

WMST 250 • Summer 2011 (online)

Introduction to Women's Studies: Women, Art & Culture

Instructor: Dr. Tara Rodgers
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Course dates: May 31-July 10, 2011 (no fixed meeting time)
Location: Online via Blackboard/ELMS: <http://elms.umd.edu/>
Office hours: Thursdays 1-4pm via Skype beginning June 9 - or by appt

Course Description

This six-week online course is an introduction to the interdisciplinary field of women's studies, especially in the humanities and the arts. It develops skills in analyzing and critiquing cultural texts, particularly their representations of women and their assumptions about gender, race, sexuality, and other forms of social difference. It also introduces cultural productions by a range of women artists working in various mediums, genres, and historical eras. Examples for discussion and analysis are drawn from such creative realms as poetry, visual art, performance art, music, and zines.

Course Format

Our primary classroom “space” will be on ELMS. Readings will be distributed there as PDF files, and are available now--except for the three books listed below, which can be purchased at the UMD Book Center or accessed on hard copy reserve at McKeldin Library.

We will use the ELMS discussion board for posting and discussing your responses to the readings. Your longer writing assignments (analytic essay; take-home final) will be submitted to me by e-mail. I will send out instructions for assignments at least once a week, by Tuesday morning and perhaps again later in the week; these will be posted as announcements on ELMS and also typically distributed by e-mail. Please make sure your e-mail is configured to receive ELMS announcements. Typically you will be required to post responses and reflections on the readings to the ELMS discussion board twice a week, with deadlines on Tuesdays and Fridays at 12 noon EST. Other than that, the timing of when you complete the work is up to you.

Because this is an online course, your regular and reliable access to the internet is a necessity. You do not need to access the internet every day, however, you must be able to complete the assignments on time. Be aware that I do not accept computer- or network-related excuses if you turn in an assignment late. It is a good idea to allow a little extra time for unforeseen computer or network glitches when submitting assignments via e-mail or posting responses on ELMS.

My teaching style in the classroom is to generate discussion and conduct a dialogue with students, and I wish to model that style online. I will periodically post a brief audio lecture or announcement to contextualize the readings or respond to your written work. I will also teach via PDF files and web links that I distribute with your weekly assignments, and with my responses to your work collectively on the discussion board, and/or individually via e-mail.

Because this is a three-credit-hour course condensed into a six-week period, the amount of reading and writing is intensive and demanding. Please be aware of that now, and plan your time accordingly. The course requires a certain amount of your own self-direction; my role is to provide instruction and guidance, yours is to complete the readings and assignments on time, diligently and thoughtfully. I also encourage you to get to know your classmates, and consider reaching out to one another via ELMS, e-mail, or Skype to discuss the course material. Like you, I will post to the ELMS discussion board at least twice a week. I do not plan to post or reply to your posts every day.

I do my best to respond to e-mails within 24 hours, but may take longer to respond especially over weekends and university holidays. Please remember that e-mail is a formal mode of correspondence. Be sure to address me formally (“Dear Professor”), identify yourself, and clearly state your question and expectations of a response. Include the course number (WMST250) in your e-mail subject lines, and your last name and course number in the file name of any assignment you submit via e-mail (e.g., “SmithWMST250_essay.doc”).

Beginning June 9, I will hold virtual office hours on Thursdays 1-4pm via Skype. This is an excellent opportunity for you to discuss your ideas and questions with me one-on-one, and I encourage each of you to hold a Skype conversation with me at least once during the six-week course. If that time slot does not work for you, please e-mail me and I will do my best to accommodate appointments at another time. You can also e-mail me at any time with questions or concerns. My Thursday sessions may be subject to change based on your needs and my own travel schedule.

CORE Requirement

This course fulfills a CORE distributive requirement in the Humanities and Arts, and satisfies the Human Cultural Diversity requirement. CORE courses are designed to expose students to the ideas and methods of different academic disciplines and fields, and the ways in which they produce and analyze knowledge. Analytic reading and writing and collaborative learning are central to the course. Accordingly, its success and the success of your learning experience in it depend on your informed and thoughtful preparation for class, and your participation in discussion, writing, and group activities.

