**Course Syllabus**

**Women's Studies 1500:**
Introduction to Women's Studies

---

**WOMEN'S STUDIES 1500**

Introduction to Women's Studies

**Summer 2015**

T, Th 10:00 - 11:15am

---

Eva Ludwiga Szalay, Ph.D.
Main Office: Elizabeth Hall 265
Office Hours: M, W, prior to and after class, and,
as always, by appointment
Phone: 626-7908 / Fax: 626-7588
Email: eszalay@weber.edu
Website: [http://faculty.weber.edu/eszalay](http://faculty.weber.edu/eszalay) (Links to an external site.)

---

**DESCRIPTION**
This course provides an introduction to critical texts and research on women and gender issues from the primary perspectives of the humanities and social sciences. We ask: what is Women's Studies? What constitutes feminism as we know it today and as it has appeared historically? What are the diverse kinds of feminism? What exactly are "woman," "man," and "gender"? How do a culture's belief systems, unexamined assumptions, and social institutions justify the oppression--and by contrast, the elevation--of one gender over another? How do assumptions about race, social class, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, and physical ability intersect in our lives today? How might we be unconsciously complicit in the very institutions that benefit only some lives at the expense of others? How do global and multicultural perspectives affect our understanding of these and related questions?

WS 1500 considers in detail the various interpersonal relationships, socioeconomic status, power, and authority as individuals experience these relationships; the course, furthermore, explores the realities and the myths about the differences between the genders, and among individuals of different races, classes, ethnicities, sexual orientations, ages, and physical abilities in the United States.

---

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**
Students will: a) consider feminist critiques of science as the model of knowledge in Western traditions; b) evaluate various methods of knowing and gathering information;
c) estimate and judge the impact of feminism on various disciplines, and d) plan distinct phases of a small, independent research project that involves an element of community service (e.g., creating links between Weber State University and the local YWCA, or YCC, known as Your Community Connection).

The course is also designed to hone critical thinking skills in several ways by:
1) identifying and challenging the assumptions that underlie the ideas, beliefs, values, and actions taken for granted in dominant research design and implementation;
2) demonstrating the importance of context in shaping our habitual perceptions, understandings, and interpretations of the world. This course will also promote critical consciousness of the practices, structures, and actions that organize the manner in which dominant research is practiced;
3) uncovering ways of imagining and exploring alternatives to prevailing ways of conducting research, and more broadly, science;
4) developing a reflective skepticism about claims made by science and research.

TEXT(S)


Additional readings relevant to an "Introduction to Women's Studies" will be made available to course participants; some texts will be on Electronic Reserve, see: Accessing E-Reserve.

KEY TERMS

**Patriarchy**: Power of the fathers; used by feminists to describe:1) a society in which older men are in positions of power, and 2) a male-dominated society.

**Epistemology**: The theory of knowledge. Epistemology involves questions about who can be a "knower"; what kinds of tests must beliefs and values pass in order to be legitimated as "knowledge (e.g., only those tests measured by hegemonic experiences and observations?).

**Ontology**: A way of being in the world; the conditions of gendered human existence.

**Intersectionality**: The idea that distinct systems of racism, sexism, and class oppression interact simultaneously in the lives of women in the United States.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**:

**Readings**: (as assigned; see "Course Plan" below).

**Class Participation**: Students are responsible for coming to class prepared, actively engaging in class discussions, raising thought-provoking questions, and consistently answering questions to demonstrate mastery of the material. Participation also involves work in small group projects, and it is important that students use the in-class tasks to expand upon material communicated in the lecture format. Highly consistent class attendance is expected and required.

More information on the Grading and Attendance Policy and on Services for Students
Presentations: Presentations constitute a very critical portion of the overall grade in WS 1500: at least 45%.
Each student is required to present three times (yes, 3 times!) throughout the summer semester, and I encourage students to find a partner to present with, particularly if there is a topic of interest to at least two course members.
NOTE: If any student finds that he/she would like to have a partner but cannot readily locate a partner at the start of classes, please let Prof. Szalay know of this interest, and she will share it immediately with the class, so that all class members are aware and that team-presentations can be enabled.
It follows from this, that for partnered presentations, the presentation length will be greater than the length of an individual presentation (twice as long) and each of the team presentation members will be required to indicate clearly that the presentation project was a team effort.
You will note that there are many options for each of the course section themes to present on, and, should you find a topic of interest that is not noted, but still highly relevant, please do not hesitate to make your interest in a special topic known, so that an amendment can be made to the course plan. Particularly if there is a Women's Studies theme (book, article or text, film, news item, internet website, blog, etc.) that relates clearly to the given course topics, do by all means explore this interest with the instructor of record for this course, Professor Szalay.
Detailed information on creating the presentation and the Presentation Handout are provided at these links: a) Women's Studies 1500 Handout Guidelines and Sample Handout and b) Women's Studies 1500 Course Presentation. The first link a) provides specific information on how to put together the handout in content and structure and the second link b) gives specific information on how to present the topic in keeping with the style and manner of a genuinely formal presentation. Although our classroom style will be relaxed and welcoming, the presentation styles will be in keeping with the academic context. Of course, this information will be covered in sufficient detail at the beginning of the course, so that all students will have the requisite information and the opportunity to ask questions about the preparation of the presentations and the presentation handouts.

