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## SENIOR SEMINAR: THEORY AND PRACTICE

WMST 4900  
Spring 2007  
T/R 2-3:15 PM  
Leconte 135

This is the senior capstone course for Women's Studies majors. The course has two components. In the first section of the course, we will be completing a variety of challenging readings all linked in some way to "nature," a concept with important theoretical and practical implications for feminists in today's world. In the second section, students will design and carry out a project which will contribute to the establishment of a women's center on the UGA campus.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to attend all class sessions and complete all reading assignments on time.

#### **1. Attendance and Participation: 10%**

Active and informed participation is expected of all students. You must be present in class in order to participate; excessive absences will result in a lower participation grade. Because not all students are comfortable speaking up in class, however, it is accepted that participation can be verbal or non-verbal. Other acceptable forms of participation include: suggesting outside readings, recommending related films or television programs, and attending and reporting on related campus activities.

Some readings and class discussions may challenge how you think about the world. At times you may disagree with statements made by me, other students, and the authors we read. This is part of developing an informed and analytical perspective, and disagreements can help us think more critically about the material. However, in order for the classroom to be a comfortable environment for all of us, it is essential to voice disagreements in a respectful manner, to listen carefully to others, and to avoid attacking and insulting others.

Consistent tardiness, packing up early, or sleeping in class will result in a lower participation grade.

#### **2. Discussion Questions: 5%**

For each class day in the first section of the course, each student must turn in a discussion question on that day's readings. Discussion questions should be reflective, analytical, and demonstrate that you completed and gave substantial thought to the day's readings. You must be present in class to turn these in; no exceptions.

#### **3. Leading Class Discussion: 10%**

In groups of 2-3, students will lead one class discussion in the first part of the course. You will be responsible for the entire class period, and will be expected to generate a class discussion that leads students not to simply repeat the authors' arguments, but to engage reflexively and analytically with the readings. Discussion should build on what you've learned through your time in the women's studies program, and should link to other readings in this course as

well. A one page hand-out should be made available to students and instructors at the beginning of the discussion.

#### **4. Take-Home Exam: 25%**

The take home examination will consist of essay questions requiring you to analyze and reflect on course readings, lectures and discussions in the first part of the course

#### **5. Class Project: 50%**

The class project will be oriented around working to get a women's center on campus. The project design, student responsibilities, and assessment procedures will be established with input from the class, though I reserve ultimate decision making authority.

Aspects of the project might include:

- Gathering information of women's centers across the country through web searches and email/phone interviews
- Reviewing literature on the history, challenges, and successes of women's centers
- Formulating an open-ended survey to identify student perceptions of the need for a women's center and what it should offer
- Focus groups with students regarding the same
- Interviews/Discussions with relevant administrators
- Identification of necessary steps, unforeseen barriers, etc. at UGA
- Planning lay-out, space needs, etc.

### **ADDITIONAL POLICIES**

**Academic Misconduct:** Academic misconduct of any sort will not be tolerated. Any student found guilty of cheating or plagiarism will be penalized according to university policy. Please consult the Academic Honesty Policy (Section 5) if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism or cheating: [http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/culture\\_honesty.htm](http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/culture_honesty.htm)

**Accommodations for Students with Special Needs:** I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that you may require as a student with a disability. Before course accommodations will be made, you may be required to provide documentation to Disability Services (<http://www.dissvcs.uga.edu>, 542-8719).

**Cell Phones:** Please make sure to turn your cell phones off at the beginning of class.

**Grading Scale:**

100-94 = A	93-90 = A-	
89-86 = B+	85-83 = B	82-80 = B-
79-76 = C+	75-73 = C	72-70 = C-
69-60 = D	< 60 = F	

### **WEEKLY TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS (SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS INSTRUCTOR SEES FIT)**

Jan 9: Course Introduction

Jan 11: Brainstorm Project Design

## **NATURE: TOPICS FOR THOUGHT AS WE ENTER THE WORLD**

Jan 16: Basic Concepts

Reading: Gould, Tavis (1992), Oyewumi

Jan 18: Feminism and Science

Reading: Roughgarden (2004a), Gowaty, Tavis (2001)

Jan 23: Reproduction and Technology

Reading: Davion, Kahn

Jan 25: Biology, Culture, and Racialization

Reading: Fausto-Sterling, Bonilla-Silva

Jan 30: Transgender

Reading: Roughgarden (2004b), Schilt

Feb 1: Animals and Feminism

Reading: Bailey, Ramirez

Feb 6: Nature, Science, and Democracy

Reading: Shiva

### **Take-Home Exam Distributed Feb 6**

Feb 8: Exam Day – Work on your own time

## **THE PROJECT: ACHIEVING A WOMEN'S CENTER ON CAMPUS**

Feb 13: Establish Responsibilities and Divvy Up Labor

### **Exam Due in Class**

Feb 15:

Feb 20:

Feb 22:

Feb 27:

Mar 1:

Mar 6:

Mar 8:

Mar 13-15: Spring Break

Mar 20:

Mar 22:

Mar 27:

Mar 29:

April 3:

April 5:

April 10:

April 12:

April 17:

April 19:

April 24:

April 26:

### Required Readings

(This list is not comprehensive. We will add to it as the semester progresses.)

- Bailey, Cathryn. 2005. "On the Backs of Animals: The valorization of reason in contemporary animal ethics." *Ethics & the Environment* 10(1): 1-17.
- Bonilla-Silva, Eduardo. 2002. "The Linguistics of Color Blind Racism: How to Talk Nasty about Blacks without Sounding 'Racist'." *Critical Sociology* 28(1-2): 41-64.
- Davion, Victoria. 2006. "Coming down to earth on cloning: An ecofeminist analysis of homophobia in the current debate." *Hypatia* 21(4): 58-76.
- Fausto-Sterling, Anne. 2001. "Gender, race, and nation: The comparative anatomy of 'Hottentot' women in Europe, 1815-1817." Pp. 343-366 in *The Gender and Science Reader*, edited by M. Lederman and I. Bartsch. New York: Routledge.
- Gould, Stephen Jay 2002. "Women's Brains." Pp. 44-47 in *An Introduction to Women's Studies: Gender in a Transnational World*, edited by I. Grewal and C. Kaplan. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Gowaty, Patricia Adair. 2003. "Sexual Natures: How Feminism Changed Evolutionary Biology." *Signs* 28(3):901-921.
- Kahn, Susan. 2000. "Multiple Mothers," from her book, *Reproducing Jews*.
- Oyewumi, Oyeronke, "Visualizing the Body: Western Theories and African Subjects"
- Ramirez, Michael. 2006. "'My Dog's Just Like Me': Dog Ownership as a Gender Display." *Symbolic Interaction* 29(3): 373-391.
- Roughgarden, Joan. 2004a. "Same-Sex Sexuality." Pp. 127-158 in *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People*. Berkeley: University of California.
- . 2004b. "Transgender in Historical Europe and the Middle East." Pp. 352-376 in *Evolution's Rainbow*. Berkeley: University of California.
- Schilt, Kristen. 2006 "Just one of the guys? How transmen make gender visible at work." *Gender & Society* 20(4): 465-490.
- Shiva, Vandana. 2001. "Democratizing Biology." Pp. 447-465 in *The Gender and Science Reader*, edited by M. Lederman and I. Bartsch. New York: Routledge.
- Tavris, Carol. 1992 "Measuring Up: Why women are not inferior to men." in *The mismeasure of women*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- . 2001[1995]. "Biological Politics and the Study of Gender." Pp. 58-60 in *Psychobabble & Biobunk: Using psychology to think critically about issues in the news*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.