

Women, Gender Identity, and Ethnicity

Northern Arizona University

WST 191/Winter 2007

Instructor: Heather D. Harris

Email: Heather.Harris@nau.edu

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the intersections of gender and ethnicity primarily in the U.S. Using an interdisciplinary approach, we will explore the ways in which gender and ethnicity are socially constructed and maintained and how they intersect and affect individuals in various institutions such as school, work, media and the family. In addition, this course will include discussions of sexuality and class. The primary focus of this course will be on the experiences of women of various races/ethnicities, though it will also investigate some issues surrounding manhood and masculinity.

WST 191 is a liberal studies course within the Cultural Understanding distribution block and will address several of the essential liberal studies skills including critical reading, critical and creative thinking, ethical reasoning, and effective writing and oral communication. It has the thematic focus Valuing the Diversity of Human Experience. This course also fulfills the U.S. ethnic diversity requirement.

Course Objectives

The central goal of this course is for each student to become informed and empowered contributors to our society. Empowerment could occur by gaining the following skills:

- **Effective Communication:** Learning concepts and how to clearly articulate points of view in discussions and writings; learning how to respectfully read and respond to others' points of view.
- **Critical Analysis:** Learning and practicing critical reading and reasoning; recognizing and evaluating multiple meanings embedded in various materials.
- **Identifying Oppressions:** Recognizing and understanding the multiple ways in which individuals are discriminated against and who benefits from these practices.

Course Structure

The majority of the learning in this online section will come from the assigned readings and from the online-discussions of the readings. Therefore in order to pass this class and, more importantly, achieve a comprehensive understanding of the significance of gender, race and class in our lives, each student must complete each of the assigned readings and actively participate in on-line discussions. In an effort to make the discussions more effective and less overwhelming, each student will sign up for a participation group that will consist of 5-6 members. You will then post your responses and have discussions in

your selected participation group. There will also be activities, quizzes, journals and a group project, which will also deepen and strengthen your understanding of the presented material.

~IMPORTANT NOTICE ~ACCELERATED COURSE~

This course is usually taught over 16 weeks. This is an accelerated course that condenses 16 weeks of course work into 4 very busy and intense weeks and will demand a great deal of time and commitment. Every module (there are 5 modules) will consist of reading about 120 pages from the text, online discussions and questions, a topic activity, a 1-2 page journal entry and an essential terms quiz. In addition to the assignments within each module, students must also select a novel to read and write a 10-page group paper on. The novel must be read by mid-semester. According to Arizona Board of Regent guidelines, a minimum of 45 hours of work by each student is required for each unit of credit. Therefore, this 3-credit class requires that 135 hours be spent on it, which translates into about 30 hours a week for this accelerated course. **Before you commit to taking this course be sure you have the appropriate time and commitment for it.**

Summary of Policies

All students are required to fully participate in all activities. Because it is important for our discussions to be about similar materials and ideas, it is not recommended that you work ahead. Each student must have their responses posted by the deadlines and respond to other's postings by the following day.

Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism and cheating, will not be tolerated; if you engage in these activities you run the risk of failing this course. Please read the NAU policy statements at the end of this syllabus.

Be respectful of others' opinions and points of view; you don't have to agree to be respectful. Disagreements may occur; do not state your disagreements as personal attacks, and do not interpret others' expressed points of view that differ from your own as personal attacks. Be prepared to support your points of view with appropriate evidence.

All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced, in a legible typeface and font size with standard margins: 1 inch top and bottom and 1.25 inch right and left. It is required that all of your written assignments are free of grammatical and spelling errors. The final group paper must be in APA format, include a bibliography and/or correct citations in APA format. Information on APA can be found on the Cline library's website: <http://www6.nau.edu/library/info/refresources.cfm?subject=Citation%20%26%20Style%20>

Texts

The following texts are available at Aradia Bookstore, 116 W. Cottage Avenue in Flagstaff and at the NAU Bookstore. Additional readings will be posted on Vista.

