Course Description and Objectives
This class is designed as an introduction the interdisciplinary field of Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. We begin by asking questions about what it means to be, or not be, a female and a feminist. What is sex? What is gender? What is sexuality? And how does our culture—and our “nature”—shape the way we understand these concepts? We will examine the development and impact of assumptions we have about our sexual identities and nature and the ways these assumptions underlie our belief system and institutional practices. In what ways do gender differences and gender relations structure our daily lives? How do perspectives about gender change over time? How do race, ethnicity, class, religion, and ability intersect with sexism? In what ways do we participate in gender performance? What is our relationship to feminism and
feminist activism? We will have opportunities to cultivate awareness about cultural understandings and constructions of gender and sexuality and their effects. Course assignments are designed to help you make connections between academic theory and everyday life.

A note: Because sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, and ableism touch all of us, whether as recipients of privilege or of oppression, this course will challenge us all on a personal level; and it is also an invitation to you to challenge yourself. Much of the material we will be studying may be uncomfortable to learn about. Given the subject matter of this course, it is likely that we will sometimes disagree with one another and/or with the readings. This is the nature of challenging and/or controversial topics. We will be most successful, and benefit most from the class, if we come with an open mind and a respectful attitude for our peers and ourselves.

Important: As members of this class we agree that (1) we have the right to test ideas, voice our thoughts, and change our minds throughout the semester, (2) we will respect confidentiality, (3) we will listen carefully and respect someone else’s point of view, (4) we will consider twice before sharing personal information, asking ourselves if it helps illustrate a point/fit into the readings and how we might feel after sharing it, and (5) we will be patient and forgiving with each other and ourselves.

Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:
1. Understand Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies as a critical interdisciplinary field of scholarly inquiry and the academic component of social movements for sex, gender, and other forms of social justice.
2. Identify the complex relationships between sex, gender, and sexualities in local and global contexts.
3. Identify the historical contributions of feminism, womanism, and LGBTQ movements to existing women’s and LGBTQ rights and recognize instances of sexism and heteronormativity in contemporary culture.
4. Recognize the existence of multiple feminisms and develop an ability to identify and describe them.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the intersections of race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, class, age, and ability, and the effects of these intersections on identity and social status.
6. Analyze how sexism, patriarchy, and heteronormativity function as systems of privilege and oppression that generate everyday and institutional experiences of inequality in education, media, politics, work and labor, family, and other social systems.

Course Requirements and Assignments

Assignments
You will be asked to do diverse kinds of assignments over the course of the semester, including an interview with a feminist, or a “crone” (or one who is both), a group activism project, a midterm, a journal, a reading gender paper, a final exam, plus various in-class and out-of-class activities. You must turn in all the major assignments listed below in order to pass the class!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interview Exercise</td>
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<td>Midterm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Gender Exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Group Activism Project &amp; Paper</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Activities 10%
Final Exam 20%
Participation 10%

***Please read the attached criteria for class participation and essay grading***

**Attendance and Participation**

**Attendance is Required!** Allegheny policy requires class attendance. I expect that you will come to every class and be present in mind as well as body. That means being prepared. Come to class having done the assigned reading (take notes, record comments!) listed for that day and with at least one thing in mind that you would like to contribute to the class. I understand that life happens and sometimes you must be absent. If this is the case and you know you will be absent, please let me know (by phone message or e-mail). An absence can be excused with proof of cause: either a College obligation (e.g., sports event away, a class field trip) or illness (requiring a note from a doctor or the health center). Each student is permitted two unexcused absences; each unexcused absence beyond this number will result in a penalty of 2 points off your final grade. (For example, if you earn a final grade of 85, but have three additional unexcused absences, your final grade becomes a 79.)

Also remember: if you miss class YOU are responsible for finding out what you have missed; check with a classmate about readings and assignments. (Please please, please do not ask if you have missed anything!)

**Participation** includes contributions to class discussion in the form of answers, questions, comments, and disagreements both in small and large group work as well as paired activities.

