

Course Syllabus



Cultural and Ethnic Studies 109:

Introduction to Women's Studies

Fall 2014

Instructor: Kimberly Pollock

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Required Texts:

- ***Red Tent*, Anita Diamant**
- ***Kitchen*, Banana Yoshimoto**
- ***Woman: An Intimate Geography*, Nathalie Angier**
- ***The Vagina Monologues*, Eve Ensler**
- ***The Silence of the Trees*, Valya Dudycz Lupescu**
- ***Wench*, Dolens Perkins-Valdez**
- ***Half The Sky*, Nicholas Kristof**

Course Description:

This course will employ a feminist analysis of the construction and enforcement of gender differences and gender inequalities in various contexts. Emphasis will be placed on the intersection of race, class, sexuality and nationality in the lives of women. Topics include feminist theory, motherhood, popular culture, sexual autonomy, racism, and activism in the United States.

This course is designed to explore the role that gender, plays in our social, economic and political structure. Through readings from sociology and literature, will look at how this master construct forms culture.

Instructor's Philosophy:

I strongly believe that each of us is responsible for what happens in this classroom. Students are just as capable of making a class great as the instructor. We are studying communities and cultures, and in the process we are also creating a new community in our own classroom. We are all still striving, still learning. The key to a successful class is mutual responsibility. We all have a myriad of valuable insights to offer. I will expect each of you to be committed to the course, just as you will expect commitment from me. I am excited to learn with you. It is my hope that we can have a fun, enriching quarter. Therefore, expect to do a good bit of work, and plan on participating fully in class.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To develop interdisciplinary connections while exploring the sources of identity and intercultural conflict.
- To develop teamwork and collaborative skills while cooperating in an intellectual endeavor; to investigate ideas together, respect others' insights and opinions, and develop areas of consensus and agreement.
- To develop self-reliance and responsibility for one's own learning: taking initiative, following up ideas and intuitions, evaluating one's own progress, and developing learning goals.
- To learn methods of discussion and discourse of a controversial and complex topic.
- To develop critical reading skills; to be able to understand, and weigh the strength and weakness of, an author's argument.

Tests, Projects and Papers:

- Each student will also turn in 1 page Response paper on the readings, films and discussions of the week every Friday. There will be a total of 10 weekly papers. Each paper will be worth 10 points, totaling 100 points and will be turned in on canvas.
- Each student will create a five (5) item annotated bibliography on a choice of topics outlined on the assignment sheet. This will be due just after midterm, and will be worth 100points.
- Each student will receive a total of 100 points for participation.

Hints for Class Success

Disclaimer:

This is a heavily dialogue-based class and you will be graded upon your participation. There will be few if any lectures and you will not be required to memorize things as much as to analyze the many aspects of the issues discussed. Many of these issues will be controversial and do not have one correct answer. Often class dialogues will begin with open-ended questions meant to get at a deeper understanding of the content being discussed. Don't be discouraged if a classmate or even the professor raises another question or theory that may point out the flaws of your own argument, this is all part of the process. The more we question ourselves the more we can understand. In order to be successful in this class you must complete all assigned readings and be willing to participate respectfully. If you cannot come to class regularly, or are simply looking to "coast" this is not the class for you.

Dialogue vs. Discussion/Debate

Dialogues require the use of logical arguments and concrete facts instead of personal opinions or experiences. Valid arguments are based on premises (much like the scientific "if-then" method of reasoning).

For Example: If the secession of the southern states in 1860 was intended to protect those states from the economic oppression of the northern states, then it follows that the issue of slavery during the American civil war was not one of morals but one of economics. And if the economic backbone of the southern states was the system of slavery and, many of the southern states were part of the economic backbone of the country as a whole, it makes sense to say that our nation's earliest economic system was based on the oppression of people based on the color of their skin.

During class dialogues you will be expected to:

- Be prepared. This is not a bull session. If you aren't prepared, please don't participate.
- Articulate the concepts and principles of the issue(s) in question
- Refer to the text when needed during the dialogue
- Reframe from relying on personal anecdotes
- Ask for clarification when confused
- Stick to the point under discussion. You can make notes about ideas you want to bring up later.
- Speak clearly and loud enough for everyone to hear
- Listen carefully and respectfully
- Engage your classmates in the dialogue, not just the teacher

Remember, class dialogues are not a test of memory and you are not simply “learning a subject.” Here your goal should be to broaden your understanding of social issues we all face.

Want to check on your success in this class? Here’s a cheat-sheet of things to consider during class dialogues

Did I...

- Come to class?
 - Prepare?
 - Speak clearly and loudly?
 - Cite reasons and evidence for my statements?
 - Listen respectfully?
 - Stay on point?
 - Talk to my classmates and not just the professor?
 - Paraphrase accurately?
 - Ask questions to clear up confusion?
 - Support my classmates?
 - Avoid hostile exchanges?
 - Raise questions in a civil manner?
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- [Academic Success Center - Bellevue College](#) (Links to an external site.)
 - [Current Students Menu - Bellevue College](#) (Links to an external site.)
 - [Library Media Center @ Bellevue College](#) (Links to an external site.)

