

GNDR 111 Introduction to Gender Studies
Syllabus – Term

Professor: Dr. Kristin LaFollette
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 Office: Orr Center 3007
 Office hours: (or by appointment)

Credits: 3 credit hours
 Meeting time/location:
 Pre-requisite: N/A

Course Description

This course is designed as an introduction to the field of gender studies and the many ways gender is understood and examined. Lectures will be drawn from the humanities and social sciences as well as other disciplines within and beyond Liberal Arts.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Evaluate gender from a multidisciplinary perspective
- Critically evaluate the social-constructionist view of gender
- Demonstrate different schools of thought on masculinity
- Define reproductive self-determination versus reproductive freedom
- Identify how various disciplines study and understand gender
- Compare different (and sometimes competing) perspectives on gender
- Identify an author's main argument/point, the evidence used to demonstrate their argument/point, and the conclusions the author has drawn

Program Learning Outcomes

The following are the learning outcomes specific to the Gender Studies program:

- Increase student understanding of the biological, psychological, cultural, and social dimensions of sex and gender.
- Provide an arena of critical scholarly thought on issues of gender and sexuality.
- Allow for the exploration of relevant gender issues such as gender identity, sexual orientation, family structure, and the intersection of race, ethnicity, class, and ability.

Textbook/Course Materials

- There is not a required text for this course; instead, I will post readings throughout the course of the semester on Blackboard.
- Access to Blackboard

Assessment

Grading Events

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|--------------------------|------------|
| Introductory reflection | 25 points |
| Event reflection | 25 points |
| Reading facilitation | 25 points |
| Reading notes/journal | 75 points |
| Research presentation | 100 points |
| Attendance/participation | 50 points |

Total 300 points

Grading Scale

| | |
|----|---------|
| A | 270-300 |
| B+ | 255-269 |
| B | 240-254 |
| C+ | 225-239 |
| C | 210-224 |
| D+ | 195-209 |
| D | 180-194 |
| F | 0-179 |

All assignments will be turned in to the appropriate submission area on Blackboard. Feedback and grades will also be provided via Blackboard.

Grading/Assignment Policies

Late Work

In general, I do not accept late work. If you submit an assignment late, you will not receive credit. If you are not able to complete an assignment on time, you must contact me before the assignment is due to receive an extension. Failure of computer technology is not an acceptable reason for late written work. You should start your written work early and “back up” your drafts and revisions. YOU MUST SUBMIT EVERY MAJOR PROJECT IN THIS CLASS TO PASS. IF YOU FAIL TO SUBMIT ANY OF THE PROJECTS, YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY FAIL THE COURSE.

In-Class Activities

There will often be activities completed during each class session. If you are absent, these activities cannot be made up.

Participation

Students are expected to attend all classes, and it is crucial that all students have done the reading(s) for each class period. Class participation through discussion is required and necessary. Your participation/attendance score is worth 50 points at the end of the semester. You will lose 3 points for every class session missed (please see the full attendance policy below). Your participation score will be given holistically at the end of the course and will be based on your interactions in class (contributing to class discussion, asking questions, participating in group work, etc.).

Course Policies

Academic Honesty

All members of the university are accountable for their actions in maintaining high standards of academic integrity. Students are responsible for completing academic requirements without action and/or material that violate academic integrity. More information on academic integrity and the student code of conduct can be found at <https://www.usi.edu/deanofstudents/code>. The first incident of academic dishonesty will result in a 0 for the assignment. Further infractions will result in failure of the course. All academic dishonesty will be reported to the university.

Professionalism

Students should listen, engage, and appreciate an atmosphere of diversity and open discussion. Class discussion must be respectful; whenever students speak, they should be considerate of other students' feelings, use appropriate language, and make their points without being

combative or confrontational. Students should not use discriminatory language regarding their fellow students' gender, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or anything else. Students should listen to one another, ask questions, and explain their disagreements without attacking others.

Attendance

I will take attendance each class session. Students may miss up to 6 class sessions; if a student misses more than 6 class sessions, they will be ineligible to pass the course. According to the University Handbook, "Students who expect to be absent from classes should confer with their instructors prior to the absence. Students who miss classes are not excused from their obligations to instructors" (84). University-sanctioned absences will count toward the total number of excused absences. Students who believe they cannot complete the semester without missing 6 class sessions should either seek another section that poses fewer conflicts with their extracurricular schedules or drop the course and enroll in it during another semester. It is the student's responsibility to contact the instructor in the case of an absence before class. Since we are all connected to our electronic devices, it is almost always possible to send an email or text message indicating that you will be absent from class.

Late Arrivals/Early Departures

Late arrivals/early departures are defined as follows: If you arrive after the first 10 minutes of class or leave with 10 or more minutes left in the class session. Every 3 times you are late or leave early, you will receive 1 absence.

