

Fall 2019 Course Descriptions

Undergraduate

WSGS142/UCOR142 Theol Views of the Person
MWF 1:00-1:50 (E. Vasko)

Focusing on the question "What does it mean to be human?" this course explores the relationship between gender, theology, and personhood. Students engage this question in relationship to self, others, the world, and the Divine, with attention to Christian and other views. More specifically, the class considers the ways that the Christian tradition has named sin and grace, and the implications of this naming in view of various forms of embodiment: gender/sexuality, ability, and race/ethnicity. **Core Theology.**

WSGS 200/Engl 204 Gender and Social Justice T/Th 10:50-12:05 (E. Speese)

This course will examine the interdisciplinary field of Women's and Gender Studies, paying particular attention to the construction of gender both in the past and in our contemporary moment. We will examine the ways social justice is intimately tied to discussions of gender, and our focus will be in tracing the historical and cultural narratives that eventually produced the concept of intersectionality. We will be particularly attuned to discussing the ways gender intersects with other identities, like race, class, sexuality, and ability. We will trace the development of Women's Studies by examining texts associated with the three waves of the women's movement as well as work from the 21st century. Ultimately, this course will study multiple viewpoints related to gender as well as its many intersections and ask students to thoughtfully engage these topics with both empathy and open-mindedness. This course will include works by Lucretia Mott, Sojourner Truth, Sarah Grimké, Margaret Sanger, Pauli Murray, Simone de Beauvoir, Fannie Lou Hamer, Gloria Steinem, Angela Davis, bell hooks, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Roxane Gay, Malala Yousafzai, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, and many others.

Total cap 30: 25 seats for Engl, 5 seats for WGS (Theme area: Social justice)

Engl 204 Monsters and the Children of the Night MWF 1:00-1:50 (N. Aceto)

This course will examine some of the most (in)famous monsters of literary and film. What is it that makes a "monster"? What is it about these characters that strikes terror in the hearts of the audience? To answer these questions, the class will examine various literary texts and films to explore the ways in which monsters represent society's deepest fears and anxieties about race and gender roles. The texts studied will include nineteenth-century literary texts such as

Frankenstein, Carmilla, Dracula, and The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, as well as films and stories of the twentieth-century which carry on this monstrous tradition, including Nosferatu (1922), “The Call of Cthulhu” (1928), King Kong (1933), and Aliens (1986). The course will focus on the ways in which these monstrous characters, as well as their (often) female victims, challenge the bodily “norms” and traditional sexualities of modern Western society. These will be examined in three units: Monstrous Invasions, Monstrous Sexualities, and Monstrous Mothers/Monstrous Births. To more fully understand these themes, we will be discussing theories of imperialism, race, gender, sexuality, and embodiment to more deeply understand the texts and the cultural environment in which they were created. Additionally, the class will examine how the texts reflect the way Western civilization continues to use the language of monstrosity define those who live outside the norms of conventional society.

WSGS 210-01/SOCI 210 Sociology of Sex and Gender T/Th 9:25-10:40 (S. Macmillen)

This course will explore the domain of sexual identity, the concomitant notion of the social construction of gender, and the concept of deviance. While our point of departure is distinctively sociological, we will attempt to examine the issues in a broader context. Consequently, we will be drawing from diverse fields such as philosophy, cultural studies, anthropology, psychology, literature, and popular culture. The readings will focus on power, addressing the conditions under which the gender system intersects with other factors to create various kinds of power and powerlessness. We will analyze contemporary films for what they can tell us about the popular conceptions of sex and gender identities, relations, and constructions. The readings will also address how people empower themselves, both personally and collectively. We will have numerous guest speakers, and although it will be a standard lecture course, active student participation will be highly encouraged.

WSGS 225-01/SOCI 225 Family Systems MWF 12:00-12:50 (TBA/Ahmed)

A study of the family institution and its interaction with other community institutions.

WSGS 316W/Engl 316W Healthcare and Literature MWF 12-12:50 and T/Th 9:25 (R. May)

This course explores representations of healthcare and medical knowledge in the West since about 1800 with an emphasis on the gendered construction of the medical practitioner and his engagement with the body. We will study the history of human dissection and learn how this vital medical privilege was not always valorized as a legitimate medical practice. We will also examine patient-provider communication dynamics and especially how gender and socioeconomic status can affect communication, how patients experience their illnesses, and how practitioners treat them. We will address physical and mental illness, stigma, burnout, resilience and empowerment. We will at all times consider what defines patient-centered care within quality of life vs. quantity of life debates.

Guest speakers in harm reduction will visit to discuss the opioid crisis in Pittsburgh; a DPT will visit to discuss PT and chronic pain, and you will have an opportunity to visit the campus cadaver lab.

