

**WGST 140-130: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies**  
**Georgetown University**  
**Summer 2020**  
**Online**

Instructor: Dr. Emerald Christopher-Byrd  
Office: ICC 456  
E-mail: [elc78@georgetown.edu](mailto:elc78@georgetown.edu) (preferred form of contact)  
Office hours: By appointment

### **GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION**

Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies is a multicultural, interdisciplinary introduction to some of the major concepts and political issues surrounding gender and society. We will explore the manner in which 'gender' intersects with race, sexuality, nationality, class and other identities to shape systems of power that contribute to and reinforce inequality. Through an investigation of popular culture, media, scholarly works, and discussion, we will explore how representation as objects, consumers, subjects, creators, challengers, and critics both reflect and produce ideas about femininity and masculinity. This course will provide students with tools to critique power structures and aims to empower students to explore the possibility of change.

### **SPECIFIC OUTCOMES**

- Demonstrate an understanding of the history of feminist movements in the United States
- Compare and contrast feminist theories of sex and gender
- Apply social constructionist and intersectional perspective in order to deconstruct and rethink what is assumed as "common sense" and "natural"
- Analyze social privilege and explain how its effects are mediated through institutional apparatuses
- Explain how gender intersects with other social categorizations including race, class, and sexuality
- Demonstrate an understanding of the history of violence against women
- Examine agency and resilience

### **CLASSROOM FORMAT**

As a distance learning course, this class will meet online. Canvas will serve as this course's classroom space. Lectures, videos, and course readings for each module can be found on Canvas. Because this is a discussion based course, and all of our communication will be written, you will spend a great amount of time reading and writing in this online course than you would in a face-to-face class.

### **REQUIRED COURSE MATERIALS**

Access to a GU email account.

Articles on the WGST 140 Canvas site

Braithwaite, Ann, and Catherine M. Orr. *Everyday women's and gender studies: Introductory concepts*. Routledge, 2016.

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *We Should All Be Feminists*. Vintage, 2014.

## **POLICIES**

*Canvas* – This course utilizes the learning management system, Canvas. On the course's Canvas site students will find access to additional course readings, assignments, and other resources.

*Communicating with Instructor / Netiquette Policy* – Students should check their e-mail regularly. The faculty at Georgetown University expects students to communicate effectively and professionally. Because e-mail is quick and easy, it is sometimes mistakenly considered informal. When you correspond with friends, informality is acceptable. However, in other circumstances, such as in academic and professional related communication, e-mail should be formal. Please use the following guidelines when sending academic and professional related communication:

- When communicating with the instructor by e-mail, please do not expect an immediate response. The instructor will reply to all messages within 24 hours on business days. Students should not wait until the night before an assignment is due to contact the instructor with questions.
- Indicate the topic of the message in the subject line.
- E-mails should begin with a greeting (i.e. Professor or Dr.). Using “Hey,” “What up Sis,” “Emerald,” another informal greeting, or no greeting at all may not yield a response.
- Reference the class title and name somewhere in your e-mail if not the subject line.
- Use proper English, grammar, and spelling; proofread before sending. Do not use text language, emojis, or hashtags (#thatwontendwellforU).
- Before sending your e-mail be sure that your question has not already been addressed in the syllabus.
- Sign your name to all e-mails.
- If a student chooses to ignore this format in their e-mail correspondence, the instructor reserves the right to not answer the e-mail until properly formatted.

*Honor System:* Students are expected to abide by the Georgetown University Undergraduate Honor System. If you have not already done so, please familiarize yourself with the material and information posted on the Honor Council's website.

*Academic Resource Center:* Students with disabilities should contact the Academic Resource Center ([arc@georgetown.edu](mailto:arc@georgetown.edu)) for further information about accommodations available to you. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

*Academic Dishonesty & Plagiarism:* As members of this class and the Georgetown University community, all students are expected to act honestly. This includes but is not limited to a pledge to never lie, cheat, steal, or in any other way act in an unethical manner. Unethical behavior is taken very seriously in this class.

Of particular importance to this class is a consideration of plagiarism. Plagiarism is when you misrepresent someone else's words, thoughts, ideas or organization as your own – intentionally or unintentionally. Again, intent does not matter when it comes to plagiarism. You are responsible for taking all steps necessary to make sure that your ideas are your own, or that proper credit is given for the ideas and words of others.

