

Course: WaGS 001 (formerly Womst 001)

1. Date of Application: 11/29/201
2. Name, Dept of Proposer: Denise Witzig, Women's and Gender Studies
3. Name of Dept/Program housing course: Women's and Gender Studies
4. Name of Chair/PD: Molly Metherd
5. How often is the course taught:yearly
6. Course Prerequisites:0
7. Unit value of course:1
- 8: Normal Class Size: 25
9. Number of sections expected Fall 2012:2
10. Number of sections expected Spring 2013:0
11. Is the course appropriate for first-year students: Yes
12. Relevant Learning Goal(s):Social, Historical, Cultural Understanding, Common Good
13. Chair will oversee submission of student work: Yes
14. Chair will oversee instructor participation in norming/asst: Yes

15. Teaching: "Intro to WaGS addresses the lives of women and men as historical subjects from an intersectional perspective ? through the lenses of race, ethnicity, gender, class, sexuality, ability, age, etc. It asks students to question dominant ways of thinking about these intersections and questions hegemonic and patriarchal assumptions. It suggests that feminist theory and practice are collaborative ways of engaging and challenging privilege and dominant ideologies.

Students read a variety of theoretical and historical texts which frame questions about gender and sexuality, providing an intersectional analysis. These readings challenge prevailing ways of seeing, but they also challenge and debate attitudes and assumptions within historical U.S. feminist politics and ideology (such as white privilege or heteronormativity, etc.). In this way, students are encouraged to engage feminist discourses from diverse perspective, evaluating their efficacy for diverse communities of women and men.

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16. Learning: "Learning outcomes specifically address intersectionality as a key discourse of self-awareness, historical and global significance. Learning outcomes also assert the necessity of questioning prevailing points of view and dominant ideologies as part of a feminist scholarly discourse, and the process by which student will come to see themselves as subjects and agents in history and in the contemporary world.

1. Develop critical strategies to recognize and interpret intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality and class in local and global contexts: Students engage a series of theories about and definitions of patriarchy, as well as questions about the nature of ? equality.? They are encouraged to challenge and debate these views in the readings for class discussion, and in weekly written responses to the readings. Students are frequently divided into small groups to facilitate discussion and allow everyone a chance to participate. Later in the semester, these small group discussions consider major ideas about gender from local and global perspectives. They read and discuss articles on current issues facing women and men, from sex trafficking to workplace pay equity, and present these issues to the class for general discussion. More formally, students are assigned to work together in ?forums? of 4 to plan, prepare and present ideas in the readings and lead class discussion as part of the regular schedule, drawing upon diverse cultural and critical perspectives. This presentation is evaluated as part of students' class participation grade and, as such, is part of individual midterm assessment. As one of

three assigned formal papers, students write a 1000- word essay on their own understanding of gender, connecting this reflection to one of the readings about the intersections of cultural and gender identity.

2. Recognize and evaluate diverse ideas, debates and theories about feminism, women and men in culture: After a section on the history of the women's movement in 19th and 20th century U.S., students work within a group to write a "manifesta" on an issue of critical importance to women's and men's lives. They produce a 1250- word essay as a group, and present it in class, with accompanying visual materials (pamphlets, videos, etc.). The assignment also asks them to evaluate their individual contributions to the group, reflect on the group's success in creating and meeting mission goals, and suggest one area of improvement. This allows students to address the challenges and benefits of working within a diverse group of individuals, and to gauge their own efforts in creating critical connections and learning communities. This project is evaluated for originality of topic, class presentation (all group members must participate), essay (each member must assume a section of writing) and group effort and commitment (responsibility to the project and to the group).

3. Develop thoughtful and well-reasoned arguments in reading, writing about and discussing gender: Students meet with me at midterm to discuss their progress in the course, their written work and class participation, and to address any questions or concerns they have. I present each student with a written list of general qualities of class discussion that takes into account the varieties of participation possible (ie., leading discussion, asking questions, active listening, broadening issues, being prepared, addressing peers, etc.), and emphasize the importance of "engaging peers in discussion and exchange." We discuss strengths and weaknesses in the student's class participation and engagement, and I assign the student a midterm informal "grade" (not recorded) on class participation. Then I ask the student to set a challenge for her/himself in discussion. (These are commonly "talking more in general discussion," "listening more, stepping back," etc.) I tell the student to think about this challenge when evaluating her/his own performance in class. As a way of formally addressing this challenge, in the last week of class I ask the students to revisit a paragraph they wrote the first week of class, in response to Adrienne Rich's "Claiming an Education." They addressed the question, "How will I claim my education this semester?" I return the early paragraph and ask students to write another, assessing whether they met their own challenges in learning about gender. This further emphasizes the point I make throughout the semester, that learning is an active process that extends far beyond syllabi and classroom walls. The students' final written assignment is a preliminary literature review, developed in collaboration with WaGS subject selector librarian Sharon Walters. The assignment asks students to research a key political issue for women or men, and evaluate and assess the quality of information on the issue in popular, scholarly and organizational sources. Students begin their inquiry with a library session, and during the drafting process present their findings to the class. Often, they are surprised at the cultural assumptions conveyed in the types of information they find (in issues of healthcare or poverty, eg.), which leads to questions of how best to represent marginalized ideas and communities, as well as dominant ways of thinking or seeing. They are asked to consider what kinds of information are difficult to find, and ask why. Students write a 2000-2500 word essay on these findings, comparing and contrasting sources and describing the issue's profile, or lack of profile, in public discourse.

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