

**WOMS 2310: Introduction to Women's & Gender Studies**

Spring 2016  
MWF 11-11:50am  
COBA 251

**Professor:** Dr. Desiree Henderson

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**Course Description:** This course introduces students to the ways of seeing, thinking, and knowing that characterize the fields of Women's and Gender Studies. The basic goal of the course is to foster a greater understanding of four key concepts: 1) the social construction of gender; 2) intersectionality; 3) privilege and oppression; and 4) feminist praxis. In addition to gaining a solid foundation in these threshold concepts, we will focus on the debates, dialogues, and controversies that surround three social issues: gendered violence, reproductive rights, and the economics of gender. Above all, the course emphasizes how a feminist critical approach equips us to understand the complex role of gender in modern society, and to make connections between broader social issues and our individual experiences and values.

**Required Books:**

Norma Cantu, *Canícula: Snapshots of a Girlhood en la Frontera* (U New Mexico P, 1997) ISBN: 978-0826318282

Kate Harding, *Asking for It: The Alarming Rise of Rape Culture--and What We Can Do about It* (Da Capo Press, 2015) ISBN: 978-0738217024

Christie Launius and Holly Hassel, *Threshold Concepts in Women's and Gender Studies: Ways of Seeing, Thinking, and Knowing* (Routledge, 2014) ISBN: 978-1138788800

Katha Pollitt, *Pro: Reclaiming Abortion Rights* (Picador, 2015) ISBN: 978-1250072665

Additional required reading will be available through Blackboard or online.

**E-Book Policy:** Students may use e-book readers or tablets in class – but not cellphones or laptops, unless specifically allowed to complete an in-class assignment.

**Learning Outcomes:** Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Define feminism and its threshold concepts.
- Explain major debates within women's and gender studies.
- Present a feminist critique of texts, culture, and current events.
- Apply women's and gender studies criticism to cultural analysis.
- Apply feminist concepts to real world problems, and develop and implement solutions.

**Team-Based Learning:** This course implements a team-based learning pedagogy. The specific nature of this course design (and the meaning of the assignments listed below) will be explained in class but students should be prepared for the fact that they will be working in teams throughout the semester, and that part of their grade will be based on their contributions to their teams.

**Service Learning:** This course has a service learning component which will require teams to work outside-of-class on issues relevant to this course. The details of this assignment are provided on the assignment prompt (available on Blackboard) but students should be aware that they are expected to devote a minimum of 6 hours outside of class to developing and implementing their Praxis Project.

**Descriptions of major assignments and examinations with due dates:** Three components of the course grade are related to Team-Based Learning: Individual Readiness Assurance Tests (iRATs), Team Readiness Assurance Tests (tRATs), and Peer Evaluation of team members, taken at mid-semester and end-of-semester. Students will write 2 short essays (2-3 pages) and take an Exam. They will also complete a Gender Memoir, as well as the Service Learning assignment. All requirements and due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.

**Grade Policy/Requirements:**

iRATs (5) = 5%  
 tRATs (5) = 10%  
 Peer Evaluations (2) = 5%  
 Gender Memoir = 15%  
 Praxis Project = 15%  
 Essays (2) = 25%  
 Exam = 25%

**Attendance Policy:** At The University of Texas at Arlington, taking attendance is not required. Rather, each faculty member is free to develop his or her own methods of evaluating students' academic performance, which includes establishing course-specific policies on attendance. As the instructor of this section, my policy is as follows:

*Attendance is mandatory and late arrival is not acceptable. I will take attendance in every class.*

Perfect Attendance	Students who attend every class (have 0 absences and no late arrivals) will have 2 additional points <i>added</i> to their final course grade. Any absences, including excused absences, will exclude the student from these bonus points.	
Allowed Absences	Students are granted 3 unexcused absences during the semester without penalty.	
Unexcused Absences	Any additional absences will result in a loss of points as detailed below. <i>Points will be deducted from the student's final course grade.</i>	
	# of Unexcused Absences	Points Deducted
	1-3	0
	4	3
	5	5
Excused Absences	<i>DO NOT claim excused absences until you have exceeded your 3 allowed absences.</i> In order to claim an excused absence, you must submit written confirmation (copy of doctor's note, written excuse, etc.) that clearly states your name and the date(s) you were absent. Do not submit absence paperwork over email. Only a limited number of excused absences will be granted.	
Excessive Absences	<b>Excessive Absences (6 or more) will result in an automatic F in the course.</b>	

**Expectations for In-Class Behavior:** This class addresses many topics that are sensitive, controversial, and “triggering.” Students are expected to abide by the following guidelines:

- Engage in dialogue, not debate. Listen to understand the positions offered by others.
- Ask questions. If you do not know, it is always better to ask than assume.
- Seek common ground. Acknowledge those places where agreement can occur.
- Understand that reasonable people can and do disagree.
- Respect everyone's right to their opinion.
- Speak with “I” statements. Avoid trying to speak for all or any group.
- But, do not feel pressured to disclose anything about yourself, your values, or your experiences that you are not comfortable disclosing.
- Talk to Dr. Henderson if you ever have any questions or concerns.