Reflective Media Reviews and Analysis (Journals): These journal entries (approx. 3-4 paragraphs in length or at least 1 page) require students to use course readings and related MEDIA materials (specifically, films, internet sites, newspaper reviews, blogs, etc.) and the notes from class discussions to create a succinct, clearly delineated positioning on the topic(s) addressed in each of the four-five units (What is Feminism/Women's Studies; Creating Genders: Feminine, Masculine...; Bodies; Institutions) covered in this course. Journals may be collected on a "no-advance-notice" basis, so students should always come to class prepared to turn in what is due to date. All journals will also be collected before the official end of the semester, and are due on:
Friday, August 2, 2015, by 8:00am in Professor Szalay's Office in Elizabeth Hall, Room 265.

Please refer to "Media Review/Journal Guidelines" (see below). Detailed guidelines and information on how to proceed in composing the Reflective Media Review and Analysis are offered at the link: Introduction to Women's Studies Media Review and Analysis Assignment.

The general idea is to:

a) summarize how a feminist issue or theme, as elaborated in our course, involves a select problem that concerns you and requires addressing as it is portrayed and presented in the media (newspaper or magazine article, internet, TV, film, textual representation, etc.);

b) offer relevant historical documentation of how a particular approach has already dealt with this problem or issue; and

c) consider why (or why not) this approach, this school or approach of Women's Studies/feminist thinking, or philosophy, is particularly relevant to this subject matter.

Clearly, certain feminist approaches may not fit perfectly or at all with the subject area you have selected. In these cases, focus instead on the approach in feminism/Women's Studies that does address, or is relevant to, this issue and more briefly explain why other approaches do not concern themselves (as competently) with this subject matter.

Ultimately, assessment of your written project will rest on your ability to demonstrate that you understand the main parameters of the issue and the finer points of the theoretical approach or application ("praxis") you are using as your framework. Your research should reinforce this understanding through illustrations and examples taken from class discussions. Try to view research as supporting and perhaps productively questioning certain assumptions, and, foremost, focus on providing a competent, more in-depth review of a relevant theory (or two, for comparison-contrast purposes) rather than attempting to "do it all" rather superficially.

R Reflective Media Review and Analysis Paper Preparation

We will commence work on the writing process by the 3rd week of class. During this week, we will go over composing an introduction, thesis statement, and defining the key terms in your thesis statement. In subsequent weeks, we will go over the various components of the review paper, so that the papers will uniformly be of high quality. In keeping with thorough preparation, all course participants must turn in an outline with their final papers. Final papers must also be turned in with previous drafts (including reviewers' comments) and their revisions (minimum: 2 revisions documenting substantive revision). To restate: these term paper revisions - - labeled clearly as: Draft 1, Draft 2, ....Final Paper - - must show evidence of having been proof read and undergone revision, as they go through their revision stages.

For matters of form and style, beyond the most important elements covered in class, you are strongly encouraged to visit the Writing Center, Academic Support Services, in the Student Center, Room 261. Students who visit the Writing Center to improve their
papers will receive credit for their efforts.

**Reflective Media Review and Analysis Preparation and Critique of Presentations by Peer Review:** Approximately two to three weeks prior to the final due date, a good portion of the preceding class periods will be devoted to a peer review session that will enable all students to address questions and concerns with their papers and their reworking, where necessary, of their presentation handouts. All students must bring a copy of their media review paper to class to discuss refining their work for final submission on **Friday, August 2, 2015.**

**Length of Media Review Analysis (Summary here; see link above for full details):**
* Cover Sheet (not included in paginating the 4-6 pp. paper) with:
  - Full Student/Course Participant name, title of Media Review paper, Course Name and Number, and
  - Professor of Record for Course included.
* 4-6 pp. double-spaced, 1" margins all around.
* Font: Time Roman or similar font with 12-, 13-, or 14-point font.
* Paginate: number each page
* An "Annotated Bibliography" or "Works Cited" and footnotes or end*notes documenting your assertions and research are required. Detailed information on the 'Annotated Bibliography' is provided below, under "Bibliography for the Introduction to Women's Studies Term Paper: Documenting Sources According to MLA Guidelines."