**Journal Policies:**
- Journals should have entries devoted to analyzing course readings as well as reflections on events outside of the class. You needn’t respond to each and every reading, though some students find it useful to as they later review their responses at exam time.
- Don’t worry about spelling or grammar in these informal writing assignments. Likewise, it’s not necessary to concern yourself with structure while writing these journal entries.
- I’ll collect a few journals at the end of most class periods at random. You should aim to write about 1 page typed per week.
- I do grade these—the more thorough and thoughtful, the more points.
- I ask that you write one journal entry a week. If you decide to do more (i.e., for each day’s class reading), you will get extra credit.

Whether you decide to type or handwrite your journal, please collect them in some kind of folder or notebook so I may review previous entries and commentary if I need to.

**Activities:**
- Every so often you will see an Activity listed on the syllabus. Please do that activity and turn it in on the day you see it listed unless noted otherwise in class. We often use the Activities as part of our discussion in class.

**Activism Project**
The Group Activism Project requires you to learn about a contemporary issue related to women, gender, or sexuality and sexual identity with the goal of becoming more aware of community issues, and to imagine and engage in social change. The project will be about three weeks of
various exercises around identifying an issue, gathering information about resources, and presenting the issues and results to the class in a short presentation. You will also be required to write a short reflection paper on your project in which you write about your findings and draw on class readings to situate and evaluate your project.

Events
I ask that you attend two campus events that relate to Women’s, Gender, and/or Sexuality Studies issues. These can be your classmates’ Activism Project Events. Events to be announced. I award extra credit for attending (and writing up a description of) these events.

A Note on Plagiarism
Plagiarism will not be tolerated in this class. Please read the Honor Code in the College Catalogue. We will discuss various ways to avoid unintentional plagiarism. Please note that plagiarism includes direct or indirect use of any words or ideas other than your own without proper acknowledgment. Using the words of ideas of another person, including internet sources, without proper citation is a crime and could result in failure of the assignment or course. In addition, all cases of plagiarism are to be reported to the Honor Committee.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Devices: unless instructed to use them or you have documentation from the Learning Commons, cell phones, laptops, and other electronic devices are not permitted during our class sessions. If a phone rings, text messages are sent, or if a student is surfing the web, I have a clear policy: the first time the student will be warned publicly and/or privately that this is disrespectful behavior; the second time, the student will bring us light snacks to atone; a third time (and I know this will never happen), we will have lunch on you! Before you come to class, turn off/completely silence your phone/put them away as not to be tempted by them. We all ask for your attention, engagement, participation, and respect. If you are in the middle of an emergency and expect the phone to ring, please come see me before class and we will decide if it is appropriate for you to be in the classroom that day.

Specific Needs for Success in the Classroom: Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Services at (814) 332-2898. Disability Services is part of the Learning Commons and is located in Pelletier Library. Please do this as soon as possible to ensure that approved accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion.

HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS
- Take notes while you read. Write down what you think are important points and ask questions of the authors’ arguments as you go through the material. Doing so will facilitate learning and retention, and save you an enormous amount of time over the term.
- Take notes on our discussions ... not just what the professor says! In a discussion-based class, it is important to write down everyone’s good points, so you can think through them later.
- Stay up with the reading—learn to read strategically; catching up is always a more difficult.
- If you have unanswered questions and/or would like to discuss issues in more depth, let’s talk during office hours or make an appointment.

*Please note that you might include some of these as part of your journal.*

Required Texts
The following texts are available at the Allegheny College Bookstore:

****Please Note: The syllabus is subject to change! Please pay attention to announcements regarding any changes in course readings and assignments!****

Calendar

**Week 1**


Fri. Sept 1  Read “Mapping the Field: an Introduction to Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies” (pp 1-19) in *Introduction to Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies*. (IWGSS). Note: please read the boxes and margins!

**Week 2**

Mon. Sept 4  Read bell hooks, “Feminist Politics: Where We Stand” (pp. 1-6 in *Feminism is for Everybody* or pp. 20-22 in *IWGSS*); Allan Johnson, “Patriarchy, the System: An It, Not a He, A Them, or an Us” (*IWGSS*, pp. 23-31).

