

CAPSTONE SEMINAR

Women's Studies 4935 (18795)

Fall 2021

Wednesdays, 1:55 – 4:55 p.m. (periods 7-9)

Meeting space: Ustler 108

Last updated 8/18/2021

INSTRUCTOR: Devan Johnson

OFFICE: Ustler Library

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OFFICE HOURS: Mondays and Thursdays 2-3:30 and by appointment; all office hours will be simultaneously held on [Zoom](#)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course, required for all Women's Studies majors, is the culmination of the Women's Studies degree. Throughout the course we explore past and present scholarship in women's, gender, and sexualities studies to reaffirm the interdisciplinary nature of the field and highlight the relationship between feminist theory, intellectual practice, and social change. The majority of the semester is devoted to a full-length independent project on a topic of the student's choosing. This course is dedicated to exploring feminist theories, epistemologies, and methodologies in order to help students prepare their final projects. We also will be thinking about "feminist futures," as we explore what becoming and living as a feminist means for student's future professional and personal plans.

COURSE PREREQUISITES/COREQUISITES

WST 3015 - Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Women's Studies

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Students will engage with ontological, epistemological, and methodological questions as they develop their own independent projects throughout the course.
- Students will become familiar with the ways in which feminists have used scholarship and activism to address gender injustice in society.
- Students will learn to draw on and apply core concepts of feminist theory.
- Students will position themselves and their experiences into key feminist debates through a "position paper."

COURSE FORMAT

This class is designated as 100% face-to-face. All participants will practice safety measures for in person meetings (see section on COVID-19 below). Additional face-to-face meetings may be set as needed. If any of these modes might be difficult for you, please reach out. I will honor all DRC accommodations and am happy to think creatively with students about how to make the class work well for everyone involved. My aim is to create a discussion space where we can engage with each other in as meaningful a way as possible.

REQUIRED TEXTS

None. All readings are available online via weblink or Canvas.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance for this class is not graded, but please bear in mind how missing class will affect your ability to process the content and course materials. Catching up on notes is no substitute for being part of class discussions, and absence is likely to be reflected in the quality of your assignments.

Presentations: If you are unable to attend the session to deliver your presentation, a make-up opportunity will be available during my office hours.

EVALUATIVE ESSAY (25 POINTS, 25%)

In order to fulfill the BA in Women's Studies requirements, the program has designated the following three Student Learning Objectives:

1. Identify the terminology and concepts central to the interdisciplinary field of women's gender, and sexualities studies.
2. Examine and interpret material using the theory and research methods of women's, gender, and sexualities studies and apply these ideas to current social issues.
3. Present ideas concerning women's, gender, and sexualities studies in spoken and written form.

The undergraduate curriculum is designed to introduce material relevant to these learning outcomes in WST3015 (Interdisciplinary Perspectives in Women's Studies), reinforce them throughout the additional courses taken in the major, and assess students' achievement of these outcomes in WST 4935 Capstone Seminar in Women's Studies. During the Fall semester (2021), your exit assessment will take the form of a "position paper." This assignment is required for all students in the Capstone Seminar. Students will read a selected article and then write a "position paper" of 5 pages. Students will be asked to "position" themselves relative to the arguments the author lays out in the essay. Detailed instructions for the evaluative essay will be provided in class and listed on the course Canvas site under "assignments." The evaluative essay will make up 25% of a student's overall grade in this course. See the course schedule for the due date.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (5 POINTS, 5%)

Discussion questions are due every week that reading is assigned. The goal of this assignment is to help you think about the readings and prepare for discussion before we meet for class. What were the most interesting or provocative issues raised by the readings? Do the readings "speak to" or complement each other in ways that bear discussing? How might we think about GSWS differently having read these pieces? Please include 2-4 questions about the readings. **These questions must be posted on the appropriate discussion board on Canvas by 9 a.m. on the day of class**, so that I have a chance to see your thinking before we meet that afternoon. If for some reason you are unable to post them, send them to me via e-mail and I will post them.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY (15 POINTS, 15%)

You will complete an annotated bibliography that outlines five relevant resources for your project. The

articles/books should be listed in chronological order, use an established citation style of your choice, and should include brief (one long paragraph) annotations that both summarize and analyze/evaluate the work (i.e. that includes your voice as the author). See slides in Canvas for tips on how to prepare annotated bibliographies.

PROJECT OUTLINE (15 POINTS, 15%)

Your project outline should set out your research question, and how you will approach answering it. You should write this succinctly in maximum 3 pages, with a rationale for why you have chosen your research question and how it will advance knowledge on feminist futures.

PROJECT PRESENTATIONS (10 POINTS, 10%)

You will present an outline of your project to the class. This entails preparing a PowerPoint presentation and summarizing your project: topic and focus, rationale and proposed sources. Your project is not expected to be fully developed at this stage. This is an opportunity for you to engage classmates in discussion and participate in a knowledge exchange. Points will be allocated for presentation and communication of content.

FINAL PROJECT (30 POINTS, 30%)

You will prepare a final paper that is a 'state of knowledge' review on a topic of your choosing, and makes recommendations for further feminist inquiry. The paper should be 12-15 pages, double spaced, and will include a justification for your focus, your analysis of the material you've drawn on to answer it and reflections from the course literature (and anything else you have read). The paper will be formatted according to appropriate academic conventions, with an established citation style and clear structure. More details will be given in class and on Canvas.

GRADE BREAKDOWN

Discussion Questions 5%, Evaluative Essay 25%, Annotated Bibliography 15%, Project Outline 15%, Final Project 30%, Project Presentations 10%

GRADING

Requirements for make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found in the online catalog at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/>.