Required Text:

Women: Images and Realities, A Multicultural Anthology (4th). By A.Kesselman, L.D. McNair, & Scniedewind. McGraw Hill: Boston. 2008.

Recommended Text:

50 Key Concepts in Gender Studies. By J. Pilcher & I. Whelehan. Sage: London. 2005.
(This text is not required but will be helpful in understanding reading material and essential terms.)

Course Reading Calendar

Please note: This calendar is only for assigned readings from the assigned text *Women: Images and Realities*. Other assignments will be posted on Vista.

Module 1: Introduction to Course, Each Other, and Gender, Race, and Ethnicity

Intro & What is Women's Studies	pgs: 1-40
The Differences Among US	pgs: 375-414

Module 2: Gender Socializations

Becoming a Woman	pgs: 41-113
Gender and Women's Bodies	pgs: 116-139
Health Issues	pgs: 309-334

Module 3: Bodies and Sexualities

Sexualities and Relationships	pgs: 140-165
Reproductive Justice	pgs: 347-367
Heterosexism & Aging	pgs: 415-476
Sexual Violence	pgs: 499-533

Module 4: Social Institutions

Institutions That Shape Women (Work, School, Public Policies, Family, and Religion)	pgs: 170-308
---	--------------

Module 5: Visions and Transformations

Changing Our World	pgs: 535-635
--------------------	--------------

Course Requirements

Participation (40 points, 8 points per module, 20% of final grade): Students are required to regularly and actively participate in online class discussions and activities. You will not be able to fully participate if you have not completed the assigned readings. Take notes on the main points of each reading: what the connection(s) between the reading(s) are, your reactions and any questions you have. Also watch for assigned terms and make notes of the definitions and the context in which they are used. These notes will be helpful for you during online discussions, in writing your journals and preparing for quizzes and other assignments. I will instruct you on the discussion questions assigned with each module on Vista. Keep in mind that your grade for this will not only depend on the quantity of your response but also the quality: be sure each of your responses exhibits critical thought and references at least one of the assigned readings.

Essential Terms: (4 weekly quizzes: 8 points each, 1 final comprehensive quiz: 8 points, 40 points total, 20% of final grade): At the beginning of each module, I will give you a list of essential terms that relate to the module's readings. You will be responsible for locating the definitions and using these terms correctly in online discussions and other assignments. There will be a quiz for each module on that module's terms; on the 5th module the quiz will cover terms from all of the modules. I will not provide the definitions; you must locate them yourself. You may discuss the definitions with your classmates or me if you are unsure.

Journals (6 points each, 30 points total, 15% of final grade): For every module, I will present a suggested journal topic that relates to the module's readings. You are required to write a journal for every module and submit it by the end of that module. The purpose of journal writing is to critically reflect upon the readings, discussions and any other course material. The required length of each entry is one or two double spaced pages. Do not exceed the required length; this will be an exercise in clear and concise writing. If your journal entry is legible, thoughtful, with your points clearly stated, **includes at least one of the module's assigned essential terms and reflects the module's readings**, you will receive full credit.

Topic Activities (6 points each, 30 points total, 15% of final grade): For each module I will assign an activity that corresponds to the module's topic. Some of the activities you will be able to do at your computer, and others will require you to go into "the real world" to make observations and report back on them.

Novel Group Paper (60 points, 30% of final grade): All students are required to select a novel from the following list to read and write a collaborative paper on. You may purchase the novel at Aradia or buy it used at Bookman's or on the internet. Do not buy the text until you have seen the posting of readings. Four to six individuals will read the same novel and write a ten page group paper on it. On the first day of class you will be able to sign up for the novel you would like to read. This will be done on a first come, first served basis, so you may want to have a second and third choice in mind as well.

Midway through the semester you need to have completely read your selected text and turned in a one page summary to me.

