

Linda Strong-Leek
WST 124—Tuesday and Thursday, 1:00-2:50
Office Hours: M&W 10:00-12: 1:30-2:30--Others by Appointment
Phelps Stokes Room 202A
Spring 2011
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WST 124: Introduction to Women's Studies

Imagine living in a world where there is no domination, where females and males are not alike or even equal, but where a vision of mutuality is the ethos shaping our interaction. Imagine living in a world where we can all be who we are, a world of peace and possibility. Feminist revolution alone will not create such a world:...But it will make it possible for us to be fully self-actualized females and males able to create beloved community, to live together, realizing our dreams of freedom and justice, living the truth that we are all “created equal.” bell hooks

Catalog Description:

What is women’s studies? What is feminism? What have been the historic roles of women in the United States? In the world? How are women’s experiences similar? How do they differ? How do class, race, and ethnicity shape women’s development? Any student who has ever asked her/himself any of these questions can begin to explore answers in this introductory course in women’s studies. The interdisciplinary field of women’s studies draws from the often-neglected experience of women in order to describe, analyze, and more fully understand the gendered world order. Students will read several primary source selections from each of the different eras of the international feminist movement, as well as complementary texts in women’s history and literature. This introduction to women’s studies will engage students in a personal and academic journey that involves classroom discussion of individuals’ perceptions and critiques, as well as study guide responses to both discussion and reading. This course is required for those pursuing either a minor or an independent major in women’s studies.

Special Note on this course: Introduction to Women’s Studies introduces students to the discipline of Women’s Studies. Students in this Special Civic Engagement Course will be introduced to Women’s Studies, and will focus specifically on the issue of domestic violence and the realities of domestic violence within the Commonwealth of Kentucky. One of the major objectives of the course is not only to introduce students to some of the myths associated with domestic violence, but to work within the context of the high domestic violence rates within the Commonwealth of Kentucky to understand why this continues to be a pervasive problem within our communities. Ultimately, we will review the statistics related to domestic violence within our state and begin to examine the psychology associated with this issue. Finally, we will present our findings to the campus, and make suggestions to our state representatives to combat the issue, and make our communities safer for all people, but especially for women.

Disability Statement for Course Syllabus

Students who have a disability that may prevent them from fully demonstrating their abilities should contact the Disability Services Coordinator, Cindy Reed at (859) 985-3212, or e-mail cynthia_reed@berea.edu, to discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation in this course. Upon request, this syllabus can be made available in alternative forms.

Required Texts:

bell hooks. *Feminism is for Everybody*.

Amy Kesselman, LilyMcNair, and Nancy Schniedewind. *Women: Images and Reality*. (California: Mayfield), 2007.

Jean Baker Miller. *Toward a New Psychology of Women*. (Boston: Beacon Press), 1976.

Peggy McIntosh. "The Interactive Phases of Curricular Revision: A Feminist Perspective." Center for Research on Women, No. 124, 1987.

Kevin Powell. Selections from his work on race, sex, and politics. To be distributed in class.

Sherley Anne Williams. *Dessa Rose* (New York: Harper), 1986.

Current Edition of *Ms. Magazine*—will be available in the bookstore

We will also review some websites and information from the University of Kentucky Center for Domestic Violence to begin to understand the issue of Domestic Violence within the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is required for each day the class meets. Students who are unable to attend should notify Linda (if possible) before class. Continued absences will have a deleterious affect on the student's final grade as it is difficult to make up many of the assignments. Failure to comply with the course attendance policy will result in the lowering of the student's grade.

Participation

Women's studies courses are designed to be interactive and highly participatory. One's attendance in class is prerequisite to an excellent grade in participation. While in class, a student is expected to be "present" in mind and spirit as well. This includes cultivating the art of listening, dialoguing with others (encouraging those less comfortable to speak, encouraging those who dominate conversation to moderate their spoken comments). Participation also means reading the dynamics of a group conversation and helping to discern the "next step" in the learning process. Participation marks will constitute **15%** of the final grade. At the end of the course, each student will submit a one-page evaluation of her or his participation in the course.

Midterm Exam

A comprehensive midterm exam constitutes **10%** of the course grade.

Daily Assignments and Quizzes

As in most liberal arts courses, the heart of our work will be reading and writing, and occasional test taking. These activities will count for **50%** of the final grade.

Extra Credit

There will be multiple opportunities to earn extra credit points in the course. Ten credits constitute one additional percentage point in the course. Examples of extra credit opportunities are: Peanut Butter and Gender, (There are currently eight scheduled programs for the Peanut Butter and Gender series this spring!) special off-campus lectures and field trips, and extra readings and reports on topics relevant to our study.