**Volunteer Service Project:**
Students are required to volunteer 8 hours with a community service organization selected by the course instructor. A list of organizations will be provided on the first day of classes and students already involved in service appropriate to Women's Studies service project themes, **may -- MAY!** -- upon discussion and approval of the course instructor -- continue this service commitment as part of this WS course's requirements. The organizations must -- and will all -- have an affiliation with women's issues, be these political, social, welfare, and/or educational in nature. **All participants must keep a log or journal of activities (see below: Service Project Journal Guidelines) and provide a short oral presentation about their experiences to be held during the last weeks of classes.**
Specific Information on the Service Project that reiterates and details what is mentioned in class is available at Women's Studies 1500 Service Project Assignment. In addition to receiving a hard copy of the WS 1500 Service Project Contract in class from Professor Szalay during the first day/week of classes, students can always access the contract itself for review and printing at Women's Studies 1500 Service Project Contract.

**STATEMENT OF CORE BELIEFS**
This course includes a "Statement of Core Beliefs," which -- as highly relevant to WS 1500 and to The Women's Studies Program -- **requests that faculty members whose courses include potentially controversial material may wish to include a statement**
in the syllabus referring to this policy, or to deal with this issue in early class discussion, or both. Because, as Instructor of Record for this WS 1500 course, I, Professor Eva Ludwiga Szalay, deem this matter to be applicable to our class and our working from a common understanding, the following Core Beliefs Statement is included here:

**Core Beliefs:** According to PPM 6-22 IV, students are to “[d]etermine, before the last day to drop courses without penalty, when course requirements conflict with a student's core beliefs. If there is such a conflict, the student should consider dropping the class. A student who finds this solution impracticable may request a resolution from the instructor. This policy does not oblige the instructor to grant the request, except in those cases when a denial would be arbitrary and capricious or illegal. This request must be made to the instructor in writing and the student must deliver a copy of the request to the office of the department head. The student's request must articulate the burden the requirement would place on the student's beliefs.”

**WSU Academic Standards & Course Participation Expectations**
All courses in the Women's Studies Program adhere to the Weber State University Policy on Academic Standards. In cases of alleged violations, the procedures outlined in the policy will be followed. A complete description of the WSU Policy on Academic Standards is available in the [WSU Student Code (Links to an external site.)](http://wsuonline.weber.edu/plagiarism/best_practices.asp), Section IV, titled "Student Responsibilities."

**CLASS COMPORTEMENT** (Expectations and Guidelines):
For this course, it is expected that all participants participate at all times in professional and respectful manner throughout the duration of this course, from start to finish. Any behavior that is disruptive to the learning environment may constitute a cause for disciplinary action under the -- and as per the -- WSU Student Code of Conduct.

**ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**:
at some or all of your assignments be submitted to Turnitin this semester. Documents submitted to Turnitin are retained, anonymAs specified in PPM 6-22 IV D, cheating and plagiarism violate the Student Code. Plagiarism is “the unacknowledged (uncited) use of any other person’s or group’s ideas or work.” Students found guilty of cheating or plagiarism are subject to failure of a specific assignment, or, in more serious cases, failure of the entire course.

**WSU and WS Course 1500 Statement Regarding Turnitin.com**:
WSU subscribes to Turnitin.com, an electronic service that verifies the originality of student work. Enrollment in this course may require thously, in the company’s databases. For best practices in using Turnitin, see [http://wsuonline.weber.edu/plagiarism/best_practices.asp](http://wsuonline.weber.edu/plagiarism/best_practices.asp).
Course Preparation & Participation
   Readings, leading and participating in daily discussions........20%
Class Presentations........................................................................45%
   [Presentations (3 in sum at 15% each)..........................45%]
Reflective Media Review.............................................................15%
Review Writing Paper (as process writing)..............................10%
Volunteer Service Project...........................................................10%

A Academic Dishonesty: As specified in PPM 6-22 IV D, cheating and plagiarism violate the Student Code. Plagiarism is “the unacknowledged (un-cited) use of any other person’s or group’s ideas or work.” Students found guilty of cheating or plagiarism are subject to failure of a specific assignment, or, in more serious cases, failure of the entire course.

If instructors plan to utilize Turnitin.com, they should include a statement in the syllabus along the following lines:

WSU subscribes to Turnitin.com, an electronic service that verifies the originality of student work. Enrollment in this course may require that some or all of your assignments be submitted to Turnitin this semester. Documents submitted to Turnitin are retained, anonymously, in the company’s databases.

(For best practices in using Turnitin, see http://wsuonline.weber.edu/plagiarism/best_practices.asp)