

Women's Studies Course Descriptions – Fall 2008

AMER 83-01 / WS 196-02 *On the Road in America*

Block: W/Th 4:30-5:45

Johnson

This multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary course studies the 20th-century United States through two of its most compelling narrative forms: the road tale and the buddy tale. We will consider this most popular form of epic movement across multiple forms and significations, including: citizenship, and disenfranchisement; political entitlement and oppression; "discovery" and self-discovery; emancipation and enslavement; captivity and assimilation; resistance and resignation; self-improvement and the pursuit of the American Dream. Throughout the course we will focus on the similarities and differences between male and female road travel and "buddy" adventures.

ON THE ROAD IN AMERICA will include such films and texts as: *The Searchers* (1957); *Easy Rider* (1969); *Thelma and Louise* (1991); *Smoke Signals* (1999); and *the Living End* (1993); Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (1957); Hunter S. Thompson, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1971); Louise Erdrich, *Love Medicine* (1984); Chuang Hua, *Crossings* (1968); Ishmael Reed, *Flight to Canada* (1976); and Edwidge Danticat, *Breath Eyes Memory* (1994).

AMER 0083-01/WS 0196 is a cross-listed course and will count as an elective course in either American Studies or Women's Studies. This course offers an introduction to studies in both of these programs.

ANTH 120 *Sex, Power & the Social Order in Contemporary South Asia*

Block: E+

Pinto

This course is an introduction to the anthropology of South Asia by way of inquiry into structures of identity and intimacy in household, religious, and political life. Beginning with the critique that, within a region marked by its rich diversity, anthropological approaches to South Asia have long been preoccupied with kinship, religion, and caste, we will consider both the content and politics of these foci, with a particular attention to issues of gender, sexuality, and law that emerge within them. We will look at ethnographic studies, novels, and films from and about South Asia for what they can tell us about gender, culture, and power, as well as what they reveal about the symbolic place of South Asia in the larger world. Asking what holds people together and establishes difference, how the state is concerned with sexuality and intimate life, and how cultural and political structures delineate relationships within and across groups, we will consider issues of critical importance to contemporary South Asia: the changing face of marriage, politics of reproduction, sexual identities, the politics and symbolics of caste, concepts of community, and forms of violence, all with a particular focus on the role of gender in the maintenance of and challenges to social hierarchies.

CLS 158 *Women in Greek Mythology*

Block: F+

Halpern

Study of legendary and mythical female figures with emphasis on identifying characterizations and roles for these figures and assessment of how their representation enhances female stature, as it informs and supports cultural identity at various historical times. Exploration of how ancient authors and artists represent the female experience

generally: matriarchy, misogyny, martyrdom, marriage, gender-specific cults, athletics, and election in various vocations. No prerequisite.

COMP 7 *Great Advances in Computer Science*

Block: 11

Stafford

Explore the history of computation and computer science with a focus on great advances since the conception of the first electronic computer in 1937. Identify great women and men who have helped form the digital world we live in today. Understand the context of their contributions from both social and technical perspectives. Students will develop a web-based timeline of progress in computer science using HTML, javascript, XML, and AJAX. No prerequisites. Optional lab to be arranged the first day of class. Co-Listed as WS 196. (1 credit WS; ½ credit EN)

ENG 46 *Girls' Books*

Block: 7

Flynn

Girls' Books construct our ideas about femininity, sometimes deliberately, sometimes quite incidentally. This course will examine the various cultural values that girls' books produce. Without being too subjective, we will probably unpack some of the values that have become part of your own cultural baggage. We will read some of the classical nineteenth century texts- Little Women, The Secret Garden, Girls of Limberlost - then some of your own classics – Blubber, Flowers in the Attic, A Wrinkle in Time, Harriet the Spy. Finally, we will look at contemporary girls' books that explore issues of multi-cultural and sexual diversity - texts like Weetzie Bat, Deliver Us from Evie, Toning the Sweep and Finding my Voice. We will also read cultural critics Gilligan and Pipher. We will read quite a lot of books. If you sign up for this course, I would like you to email me a short list of the girls' books that you find most important to you. I can't promise to include them all, but I am interested in adding texts that strongly interest you. We will also be doing a great deal of writing, both analytical and creative. My email address is carol.flynn@tufts.edu. The book list is subject to change. I will email students registered for the course the final list as soon as possible.