*Activity* Ask five people you know how they define “feminism.” Record their answers and take note of their tone of voice and “body language” as well.

Wed. Sept 6  Read Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack” (*IWGSS* pp. 72-75); Audre Lorde, “There is No Hierarchy of Oppressions” (*IWGSS* p. 76).

Fri. Sept 8  Read Anne Fausto-Sterling, “The Five Sexes, Revisited” (pp. 32-27); Pascoe, “Making Masculinity” (43-51); Currah, “Stepping Back, Looking Outward” (pp. 57-67).

**Week 3**

Mon. Sept 11  Read Berger and Radeloff, “Claiming an Education: Your Inheritance as Student of Women’s and Gender Studies” (pp 82-95); bell hooks, “Feminist Education” (pp.19-24, FIFE).

Wed. Sept 13  *Historical Perspectives*. Read “Historical Perspectives in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies” (pp 97-119).

Fri. Sept 15  First Wave. Read “Grimké, “An Appeal to the Christian Women of the South” (pp. 120-121); Seneca Falls Convention “Declaration of Sentiments” (pp. 122-123); Sojourner Truth, “1851 Speech” (p. 124); Susan B. Anthony, “Sentencing Speech” (pp. 124-126); Ida B. Wells, “A Red Record” (pp. 127-129); Declaration of Independence.

*Activity* A Day without Feminism. Imagine it. Try it. Reflect.

**Week 4**

Mon. Sept 18  Second Wave. Read Pat Mainardi, “The Politics of Housework” (pp. 143-146);
Radicalesbians, “The Woman-identified Woman” (pp.152-155); Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement” (pp. 157-163); bell hooks, “Race and Gender” (pp. 55-60 FIFE).

**Wed. Sept 20** Read Anne Koedt, “The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm” (pp.147-152); bell hooks, “Consciousness-Raising” pp. 7-12 (FIFE).

**Fri. Sept 22** Read Gloria Anzaldúa, “La Consciencia de la Mestiza/Towards a New Consciousness” (pp. 173-178); Angela Davis, “Masked Racism” (pp. 178-82)

**Week 5**


**Wed. Sept 27** Read Claire Goldberg Moses, “What’s in a Name?” (pp.190-196).

**Fri. Sept 29** Read Tina Vasquez, “It’s Time to End the Long History of Feminism Failing Transgender Women” (pp.197-200).

**Sat. Sept 30** Interview with a Crone

*Activity* Be a “gender traitor” for a day: act, dress, eat, speak in ways that are not generally considered “appropriate” for your (or an “old school” gender category) chosen gender expression.

**Week 6**

**Mon. Oct 2** Cultural Debates. Read Introduction to Section Three, “Cultural Debates in Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies” (pp. 201-230).


**Fri. Oct 6** Read Jessica Birch, “Love, Labor, and Lorde” (pp.234-38); beyondmarriage.org, “Beyond Same-Sex Marriage” (pp. 244-249).

*Activity* Observe the different kinds of families you see around you—on television, in movies, in advertisements, on the news—how would you characterize how they are represented?

**Week 7**

**Mon. Oct 9** Fall Break—No Class.

**Wed. Oct 11** Reproduction. Read Alexandra DelValle, “From the Roots of Latina Feminism” (pp. 279-281); Kathy E. Ferguson, “Birth Control” (pp. 282-285); France Winddance Twine, “The Industrial Womb” (pp. 268-294); bell hooks, “Our Bodies, Ourselves” (FIFE)

**Fri. Oct 13** Read Mogul, et. al., “False Promises” (pp. 313-323).

*Activity* Research (briefly) one International Women’s or LGBTQ Rights Issue issue related to reproduction, birth control, wages, same-sex marriage, or any other topic covered in the last two weeks. Be prepared to share what you learn in class (i.e. bring notes, an article, etc. with you to which you can refer).