Course Objectives

- to understand and appreciate creative practices by women working across cultural locations and historical eras
- to develop a basic understanding of various women's creative practices in relation to feminist movements in the U.S.
- to analyze how ideas and ideologies of gender, race, sexuality and other forms of social difference circulate in art and culture
- to be more thoughtful and reflexive critics of the ways that art, culture, power, and inequality intersect
- to learn how to apply feminist critical frameworks to encounters with art and popular culture in our daily lives

Course Materials

Required books:

The Guerrilla Girls, Excerpts from *The Guerrilla Girls' Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998). ISBN: 978-0-1-4025997-1

Davis, Angela Y. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998). ISBN: 978-0-6-7977126-5

Marcus, Sara. *Girls to the Front: The True Story of the Riot Grrrl Revolution* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010). ISBN: 978-0-0-6180636-0

You are not required to buy these books, however we will be reading most of them and therefore these particular readings will NOT be available on electronic reserves. One hard copy of each book will be on reserve at McKeldin Library. If you wish to purchase your own copy, there are some available at the University Book Center, or you can order online through Amazon.com or another source. All other required readings for the course will be available through ELMS as PDFs.

Grading

- 40% Reading responses
- 10% Reflections
- 10% Discussion
- 15% Analytic essay on art or performance
- 25% Take-home final exam

Assignments and Evaluation

Reading responses (40%): You are required to write four responses to the readings (300-500 words each) on the assigned dates. These assignments require you to demonstrate an understanding of the authors' claims, to cite specific passages in the texts as evidence of these claims, and to pose thoughtful questions about the readings. I will distribute specific questions or prompts in advance of each due date.

Reflections (10%): The four required reflections are similar to the reading responses, but shorter (100-200 words). These will typically offer a more informal opportunity for you to apply insights from the readings to your own experiences of art, culture, power, and social difference; or to share your responses to art, music, or videos available online. I will distribute specific questions or prompts in advance of each due date.

Discussion (10%): Every week, in addition to posting your own work on the discussion board, you should read all of your classmates' posts to become familiar with each others' work and ideas. For your discussion grade, you are required to respond to at least two of your classmates's work per week, during weeks 2,3,4, and 5, on the ELMS discussion board. (This can be done by replying to their post, or mentioning it in your own.) Please try to respond to different classmates each week, and ensure that no one goes without at least one response. Your responses may be brief (a few sentences is fine)--but use this as a way of starting meaningful conversations with each other and offering constructive feedback on each others' work.

A good discussion reply might go something like this: "I agree with you when you cite XX argument in the text. I also found the passage on page XX relevant to this question. I wasn't sure what the author meant by XX; what do others think?" An example of an unacceptable post (at least for discussion credit) would be: "Cool idea." I expect a minimum of two substantive responses to others' work, or replies to ongoing dialogues, each week. However, I will evaluate your discussion participation on the quality and thoughtfulness of your engagement rather than excessive quantity of it. I will weigh in discussions, but as the course goes on I will increasingly expect you to comment substantively on each others' work.

Analytic essay on art or performance (15%): Every student is required to visit/attend at least one gallery or performance and write a short analytic essay about it (1000-1200 words), connecting it to course themes and readings, due on Friday, June 24. More details on this assignment will be distributed. I will suggest various events and venues; please mark your calendars and plan ahead. Please be sure to confirm your topic with me in advance of attending an event.

Take-home final exam (25%):

The final exam will test your comprehension of course readings and ability to critically assess and compare authors and concepts. It will be a take-home written exam distributed during the last week of class, open-book and open-notes; you will have approximately three days to complete the exam. Details TBA.

Late Assignments

No extensions or make-ups will be granted on assignments or exams unless in the case of illness or emergency which must be documented in writing by a medical professional. Late assignments will be penalized, and I reserve the right to not accept them at all.