ENG 80 *Hitchcock: Cinema, Gender, Ideology*

Block: I+

Edelman

More than a century after his birth, Alfred Hitchcock's name is synonymous not only with cinematic suspense, but also with the appeal of film as a medium of popular entertainment. That popularity reflects our continuing fascination with the visual satisfactions the medium affords even as it testifies to our cultural investment in the narrative forms (thriller, suspense film, romantic melodrama) in which Hitchcock primarily worked. This course will explore the relation between Hitchcock's achievement of cinematic "mastery" and his constant, almost obsessive attention to questions of gender, sexuality, and cultural authority—questions that always underpin the narrative suspense of his films. We will examine in detail how the act of seeing gets framed in Hitchcock's films by being associated with practices of political and erotic surveillance and we will attend to his consequent inflection of "looking," and therefore of cinematic spectatorship as well, in the direction of sexual perversions such as voyeurism, fetishism, sadism, and masochism. In this regard, we will consider the pleasures that Hitchcock's style affords: Whose pleasure is it? To what does it respond? How does its

insistent perversity affect our reading of Hitchcock's popular appeal? To answer these questions we will read a number of theoretical accounts of Hitchcock's cinema, including a number of recent interventions from the perspectives of psychoanalysis, feminism, and queer theory. Students should be prepared to explore and discuss the politics of sexuality as it intersects with the politics of reading and interpretation. Our energies will be devoted primarily, however, to studying and learning how to read closely some of the most complex, compelling, and stylish texts of Western cinema. These will include *The 39 Steps*, *Rebecca*, *Shadow of a Doubt*, *Notorious*, *Rope*, *Strangers on a Train*, *Rear Window*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *Vertigo*, *North by Northwest*, *Psycho*, *The Birds*, and *Marnie*.

ENG 155 *American Women Writers*

Block: K+

Sharpe

The texts in this course will emphasize the heterogeneity of American literature. We will read a variety of texts that trace and retrace the contours and concerns of race, nation, belonging, and representation from the end of the nineteenth-century to the present. In addition to reading novels we may also see a number of films and view other visual arts as we think through "American women writing" and the practice and politics of representation. This is a seminar. Class will be run on a discussion basis and active student participation is required.

Texts may include but are not limited to: Gertrude Stein, *Three Lives*; Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*; Kate Chopin, *The Awakening*; Valerie Martin, *Property*; Gayl Jones, *Corregidora*; Michelle Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven*; Bharati Mukerjee, *Jasmine*; Sandra Cisneros, *Woman Hollering Creek*.

FAH 92/192 / AMER 143 *The Latinos/as in US Visual Culture*

Block: J+

Zavala

Course examines representation of Latinas/os in the U.S., undertaking a critical examination of Latinidad as appealing yet different. Notwithstanding debates about immigration and national security, the popularity of Latina/o culture is on the upswing. Analysis of how difference (racial, ethnic, gender) is linked to power relations and structural inequalities, and how self-expression informs political dissent. Methods and readings drawn from Latina/o Studies, Art History, Visual Culture, Media, Gender and Women's Studies.

GER 70/170 *Grimms' Fairy Tale: Ideology and Politics*

Block:

G+

Nelson

The Grimm brothers as nineteenth-century collectors and authors. Folk tale and literary fairy tale; relation to the development of German nationalism and capitalism; role in attitude formation towards gender and social class; assimilation and adaptation in twentieth-century social, political, and economic life under the Weimar Republic, National Socialism, and post World War II Germany. Significant focus on women's issues. May be taken at the 100 level with consent, extra assignments and conferences.

HST 1.01 *Girlhood in the 1950's*

Block: 8

Drachman

This course will examine girlhood and coming of age in the decades of the 1950s and 1960s. Specifically, it will cover the era that begins in the post-World War II years with the emergence of the feminine mystique and ends in the 1960s with the rise of the second wave of feminism. The class will analyze the tension between image and reality, gender difference and equality, conformity and individuality. It will explore differences based on race, class, and ethnicity as well as similarities based on gender. It will focus on the paradox for girls of growing up in an era of optimism and opportunity, when little was expected of girls.

HST 181.04 *Research Seminar: The Body & Sexuality in Pre-Modern Europe*

Rankin

Block: 7+

This course examines the varying ways in which the human body and sexuality were construed in medieval and early modern Europe. How do bodies change through history? Is sexuality a useful term to use when examining medieval and early modern Europe? How are the body and sexuality linked? What assumptions do we have to leave behind in order to understand the way people related to their bodies in the past? Topics covered include medical and cultural meanings of sex difference; the purified religious body; academic anatomy and the body; homosexuality; cross-dressing and sexual identity; sexual deviance; the monstrous body; and historiographical debates about the early modern body.

PHIL 48 *Feminist Philosophy

Block: 1+

Bauer

The purpose of this course is to ask whether "feminist philosophy" is possible and, if so, what it can do and what it is good for. Any number of prominent feminists believe that in its commitment to what it calls "objectivity," "universality," and "reason," philosophy inveterately and insidiously serves the interests of men and is inherently an enemy of feminism. On the other hand, mainstream philosophers, who see objectivity, universality, and reason as paradigmatically neutral values, often worry that political movements such as feminism, while they may serve lofty purposes, cannot, by definition, count as philosophy.