**Expectations for Out-of-Class Study:** Beyond the time required to attend each class meeting, students enrolled in this course should expect to spend at least an additional **nine** hours per weeks of their own time in course-related activities, including reading required materials, completing assignments, preparing for exams, etc.

**Late Policy:** Essays and short assignments will be accepted late with a deduction of 5 points per class day and 10 points per weekend. Missed tests or exams can only be made up with evidence of a family or medical emergency. Assignments due the final week of class will only be accepted late with evidence of a family or medical emergency.

**Electronics Policy:** Students are expected to behave responsibly and respectfully during class, which means that everyone turns cell phones off before class and refrains from texting or other disruptive behavior during class. E-book readers and tablets are allowed in class only for the purpose of displaying the assigned readings. Laptops and cellphones are not allowed during class, unless specifically announced. Violation of this policy can affect your course grade and may result in an Academic Dishonesty investigation.

**Library Resources:** Our Subject Librarian is Rafia Mirza. Her contact information is: rafia@uta.edu Ph: 817-272-7428 <http://libguides.uta.edu/GenderInfo>

**The Writing Center:** The English Writing Center is located in Room 411 Central Library. Hours are 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Mondays-Thursdays, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Fridays and Noon to 5 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Students must register and can make appointments online at <http://uta.mywconline.com>. Face-to-Face and online appointments for undergraduate students are scheduled for 20, 40, or 60 minutes. Writing Center consultants assist with any aspect of academic writing, from understanding an assignment, brainstorming, revising an early draft, to polishing a final draft. However, the Writing Center is not an editing service; consultants will not correct grammar or rewrite assignments during our long sessions. Please see [www.uta.edu/owl](http://www.uta.edu/owl) for more information about services and guidelines.

## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more

information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Title IX:** The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law "Title IX" such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades,

graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located down the hallway. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.

**Student Support Services:** UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

## WOMS 2310 Reading & Assignment Schedule

*All requirements and due dates are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.*

BB = Available on Blackboard

### I. Introduction to Feminism

1/20 Introduction

1/22 What is feminism?

- ☐ *Makers* (in class)

1/25 What is feminism? (cont.)

- ☐ **iRAT and tRAT #1** (tests taken in class)
- ☐ *Threshold Concepts*: "Introduction"
- ☐ "The Feminist Waves Model" (BB)
- ☐ Google "Bechdel test" to familiarize yourself with the concept

1/27 Is feminism still relevant?

- ☐ Baumgardner and Richards, "A Day without Feminism" (BB)
- ☐ Adichie, "We Should All Be Feminists" (online video)  
<http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/We-should-all-be-feminists-Chim>
- ☐ Gay, "Confessions of a Bad Feminist" (online video)  
[http://www.ted.com/talks/roxane\\_gay\\_confessions\\_of\\_a\\_bad\\_feminist](http://www.ted.com/talks/roxane_gay_confessions_of_a_bad_feminist)

1/29 Can men be feminists?

- ☐ Kimmel, "Why Gender Equality is Good for Everyone" (online video)  
[http://www.ted.com/talks/michael\\_kimmel\\_why\\_gender\\_equality\\_is\\_good\\_for\\_everyone\\_men\\_included\\_t-304920](http://www.ted.com/talks/michael_kimmel_why_gender_equality_is_good_for_everyone_men_included_t-304920)
- ☐ Clark, "35 Practical Steps Men can Take to Support Feminism" (online)  
<http://www.xojane.com/issues/feminism-men-practical-steps>

### II. The Social Construction of Gender

2/1 What is social construction theory?

- ☐ **iRAT and tRAT #2**
- ☐ *Threshold Concepts*: Chapter 1
- ☐ Vlog Brothers, "Sexuality is Complicated" (online video)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xXAoG8vAyzI>
- ☐ Lorber, "The Social Construction of Gender" (BB)

2/3 Understanding gender variation

- ☐ Gould, "X: A Fabulous Child's Story" (BB)
- ☐ *I am a Girl* (in class)

### 2/5 Understanding the sexuality spectrum

- ☐ Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (BB)
- ☐ Gay Rights in the United States (online):  
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/interactive/2012/may/08/gay-rights-united-states>

### 2/8 Gender & toys

- ☐ Go to the website *Sociological Images*:  
<http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/blog/>  
Under "Posts by Topic," select "Product: Toys/Games." Scroll through the posts, select and read any TWO essays on children's toys and games.