Plagiarism is not just directly copying sections of a paper from someone else or buying a paper from the internet. It also includes not properly citing authorities that you've consulted, giving your essay to someone else for editing, or plugging your own words into someone else's sentence structure. Plagiarism will always result in an "F" on the assignment in which it took place, with no chance for make-up, and may be grounds for failure of the class. Please see the Student Code of Conduct for a more in-depth discussion of plagiarism and the penalties involved. If you have any concerns about plagiarism or about a specific writing assignment, please contact me before you turn in the assignment. Once an assignment is submitted, it cannot be changed.

*Offensive Material:* Some of the things said or shown in this class may and should offend you. Films, if shown, as well as written material may contain violence, nudity, and/or coarse language. I, or your fellow students may say things that shock or disturb you. I expect students to exercise their own discretion and judgment when faced with such potentially offensive material. I also expect students to deal with their classmates with courtesy, respect, and decorum, even when a classmate has said or done something you find offensive (although this is not a license to be offensive, and abusive behavior or harassment will not be tolerated at any time). If the material covered in this class brings into question matters relating to your own faith, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, race, or any other feature of your identity, please take the time to examine your reactions and their bases and reflect on the nature of your discomfort.

*Late Assignments & Missed Work:* Make-up work will not be accepted. Assignments are due as indicated.

## COURSE ACTIVITIES AND STUDENT ASSESSMENT

### 1. Discussion Board Participation (30%):

This is a discussion-based course and as such it requires students to engage in weekly online discussions via our Canvas course site. Students are expected to post a **minimum of three times per week**, on at least **two different days** during the week in which the materials are assigned. Anything posted after the week's end (Sunday at 7:00 p.m EST) will be considered late and will not be accepted without prior approval from the instructor. In other words, you must post on the discussion board **EVERY WEEK** while class is in session in order to receive credit for your posts.

The goal of this assignment is to encourage you to discuss parts of the readings that you find most compelling and relevant to your own lives. While I encourage students to make connections between the readings and other media or personal experience, outside materials should never replace the assigned readings.

- The first of your 3 (minimum) posts will be a question that sparks discussion about that week's assigned materials. You could ask a question about:
  - An aspect of the author's argument that you found difficult to understand.
  - An aspect of the author's argument that you found compelling or disagreed with.
  - Connections between the readings and the media news, blogs, films, television etc.
  - Your question should be directly related to the assigned readings or videos and contain a subject heading that accurately indicates what your post is about.
  - I recommend you post your question early in the week so that other students have the opportunity to interact with you.
  - While your first post is intended to initiate discussion, your additional posts for that week should keep that discussion going.
- Your second post will be in response to a classmate's question or one of my questions.
- Your third post will be a response to students who have responded to your question.

I will offer feedback on discussion board posts. Discussion board posts will be graded on both frequency and quality. This dialogue must center around the course text and concepts. A high-quality post is one that focuses on the theme for that module, makes use of the course concepts, and draws on specific references to the assigned readings. A post of superior quality will do all of that in addition to making connections between readings and modules. I highly recommend you write all posts as a Word document, then copy and paste it into the discussion board to avoid losing your work should you encounter technical difficulties.

### [“Guidelines for Student Participation in Online Discussion Forums”](#)

With freedom to voice your opinion and personal thoughts on the web comes responsibility. Keep the following guidelines in mind when developing your posts:

#### *Netiquette*

- Identify yourself by your real name. Be mindful of your personal safety, and avoid including personal information, such as phone numbers or addresses, in discussion forums.
- Write in the first person (this is your opinion).

- Use humor, joking, or sarcasm with caution. We often rely on nonverbal cues such as facial expressions to communicate joking or sarcasm; but these cues are not always clear in an online environment. These cues can be simulated with emoticons to reduce misunderstandings.
- What you write is public--respect your audience and be mindful of proper netiquette. Netiquette, also known as “net etiquette,” includes using language free of profanity, proper tone, and mechanics (including full sentences), as well as courtesy and respect for others’ opinions. I may interpret breaches of netiquette as “disruptive behavior.”