The guiding concern of this course will be to explore whether in fact feminism has any good reason to take an interest in philosophy -- or traditional philosophy in feminism. We will focus on the following sorts of questions: Does philosophy have anything special to offer feminism? Can philosophy be feminist and remain philosophy? Why can't we, if indeed we can't, explore feminist concerns -- such as the very possibility of an inherent masculinist bias in some of our basic practices and concepts -- within traditional philosophical inquiry? Is there anything philosophically special about oppression based on gender? Is gender a natural subject for philosophy? What *is* gender? What, if anything, does it have to do with people's bodies? What rides, for feminism and for philosophy, on the answers to these sorts of questions?

The syllabus for the course will juxtapose, week by week, contemporary feminist writings with traditional philosophical texts. The feminist writings, by such authors as Simone de Beauvoir, Catharine MacKinnon, Luce Irigaray, Margaret Urban Walker, and Judith Butler, implicitly or explicitly offer themselves as examples of or commentaries on the possibility of

feminist philosophy. The traditional philosophical material criticized and appropriated by our feminist writers will include texts by Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Marx, Rousseau, Nietzsche, and Freud -- authors who, ironically in this context, understood themselves to be working generally in service of human liberation.

Prerequisites: No previous experience with any of the authors mentioned above, or with philosophy or feminist theory in general, is necessary or will be presupposed.

PS 129 *African Politics*

Block: E+

Robinson

What accounts for the prevailing patterns of ethnic, gender, and race relations in present-day Africa? To what extent have they been prefigured by earlier histories? How have various political forces sought to overturn discriminatory legal and racial orders, to end the various forms of gender bias, to reverse exclusion from citizenship rights, or to end authoritarian rule? How do we make sense of current African debates about dual citizenship and alternative forms of modernity?

This is a Comparative Politics course that is cross-listed with Women's Studies. It examines issues of political identity, gender relationships and citizenship in contemporary Africa – through analytical frameworks that focus on processes of democratization and notions of political entitlement. You will learn how to identify distinctive patterns of ethnic, race and gender relations; how to historicize a concept in order to analyze change over time; how social categories become a basis for constructing political identities; and how to apply these constructs in a variety of approaches to the analysis of democracy and the dynamics of political inclusion and exclusion. Case studies that vary the context are used to provide comparative perspective, to test hypotheses, and to ground the phenomena we try to understand in concrete situations. Particular emphasis is paid to the relationship between politics and culture.

SOC 30 *Sex & Gender in Society

Block: L+

tba

Differences and inequalities between women's and men's social positions and personal experiences in the contemporary United States. Intersections of gender, race, and class. Gender relations in the labor force, families, the state, and in sexual and emotional life. Violence and sexual harassment. Men's and women's efforts toward personal and social change in gender relations.

SPN 191 C *Latin American Women Writers*

Block: D+

Millay

This course will examine works by women from South America, Central America, and the Caribbean, ranging from the 17th-century Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz to Latina writers of the United States. We will explore the emergence of the female voice in Latin American writing in a variety of genres: the novel, poetry, the short story, and testimonial literature. Among the authors considered will be Ángeles Mastretta, Gabriela Mistral, Luisa Valenzuela, and

Isabel Allende. Varied writing assignments, oral presentations, exams. Prerequisites: Spanish 31 or 34 and 32 or 35, or consent.

WS 93 *Intro to Queer Studies

Block: 12+

Yarbrough

This course will introduce students to queer studies through an examination of key theoretical texts and exemplary practices. We will be interested in a diverse set of attempts to upset, oppose, or subvert ideas and practices of normality and to displace the opposition between "homosexuality" and "heterosexuality" as the main axis on which human sexuality is mapped. First we will examine several sources of what became queer theory, including writing by Michel Foucault and Gayle Rubin. We will then examine work by two of queer theory's foundational writers, Eve Sedgwick and Judith Butler. The bulk of the course will be concerned with how queer theory is put into practice in fields such as economics, anthropology, literature, cultural studies, and film. Texts here will include work by Lisa Duggan, Martin Manalansan, John D'Emilio, and Isaac Julien. We will pay particular attention to the way gender and sexuality intersect with race, ethnicity, nationality, and class.

WS 99: *Women's Studies Internship*

Block: Arr

Please contact the Director of Women's Studies.

WS 190: *Doing Feminist Research

Block: 11

Johnson

Practices and methods of feminist, interdisciplinary research in a cross-cultural framework. How feminist inquiry rethinks disciplinary assumptions and categories; what counts as knowledge; relation among subjects and objects of study; international issues in feminist analysis. To be taken in preparation for the sr. project. With approval of the instructor, open to non-majors and non-minors (including grad. students) engaged in extensive research on women and/or gender in other programs or departments.