**Week 8**

**Mon. Oct 16** MIDTERM

**Wed. Oct 18** Violence. Read Victoria Banyard, et. al. “Friends of Survivors” (pp. 294-303); Brad Perry, “Hooking up with Healthy Sexuality” (pp. 303-309).

**Fri. Oct 20** Read Beth Richie, “A Black Feminist Reflection on the Antiviolence Movement” (pp.310-313); bell hooks, “Ending Violence” (pp. 61-66, FIFE).
*Activity* Do a brief search (in the NY Times or other reputable journal, for example) about violence against women, trans, gays, and/or lesbians, as it manifests in another country. What are the general characteristics of the issue in that other country?

**Week 9**

**Mon. Oct 23** Epistemologies of Bodies. Read the Introduction to Section Four, “Epistemologies of Bodies: Ways of Knowing and Experiencing the World” (pp.345-365).

**Wed. Oct 25** Read Riki Wilchins, “Angry Intersex People with Signs!” (pp. 372-373); Eunjung Kim, “How Much Sex is Healthy?” (pp. 391-399).

**Fri. Oct 27** Read Alechia Williams, “Too Latina to be Black, Too Black to be Latina” (pp. 383); Dominique C. Hill, “(My) Lesbianism is Not a Fixed Point” (pp. 384-386).

*Activity* Observe and record examples of heteronormativity, bisexuality, homosexuality, asexuality, pansexuality, and/or polyamory in your everyday life—in conversation, on TV, in magazines, movies, the internet, etc.

**Week 10**

**Mon. Oct 30** Read Gloria Steinem, “If Men Could Menstruate” (pp. 399-400); Susan Bordo, “Beauty (Re)Discovers the Male Body” (pp. 401-408); Don Sabo, “Doing Time, Doing Masculinity” (pp. 408-412).

**Wed. Nov 1** Read L. Ayu Sraswati, “Cosmopolitan Whiteness” (pp. 413-423); Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “From Americanah” (pp. 423-428); Kimberly Dark, “Big Yoga Student” (pp.428-429).

**Fri. Nov 3** Read bell hooks, “Beauty Within, Beauty Without” (pp. 31-36 FIFE); View “Killing us Softly 4.”

*Activity* Pick an example of women represented in some form of popular culture—in music, ads, tv, movie clip—and talk about it from a feminist perspective.

**Week 11**

**Mon. Nov 6** Activism. Read Introduction to “Activist Frontiers: Agency and Resistance” (pp. 526-547).

**Wed. Nov 8** Read Elizabeth R. Cole and Zakiya T. Luna, “Making Coalitions Work” (pp. 564-572); Melanie Fey, et. al., “Empower Yoself Before You Wreck Yoself” (pp. 576-585).

**Fri. Nov 10** Read Guerrilla Girls, “When Racism & Sexism are no Longer Fashionable” (pp. 596-597); Kathleen Hanna/Bikini Kill, “Riot Grrl Manifesto” (pp. 597-598); Amber L. Vlasnik, “Campus-Based Women’s and Gender Equity Centers” (pp. 604-608).

**Sat. Nov 11** Reading Gender Exercise due by 5 pm.

**Week 12**

**Mon. Nov 13** Read Lila Abu-Lughod, “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?” (pp. 548-559); Hannah E. Britton and Taylor Price, “If Good Food is Cooked” (pp. 586-590).

**Wed. Nov 15** Read Michael Winter, “I Was There” (pp. 590-591); Sarah E. Fryett, “Laudable
Laughter” (pp. 592-596); Julie R Enszer, “On Lesbian-Feminism and Lesbian Separatism” (pp. 599-603).

Fri. Nov 17 **Science & Technology.** Read the Introduction to “Science, Technology, and the Digital World” (pp. 432-451).

**Week 13**

Mon. Nov 20 Read Sandra Harding, “Feminism Confronts the Sciences” (p.451-461).

Wed. Nov 22 **No Class—Thanksgiving Break**

Fri. Nov 24 **No Class—Thanksgiving Break**

**Week 14**

Mon. Nov 27 Read Emily Martin, “The Egg and the Sperm” (pp. 462-469); Liam Lair, “Sexology, Eugenics, and Hirschfield’s Transvestites” (pp. 469-473).