Technology

I appreciate technology and think cell phones, tablets, computers, etc. can be great tools for learning and composing. That being said, please be respectful of the instructor and the rest of the class. Cell phones, tablets, and computers are permitted, but please don't allow them to distract you or your classmates from what's going on in class. Laptops are welcomed and encouraged.

Communication

Contact me and/or make an appointment to come see me in my office if you have questions or need help with your writing. You should always use your USI email address (be sure to check your USI email frequently) and contact me using my USI email address (which is available at the top of the syllabus). You should also be checking Blackboard regularly to stay on track.

Names/Pronouns

I want to refer to you by your preferred name/pronouns. Please let me know if what is listed on my roster is not what you prefer.

Campus Resources

- Academic Skills (ED 1111) – tutors, supplemental instruction, writing help (usi.edu/university-division/academicskills)
- The Writer's Room (ED 1102) – one-on-one sessions with a writing consultant (812-461-5359)
- Rice Library – help with research, finding resources, etc. (usi.edu/library)
- Information Technology (IT) – help with computers, email, etc. (usi.edu/it)

University Policies*Accessibility*

If you have a disability for which you may require academic accommodations for this class, please register with Disability Resources (DR) as soon as possible. Students who have an accommodation letter from DR are encouraged to meet privately with course faculty to discuss the provisions of those accommodations as early in the semester as possible. To qualify for accommodation assistance, students must first register to use the disability resources in DR, Science Center 2206, 812-464-1961, www.usi.edu/disabilities. To help ensure that accommodations will be available when needed, students are encouraged to meet with course faculty at least 7 days prior to the actual need for the accommodation. Please contact Disability Resources as soon as possible to discuss accommodations needed for access while in this setting.

Title IX – Sexual Misconduct

USI does not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment and all forms of sexual violence. If you have experienced sexual misconduct, or know someone who has, the University can help. It is important to know that federal regulations and University policy require faculty to promptly report incidences of potential sexual misconduct known to them to the Title IX Coordinator to ensure that appropriate measures are taken and resources are made available. The University will work with you to protect your privacy by sharing information with only those who need to know to ensure we can respond and assist. If you are seeking help and would like to speak to someone confidentially, you can make an appointment with a counselor in the University Counseling Center. Find more information about sexual violence, including campus and community resources, at www.usi.edu/stopsexualassault.

Student Basic Needs

Students who have difficulty affording food on a regular basis or lack a safe place to live and believe this may affect their class performance are encouraged to contact the Office of the Dean of Students. A list of resources can also be found at www.usi.edu/media/5612733/financial-wellness-resources.pdf.

Syllabus Change Policy

This syllabus is a guide to the course and may be subject to change with reasonable advanced notice.

Projects

Introductory Reflection

For this assignment, you will be required to choose a specific reading, concept, theme, or discussion point from class to expand upon in a reflection essay (this assignment is called the Introductory Reflection because it will be due in Week 3 of the course). The reflection should be at least 3 pages in length. As you work on your reflection, consider the following questions:

- Why did you choose this particular topic for your reflection? What about it was interesting, surprising, or new for you?
- What did you learn while reading about this topic and/or discussing it in class? How can you apply what you learned inside and outside of the classroom?
- Did any of our class discussion points about this topic stand out to you? Did a specific aspect of the reading stand out to you? Why or why not?
- Did you do any additional research on this topic on your own? What did you learn?
- What else would you like to know about this topic?
- What are you most looking forward to learning about as we move forward in this course?

Event Reflection

You are required to attend one event on campus during the semester related to gender studies and write about the event topic and the speaker. In addition, you should make two specific connections to class content in a 2-page reflection. This assignment is designed to help you branch out on campus, attend an event with your classmates, and engage with academic discussions across disciplines.

This semester, the event you are required to attend is the Mandela Social Justice Day keynote address by Dr. Angela Y. Davis. Dr. Davis is an iconic activist, author, and professor and has made it her mission to share her life story and challenge her audiences to join the struggle for racial, economic, and gender justice. Her keynote will take place at 6:00 p.m. in Carter Hall (UC East). (If you absolutely cannot attend this event, you need to meet with me well beforehand to work out an alternate assignment. However, you should plan ahead and put this event on your calendar). I will be in attendance at this event; be sure to find me at some point so I can confirm your attendance on an attendance sheet. You will not receive credit for this assignment if you do not attend the event and/or if you don't meet with me to plan an alternate assignment.