WS 193: *Senior Project

Block: Arr

Staff

Independent project. A substantial interdisciplinary research paper or other creative project, such as film, presentation or performance (with written component) developed from elective cluster topic area on women or gender.

WS 196-01 / Comp 7 *Great Advances in Computer Science*

Block: 11

Stafford

Explore the history of computation and computer science with a focus on great advances since the conception of the first electronic computer in 1937. Identify great women and men

who have helped form the digital world we live in today. Understand the context of their contributions from both social and technical perspectives. Students will select a term project. Options include research paper on a great contributor or advance in computing or development of a web-based timeline of progress in computer science using HTML, javascript, XML, and AJAX. No prerequisites. Optional lab/study session to be arranged the first day of class. Co-Listed as Comp 7. (1 credit WS; ½ credit EN)

WS 196-02 / AMER 83-01 *On the Road in America*

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Johnson

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Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies (GCWS)

Founded in 1993, GCWS is a pioneering effort by faculty at eight degree-granting institutions in the Boston area (Boston College, Brandeis University, Harvard University, MIT, Northeastern University, Simmons College, Tufts University, and UMass Boston.) GCWS pursues its mission through an ongoing series of team-taught graduate seminars, interdisciplinary faculty development workshops, and other opportunities for scholarly and administrative collaboration. GCWS programs help to build intellectual community and offer a model for institutional change. GCWS courses are offered to students matriculated in graduate programs at member schools. There is no fee for GCWS courses. Students are granted credit for participation by their home institutions.

Visit the GCWS website at: www.mit.edu/gcws.

Courses Fall 2008

CRWS 294: Women's Activism: Gender, Literacy and Human Rights

Wednesdays, 5:30 - 8:30 PM / 9.10.08 – 12.10.08

Meets at MIT, building and room TBA

This course explores education, literacy, and human rights as sites of women's activism. It seeks to build deepened understandings of gender and intersectionality as we use different lenses to focus on these sites; we will consider how gender, race, class, nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, age, location, literacy, and ideologies impact upon activism.

Women throughout the world have engaged in collective and individual actions both to resist oppression but also sometimes to further their own privileges. This activism has taken place in formal educational institutions, at the community and grassroots level, and through national and international organizations and movements. This course will examine the meaning of women's activism around education and human rights both globally and locally.

FACULTY

[Lorna Rivera](#) is Associate Professor of Sociology and Community Planning at the University of Massachusetts-Boston. She is also a Research Associate at the Mauricio Gaston Institute for Latino Public Policy at UMass-Boston. Dr. Rivera's work focuses on women's literacy, Latino Studies, and social inequalities in public education.

[Kathleen Weiler](#) is Professor of Education at Tufts University. She is the author of a number of works on women and education exploring the possibilities and parameters of education for women, including ethnographic studies of classroom teaching, feminist theory and pedagogy, and historical studies of women educators in the American West.

A sociologist and activist, [Loretta J. Williams](#) directs the Gustavus Myers Center for the Study of Bigotry and Human Rights, a 24 year old national network with a hub office at Simmons College, that, among other things, publishes /Multidiversity: Myers Book Commentary/ and the annual /Sheroes Womyn Warriors/ Calendar series. She consults locally and nationally on multicultural organizational development with particular attention to anti-oppression strategies.

CRWS 292: Workshop for Dissertation Writers in Women's & Gender Studies

FALL & SPRING, Tuesdays, 1:00 - 4:00 PM / 9.9.08 - 5.5.09
Meets every other week at MIT, building and room TBA

A writing workshop for dissertation writers. Classes will include presentation and discussion of students' work-in-progress. Discussion will move back and forth between theoretical considerations and practical ones as we address three subjects central to dissertation work: the archive, methodology, and rhetoric. Each student will be asked to reflect on ways that feminism and gender studies affected her discipline's views of its appropriate archive and on the question of what archive of materials is best suited to answer the questions raised in her dissertation. We will also consider general issues of scholarly method, methodological issues that feminism and gender studies have raised, and methodological issues prominent within the disciplines of participants' different disciplinary fields. The inquiry into rhetoric will ask how a dissertation writer convinces various audiences that her work is significant. Each student will also give an oral presentation to the group that has been self-consciously adapted for an interdisciplinary audience. Enrollment is limited to ten students

FACULTY

Susan Staves is Paul Proswimmer Professor Emerita of Brandeis University. Her scholarly interests have centered on English literature and history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. She is the author of *Player's Scepters: Fictions of Authority in the Restoration*, *Married Women's Separate Property in England, 1660-1833*, *A Literary History of Women's Writing in Britain, 1660-1789*, and articles and essays on literary, legal, historical, medical, and musical subjects.