

Women's and Gender Studies Fall 2020 Course Descriptions

Undergraduate Course Descriptions

WSGS 123/HIST 123 Greek and Roman Mythology

MWF 11:00-11:50 (Online) S. Miller

The major myths of Greece and Rome with special attention to contemporary interpretations of myth and the influence of myth on art and literature. Lecture. Theme Area Creative Arts. Offered spring only.

WSGS 142-05/UCOR 142-05 Theological Views of the Person

MWF 12:00-12:50 (Online) E. Vasko

A study of theology through an investigation of the question: "What does it mean to be human?" Students engage this question in relationship to self, others, the world, and the Divine, with attention to Christian and other views. In particular, this class will explore the ways in which the Christian tradition has named sin and grace, the implications of this naming in view of various forms of embodiment: ability, gender/sexuality, and race/ethnicity. We will begin with a historical overview of traditional source material and move into contemporary texts. Please note: this is not your ordinary lecture-based class. We will use a mix of lecture, discussion, in-class activity, and community engagement

WSGS 203/THEO 202 Christianity, Embodiment, and Violence

W 6-8:40 (Campus) E. Vasko

Want to make a difference? Tired of just talking about social justice? Interested in psychology, sociology, public policy, education, or health, but still need to take a theology course? The course examines the research, writings, and experiences of women and men in the Christian tradition. Particular attention will be paid to religious justifications for violence and discrimination; and the role that theology and faith communities have played in both condoning and resisting such violence in the US. Theme Areas: Social Justice and Faith and Reason.

WSGS 205-01/ENGL 201-02 SPST: Intro to Fiction

MWF 1:00-1:50 (Campus) C. Mullis

Social issues—including gender inequity, racial discrimination, gun violence, climate change, immigration, mental health, disability, and LGBTQ rights—have defined the first two decades of the 21st century in the United States. These issues shape the political landscape and the lived experiences of individuals. Through reading and analyzing Jesmyn Ward's *Salvage the Bones*, Rhiannon Navin's *Only Child*, Jeffrey Eugenides' *Middlesex*, Ocean Vuong's *On Earth We're 3 Briefly Gorgeous*, Cristina Henríquez's *The Book of Unknown Americans*, short stories by numerous American authors, and secondary texts from feminist theory, queer theory, critical

race theory, border studies, disability studies, and environmental studies, this class will consider how contentious social issues affect the material realities of America's most vulnerable inhabitants, and how literary representations can effect social change. Fulfills WSGS major/minor requirement

WSGS 205-02/ENGL 204 SPST: Women and the Bible

MWF 2:00-2:50 (Campus) R. Gasson

The Bible as Literature: This is a special topics course designed around culturally recognizable Old Testament (Abrahamic) bible stories and how they function as literature. We will read and study the bible as a "living text," because it can still be actively read, interpreted, and reconstructed through a modern lens—giving a renewed importance to how biblical parables function in our lives and in society. Specifically, we will learn, discuss, and write about how different cultural moments and literary movements are reflected and function in biblical narratives; for example, reading the story of Eve and Lilith as a feminist text, open for reinterpretation. We will also explore how literary genres (fiction, non-fiction, and poetics) are employed in biblical texts to elevate meaning. Exploring biblical texts like the Song of Songs and the Psalms, we will open new discussions, (re)interpretations, and (re)applications of how these significant narratives build on our expectations of love, desire, and redemption as we work toward a more peaceful world.

WSGS 316W-01/ENGL 316W-01 SPST: Health Care & Literature

MWF 12:00-12:50 (Campus) R. Maatta

This course explores representations of healthcare and medical knowledge in the West since about 1800 with an emphasis on cultural constructions of the medical practitioner and his engagement with the body. We will discuss representations of medical practice in word and image. We interpret illustrations from 19th century anatomical textbooks and paintings of 8 surgeries by Thomas Eakins alongside episodes of *The Knick*; 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 read non-fiction and fiction about physical and mental illness, disability, medical mismanagement, and medical heroics, including Fanny Burney's 1812 account of her radical mastectomy, Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun*, Sylvia Plath's *The Bell Jar* and Bernard Pomerance's *The Elephant Man*. A guest speaker in physical therapy will visit to discuss PT and chronic pain, and you will have an opportunity to visit the campus cadaver lab. We are interested in the nature of humanity, the ethics of experimentation, the profession as locus of power and generator of discourse, patient-provider communication challenges, spectacles of disability, stigmas surrounding illness, and the inevitability of death. You will participate regularly in class discussions and complete two process-based analytical papers, some in-class writing assignments, a few informal reflections, and a research project.

