Grades are given on a credit/no-credit basis. In the case of absences, they may not be made up, as this is a participatory exercise; this policy will be upheld even in the case of excused absences. At the end of the semester, the points for each CRTG will be divided by the total fifty points. Make-up work will not be allowed.

Project-Based Learning Activities

In order for students to become active participants in the construction of knowledge, students will be asked to participate in various Project-Based Learning activities throughout the course. Activities include: partner/group interviews, oral presentations, film analyses, devising institutional critiques, debates, and problem-solving. Students are graded on their *participation* in each activity, thus, students must be *present* in class. At the end of the semester, the points for each PBLA will be divided by the total fifty points. Make-up work will not be allowed.

Discussion Questions

During the first week of the semester, students will sign up to submit discussion questions, which he/she will pose to the class on the date for which he/she signed up. Discussion questions are required to be based upon the daily reading, but students are encouraged to bring in additional resources (newspaper/magazine clippings, song lyrics, etc.) to draw the relationship between class readings and current events. Questions should be thoughtful, clear, and encourage critical thought and discussion from the class; they must reference a passage from the assigned reading.

Discussion questions must be submitted to me the day of the presentation *at the beginning of class*. Bring one copy for yourself to present to the class during lecture and discussion; bring one copy for the instructor. The question must be formatted according to class standards. Emailed copies will not be accepted.

Student-led Presentations of Half the Sky (November and December)

The Presentation Guidelines may be found on Blackboard. Presentation dates may be found below.

In-Class Exams

The three exams will each consist of five, short-answer questions, worth twenty points each. Students will be graded on their ability to connect concepts and theory, the supporting of claims with evidence from the textbooks and class materials, and their evidence of critical thinking.

Classroom Policies and Information

Respect - *"If everybody is thinking alike, then someone isn't thinking."* – George S. Patton.

Come to class ready to engage in thoughtful, constructive dialogue. Challenging taken-for-granted assumptions about the world is not always easy. Some of the readings and discussions in the class might

make you uncomfortable. If anything about the class (a discussion, a reading, etc.) makes you particularly uneasy, let me know and we can talk about the problem.

Finally, it is crucial that our discussions remain respectful. *Always engage in debate about ideas. Never engage in personal attacks.*

Late Work

Late work will not be accepted and exams will not be administered past the date at which they were scheduled to be taken in class. Only in emergencies or in the case of serious illness may late work be *considered*. In concurrence with my absence policy, formal written documentation is required. You may *not* make up any missed in-class activities/papers or email me any assignments. If you have an excused absence, you may turn in your work at a date of my specification.

Because life can be unpredictable – illnesses arise, cars break down, computers stop working, etc., it is *highly* suggested that you provide yourself with ample time to begin and complete an assignment; start working on your assignments shortly after receiving the assignment instructions. I *strongly* recommend having an electronic copy ready to email me by the respective due date *and time just in case* an unforeseen circumstance arises; it is the student's responsibility to take the necessary steps to ensure they meet all deadlines. Please note that assignments are always due promptly at the beginning of class.

You may *not* make up any missed in-class activities/papers; this includes PBLAs and CRTGs. Any emailed assignments must be cleared with the instructor; a hardcopy will be due at the next available meeting. If you have an excused absence, you may turn in your work at a date of my specification.

Extra Credit

I will offer extra credit assignments at various points throughout the semester. I will notify the class when these opportunities arise.

Electronic Devices

Any electronic device which will pose a possible distraction to you or your colleagues will not be allowed during class time. Electronic devices include, *but are not limited to*: cell phones, organizers, laptop computers, pagers, translators, tape recorders, iPads, and iPods. Additionally, I do not allow recordings of any lecture or class discussion. Please turn off your phone before entering the classroom and refrain from turning it on until class is done.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Plagiarism and cheating are violations of the *Rancho Santiago Community College District's Academic Honesty Policy* and will be treated with severe action. If any student is found to have plagiarized and/or cheated on any assignment, the student will receive a zero on the assignment and be reported to the Associate Dean of Student Development. Information regarding plagiarism and SAC's policies may be found at: http://www.sac.edu/students/library/nealley/pathfinders/meb_plagiarism.htm. If you have any further questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism, please consult me and/or a librarian.

Dropping the Course

It is your responsibility to withdraw from the course. Please refer to the college schedule concerning add/drop and withdraw dates and procedures.

Grades

It is the student's responsibility to keep informed of his/her grade throughout the entire course of the semester and to communicate with the professor regarding his/her academic performance. Check Blackboard regularly to ensure your grades are consistent with your own records and standards.

Absence Policy

"It is the student's responsibility to withdraw officially from a course. However, because of enrollment demand, a student may be dropped by the instructor when not appearing at the first class meeting. A student may also be dropped for excessive absences when the total hours of absence exceed 10% of the total scheduled hours of the class." For example, if a class meets a total of 48 hours for the semester, 10% of 48 would be 4.8 hours.

Special Accommodation

Your success in this course is important to me. Santa Ana College and I are committed to providing reasonable accommodations for all individuals with disabilities. If you have a disability that may have some impact on your ability to do well in this course, I encourage you to speak with me as soon as possible. Also, please contact Disabled Student Programs & Services so that we can all collaborate on your classroom accommodations in a timely manner. DSP&S is located in U-103, and their phone number is 714-564-6264. The DSP&S office requires documentation of your disability in order to receive reasonable accommodations. If you do not have documentation, they will work with you to acquire it. I look forward to supporting you to meet your learning goals. Finally, "it is the disabled student's responsibility to contact the course instructor at the beginning of the semester to discuss potential plans when classroom evacuations are necessary."

