

# Women's and Gender Studies Spring 2020 Course Descriptions

## Undergraduate Course Descriptions

### **WSGS 205 /ARHY 220 History of Photography (Spring breakaway)**

T/Th 3:05-4:20 (C. Lorenz)

We will examine key points in the history of photography in Great Britain, from the years leading up to its 1839 invention to the close of the 19th century. Our study tour will allow direct encounters with the sites, devices, prints, and rare books that played the most important parts in this history. Contemporary exhibitions and studio visits show how early ways of making and distributing images continue to influence photographic practices today. Back in the classroom, we will deepen our understanding of early processes by making salted paper prints and cyanotypes of our own. Throughout the semester, we will pay particular attention to early innovations in scientific imaging and to the essential roles of women in the early history of photography.

Women photographers we will address include Anna Atkins, Julia Margaret Cameron, Lady Clementina Hawarden, Anne Brigman, Violet Blaiklock, and makers of Victorian photocollage albums.

### **WSGS 205 SEC 02/ENGL204 SEC 02 Women at the Top: Literary Representations of Female Leadership**

T/Th 10:50-12:05 (C. Druzak)

This course's main goal is to unpack how female leadership is conceptualized in literature, both British and American, through the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality. We will seek to answer the following questions: How are female leaders portrayed, and what kind of roles do women as "leaders" inhabit—ruler, matriarch, decision maker, moral compass? How do such portrayals differ from broader / traditional notions of what it means to be a "leader"—white, male, and upper class? In their literary representations, how do women attain and retain power? How are traditional notions of what it means to be "female" upheld or subverted when a woman rules? And finally, what kind of imagined pasts, presents, and futures do these depictions of women as leaders offer us as readers? Such questions guide our other course goals, which include demonstrating an ability to critically engage with primary texts through the lens of feminist theory, such as those articulated by bell hooks and Judith Butler. Students will also be asked to interpret texts in relation to one another, building an alternative corpus, or canon, that revolves around the central idea of female

leadership and empowerment. Students will also be tasked with orally presenting their readings of critical texts that form the interpretive framework for our primary readings to the classroom audience, and articulating their own close readings via written essays.

### **WSGS 211/HIST 212/CLSX 211 History of Ancient Women**

MWF 11:00 (S. Miller)

An investigation into the lives and representations of women and girls in historical and literary texts, art, and material culture in ancient Greece and Rome. The course examines representations of female bodies, work, familial roles, and religious roles.

### **WSGS 252W/Engl 251W Nursing and Narrative**

T/R 1:40 OR MWF 10 (R. Maatta)

This class is for and about nurses, and it considers how narrative form intersects with the profession. The class is divided into four units. First, we will study how nurses have been depicted in works of literature and film. What cultural values do these women embody? Are they realistic? What made nursing a stereotypically feminine profession, and have present-day nurses escaped the gender stereotypes that have hounded them for more than a century? Second, we examine pathographies -- stories that patients tell about their illnesses. We will discuss how illness, trauma, and disability affect a person's identity and their place in their social network. How is illness disempowering and how does it challenge a patient's ability to communicate? What kinds of illness experiences exceed language? Why is our culture so committed to narratives of triumph when every illness cannot be cured? How do patients view their nurses and the caregiving institution? How do race, class, and gender affect a person's experience of illness, treatment, and recovery?

Third, we read narratives written by nurses about their work and identities. Narratives surround nurses as patients their stories, nurses chart their shiftwork and narrate differently for doctors, colleagues, patients and their families, and nurses build personal narratives as they reflect on their trajectory from student to practitioner. Thus, we will read texts about how communication and language are central to nursing and how nurses use narrative to affirm the work they do. We will understand nurses as people who receive, interpret, and create narratives in the unique and critical context of intervening with illness. Finally, we examine how dementia and dying affect language in profound ways and present nurses with unparalleled listening and interpreting challenges. The actively dying frequently speak in metaphors. How can nurses respond

to those metaphors and advocate for the dying? Similarly, demented patients can speak in fragmented, seemingly nonsensical ways. How can we listen for the intention within the speech to increase demented patients' quality of life, and how can we help their families to learn to listen and interpret?