WSGS 351/THEO 351 Sexuality and Christian Ethics

T/Th 12:15-1:30 (Online) 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 Psychology of Gender

T/Th 9:25/10:40 (Campus) M. Browne

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.

WSGS 375/HIST 375 Women and Gender in Africa

MWF 1:00-1:50 (Online) R. Chapdelaine

In this course we will explore scholarship on women and gender in Africa in a historical context. As a social construction, gender is negotiated and renegotiated throughout time and space. From the colonial era to today, women's experiences have not only been shaped by their environments, but they have been responsible for shaping their political, economic and social environments. Examining gendered histories is important because it explores gendered understandings of rights and responsibilities in society, as well examines how gender, including femininity and masculinity, is not static. As internal and external forces necessitate, i.e. imperialism, gender roles within families and in communities change. Themes such as power, gerontocracies, law, motherhood, manhood, feminism and others will be covered in this course.

WSGS 406/HIST 406/CLSX 406 Ancient and Medieval Gynecology

T 6:00-8:40 (Online) S. Miller

This course examines the representations of female bodies, anatomies, and physiological processes in texts and material artifacts from ancient Greece, Rome, and Medieval Europe. It will focus on contextualizing ancient and medieval gynecological theory and practice within diverse—convergent, overlapping, and divisive—frameworks to unveil the beliefs, desires, and fears that centered on the various "phases" of the female body: virgin, fertile, maternal, menopausal. Primary texts will come from genres including medical handbooks, natural philosophy, ancient history, the pseudo-Gospels, and medieval mystical literature. Primary authors will include selections from the Hippocratic Corpus, Aristotle, Plato, Pliny, Galen, Soranus, Avicenna, Averroes, the Trotula texts, and Hildegard of Bingen. Material primary sources will include grave stelai, votive offerings depicting female anatomy, medical manuscript drawings, and medieval iconography of the Virgin Mary and some early-Christian martyrs. The course investigates what it meant to be a "woman" and have a "female body" within this contextual framework of cultural, familial, and religious expectations, but also how this array of evidence problematized gender and sexuality by way of gynecological theory and practice.

WSGS 421/MEDIA 421 Sex, Myth, and the Media

T/Th 4:30-5:45 (Campus) 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 496/PHIL 496 Queer Theory & Transgender Studies

T/Th 10:50-12:05 (Campus) L. Rodemeyer

Sexuality, gender, and embodiment have been understood in dramatically new ways since the mid-20th century. This course will begin with a brief overview of Foucault's and Butler's philosophies, focusing on how they present sexuality, gender, and embodiment as discursive and/or performative, and how their arguments ground subsequent positions in both queer theory and trans studies. Then we will turn to articles in queer theory and transgender studies to demonstrate how each of these movements developed, the dialogues within each area, and the discussions--and criticisms--between these two regions of study.

Graduate Course Descriptions

WSGS 506/HIST 506/CLSX 506 Ancient and Medieval Gynecology

T 6:00-8:40 (Online) S. Miller

This course examines the representations of female bodies, anatomies, and physiological processes in texts and material artifacts from ancient Greece, Rome, and Medieval Europe. It will focus on contextualizing ancient and medieval gynecological theory and practice within diverse—convergent, overlapping, and divisive—frameworks to unveil the beliefs, desires, and fears that centered on the various "phases" of the female body: virgin, fertile, maternal, menopausal. Primary texts will come from genres including medical handbooks, natural philosophy, ancient history, the pseudo-Gospels, and medieval mystical literature. Primary authors will include selections from the Hippocratic Corpus, Aristotle, Plato, Pliny, Galen, Soranus, Avicenna, Averroes, the Trotula texts, and Hildegard of Bingen. Material primary sources will include grave stelai, votive offerings depicting female anatomy, medical manuscript drawings, and medieval iconography of the Virgin Mary and some early-Christian martyrs. The course investigates what it meant to be a "woman" and have a "female body" within this contextual framework of cultural, familial, and religious expectations, but also how this array of evidence problematized gender and sexuality by way of gynecological theory and practice.