Expectations and Policies

Academic Integrity

By putting your name on your assignments and exams, you are indicating to me that the work is your own. The University has approved a Code of Academic Integrity which prohibits students from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting fraudulent documents, and forging signatures. Plagiarism policy: all quotations taken from other authors, including from the internet, must be indicated in quotation marks and references. Paraphrasing must be referenced as well. Learning how to cite properly is an important skill; please consult a reference manual for proper citation practices, and ask me in advance of deadlines if you have any questions about citing materials properly. More information on the University's Code of Academic Integrity, and handy reference-manual style guides for citations, are available here:

http://www.lib.umd.edu/UES/plag_stud_what.html

Absences

Regular class participation and active engagement with course readings, discussions, and themes are absolutely essential to your success in this course. Unexcused absences, without written documentation from a medical professional of illness or emergency, will adversely affect your grade. Whenever possible, please request in writing any excused absences in advance. Any requests for excused absences must be signed by you with the knowledge that any falsehood in the note will be considered a violation of the student Code of Academic Integrity: <http://www.shc.umd.edu/code.html>. You are not required to “attend” this online course on any particular day, but “attendance” is understood to be your timely completion of assignments and regular participation in online discussions. If you are away from our online discussions for a period of time or do not have access to e-mail for any reason, you are responsible for providing the appropriate written documentation of illness, and for getting materials from a classmate and ensuring that you understand them.

Accommodations

Students with a disability or learning difference that may require special accommodations in class or on assignments should inform me at the beginning of the semester. The Disability Support Services (DSS) office may also be of assistance: <http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/>

Religious Observances

Please inform me well in advance of class sessions or assignment due dates that may be affected by religious observances.

Discussion Etiquette

A portion of our online course will be dedicated to discussion. Please work to create a comfortable climate of friendly, engaged, and respectful discussion. Avoid any personal attacks or posturing. Disagreements, even arguments, are a natural part of academic debate, but we must work to grant each other courtesy and respect even when we disagree. We will work together to keep critiques constructive, and not purely negative. If there is anything I can do to make the course environment more hospitable to you or others, please let me know.

Semester Schedule and Course Readings

This syllabus is subject to change as we move through the course; students will be notified in advance should there be any changes to readings, assignments, exams or grading. All readings are to be done BEFORE the date under which they are listed.

WEEK 1

Tues 5/31: Introductions

Read “Reading, Writing, Citing” and “How to Read” PDFs under Course Documents

Fri 6/3: Identities; Feminisms; Representation

Reflection #1 due on ELMS, by 12 noon EST

hooks, bell. “Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression,” in *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*, 2nd ed., edited by S-K Kim and C. R. McCann (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 51-57.

Grewal, Inderpal, and Caren Kaplan, Introduction to Part 3: Representations, Cultures, Media, and Markets; John Berger, Excerpts from *Ways of Seeing*, and Catherine King, “Making Things Mean: Cultural Representation in Objects,” in Grewal and Kaplan, *An Introduction to Women’s Studies: Gender in a Transnational World*, 2nd ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2006), pp. 265-75.

WEEK 2

Tues 6/7: Feminist Poetry; Silence and Voice

Reflection #2 due on ELMS on ELMS, by 12 noon EST

Reed, T.V. “The Poetical is the Political: Feminist Poetry and the Poetics of Women’s Rights,” in Kim and McCann, *Feminist Theory Reader*, pp. 92-105.

hooks, bell. “Talking Back,” *Talking Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black* (Boston: South End Press, 1989), pp. 5-9.

Rich, Adrienne. “Why I Refused the National Medal for the Arts,” *Arts of the Possible* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2002), pp. 98-105.

Lorde, Audre. "Poetry is Not a Luxury," "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," "Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 2007), pp. 36-39, 40-45, 114-23.

Moraga, Cherrie, and Gloria E. Anzaldúa (editors), *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 2002) - read at least 2 of the selections included in the PDF.

Selections from DeRango-Adem, Adebé, and Andrea Thompson (editors), *Other Tongues: Mixed-Race Women Speak Out* (Toronto: INANNA, 2010). - read at least 1 of the selections included in the PDF.

Fri 6/10: Feminist Approaches to Art History; Collaborations

Reading Response #1 due on ELMS, by 12 noon EST

Piper, Adrian. "The Triple Negation of Colored Women Artists," in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, edited by A. Jones (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 239-48.

Schor, Mira. "Patrilineage," in Jones, *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, pp. 249-56.

Stein, Judith E. "Collaboration," in *The Power of Feminist Art*, edited by N. Broude and M. D. Garrard (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1996), pp. 226-43.

