Women's Studies 1216 - Spring 2010

Exploring Women's Lives: An Introduction

Required Texts:
• CR: Women's Studies 1216 Course Reader Spring 2010, in Langara Bookstore.

Weekly Topics, Readings and Assignment Due Dates

Week #1 Jan 4  Introduction to the Course
Topics:
• Overview of Course Content
• Methods and Techniques of Learning and Teaching
• The Power of Naming: Finding Our Voices, Finding Ourselves

“Not being in control of naming, that is, defining who you are, serves as one of the most express examples of silencing that I can think of... The most that I can do is maintain and nurture my voice. It is the voices for those who have been traditionally excluded who bring the tension to bear on all those systems that are oppressive to human life. It is that tension which is the site of true human development and knowledge.”
— Patricia Monture-Angus, Thunder in My Soul: A Mohawk woman speaks

Week #2 Jan 11  From the Inside Out: Developing Tools for Interactions
Topics:
• Commonalities and Differences among Women
• “Voice”: Where We Speak; How We Listen
• Discussion of Grading, Assignments and Organizing Group Projects
• What Is Women’s Studies? Knowledge Production; Social Construction of Language

Readings:
CR1  Nym Hughes, “Why I Can't Write about Class,” Fireweed
CR3  Sarita Srivastava, “Discovering India without Columbus: Relearning and Reclaiming Herstory,” in Canadian Woman Studies, Fall 1992
Assignment: Practice Readings Comprehension Quiz

Week #3 Jan 18  The Creation of Patriarchies: Historical Perspectives

Topics:
• Theories of the Origins of Patriarchies
• Institutionalized Power
• Intersections of gender, race and class as systems of oppression

Readings:

Assignments: Readings Comprehension Quiz
° Journal 1 Due

Week #4 Jan 25  Some Feminist Challenges to Institutionalized Systems of Power

“Perhaps it becomes clear why all issues are feminist issues—and why bandaid reforms, or equality with men in a male-defined society, or “empowering” women to have ‘self-esteem’ while leaving intact a status quo with a perforated ozone layer—all are pseudo-solutions that a radical feminist finds unacceptable. ...The word radical, for example, refers to ‘going to the root’ (as in radish) of an issue or subject.”


Topics:
• The “triangle” as a tool for analyzing oppression and resistance
• Feminisms: Challenging institutions and ideologies
• Connecting personal and political

Readings:
JP Warning: Feminist Content To Follow: Site: Women’s Studies and Changing the Terms, pp. 143-175

Assignments: Readings Comprehension Quiz

Week #5 Feb 1 Growing Up Female: Mind, Body and Spirit
“It is at puberty that the full force of society’s pressure to conform...is brought to bear...The best controlling tactic at puberty is to be treated as an outsider, to be ostracized at a time when it feels most vital to be accepted.”
– Suzanne Pharr, “Homophobia and Sexism”

Topics:
• The politics of girls becoming women
• Body image and “disordered eating”: The struggle to survive oppressions and define one’s self and communities

Readings:
CR18 Gabrielle Moss, “Teen, Mean Fighting Machine” in Bitchfest 2006. 43-48

Assignment: Readings Comprehension Quiz; Journal 2 Due

Week #6 Feb 8 Women & Popular Culture: Women Creating Alternatives

“These first questions that I asked myself (and that nobody answered) were the most important in my life. They were the ones that clicked open the door and allowed in the first flashes of light.”
– Nawal El-Saadawi, Click Becoming Feminists

Topics:
• Women writing and publishing their own stories
• Challenging belief systems and institutions

Readings:
CR21 Kathy Bruin, “Please Don’t Feed the Models” in Bitchfest,331-334.
CR22 Danielle Maestretti, “Feminism 2.0” in Utne Reader, March/April 2008. 32-33
CR24 Callie Watts, “Heavy Flow” in Bust, June-July 2008. 72-75
CR26 Susan Jane Gilman, “Klaus Barbie, and Other Dolls I’d Like to See,” in Adios Barbie, Seal Press 1998, 14–21

Assignments: Written Review due; Article Comment Sheet handed in instead of quiz

Week #7 March 1  Disentangling Gender, Sex and Sexuality

Readings:

Assignment: Readings Comprehension Quiz

Weeks #8 & #9 March 8 & 15  Presentation of Group Projects

Readings:

Assignments:
° Each group submits 1) Attendance Sheets; 2) Bibliography the day you present

Week #10 March 22  Globalization, Work and the Politics of Poverty

“If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

– Lilla Watson

Topics:
• Globalization, colonization and forced migration
• Immigration and the case of domestic workers in Canada

Readings:
CR32 Emma LaRoque, “Tides, Towns and Trains,” in Living the Changes. University of Manitoba, 76–90
Assignment: Readings Comprehension Quiz

Week #11 March 29  The Politics of Making Change

Topics:
• Analyzing Forces of Oppression and Resistance
• From Analysis to Local Action

Readings:
CR37 Luanne Armstrong, “Connecting the Circles: Race, Gender and Nature,” in Canadian Woman Studies, vol. 13, no. 3, 6-10
CR40 Wendy Somerson, “Knot in Our Name: Activism Beyond the Knitting Circle,” in Bitch no. 34 (winter 2007), 36-41.

Assignment: Readings Comprehension Quiz on March 29

Week #13 April 12  Summary

Readings:
JP Afterwords, 201-213.

“All this stuff accumulates to the point where it is possible to feel something different. It's not dramatic. It's like a little voice - not even a real voice - it's like a voice of integration.”
– Adele in Women's Ways of Knowing.