Link to event: <https://www.usi.edu/liberal-arts/special-programs/mandela-social-justice-day/>

Reading Facilitation

Each member of the class will complete a reading facilitation for one class session. I will disperse a sign-up sheet at the beginning of the semester and each student will choose one day to facilitate class discussion (more than one student may sign up for a single day; if this is the case, those students should coordinate to ensure there is no overlap in discussion questions). For the day you sign up for, you will prepare four discussion questions on the assigned reading(s) for one class session. You should avoid asking close-ended questions (where the answer would be "yes" or "no") and/or vague questions (like "What do you think about..."). Your discussion questions should be on a handout that you distribute to the class as a hard copy or digitally (via email or Blackboard). In addition to providing the questions on the handout, you should also include key vocabulary words, statistics, and/or key themes/concepts from the reading(s) to help your classmates gain depth and insight.

Reading/Notes Journal

You will need to compose a response to each reading assigned for class. In addition, you should take notes during our in-class discussions. I will not collect your responses/notes each

week; rather, I will collect your responses/notes journal as a whole at the end of the semester. Your journal can be in any form you like – a notebook, a sketchbook, a typed document, etc. Feel free to be as creative as you like with your journal (you can sketch, doodle, collage, write, etc.). Your journal will be returned during our final exam period.

Research Presentation

Each student will give one professional, polished oral research presentation (7-9 minutes) using a visual (like PowerPoint slides or a Prezi) during our final exam period at the end of the semester. This will be timed and graded (your grade will be penalized if you are over or under the required time), but more importantly, it is a chance to share your research skills and project with your peers in an engaging way. This is also an opportunity to exercise important public speaking skills that have a variety of applications outside the classroom.

Your research for this presentation will have two components. For the first component, you will need to choose a gendered inequality issue in our contemporary society; this could be a topic we talked about in class or one you find while performing research (and some sample topics include the wage gap, sexual violence on college campuses, media stereotypes, expectations of sexual behavior, trans issues, etc.). Consider the following questions as you choose a topic and start your research:

- How did this inequality come to be?
- What are the effects of this inequality?
- What obstacles are the affected group facing?
- Consider key concepts we have discussed throughout the course: privilege, intersectionality, social construction, freedom vs. justice, etc. Apply one or more of these concepts to your chosen topic to reveal how power is operating.

For the second component of your presentation, you should identify an institution, campaign, or social movement working to address the inequality you choose to research. You should research and describe the effort, but also evaluate its impact. Consider the following questions as you work on this component of your presentation:

- Is this effort improving the circumstances of the affected group? How?
- If not, who is left out or what more can be done to improve the impact of this effort?

You will be given a sign-up sheet so you can choose a date/time slot to present. The visual you create to accompany your presentation should provide an overview of your research and talking points. Be creative with your visual; it should be clear and easy to understand, but also engaging. You should work toward finding at least six reliable sources to use in developing your research presentation; these can be a combination of popular and scholarly sources, but you should have at least two scholarly sources.

Course Schedule

BB – indicates reading can be found as a .pdf in Blackboard

L – indicates reading can be found via a link on the “Links to Digital Readings” document in Blackboard

| Day | Class/Due Dates | Readings/Homework |
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| Week #1 | | |
| Monday, 1/13 | Introduction to course, review syllabus and course schedule, Blackboard overview | Introductory questionnaire (Blackboard, extra credit), review Gender Unicorn infographic by Trans Student Educational Resources (L) |
| Wednesday, 1/15 | Introduce reading facilitations, sign up for reading facilitations, Gender Unicorn, social/cultural constructions of gender | Read “Parents Keep Child’s Gender Secret” by Poisson (L) and “Baby Storm Five Years Later” by Botelho-Urbanski (L) |
| Friday, 1/17 | Discuss readings, sex vs. gender identity vs. gender expression, review The GENDER Book (thegenderbook.tumblr.com) | Read preview of <i>A Quick and Easy Guide to They/Them Pronouns</i> by The Beat/Bongiovanni and Jimerson (L) |
| Week #2 | | |
| Monday, 1/20 | Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, no class | |
| Wednesday, 1/22 | Gender and language/communication, pronouns | Read “Introduction to Queer Theory” (pp. 3-15) from <i>Queer: A Graphic History</i> by Barker and Scheele (BB) |
| Friday, 1/24 | Discuss reading, sexuality, social constructions of sexuality | Read “Queer and Trans” (pp. 141-146) from <i>Queer: A Graphic History</i> by Barker and Scheele (BB) |
| Week #3 | | |
| Monday, 1/27 | Discuss reading, LGBTQ spectrum, queerness/queer theory | |
| Wednesday, 1/29 | Watch <i>Growing Up Coy</i> (documentary) | Finish introductory reflection |
| Friday, 1/31 | Introductory reflection due, | Read “What is Toxic |