Writing Guidelines:

- Twelve-point sized Times font, double-spaced
- 1” margins all around
- APA Citations where appropriate – credit must be given even where any *ideas* presented in the paper are not your own (see notes below about avoiding plagiarism)
- Title pages and bibliographies are not counted as pages due
- Student information is at the top left of the page, single spaced
- There are no extra spaces between paragraphs.
- Paragraphs contain no less than four sentences.
- Magazines, newspapers, journals, and books are *italicized*. Movie titles, article titles, song titles, etc. are “in quotation marks.” Quotes inside of a quotation use ‘single quotation marks.’

- Avoid the universal “we”, “our”, “us” – ask yourself: Can I speak for everyone? If you cannot, do not write it. Also avoid phrasing such as “nowadays...” and “since the beginning of time.” Be accurate. Know what you’re writing and why.
- Do not ever use Wikipedia, CliffNotes, or other such encyclopedic references. Wikipedia is not peer-reviewed and therefore unreliable. Do your own research. If you’re going to research online (which is absolutely encouraged and totally legit), make sure you understand what you’re looking for. Do a deep dive into the internet to find your stuff.

Your work is evaluated on:

1) Content

1. Fulfilling the entire assignment. Doing the minimum amount of work expected will likely get you a passing grade, but not an outstanding one. You’re expected to go the extra mile.
2. Fully developing your argument(s) and making use of examples and evidence to support your argument(s).
3. Flow of thought throughout the paper, with strong analyses and conclusions.

2) Writing Style

1. Clarity of thought.
2. Good organization and attention to detail.
3. Persuasiveness of your argument/s.
4. Creativity. Make it an interesting read!
5. Command of the English Language
6. PROOFREAD your work. Please do a spell/grammar check before you hand it in. Read it out loud to yourself, too! It really helps.
7. Dude, like totally don’t write **colloquially**. A conversation is a conversation. A paper is an entirely different way of presenting your research and ideas. J

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Preventing Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty occurring when students use information or material from outside sources and do not properly cite those sources. This is grounds for disciplinary action. It is your responsibility to understand plagiarism and its consequences. Plagiarism occurs if:

1. You do not cite quotations and/or attribute borrowed ideas.
2. You fail to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks.
3. You do not write summaries and paraphrases in his/her own words and/or doesn’t document his/her source.

4. You turn in work created by another person.
5. You submit or use your own prior work for a current or past course, or work from one current course in another course *without express permission* from your professors. This may also be considered academic dishonesty.
6. Consequences: If it is determined that you have plagiarized or engaged in other forms of academic dishonesty, you will likely fail the assignment and possibly the course, despite points earned through other work. Acts of academic dishonesty are reviewed for disciplinary action.

Grading Scale:

Please use the following to help explain the grade you're given for a given assignment. Please do not hesitate to come to me with any questions you ever have on a grade you receive. There is no limit to how many times you email me! My email door is *always* open and I'm always happy to go over grades with you.

A: 94-100

A-: 90-93

B+: 87-89

B: 84-86

B-: 80-83

C+: 77-79

C: 74-76

C-: 70-73

D+: 67-69

D: 64-66

D-: 60-63

F: 59 and below

90-100 = A Range. "A" work shows me you're engaged with all course material by utilizing quotes and ideas. It is writing **completely free** from grammar and spelling errors, demonstrating your command not only of the English language, but of the form and flow of a solid piece of written work. I also like to see/read/hear your "writing voice." That is, I want your style to come through! Your arguments should be solid and backed up with intellectual ammunition. You should demonstrate a strong understanding of our readings and the in-class media and how they intersect with one another. Your ideas should be "fleshed out" and not just a series of statements, in other words.

80-89 = B Range. The “B” tells me you’re doing very good work. You may have a couple of grammar issues, but your work is still tidy and the writing is still strong. You have a firm grasp on the themes in the course but you may not be as well-versed in the readings and/or media and/or lecture material as you could be. I should see that you’re being challenged and that you’re struggling with the course issues and themes, and what they represent to you in an interconnected way. Your understandings of some of the course materials are stronger than others.

70-79 = C Range. “C” work means that you’re not as invested in the material as I would like to see. Your writing is relatively weaker than it could be and you’re not thinking as critically as I would like you to. You write the bare minimum of the length requirement. Some of what you point out I may not follow logically, and your use of the course materials may not be as solid as it could be. You omit some of the important points raised in class.

60-69 = D Range. Ah, the “D.” “D” is for “Don’t be Discouraged.” I will work closely with each of you as much as time allows, getting you up to speed in class. Your struggles should not be with writing so much at this point but if they are please see me immediately. “D” work is not proofread, nor does it deal critically with the themes in the course. It responds, perhaps, to one part of one of the readings but there is little-to-no integration of material and you’re not responding to the questions raised in the assignment. Demonstrated understanding of the course materials is not presented clearly, or at all. (NOTE: A “D” and below may be rewritten **once** if you choose to do so. It must be turned in within 72 hours, and I enter the better grade.)

One last thing:

There are going to be times in this class when you feel uncomfortable. That’s okay; a certain amount of discomfort can be conducive to learning. However, if you ever feel unsafe or threatened please let me know so we can try to work it out. The classroom should be a safe place for everybody.

If you have a documented disability that will require some type of accommodation, please contact me as soon as possible so that we can make whatever arrangements necessary.

My office hours are for your use. Come and see me any time you have a question or a problem with the course or your work.

I am looking forward to this quarter, and hope that we can do good things together.