### **WSGS 307W/Engl 430W Queer Drama**

MW 3:00 (J. Lane)

This course will combine textual analysis of plays with a consideration of queer performance practice and production. We will study what makes a work queer, the audience that the work is aimed at, and the success of queer works from small target audiences to widespread, global recognition. We will look at historical queer authors and how their "straight" works can contain hidden gay messages. We will analyze how the play's structure and form help to deliver its content how specific productions facilitate the plays success. We will also look at gender/sexuality/race and other complex identity categories and address whether we can assume that the identity of the playwright is a sufficient (or even partial) lens through which to ask questions. We'll consider our own biases to help us better pose questions about how identity frames the creation and reception of a performance/play text. We will study why is it useful to look at theatre and performance through the lens of sexual identity and how the commercial theatre has embraced gay and lesbian work and the class will read a select history of LGBTQ theatre from the early 20th century through today. We will look at how these works effect modern critical issues (gays in the military, gay marriage, debates over adoption for gay families, and citizenship for queer internationals) in a heteronormative culture.

### **WSGS 309W/Engl 309W Horror Film**

Tues 5-9 (J. Fried)

Horror is one of the most popular and resilient genres in the history of film. But what exactly defines a movie as a horror film? And what is it about the horror film that keeps us coming back for more? It's certainly more than the experience of being scared. In this course, we will watch and discuss a variety of classic and contemporary horror films with the purpose of a) understanding and recognizing the cinematic codes of the genre b) considering how the horror film – through its varied subgenres – often functions as a barometer of social anxieties surrounding issues of gender, sexuality, and race. In

addition to weekly screenings, students will read, discuss, and write about a variety of theoretical essays and texts on horror film. In addition, students will be expected to master the language of film analysis.

### **WSGS 316W/Engl 316W Healthcare and Lit**

MWF 11:00 OR T/R 9:25 (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 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. We will discuss how gender and socioeconomic status influence a patient's experiences of illness and how they are treated by caregivers. We will also consider how institutionalized medicine in the West has roots in traditionally masculine values, and how these values have adapted and changed since 1800. 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.

### **WSGS 333/Hist 333 American Women in History**

Tues/Th 12:15 (J. Taylor)

This undergraduate course traces the history of women's roles and women's lives from the colonial era to the present. Thematic areas focus on space, race, ethnicity, class, gender, region, work, politics, religion, sexuality, technology, consumerism, and beauty culture. Students will also become familiar with basic historiographical issues in the field of US Women's and Gender studies. Students will analyze a broad spectrum of ideas about American women through lectures, primary and secondary source readings, discussions, screenings and written or digital content they produce.

### **WSGS 353/Psych 353 Psych of Gender**

MW 4:25 (S. Barnard)

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 422/Comm 421 Communication and Gender**

T/Th 12:15 (P. Arneson)

Examines research addressing differences and similarities in male and female communication styles in a variety of contexts, ranging from personal to social to work relationships, with attention given to philosophical and narrative understandings of what it means to be male and female persons.

### **WSGS 452W/Engl 443W Modernist Women Writers**

T/Th 10:50 (L. Kinnahan)

In both Britain and America, the first 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. Gaining a degree of economic and social independence by the turn of the century, the "New Woman" was a matter of public attention and debate that continued through the following decades. This course will explore how women writers in America and Britain responded to the social, political, and cultural changes affecting ideas of gender in the modernist period. How did writers draw upon ideas of the "modern" woman? How does literature register challenges to gender conventions during this period, and how might these very challenges be said to contribute to experiments in form and subject matter characterizing Anglo-American "modernisms"? Addressing 15

these questions, we will look at works of fiction, poetry, and non-fiction prose written by American and British writers during the years of 1900-1945. Writers we will read tentatively include Virginia Woolf, Nella Larsen, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Mina Loy, Gertrude Stein, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Charlotte Mew, Sylvia Townsend Warner, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and H.D. (Hilda Doolittle).