For the final paper, as a group, you will need to include the following (in any order you choose): What is known about the author and how her background may have influenced the text; a clear and concise summary of the text; an explanation of how this text relates to the material presented in the course; and who the book could be recommended to. As a group you will need to decide how to best write the paper. It shouldn't look like a pieced together paper, but rather it should flow well as a coherent piece. It must be in APA format and free of any grammatical and spelling errors. The papers will be posted on Vista for the whole class to read and comment on, which is required. Ten points for this project will depend on group evaluations of each individual's contributions to the paper; the one page summary is worth five points; and another five points will be given for commenting on at least three other group papers from the class. The paper itself is worth 40 points.

Group Novel Paper Reading List

Brown, Rita Mae. (1973). *Rubyfruit Jjungle*. New York: Bantam Books.

Born out of wedlock, Molly Bolt is adopted by a poor Southern couple. When Molly loses her virginity to her girlfriend in sixth grade, she realizes she's different, but decides not to apologize for that. But the world is not tolerant. Booted out of college for moral turpitude, an unrepentant Molly takes New York by storm to become the greatest filmmaker that ever lived.

Cisneros, Sandra. (2002). *Caramelo*. New York: Vintage Press.

Every year, Ceyala "Lala" Reyes' family --aunts, uncles, mothers, fathers, and Lala's six older brothers-- packs up three cars and drives from Chicago to the Little Grandfather and Awful Grandmother's house in Mexico City for the summer. Lala is a shrewd observer of family life struggling to find a voice and to understand her place on both sides of the border. Soon, a multigenerational family narrative turns into a whirlwind exploration of storytelling, lies, and life.

Hurston, Zora Neal. (1937). *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. (Various Publishers).

This seminal novel is an enduring Southern love story sparkling with wit, beauty and heartfelt wisdom. Told in the captivating voice of a woman who refuses to live in sorrow, bitterness, fear or foolish romantic dreams, it is the story of fair-skinned, African American, fiercely independent Janie Crawford and her evolving selfhood through three marriages and a life marked by poverty, trials and purpose.

Kingsolver, Barbara (1993). *Pigs in Heaven*. Harpertorch.

When a young Cherokee tribal lawyer comes to the door to claim Taylor's illegally adopted Indian daughter, the white woman must face the fact that her stable life is about

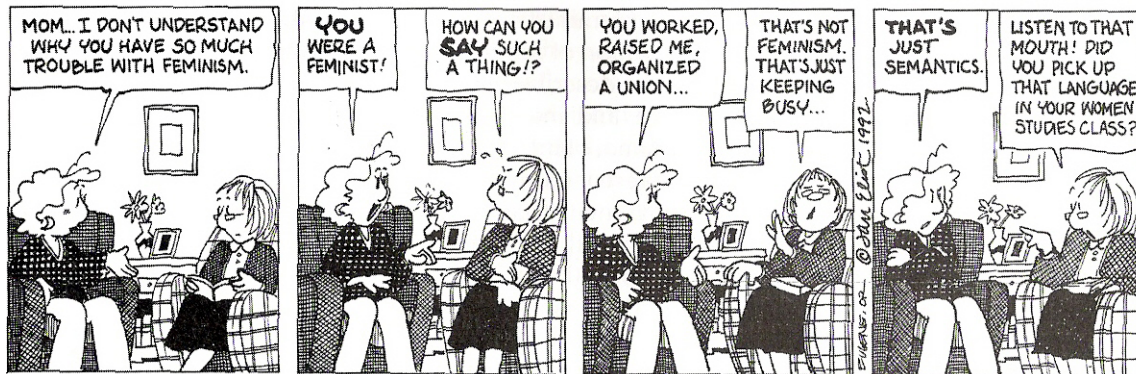
to be torn apart. The story follows her and six-year-old Turtle across the West as they flee from the threat of separation and exist on minimum-wage earnings. When Taylor and Turtle come to the reservation to face their future, readers will feel the adoptive mother's helplessness as she admits that she, too, might have let the child down. The characters are ordinary, yet noble and memorable, and the ending is just and gratifying. The issue of Indian children being adopted outside the tribe is addressed with respect from all sides.

Tan, Amy. (1989). *The Joy Luck Club*. New York: J.P. Putnam's Sons.