#### *How to Get Others to Read Your Posts*

- Jot down notes as you read; and before you post, think about the discussion question in the context of the readings. Address the discussion questions as much as possible (don’t let the discussion stray).
- Distribute contributions evenly during the discussion period (not concentrated all on one day or at the beginning and/or end of the period).
- Give your post an interesting descriptive subject line to draw attention and invite responses from others.
- Avoid cursory, noncontributory posts, such as “I agree” or “great idea.” If you agree (or disagree) with a post, then say why--and support your statement with concepts from the online lecture or assigned readings, or by sharing a related example or experience.
- Avoid using texting abbreviations in your posts.
- Elaborate one single idea and try to keep your message to a couple paragraphs. Long, multiple-screen “mini-dissertations” are difficult to follow on screen and limit opportunities for the give-and-take essential to effective dialogue.
- Review your comments carefully for grammar and punctuation before you post. Well-formulated, grammatically correct, clear posts attract more attention (from both instructor and colleagues). Consider developing your initial posts in a word processing program that allows you to edit for spelling and grammar--then copy it into the discussion forum. This not only will improve the quality of your posts but also has the added benefit of preserving your insights and observations in word documents you can access after the online course has been completed. Another advantage to composing “offline” is avoiding a time-out from the online discussion forum while you compose your thoughts—resulting in a loss of your careful composition!

#### *Earning Full Credit*

- Think of the assignment as a collegial dialogue--not a writing exercise. Engage in a discussion about the text and issues of the course materials.
- Cite or reference any part of your posts that aren’t your own original thoughts. (Avoid plagiarizing!) Citing your sources is especially important in courses where your instructor offers full credit only when citations support the ideas in your post. When you refer to online resources include a hyperlink directly to the source to add context to your comments.
- After you have posted, check back to see if anybody has responded to you--and whether a return response is desired/expected. Build on others’ responses to further develop threads of dialog.
- Respond to a colleague who either supports your own thoughts or lacks supporting evidence or seems to fall short on an important point. Pose questions, offer arguments (distinguish between opinion and argument), or play “devil’s advocate.” Avoid responses that offer only right or wrong perspectives while ignoring other possible answers; pose open-ended questions that invite dialogue.

<b>Rubric for Scoring Participation in Discussion Forums</b>			
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Excellent</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Poor</b>
<b>Timely contributions</b>	Well distributed throughout week. (2 points)	Somewhat distributed. (1 point)	Not distributed throughout the week. (0 points)
<b>Demonstration of knowledge and understanding gained from assigned readings</b>	Demonstrate readings are very clearly understood and incorporated well into responses. (6 points)	Demonstrate some coverage of readings. Readings are somewhat understood and incorporated into responses. (4 point)	Postings are superficial and have questionable relationship to reading material. (0 points)
<b>Adherence to discussion guidelines</b>	Four or more guidelines followed. (2 points)	Two to three guidelines followed. (1 point)	Guidelines ignored. (0 points)

(Adapted from Joan Van Duzer, Humboldt State University, 9/30/08)

## 2. Quizzes (30%)

Throughout the course you will be required to complete six quizzes, accessible through Canvas. These quizzes will cover assigned readings, videos, and lectures. You may use your books and notes during the quiz, but each quiz will be timed. Therefore, I recommend you stay on top of the material so that you can maximize your potential. Each quiz will be released at 12:00 p.m. EST on Friday. You may take the quiz at any time between 12:00 p.m. EST Friday to 11:59 p.m. EST on Sunday. Once you open the quiz, you will be forced to finish it.

## 3. Weekly Engagement Assignment (20%)

Each week you will be required to complete an assignment associated with that week's module/topic. The assignment will usually consist of reading questions or other short exercises to help you further understand the module's topic. There will be a total of eight assignments due on Fridays at 12:00 p.m. EST.

## 4. Final Exam (20%)

The final exam will be available via Canvas during the last week of class. The exam will be comprised of short-answer, multiple choice, and essay questions. Like the quizzes, once you open the exam, you will be forced to finish it. The final is comprehensive, open-note, open-book exam and will cover class readings, videos, and lectures. The final exam will be timed.

## FINAL GRADING SCALE

A (94-100)	A- (90-93)	B+ (87-89)	B (83-86)	B- (80-82)	C+ (77-79)
C (73-76)	C- (70-72)	D+ (67-69)	D (60-66)	F (59 or below)	