### **WSGS 458/PHIL 496 Early Modern Women Philosophers**

Wed 5-7:40 (D. Selcer)

Though typically excluded from the philosophical canon, early modern women made significant conceptual contributions to and interventions in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political theory, and the philosophical foundations of modern science. This seminar will engage primary texts by women philosophers (and occasionally their allies and interlocutors) written in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including Élisabeth de Bohême, Margaret Cavendish, Anne Finch Conway, and Olympe de Gouges. Though gender in the sense we now understand it was not yet an explicitly formulated category, these philosophers critically engage theories of embodiment, knowledge-production, and politics in ways we can now describe in its terms, establishing rich theoretical models for arraying experience and experiment, reason and passion, intellectual and political equality, as well as simultaneously metaphysical, 'natural philosophical' (i.e., scientific), and social accounts of power. The seminar will require active intellectual and discursive participation. Student writing may engage our thinkers and texts from any relevant disciplinary or multidisciplinary perspective. Undergraduate-level enrollment requires no specific background, but is intended for relatively advanced students studying any liberal arts discipline who are interested in philosophy or gender studies. Graduate-level enrollment also requires no specific background, though it will be useful to have at least some training either in philosophy, the early modern period (whatever the discipline), or in historical approaches to gender (whatever the period or discipline).

## **Graduate Course Descriptions**

### **WSGS 522/Comm 521 Communication and Gender**

T/Th 12:15 (P. Arneson)

Examines research addressing differences and similarities in male and female communication styles in a variety of contexts, ranging from personal to social to work relationships, with attention given to philosophical and narrative understandings of what it means to be male and female persons.

### **WSGS 529/ENGL 558 Civil Rights Literature**

Mon 6:00-8:40pm (K. Glass)

This course examines selected writings from the civil rights period in America. Students will have an opportunity to situate texts by Maya Angelou, James Baldwin, Nikki Giovanni, Dr. King, Huey P. Newton (and many others) in their sociopolitical contexts, while addressing broader questions of race, class, gender, orientation, and social justice. We'll focus on richly diverse (and often diverging) texts by well-known civil rights leaders, but we'll also study works by lesser-known figures who helped drive the movement. In this literature course, we'll consider the "literary" as well as sociopolitical dimensions of the works on our list. In addition to examining primary and secondary texts, we'll explore the oral tradition, which infuses the literature and social activism of the period.

### **WSGS 637/PHIL 570 Early Modern Women Philosophers**

Wed 5-7:40 (D. Selcer)

Though typically excluded from the philosophical canon, early modern women made significant conceptual contributions to and interventions in metaphysics, epistemology, ethics, political theory, and the philosophical foundations of modern science. This seminar will engage primary texts by women philosophers (and occasionally their allies and interlocutors) written in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, including Élisabeth de Bohême, Margaret Cavendish, Anne Finch Conway, and Olympe de Gouges. Though gender in the sense we now understand it was not yet an explicitly formulated category, these philosophers critically engage theories of embodiment, knowledge-production, and politics in ways we can now describe in its terms, establishing rich theoretical models for arraying experience and experiment, reason and passion, intellectual and political equality, as well as simultaneously metaphysical, 'natural philosophical' (i.e., scientific), and social accounts of power. The seminar will require active intellectual and discursive participation. Student writing may engage our thinkers and texts from any relevant disciplinary or multidisciplinary perspective. Undergraduate-level enrollment requires no specific background, but is intended for relatively advanced students studying any liberal arts discipline who are interested in philosophy or gender studies. Graduate-level enrollment also requires no specific background, though it will be useful to have at least some training either in philosophy,

the early modern period (whatever the discipline), or in historical approaches to gender (whatever the period or discipline).