WSGS 521/MDIA 521 Sex, Myth, and the Media

T/Th 4:30-5:45 (Campus)

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 568-61/ENGL 558 SPTP: Modernism and Feminist the Context

M 6:00-8:40 (Campus) L. Kinnahan

In both Britain and America, the early decades of the twentieth century were marked by a vigorous and often radical movement to advance women's equality in political rights, educational opportunities, labor practices, sexual expression, and medical/reproductive choice and treatment, along with concurrent movements sexology, eugenics, and even occultism. Gaining a degree of economic and social independence in the late nineteenth century, the "New Woman" was a matter of public attention and debate at the turn of the century, transfiguring into the image of the "feministe" by 1910. How did First Wave Feminism both shape and draw upon ideas of the "modern" that involved writers and artists of the period? How does the literature register the challenges to gender structures wrought by this multifaceted and often conflicted movement, and how might these very challenges be said to contribute to the experiments in form and subject matter characterizing Anglo-American "modernisms"? Addressing these questions, we will look at works of fiction, poetry, and nonfiction prose written by American and British writers during the years of 1900-1945 (tentatively including May Sinclair, Gertrude Stein, Sylvia Townsend Warner, Nella Larsen, Mina Loy, Lola Ridge, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Marianne Moore, Virginia Woolf, Georgia Douglas Johnson) . We will also explore little magazines of the Modernist era, such as *The Freewoman* & *The New Freewoman*, *The Woman Rebel*, *The Egoist*, *Others*, *The New Age*, *Poetry Review*, *Poetry*, *The Little Review*, *Clarion*, and *The Masses* as sites for intersections of feminist and modernist thought, debate, and activity.

WSGS 568-62/ENGL 569-61 Spectacle in Theater and Novel

W 6:00-8:40 (Campus) L. Engel

This course will trace the dynamic relationship between the theater and the novel from late eighteenth-century masquerade and gothic drama to Victorian sensation fiction and its melodramatic stage adaptations, to the subversive invocation of the new woman in turn of the century novels and plays. Focusing primarily on lesser-known works, we will pay particular attention to the complexities of female characters in these texts alongside theatrical history of actresses, celebrity, and material culture. We will think about how the dynamics of spectacle and sensation worked to construct ideas about gender, sexuality, class, race, and embodiment across genres and materials. Primary texts may include: Hannah Cowley's *The Belle Stratagem*, Jane Austen's *Lady Susan*, Matthew Lewis's *The Castle Spectre*, Mary Wollstonecraft's *Maria: Or the Wrongs of Women*, Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*, Ellen Wood's *East Lynne*, Ouida's *Moths*, George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. We will read selections from leading theorists of the theater and the novel during this period including: Emily Allen, Matthew Buckley, Sharon Marcus, Joseph Roach, Nancy Armstrong, Gail Marshall, Joseph Litvak, Tracy Davis, Nina Auerbach, and Martin Meisel.

WSGS 640/PHIL 640 Queer Theory & Transgender Studies

T/Th 10:50-12:05 (Campus) L. Rodemeyer

Sexuality, gender, and embodiment have been understood in dramatically new ways since the mid-20th century. This course will begin with a brief overview of Foucault's and Butler's

philosophies, focusing on how they present sexuality, gender, and embodiment as discursive and/or performative, and how their arguments ground subsequent positions in both queer theory and trans studies. Then we will turn to articles in queer theory and transgender studies to demonstrate how each of these movements developed, the dialogues within each area, and the discussions--and criticisms--between these two regions of study.