WSGS 322/ENGL 322/WDLI 324/AFST 322 Global Literature Survey T/Th 9:25- 10:40 (E. Mirmotahari)

This course will explore world literature as a set of active critical practices that call attention to the way we categorize literary texts and the assumptions that inform that categorization. This course will emphasize the idea of world literature and its development through the various scholarly debates and relationships that have shaped it. These include world literature's relationship to translation, "ethnic"/minority literatures, immigration, the "culture wars" (debates over canons), as well as colonialism and globalization.

The course readings for ENGL 322, and especially the primary readings, are largely selections by women writers. Most of the secondary texts are also by women writers—including Ngozi Adichie, Eva Hoffman, and Anita Desai, among others. The syllabus thus makes conspicuous the normative practice of selecting male writers for course syllabi. All the course objectives and learning blocs will be mediated through gender and gendering discourse.

Fulfills Core Curriculum Global Diversity and Social Justice Theme Area requirements.

WSGS 351/THEO 351 Sexuality and Christian Ethics T/Th 9:25-10:40 (E. Cochran)

Sex, sexuality, and social structures (such as the family) in which sexual interchanges play a constitutive role pose moral questions that are central to human identity and that are distinct from questions raised by other human experiences. This course explores the moral questions of sexual ethics in conversation with the intellectual resources of the Christian tradition, with special attention paid to Catholic theology.

One central focus of the course is the notion of natural law, a philosophical and Christian conviction that the natural world reflects divine goodness and offers norms and guidelines for shaping human behavior. Most Catholic advocates of natural law believe that teachings specific to the Christian faith and the Christian Scriptures will coincide with certain universal moral norms and commitments that extend across cultures. Some critics of Catholic natural law theory argue that this theory purports to be universal and rooted in human nature but is in fact overly shaped by the particulars of a specific religious tradition. This course explores the interworkings of religious faith and human reason in forming human beings' personal and social values, in particular those values that undergird moral norms related to sexual practices.

As part of its broader consideration of natural law, this course is particularly attentive to ways in which certain conceptions and constructions of gender are at work in moral norms regarding sexual behavior. Much of Christian teaching on sex presumes a fixed understanding of "male"

and “female” as static and binary categories with biological roots. This presumption is reinforced in Catholic understanding of the natural law, particularly in the idea of gender “complementarity” as developed in John Paul II and likewise at work in various moral arguments developed by mainline and evangelical Protestants in the United States. This course considers whether, as Martha Nussbaum puts it in *Sex and Social Justice*, moral norms associated with a biological view of two clearly differentiated genders are clearly the result of a shared human reason or the result of beliefs that are historically, culturally, and socially conditioned. This consideration will particularly emphasize the role of religious traditions in shaping these moral convictions. Questions about the relative roles of intuitive moral faculties, cultural and social influences, and religious influences in shaping gender norms prove important for critical reflection on a number of contemporary moral issues such as sexual violence and sex trafficking, the “hookup culture,” pornography, and prostitution.

WSGS 353/PSYC 353 15421 Psych of Gender (Staff) MW 3:00-4:15 (Time subject to change)

In Psychology of Gender, we elaborate critical theoretical perspectives on gender toward understanding how gendered conditions affect psychological life, forms of embodiment and sociocultural experiences. We read psychological, philosophical, and literary texts, as well as screening and interpreting film and video. Our focus includes understanding gender in contexts of contemporary popular culture, including music, films, news reporting, television and web culture. Goals for the course include deeply engaged conversation about the rich complexities of our gendered world and increasingly nuanced development of our individual perspectives on what it means to be a gendered subjectivity.

WGS 421/MDIA 421 Sex, Myth, and the Media T/Th 4:30-5:45 (M. Patterson)

This course will examine the role of mass media in reinforcing or challenging common cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity and power relationships between the sexes. In analyzing various mass media--including print, television, Internet publishing, electronic games, and film--we will apply gender theory and connect these artifacts to their historical moment. Students' own experiences, insights, questions, and ideas are a key part of this course. Throughout the term, we will consider not only what is in terms of gender roles, but also what might be.

WSGS 424/POSC 424 Women, Minorities and Politics MWF 2:00-2:50 (K. Coopie)

What is true of every member of the society, individually, is true of them all collectively; since the rights of the whole can be no more than the sum of the rights of the individuals."

- Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 1789.

When we think of Civil Rights in the United States, most people automatically associate this term with the movement for equality by African-Americans in the mid-twentieth century. Yet there have been many other groups that have faced discrimination throughout our history – and many that still do not enjoy the same rights as others to this day.

In this course, we will examine the struggles of not only race, but also ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, amongst other disaffected groups. Our focus on certain groups is not meant to highlight or claim that their struggles are greater than others; rather, we are focusing on groups and movements that have engaged in visible political battles over the years.