Four mothers, four daughters, four families whose histories shift with the four winds depending on who's "saying" the stories. In 1949 four Chinese women, recent immigrants to San Francisco, begin meeting to eat dim sum, play mahjong and talk. United in shared unspeakable loss and hope, they call themselves the Joy Luck Club. Tan examines the sometimes painful, often tender and always deep connection between mothers and daughters. As each woman reveals her secrets, trying to unravel the truth about her life, the strings become more tangled, more entwined. Mothers boast or despair over daughters, and daughters roll their eyes even as they feel the inextricable tightening of their matriarchal ties.

Final Grade Breakwn

- A 180-200
- B 160-179 D 120-139
- C 140-159 F 119 and below



Source: Stone Soup © 1999 Jan Eliot

NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY **POLICY STATEMENTS**

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY The university takes an extremely serious view of violations of academic integrity. As members of the academic community, NAU's administration, faculty, staff and students are dedicated to promoting an atmosphere of honesty and are committed to maintaining the academic integrity essential to the education process. Inherent in this commitment is the belief that academic dishonesty in all forms violates the basic principles of integrity and impedes learning. Students are therefore responsible for conducting themselves in an academically honest manner. Individual students and faculty members are responsible for identifying instances of academic dishonesty. Faculty members then recommend penalties to the department chair or college dean in keeping with the severity of the violation.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY is a form of misconduct that is subject to disciplinary action under the Student Code of Conduct and includes the following: cheating, fabrication, fraud, facilitating academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

1. **Plagiarism:** any attempt to pass off other's work as your own
2. **Cheating:** any attempt to gain an unfair, hidden advantage over one's fellow students
3. **Fabrication:** any attempt to present information that is not true
4. **Fraud:** any attempt to deceive an instructor or administrative officer of the university

The complete policy on academic integrity is in Appendix G of NAU's *Student Handbook*.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT POLICY

NAU's Safe Working and Learning Environment Policy seeks to prohibit discrimination and promote the safety of all individuals within the university. The goal of this policy is to prevent the occurrence of discrimination on the basis of sex, race, color, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, disability, or veteran status and to prevent sexual harassment, sexual assault or retaliation by anyone at this university.

You may obtain a copy of this policy from the college dean's office. If you have concerns about this policy, it is important that you contact the departmental chair, dean's office, the Office of Student Life (523-5181), the academic ombudsperson (523-9368), or NAU's Office of Affirmative Action (523-3312).

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a disability, you can arrange for accommodations by contacting the office of Disability Support Services (DSS) at 523-8773 (voice) 523-6906 (TTY). You are encouraged to provide documentation of the disability to DSS at least 8 weeks prior to the beginning of the semester so arrangements can be made to meet your individual needs. You must register with DSS each semester you are enrolled and wish to use

accommodations. Faculty are not authorized to provide accommodations without prior approval from DSS. Students are encouraged to notify their instructors a minimum of one week in advance of the need for accommodation. Failure to do so may result in a delay in provision of the accommodation. Concerns may be brought to the attention of the office of Disability Support Services or to the ADA coordinator in the Affirmative Action Office.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

Any study involving observation of or interaction with human subjects that originates at NAU—including a course project, report, or research paper—must be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects in research and research-related activities.

The IRB meets once each month. Proposals must be submitted for review at least fifteen working days before the monthly meeting. You should consult with your course instructor early in the course to ascertain if your project needs to be reviewed by the IRB and/or to secure information or appropriate forms and procedures for the IRB review. Your instructor and department chair or college dean must sign the application for approval by the IRB. The IRB categorizes projects into three levels depending on the nature of the project: exempt from further review, expedited review, or full board review. If the IRB certifies that a project is exempt from further review, you need not resubmit the project for continuing IRB review as long as there are no modifications in the exempted procedures. A copy of the IRB *Policy and Procedures Manual* is available in each department's administrative office and each college dean's office. If you have questions, contact Carey Conover, Office of Grant and Contract Services, at 523-4889.