Broude, Norma, and Mary D. Garrard. "Conversation with Judy Chicago," in *The Power of Feminist Art*, 66-73.

WEEK 3

Tues 6/14: Performance Art; Activism

Reading Response #2 due on ELMS, by 12 noon EST

Wark, Jayne. "The Origins of Feminist Art," Chap. 2 in *Radical Gestures: Feminism and Performance Art in North America* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2006), pp. 27-57.

Lustig, Suzanne. "How and Why Did the Guerrilla Girls Alter the Art World Establishment in New York City, 1985-1995?," and Pollack, Griselda. "Women and Art History," pp. 276-281 in Grewal and Kaplan, *An Introduction to Women's Studies*.

The Guerrilla Girls, Excerpts from *The Guerrilla Girls' Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998).

Fri 6/17: Contemporary Art Curation

Reflection #3 due on ELMS, by 12 noon EST

Reilly, Maura. "Introduction: Toward Transnational Feminisms," in *Global Feminisms: New Directions in Contemporary Art*, edited by M. Reilly and L. Nochlin (London: Merrell; Brooklyn Museum of Art, 2007), pp. 15-45.

WEEK 4

Tues 6/21: Zines; Riot Grrrl

Reflection #4 due on ELMS, by 12 noon EST

Piepmeyer, Alison. “‘We Are Not All One’: Intersectional Identities in Grrrl Zines,” Chap. 4 in *Girl Zines: Making Media, Doing Feminism* (New York: NYU Press, 2009), pp. 123-54.

Marcus, Sara. *Girls to the Front: The True Story of the Riot Grrrl Revolution* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2010) - excerpts TBA.

Fri 6/24: Technologies and Embodiment

Analytic Essay due via e-mail, by 12 noon EST

Bayton, Mavis. “Women and the Electric Guitar,” in Whiteley, *Sexing the Groove*, pp. 37-49.

Wald, Gayle F. “She Made That Guitar Talk,” and “The Men Would Stand Back,” *Shout, Sister, Shout! The Untold Story of Rock-and-Roll Trailblazer Sister Rosetta Tharpe* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2007), pp. 71-73, 151-55.

WATCH FILM: *The Godmother of Rock & Roll: Sister Rosetta Tharpe* (BBC documentary available on YouTube, 60 min., 4 parts) - also available streaming on ELMS from 6/13-26.

WEEK 5

Tues 6/28: Feminist Practices of Listening; Song Lyrics & Politics

Reading Response #3 due on ELMS, by 12 noon EST

Aparicio, Frances. “Listening to the Listeners: An Introduction,” and Chap. 11: “Así Son: Constructing Woman,” *Listening to Salsa: Gender, Latin Popular Music, and Puerto Rican Cultures* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), pp. 187-218.

Davis, Angela Y. *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998) - excerpts TBA.

Fri 7/1: Hip Hop

Reading Response #4 due on ELMS, by 12 noon EST

Perry, Imani. “B-Boys, Players, and Preachers: Reading Masculinity,” in *Prophets of the Hood: Politics and Poetics in Hip Hop* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), pp. 117-54.

Rose, Tricia. “Bad Sistas: Black Women Rappers and Sexual Politics in Rap Music,” in *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1994), pp. 146-82.

WEEK 6

Mon 7/4: Holiday

Tues 7/5: Cybercultures (readings only; no written response required)

Flanagan, Mary. "Hyperbodies, Hyperknowledge: Women in Games, Women in Cyberpunk, and Strategies of Resistance," Chap. 22 in *Reload: Rethinking Women + Cyberculture*, edited by M. Flanagan and A. Booth (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002), pp. 425-54.

Gonzalez, Vernadette V., and Robyn Magalit Rodriguez. "Filipina.com: Wives, Workers, and Whores on the Cyberfrontier," in Grewal and Kaplan, *An Introduction to Women's Studies*, pp. 375-79.

Pilar, Praba. Excerpts from *Cyberlabia* and *Computers Are a Girl's Best Friend* - performance activist project and book (Oakland: Tela Press, 2005), pp. 6-8, 12-17, 19-23.

Tues 7/5: Take-home final exam distributed on ELMS

Fri 7/8: FINAL EXAM DUE VIA E-MAIL AT 5 PM EST