Letter grades will be assigned according to the following numerical scales:

94 and more points = A	80-83 points = B-	67-69 points = D+
90-93 points = A-	77-79 points = C+	64-66 points = D
87-89 points = B+	74-76 points = C	60-63 points = D-
84-86 points = B	70-73 points = C-	59 and fewer points = E

Information on UF policies for grading may be found here: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

OTHER POLICIES

Content Notice - Some material assigned in this course describes or depicts experiences of trauma, sexual, and/or physical violence. I have assigned these works to facilitate learning about women's lives, gender, and sexuality. If you believe engagement with this material would likely cause you significant discomfort it may be in your interest to consider dropping the course.

Netiquette Requirements - In this course we deal with material that may be politically and emotionally charged. It is essential to discuss these issues to expand students' knowledge of women's lives, gender, and sexuality. It is also important to acknowledge that there are multiple opinions about such topics. If disagreements arise, whether it is with other students in the class, the instructor, or the authors of the texts, it is necessary that we use respectful communication to share our thoughts with others in the class. Disagreeing with classmates, the instructor, and/or the authors of texts is part of the learning process. However, hostility, aggressive behaviors, insults, and disrespect towards the instructor or your classmates will not be tolerated in this course. Students are expected to remain respectful of each other and the instructor at all times in the virtual classroom, through online interactions such as discussion posts and chats, and through email.

All students are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in the virtual classroom, in all email messages, and in any online discussions. Failure to abide by these expectations can result in loss of participation points. Additionally, you are required to follow the University of Florida's policies.

- Be professional at all times. You are preparing yourself to be a career professional. Remember that you are establishing your professional identity.
- Be respectful of other people. Everyone is entitled to his or her own opinion. While it is okay to disagree, please do so with respect to others. If you believe that someone has intentionally offended or insulted you, please contact the instructor immediately to discuss what has occurred and how to address the issue. Insults and hate speech are not tolerated in this class.

Language Disclaimer - It is important to note that language related to gender, gender identity, and affectional orientation can change rapidly. While I, as the instructor, will always do my best to use the most respectful and accurate language, there may be times when outdated or incorrect language may be used unintentionally in readings or in-class conversations. It is important to acknowledge that we are all in this course to learn together and that we may all come from different levels of knowledge and awareness related to gender. It is acceptable to have a respectful discourse about why certain language should no longer be used if the issue arises. Moreover, any intentional misgendering or misnaming of other students or public figures, or any other type of discrimination or disrespectful communication, will be viewed as a violation of the policies regarding respect and netiquette and could result in a loss of participation points. Thoughtful and respectful dialogue that takes into account different levels of knowledge, awareness, and skills is essential to this course and your overall learning. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the instructor to discuss this further.

Academic Honesty - All work in this class is to be your own. Please take note of the Student Honor Code, Student Conduct Code, and Standards of Ethical Conduct. The Honor Code (<https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/process/student-conduct-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obliged to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel.

Late Assignments - All assignments are to be submitted by 11:59 pm on the date in which they are due. Please check the course schedule for assignment due dates. Deadline extensions will be granted only in cases that conform to university policies. Official documentation must be provided for deadline extensions. Otherwise, 5 points will be deducted for each day that an assignment is submitted late.

Accessibility - I am committed to making learning in this course accessible to all. Please contact me to discuss any learning needs that you may have in the first week of the semester. You can also access the resources listed below.

UF Disability Resource Center - <https://disability.ufl.edu/>

UF Counseling and Wellness Center - <https://counseling.ufl.edu>.

Evaluations - Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Technical Issues - If you experience technical issues throughout the course please contact me via email. This is my preferred method of communication. If your technical issues are of a general nature please contact the UF Helpdesk at 352-392-4357. You can access their website here <https://helpdesk.ufl.edu>.

This syllabus is subject to amendment during the semester. Any changes considered necessary by the instructor might be made without prior notification. However, the changes will be announced in lectures and/or via e-mail. If any changes are made, the syllabus will be updated and shared with the students via Canvas

SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Reading*	Assignment
8/25	Week 1: Welcome and Introductions	Roxanne Gay's essay Bad Feminist (2012)	
9/1	Week 2: Living a Feminist Life	bell hooks "Visionary Feminism", pages 110-118 Sarah Ahmed, <i>Living a Feminist Life</i> : Introduction	Discussion Questions #1
9/8	Week 3: Planning your projects	No reading due this week	

9/15	Week 4: Feminist Theory	Audre Lorde (in Course Reserves) Jackie Kay Reflecting on Audre Lorde Crenshaw: Mapping the Margins (in Course Reserves)	Annotated Bibliography Due Discussion Questions #2
9/22	Week 5: Planning your projects	The Craft of Research: Section II 'Asking Questions, Finding Answers' pp 27-48 (in Course Reserves)	Discussion Questions #3
9/29	Week 6: Feminist Theory	Prof Akwugo Emejulu's talk	Discussion Questions #4
10/6	Week 7: Session With Career Connections Center (?)		Project Outline Due
10/13	Week 8: Documentary	<i>Black Feminist Documentary</i>	Discussion Questions #5
10/20	Week 9: Project Presentations		
10/27	Week 10: Project Presentations		
11/3	Week 11: Reflections on Roxane Gay and Check-In		Evaluation Essay Due
11/10	Week 12: Writing Workshop		
11/17	Week 13: Projects		
11/24	Week 14: No Class - Thanksgiving Break		
12/1	Week 15: Projects		
12/8	Week 16: Closing Discussion		Final Projects Due