Wed. Nov 29 Read Clare Jen, “Feminist Havtivisms” (pp. 474-480); Joni Seager, “Rachel Carson Died of Breast Cancer” (pp. 480-489).

Fri. Dec 1 Read Kimberly A. Williams, “Women@Web” (pp. 496-500); Jason Whitesel, “Gay Men’s Use of Online Pictures in Fat-Affirming Groups” (pp. 500-508).

**Week 15**

Mon. Dec 4 Activism Project Presentations

Wed. Dec 6 Activism Project Presentations

Fri. Dec 8 Activism Project Presentations

**Week 16**

Mon. Dec 11 **Last day of class.** Review.

**Thursday Dec 14** Final Exam (Group A) 9 am

**Criteria for Grading Class Participation:**
A participation is marked by its active nature, its consistency, and its quality. An A participant doesn't wait to respond to questions that the professor poses but initiates discussion by coming prepared with questions, ideas, observations about the reading assigned that day. This participant will also be consistently engaged in class discussion, always letting us know that she/he has engaged the reading thoroughly and thoughtfully. Finally an A participant will not try to substitute quantity of participation for quality (being consistent is not the same thing as dominating a discussion). To earn the highest grade for your participation, you will want to make it possible for others to participate productively too (this is not a competition); thus, habits such as interrupting others and taking up too much conversational space will not enhance your grade. It will also do you no good to participate if you haven't done the reading. I expect participation to be firmly grounded in careful and thoughtful reading. As the A reader reads, she or he prepares to participate in a class discussion with other readers.

A B discussant is less consistent than an A in initiating discussion but is active in responding to questions or problems posed by the teachers and other students. To get a B in participation, you will need to be in class and talk regularly--more, certainly, than once a week or so. Regular means regular. This level of class participation will also communicate clearly to me that you have done all the reading for the day and that you have done it thoughtfully. This level will also include productive discussion habits, such as engaging the ideas of others, not dominating, listening carefully, etc.

A C grade for participation means that you have contributed in an average way to the discussion. Your contributions have been less frequent than those of the B participant or have let me know that you are not always keeping up with the reading or have, in some way, interfered with good discussion. In short, you have not been silent or absent or altogether uninvolved, but your involvement did not work consistently to make the class a productive learning experience.

A D grade means that you were there physically most of the time and maybe even piped up three or four times during the semester but that's it. It's just the grade it should be--a minimal passing grade.

An F grade should need no explanation. I do give “F” participation grades when warranted.

Essay-grading criteria:
An essay in the A range is founded on an original, logical and coherently organized set of ideas; it makes a clearly discernible and persuasive argument (even if the reader disagrees with its argument); its thinking is, at each turn, absolutely clearly articulated: words carry thought, they don't obscure it; its sentences use only the words their ideas require, not any more; its paragraphs have distinct though related roles in the essay's larger argument, each holding one thoroughly asserted idea (not two competing ideas, not one idea half-asserted); if appropriate it accurately and thoughtfully uses other sources; and its sentences are without the grammatical, spelling or typographical mistakes that exacting proofreading would catch. (All of this takes a lot of work. If it is all very nearly accomplished, the essay usually earns an A-.)

An essay in the B range: a very good paper, founded on solid, persuasive thinking, the writing of which is clearly and effectively executed. What usually prevents an "A" is a lack of originality, thorough thinking or careful proofreading. If two of these virtues are absent, the essay will usually earn a B-.

An essay in the C range: some conspicuous flaw usually earns an essay a C; its argument is really underdeveloped, it is disorganized, its diction is consistently inarticulate, it is in dire need of proofreading.

A D essay either contains more than one of the large problems cited in the "C" description or finds another way to convince its reader that the author has not spent nearly enough time on the thinking or writing in the essay.

An F essay misses on all criteria (originality, articulateness, persuasiveness, organization, the absence of writing mistakes) or is handed in very late. (Most grades below C are earned this way.)