

Department of Gender Studies, Queen's University

**GNDS 120: Women, Gender, Difference
Fall 2011**

Course Outline

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Office hours: Tues 9:30 - noon; Thurs 2:30 - 4:30 pm; or by appointment

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GNDS 120 is an introduction to feminism, women's studies, and gender studies. Course content will reflect the changing nature of women's and gender studies, incorporating a focus on cultural practices of gender, as well as the material inequalities and oppressions of women around the world. Topics will include intersectional identities and social relations; men and masculinities; transgender studies and queer theory; living in a racialized, globalized world; women's cultural production; gendered bodies; sexuality; representations of gender in media and popular culture; gendered experiences of family life, education, work and health; women's social movements. No previous courses or experience in Gender Studies is required.

Learning objectives. During this course, students will...

- Engage with **key issues** in the field of women's and gender studies
- Explore **theoretical** approaches to understanding those issues
- Explore historical and contemporary **strategies** used to address the issues
- Develop **critical** thinking skills
- Develop **reflective** communication skills
- Develop a capacity for feminist **agency**
- Create/participate in a **positive environment** for learning.

Values. Equity, inclusion, respect, community, and integrity are the values that have guided course design for GNDS 120. I invite you to join me in bringing these values alive in the classroom and through your course work.

Required texts. There are 3 required texts, available for sale in the [Campus Bookstore](#) and on reserve at Stauffer Library.

- o *GNDS 120 Course Reader*
- o *The No-Nonsense Guide to Women's Rights*, 2008, by Nikki van der Gaag
- o *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*, 2000, by bell hooks

The **course schedule** includes two mandatory in-class components:

- Large "interactive lecture" classes (Fri 2:30-4:30) in Biosciences Auditorium which introduce new topics (especially through films) and set them in context, raise critical questions about contemporary feminist issues, and highlight theories that help us make sense of our gendered experiences;
- Weekly tutorials (Wed 2:30-3:30 OR Thurs 10:30-11:30, whichever time slot you were assigned to when you registered in the course) in which the class divides into smaller groups, led by graduate teaching assistants, for discussion of readings, lectures and assignments.

Learning activities. Regularly assigned **readings** support and extend lectures and serve as the basis for discussion in tutorials. The readings are a core learning activity - you will not be able to participate effectively in any other aspects of the course if you have not done the required reading. Your presence and active **participation** at scheduled class sessions is essential to success in this course - that's where you'll learn how to make sense of the readings. Graded **assignments** are designed to actively engage you in original, thoughtful and creative inquiry and to help you achieve the course learning objectives. Graded learning activities include:

I. Participation, 25%

- This involves weekly reading responses (10%), tutorial attendance/participation (10%), and lecture activities (5%).

II. Early writing assignment, 20%, due Oct 5/6

- Write a 2-3 page review of *Feminism is for EVERYBODY* by bell hooks.

III. Mid-term project, 20%, due Nov 9/10

- Choose **either a or b**:

a) In the News (*completed individually*)

In a 2-3 page paper, use course concepts and readings to analyze a gender-related story or issue currently in the news,

b) Planning for Action (*completed in pairs*)

Choose an important gender-related issue and design an initiative to inform the public about this issue and promote positive change. Present your plan in a 3 page paper.

IV. Final, 35%

- Choose **either a or b**:

a) Critical Inquiry

This project offers an opportunity to investigate a significant gender studies topic that is of interest to you. You must upload a proposal for your topic to Moodle by Oct 21. The 5 page final paper is due Dec 2, via Moodle.

b) Final Exam

A short answer, short essay exam on all course material will be scheduled during the formal exam period in December. There will be an in-class review during the last lecture of the term.