### 2/10 Gender & communication

- ☐ Gender communication exercise (in class)

### 2/12 Gender & the language problem

- ☐ "Gender Neutral Pronouns" (video online):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46ehrFk-gLk>
- ☐ Ball, "In All-Gender Restrooms, the Signs Reflect the Times" (online)  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/08/style/transgender-restroom-all-gender.html>

## **III. Feminist Praxis**

### 2/15 What is feminist praxis?

- ☐ **iRAT and tRAT #3**
- ☐ *Threshold Concepts*: Chapter 5
- ☐ Valenti, "Get To It" (BB)

### 2/17 Feminist praxis at UT Arlington

- ☐ LGBTQA Program at UTA (online): <http://www.uta.edu/lgbtqa/>
- ☐ RVSP: The Relationship Violence and Sexual Assault Prevention Program at UTA (online): <https://www.uta.edu/rvsp/>
- ☐ Women's & Gender Studies at UTA (online): <http://www.uta.edu/womens-studies/>

### 2/19 Feminist praxis at UT Arlington (cont)

- ☐ Baumgardner and Richards, "Third Wave Manifesta" (in class)
- ☐ Praxis Project presentations (in class)

## **IV. Privilege and Oppression**

### 2/22 Privilege and oppression through a feminist lens

- ☐ **iRAT and tRAT #4**
- ☐ *Threshold Concepts*: Chapter 3
- ☐ McIntosh, "White Privilege and Male Privilege" (BB)



2/24 Privilege and oppression through a feminist lens (cont.)

- ☐ Review Twitter posts that use the hashtags: #notallmen and #yesallwomen
- ☐ Google “not all men” and “yes all women” to learn about the context of these debates.

2/26 Objectification and the media

- ☐ *Miss Representation* (in class)

**Case Study: Rape Culture**

2/29 Objectification and the media (cont.)

- ☐ **Mid-term Peer Evaluations due**
- ☐ Applying the CHIPS test (in class)

3/2 Harding, *Asking for It*, introduction + chapters 1-4

3/4 Harding, *Asking for It*, chapters 5-7

3/7 Harding, *Asking for It*, chapters 8-11

3/9 Harding, *Asking for It* (cont.)

3/11 **Essay 1 due**

Spring Break March 14-18

**V. Intersectionality**

3/21 What's funny about rape?

- ☐ Gay, “Some Jokes are Funnier than Others” (BB)

3/23 What is intersectionality?

- ☐ **iRAT and tRAT #5**
- ☐ *Threshold Concepts*: Chapter 4
- ☐ Lorde, “There is no hierarchy of oppression” (BB)
- ☐ Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story” (video online)  
[http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda\\_adichie\\_the\\_danger\\_of\\_a\\_single\\_story?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en)

3/25 Intersectionality and the Body Positive movement

- ☐ Rubin, et al., “Body Ethics and Aesthetics” (BB)
- ☐ Review at least two of the following websites:  
*The Militant Baker* <http://www.themilitantbaker.com/>  
*Luv'in' My Curves* <http://luvinmycurves.com/>  
*Stop Hating Your Body* <http://stophatingyourbody.tumblr.com/>  
*Operation Beautiful* <http://www.operationbeautiful.com/>  
*F\*\* Yeah VBO* <http://fyeahvbo.tumblr.com/>

**Case Study: Abortion**

3/21 Pollitt, *Pro*, introduction + chapters 1-2

3/23 Pollitt, *Pro*, chapters 3-4

3/25 Pollitt, *Pro*, chapters 5-7

4/4 Pollitt, *Pro*, chapter 8 + afterword

- ☐ Hasstedt, "How Texas Lawmakers Continue to Undermine Women's Health" (online) <http://www.guttmacher.org/media/inthenews/2015/05/20/>

4/6 Reproductive rights & Twitter activism

- ☐ Review Twitter posts that use the hashtag: #shoutyourabortion
- ☐ Google "shout your abortion" for context.

4/8 In-Class Work on Praxis Project

**Case Study: The Economics of Gender**

4/11 What is the gender wage gap?

- ☐ **Essay 2 due**
- ☐ AAUW "The Simple Truth about the Gender Pay Gap, Fall 2015" (online; click "download full report") <http://www.aauw.org/research/the-simple-truth-about-the-gender-pay-gap/>

4/13 Why are products gendered?

- ☐ Wade, "Five Reasons Why Pointlessly Gendered Products are a Problem" (online): <http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2015/12/31/five-reasons-why-pointlessly-gendered-products-are-a-problem/>

4/15 Wrap up and Review

4/18 **Exam**

4/20 Praxis Projects (team work day)

4/22 Praxis Projects (team work day)

**VI. The Gender Memoir**

4/25 Cantu, *Canícula*

4/27 Cantu, *Canícula*

4/29 Cantu, *Canícula*

5/2 Praxis Project presentations

**End-of-Semester Peer Evaluations due**

5/4 Gender Memoir presentations

5/6 Gender Memoir presentations

**Praxis Project Reflections and Gender Memoirs due by Wednesday May 11 at noon.**

Emergency Phone Numbers: In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at 817-272-3003 (non-campus phone), 2-3003 (campus phone). You may also dial 911.
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