

WGS Undergraduate Courses Fall 2015

WSGS 202 / AFST 202 / THEO 201: Women and Christianity

TR 10:50 a.m.-12:05 p.m. (E. Vasko)

In this class we will be placing the received wisdom of the Christian religion in conversation with the ways in which it has been interpreted both by the tradition's dominant narrative as well as by women and men who challenge that narrative across generations and cultures. Emphasis will be placed on multicultural perspectives in light of issues and themes that engage feminist theologians, womanist theologians, and scholars from the Circle of Concern African Women Theologians. Some of the topics that will be discussed include: sexual violence, racism, poverty and health, ways of imaging the divine and participating in religious rituals, interpretive and communal authority, and power structures. The goal of this course is to expand our worldview by considering the lives of women in diverse religious communities and to think constructively and creatively about visions and strategies that promote the flourishing of women and all persons. Through this requirement students are assisted in learning how to be informed global citizens and challenged to take responsibility for promoting human dignity.

WSGS 210 / SOCI 210 (01): Sociology of Sex and Gender

TR 12:15 - 1:30 p.m. (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 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 / SOCI 225: Family Systems

TR 10:50 a.m. - 12:05 p.m. (Z. Ahmed)

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

WSGS 280 / ARHY 280: Gender, Vision, and Representation

MWF 12:00 - 12:50 p.m. (A. Mikulinsky)

This course will offer an introduction to considering the manner in which art (encompassing visual and material culture) has participated in the construction, representation, and characterization of femininity and masculinity. Considering both the work of male and female artists, this course will consider the particular concerns of creation, spectatorship, and analysis involved in the construction of gender identities in art.

WSGS 321W / ENGL 323W: Life Writing

MWF 10:00 - 10:50 a.m. (A. Gibson)

In this course we will consider the genre of life writing in theory and in practice. We will consider how writers construct the story of a life or a life experience and how we tell stories about ourselves. How do we use writing to construct our own or other people's identities? How are these stories affected by place and relationships or by gender, sexuality, race, nationality, and/or social status? How true are these stories, and how do we evaluate the relationship between storytelling and truth? We will read excerpts and essays from a range of memoirs and autobiographies, which will likely include those by St. Augustine, Virginia Woolf, Anne Frank, James Baldwin, André Aciman, J.M. Coetzee, M.F.K. Fisher, Anne Fadiman, Ruth Reichl, Maya Angelou, Annie Dillard, Frank McCourt, and Augusten Burroughs. We will also read a few biographical "Profiles" from *The New Yorker* and watch a film adaptation of a memoir. Your assignments in this class will be both critical and creative. You will keep a portfolio of short writing exercises, including journals, short memoir pieces, and responses to our reading, and you will write one critical essay and one original piece of life writing. We will regularly workshop our writing together in class, and you will have opportunities to revise your writing.

WSGS 453 / PSYC 453 (61): Psychology of Gender

W 6:00 - 8:40 p.m. (S. Dixit)

In this course we will explore what it might mean to be a woman, a man, or something in between or outside of those possibilities. We will consider gender from a variety of vantage points, including those of biology, culture, race, psychoanalysis, psychopathology, and mythology. Goals for the course include rich conversation about the varieties of our gendered world and the further development of our individual perspectives on what it means to be a gendered subjectivity

WGS Graduate Courses Fall 2015

WSGS 556 / PHIL 556 (61): Foucault

T 6:00 - 8:40 p.m. (F. Evans)

In his intellectual career, Foucault passed through a number of stages (existential phenomenological, hermeneutical, archaeological, and genealogical). Each new stage was marked by a reinterpretation of his past work in terms of his latest approach. Foucault's genealogical stage is the most discussed in recent scholarship on his work and preserves important aspects of his preceding "archaeological" period. We will therefore begin with some selections from his archaeological period and then focus on his genealogical works as well as on the ethical, "governmentality," and parrhesia writings that overlap with them. We will also view Foucault's genealogy and his ethical and political thought in relation to some major authors and themes in contemporary political and ethical philosophy, feminism, and gay and lesbian thought. As a possible option for those who are interested, I will meet for a number of after-class sessions to discuss Gilles Deleuze's book on Foucault, but it will not be an official part of the course.

WSGS 696 / ENGL 695 (01): Ethnic American Literature by Women Writers

M 6:00 - 8:40 p.m. (M. Michael)

This course will examine recent American ethnic literature by women writers in terms of its engagement with gender as well as with other difficult issues such as race, ethnicity, class, subjectivity, identity, American identity, immigration, colonialism, violence-issues that are usually intertwined, that have dominated globally at the turn of the twenty-first century, and that have become increasingly visible to Americans. At the same time the course will examine the difficulties literature faces in engaging such issues in the wake of the questioning of representation and language that has characterized literature throughout the twentieth century and into the twenty-first century. Texts will be considered individually as well as in relation to their larger cultural, historical, and intellectual contexts. The course is also intended to enhance the students' experience and skills of critical thinking, reading, and writing about literature within the context of literary studies.