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| | finish <i>Growing Up Coy</i> (documentary), transgender issues | Masculinity?" by Salam (L) and "Power and Bodies" (pp. 68-72) from <i>Queer: A Graphic History</i> by Barker and Scheele (BB) |
| Week #4 | | |
| Monday, 2/3 | Discuss reading, femininity vs. masculinity, transgender issues | Read introductory excerpt from <i>Bad Feminist</i> by Gay (BB) and "The Waves of Feminism" by Grady (L) |
| Wednesday, 2/5 | Mandela Social Justice Day keynote address by Dr. Davis (6:00 p.m. in Carter Hall), discuss reading | Review "Women's Suffrage Timeline (1840-1920)" from National Women's History Museum (L) and "Stepping Through History" from U.S. News (L) |
| Friday, 2/7 | Discuss keynote address and readings, women's suffrage, history of women's issues in the United States | |
| Week #5 | | |
| Monday, 2/10 | Watch <i>She's Beautiful When She's Angry</i> (documentary) | |
| Wednesday, 2/12 | Finish <i>She's Beautiful When She's Angry</i> (documentary), feminism/feminist activism and resistance | Finish event reflection, read "Race and Feminism: Women's March Recalls the Touchy History" by Bates (L) |
| Friday, 2/14 | Event reflection due , discuss reading, intersectionality (race and gender) | Read "Does Feminism Have a Class Problem?" by Geier (L) |
| Week #6 | | |
| Monday, 2/17 | Discuss reading, intersectionality (class and gender) | |
| Wednesday, 2/19 | Gender and families | Review "Intimate Partner Violence" infographic from UN Women (L) |
| Friday, 2/21 | Discuss reading, gender and intimate relationships | Read "The Illusion of Safety/The Safety of Illusion" from <i>Bad Feminist</i> by Gay (L) |

| Week #7 | | |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Monday, 2/24 | Discuss reading, gendered violence and rape culture | |
| Wednesday, 2/26 | Watch <i>The Hunting Ground</i> (documentary) | |
| Friday, 2/28 | Finish <i>The Hunting Ground</i> (documentary), gendered violence and rape culture cont. | Read "The Alienable Rights of Women" from <i>Bad Feminist</i> by Gay (L) |
| Week #8 | | |
| Monday, 3/2 | Discuss reading, gender and health, reproductive rights | |
| Wednesday, 3/4 | Gender and health, reproductive rights cont. | Read "Women and the Future of Work" from <i>Stanford Social Innovation Review</i> by Wesely and Midgley (L) |
| Friday 3/6 | Discuss reading, gender and work | Enjoy Spring Break! |
| Week #9 | | |
| Monday, 3/9 | Spring Break, no class | |
| Wednesday, 3/11 | Spring Break, no class | |
| Friday, 3/13 | Spring Break, no class | Read "One of the Biggest Reasons Women Aren't Getting Ahead at Work" by Boorstin (L) |
| Week #10 | | |
| Monday, 3/16 | Discuss reading, gender and work cont. | Read "Gender and Media: The Myths & Facts" (L) and review "The State of the World's Girls Report" from the Geena Davis Institute on Gender in Media (L) |
| Wednesday, 3/18 | Discuss readings, gender and the media | |
| Friday, 3/20 | Watch <i>Miss Representation</i> (documentary) | |
| Week #11 | | |

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| Monday, 3/23 | Finish <i>Miss Representation</i> (documentary), gender and the media | |
| Wednesday, 3/25 | Professor will be out of town at a conference, substitute will teach class | |
| Friday, 3/27 | Professor will be out of town at a conference, no class | Read "It's Time to Get Serious About Educating Women Around the World" by Gutterman (L) |
| Week #12 | | |
| Monday, 3/30 | Discuss reading, gender and education | |
| Wednesday, 4/1 | Gender and education cont. | |
| Friday, 4/3 | Semester wrap-up | |
| Week #13 | | |
| Monday, 4/6 | Introduce research presentations, sign up for research presentations | |
| Wednesday, 4/8 | Library research presentation (a representative from the library will come talk about research, finding resources, etc.) | |
| Friday, 4/10 | University closed, no class | Choose topic for research presentation |
| Week #14 | | |
| Monday, 4/13 | Research presentation topic due , small groups share topic ideas | |
| Wednesday, 4/15 | Research day, find sources to use in your research presentation | |
| Friday, 4/17 | Work on research presentation | |
| Week #15 | | |
| Monday, 4/20 | Work on research presentation | |

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| Wednesday, 4/22 | Work on research presentation | Finalize reading notes/journal |
| Friday, 4/24 | Reading/notes journal due , submit in person or via Blackboard | |
| Exam Week Begins | | |
| Monday, 4/27 | Research presentations | |
| Wednesday, 4/29 | Final exams begin Research presentations | |
| Friday, 5/1 | Final exams | |
| Exam Week Ends | | |
| Monday, 5/4 | Final exams | |
| Wednesday, 5/6 | Final exams, last day of Spring 2020 semester | |