A Final Note

As with any learning experience, your level of engagement with and commitment to the course will determine what you get out of the course. I encourage you to make the most of this opportunity by reading the required materials, participating in class discussions, and reflecting upon your own experiences. Additionally, I encourage you to communicate with me over the course of the semester about your learning needs. Your feedback is imperative to enabling me to better meet your needs. Please feel free to contact or schedule a meeting with me at *any time during the semester*.

Schedule of Topics, Readings, and Assignments

Assigned readings are **due** on the dates specified on the syllabus.

"Feminist education — the feminist classroom — is and should be a place where there is a sense of struggle, where there is visible acknowledgment of the union of theory and practice, where we work together as teachers and students to overcome the estrangement and alienation that have become so much the norm in the contemporary university."
— bell hooks

WEEK 1: Syllabus Overview and Introduction
 Tuesday 8/26/14: Syllabus Overview
 Thursday 8/28/14: Introductions
 Discuss "Critical Thinking" by bell hooks
Student Questionnaire Due

WEEK 2: Women's Studies: Why Study Women? *"I do not wish [women] to have power over men, but over themselves." -- Mary Wollstonecraft*
 Tuesday 9/02/14: Discuss Chapter 1
 Thursday 9/04/14: Discuss Chapter 1

WEEK 3: Women and Social Reform: The Personal is Political
 Tuesday 9/09/14: Discuss Chapter 12

Thursday 9/11/14: Discuss Chapter 12

WEEK 4: Who's Got the Power?: Women's Movements and Politics

Tuesday 9/16/14: Discuss Chapter 11

In-Class Film: *Miss Representation*

"Another world is possible." -- EZLN

Thursday 9/18/14: Discuss Chapter 11

WEEK 5: The Social Construction of Gender and Feminist Theory

Tuesday 9/23/14: Discuss selections from Chapter 2

Thursday 9/25/14: Discuss Chapter 13

"[The] simplistic definition of women's liberation is a dismissal of race and class as factors that, in conjunction with sexism, determine the extent to which an individual will be discriminated against, exploited, or oppressed." – bell hooks

WEEK 6: Feminist Theory and **Exam I**

Tuesday 9/30/14: Discuss Chapter 13

Thursday 10/02/14: **Exam I**

WEEK 7: Black Feminist Thought

Tuesday 10/07/14: Discuss Black Feminism Handouts

Thursday 10/09/14: Discuss Black Feminism Handouts

"The emotional, sexual, and psychological stereotyping of females begins when the doctor says, 'It's a girl.'" -- Shirley Chisholm

WEEK 8: Chicana/Xicana and Indigenous Feminisms

Tuesday 10/14/14: Discuss Chicana Feminism Handouts

Thursday 10/16/14: Discuss Chicana and Indigenous Feminism Handouts

"Men are taught to apologize for their weaknesses, women for their strengths." -- Lois Wyse

WEEK 9: Gender, the Media, and the Social Construction of Knowledge

Tuesday 10/21/14: Discuss Chapter 3

"Killing Us Softly"

Thursday 10/23/14: Discuss Chapter 3

bell hooks' *"Cultural Criticism and Transformation"*

"Tough Guise: Violence, Media, and the Crisis on Masculinity"

WEEK 10: Gender and Sexuality

Tuesday 10/28/14: Discuss Chapter 4

Thursday 10/30/14: Discuss Chapter 4

Staceyann Chin: *"All Oppression is Connected"*

Transgender Children

"It was we the people, not we, the white male citizens, nor we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed this Union." – Susan B. Anthony

WEEK 11: Exam II; The Family

Tuesday 11/04/14: **Exam II**

Thursday 11/06/14: Discuss Chapter 6

WEEK 12: Employment and Women's Work

Tuesday 11/11/14: Discuss Chapter 5

Thursday 11/13/14: Discuss Chapter 5

"No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world."

WEEK 13: Body Politics
Tuesday 11/18/14: Discuss Chapter 7
The Business of Being Born
Thursday 11/20/14: Discuss Chapter 7

WEEK 14: Global Feminisms: *Half the Sky*
Tuesday 11/25/14: Student-led presentation of *Half the Sky* (Chapters 1-4)
Thursday 11/27/14: **Happy Thanksgiving!**

WEEK 15: Global Feminisms: *Half the Sky*
Tuesday 12/02/14: Student-led presentations of *Half the Sky* (5-8)
Thursday 12/04/14: Student-led presentations of *Half the Sky* (9-11)

WEEK 16: Global Feminisms: *Half the Sky*; Exam III
Tuesday 12/09/14: Student-led presentations of *Half the Sky* (12-14)
Thursday 12/11/14: **Exam III**

Student Resources

The Tutorial Learning Center offers free tutoring in a variety of subjects. U-202 (714) 564-6260.

The Student Success Center offers customized, computer-aided individualized instruction in reading, language arts, mathematics, English, and writing. L-206 (714) 564-5420

The Student Support Services Program (SSSP) is a federal TRiO program designed to provide personalized supplemental services to 175 Santa Ana College students in order to help them stay in college, graduate and/or transfer. L-222 (714) 564-6843

The Owl at Purdue has several online resources to help with the writing process. 1) The Owl's Writing Lab addresses issues such as essay organization, quoting, conducting research on the web, etc. The website is here: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/679/01/>. They also have a website dedicated to research and citation resources, which you may find here: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/>.