WSGS 418W/Engl 428W Slave Narratives MWF 11-11:50 (K. Glass)

Navigating sentimental, antislavery, and abolitionist discourses, slave narratives highlight the dignity of African Americans and foreground their enduring cultural traditions. Calling for abolition in their narratives, blacks also mobilized this form to document extreme hardships and craft triumphant tales of freedom.

Using frameworks of race, class, and gender, students in this course will examine iterations of the slave narrative from 1845-1868. In particular, we will historicize early black autobiographies and examine their formal and sociopolitical concerns. Readings will include critical essays and primary texts by Frederick Douglass, Ellen and William Craft, Harriet Jacobs, Solomon Northup, Elizabeth Keckley, and many others. In this course, students will acquire a nuanced understanding of African-American slave narratives and relevant black critical/theoretical traditions.

WSGS 434W/ENGL 434W-01 Feminist Theory TR 4:30-5:45 (F. Barrett)

This course will introduce students to feminist methodologies, exploring how these methodologies might be useful to the analysis of literary texts and other forms of representation. We will consider developments in feminist theory from the 1960's through the contemporary moment, beginning with foundational texts from Second Wave US feminism and French feminist theory. While mapping the relationship between different currents in feminist thought, we will also consider the ways that feminist theory has been shaped by the methods of Marxism, Freud, post-structuralism, cultural criticism, and radical feminisms. We will study the ways that feminist theory has served as a foundation for queer and trans theory, and we will also consider how feminist theory has worked to shape post-colonial theory. Readings for the class will be drawn from the work of Simone DeBeauvoir, Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, Monique Wittig, bell hooks, Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, Donna Haraway, Chandra Mohanty, Gloria Anzaldua,

Lauren Berlant and Sara Ahmed among others. Class meetings will be spent discussing critical/theoretical essays and will require active intellectual engagement and exchange among all participants. Students will be given the opportunity to write a final paper that is informed by feminist theories within the context of their particular field of interest.

Graduate

WGS 521/MDIA521 Sex, Myth and Media T/Th 4:30-5:45 (M. Patterson)

This course will examine the role of mass media in reinforcing or challenging common cultural definitions of masculinity and femininity and power relationships between the sexes. In analyzing various mass media--including print, television, Internet publishing, electronic games, and film--we will apply gender theory and connect these artifacts to their historical moment. Students' own experiences, insights, questions, and ideas are a key part of this course.

Throughout the term, we will consider not only what is in terms of gender roles, but also what might be.

WGS 558/Engl 558 Documentary Poetics M 6:00-8:40 (L. Kinnahan)

Looking primarily at 20th century N. American poetry, along with 1930s photo-documentary books and the rise of documentary photography, this course will focus on the diverse approaches, materials, and forms through which poetry explores the concept of "documentary" and "witness." We will lay a foundation for this focus through looking at poetry and photo-documentary books from the first half of the century and then move to the contemporary period (especially the 1990s to the present). We will read works that challenge us to think about intersectional relations between gender, race, and class, and the interactions of written and visual forms of expression. In particular, the course will explore the following:

- 1) Relationships between photography and poetry, as well as the relationship of visual culture, visual art, and poetry
- 2) Uses of documents, documentary material, & archives
- 3) Relationship of documentary approaches to social ideas about gender, race, class
- 4) Poetic documentary stances of "witness" - to poverty & economic changes, social migrations, social movements (Civil Rights, Women's Movement, etc), and socio-historical contexts & narratives (capitalism & industry; N. American histories of marginal groups/voices such as women, African-Americans, and working class; media and the dominance of the image; and more).

WSGS 568/Engl 568 Feminist Theory Tues/Th 4:30-5:45 (F. Barrett)

This course will introduce students to feminist methodologies, exploring how these methodologies might be useful to the analysis of literary texts and other forms of representation.

We will consider developments in feminist theory from the 1960's through the contemporary moment, beginning with foundational texts from Second Wave US feminism and French feminist theory. While mapping the relationship between different currents in feminist thought, we will also consider the ways that feminist theory has been shaped by the methods of Marxism, Freud, post-structuralism, cultural criticism, and radical feminisms. We will study the ways that feminist theory has served as a foundation for queer and trans theory, and we will also consider how feminist theory has worked to shape post-colonial theory. Readings for the class will be drawn from the work of Simone DeBeauvoir, Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous, Monique Wittig, bell hooks, Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, Donna Haraway, Chandra Mohanty, Gloria Anzaldua, Lauren Berlant and Sara Ahmed among others. Class meetings will be spent discussing critical/theoretical essays and will require active intellectual engagement and exchange among all participants. Students will be given the opportunity to write a final paper that is informed by feminist theories within the context of their particular field of interest.