Special Assignments

1) Cultural and Spiritual Autobiography-

During the first three weeks of the course, we will have extended introductions of participants. Please answer the following questions (completely) and make a 10-minute presentation (taken from your essay) to the class on the day you are assigned to do so. The questions are:

- 1) What was your school life like growing up?
- 2) When did you first notice that girls and boys, men and women, were different? What difference, if any, did this make for you?
- 3) What is your relationship to your body? What image(s) of yourself as a man or woman does you strive to express? What do clothes, weight and/or makeup, do for the cultural image you want to project to the world?
- 4) What kind of spiritual values do you possess? What is the human project?
- 5) What are your political values and beliefs?
 - a) How do you view the abortion controversy in the USA? What is it really about?
 - b) In your opinion, why are there so few females in positions of power in the US government?
- 6) What is your present understanding of feminism?
- 7) What is your attitude toward conflict?

This assignment should be typed (Times, 12 pt. 1.5 spacing) in approximately 3 pages. **Assignments 1 (oral), 2 (written) 10% of final grade**

Domestic Violence in Kentucky

Each student in the course will work with a group to locate sources which speak to the issue of Domestic Violence in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. The team will prepare at least a 2-3 page handout discussing what they have learned about this issue. Presentations should be 15 minutes in length. (Handout—to be distributed in class). What are some of the issues related to domestic violence within the Commonwealth of Kentucky? What are some of the cultural/political/social issues in the Commonwealth which continue to make this issue of domestic violence so difficult to discuss? **This assignment will constitute 15% of the final grade.**

Calendar Spring 2011

Part I. What is Feminism? What is Women's Studies?

"Feminism is the articulation of the ancient underground culture and philosophy based on the values that patriarchy has labeled "womanly" but which are necessary for full humanity. Among the principles and values of feminism that are most distinct from those

of patriarchy are universal equality, non-violent problem solving, and cooperation with nature, one another, and other species. " *Sonia Johnson*.

- Jan.11 (Tuesday) Course Introduction; Assignment—Cultural and Spiritual Autobiography—Assign dates for each Autobiography
- Jan. 13 (Thursday) **Film:** “Whale Rider”
Assignment: Write a 1 page response (Times, 12pt. single spaced) to the film. (3)
- Jan. 18 (Tuesday) In class discussion of film, “Whale Rider;” student autobiographies (10 minute oral presentation of written assignment.)
Assignment: Read McIntosh's, " Interactive Phases of Curricular Revision: A Feminist Perspective," and write a one page response. (What did the article say to you?) (4)
- Jan. 20 (Thursday) Lecture: "The Broken Pyramid," and discussion of McIntosh essay; continue student autobiographical presentations.
Assignment: Read the introduction and Part I (pp. 7-39) in *Images..* and prepare for short quiz over assigned readings. Use note card distributed in class to write your definition of feminism. (5)
- Jan. 25 (Tuesday) Discuss *Images*...continue student autobiographies.
- Jan. 27 (Thursday) Continue student autobiographies.
- Feb. 1 (Tuesday) **Assignment:** Read pp. 1-26 in *Towards a New Psychology of Women*; summarize each chapter in two paragraphs (10-12 sentences each). (6)
- Feb.3 (Thursday) Discussion of Miller text; continue student autobiographies.
Assignment: Read pp. 27-97 in *Towards....* and prepare for a quiz. (7)
- Feb. 8 (Tuesday) Discuss Miller’s text. **Handout on Feminist Research Methods**
Assignment: Read pp. 98-142 in *Towards a New Psychology...*and write a one page response that includes your views on your own personal power and attitude toward conflict. Be sure to reference the chapters in your response. (8)
Complete student autobiographies—Work on Domestic Violence in Kentucky Project
- Feb. 10 (Thursday) **Assignment:** Complete Study guide for *Images...*Part II “Dominant Ideas about Women”—pp. 46-77, Due Tuesday Tuesday, February 15 (9)
- Feb. 15 (Tuesday) Discuss Study Guide from *Images...*; continue work on Domestic Violence in Kentucky Civic Engagement Project.

Assignment: Read *Images*, “Learning Gender”—pp. 69-115 and complete Study Guide (10,11)

- Feb. 17 (Thursday) Continue work on Domestic Violence in Kentucky (1st hour of class); discussion of *Images*.
- Feb. 22 (Tuesday) **Assignment:** Prepare for midterm exam (Feb 24)
- Feb. 24 (Thursday) Midterm exam—Mid-term grade accounting sheets due in class!
Assignment: Read hooks’ *Feminism is for Everybody*, pp.1-54 and write a one page response. What questions arise from this reading? What questions do you want to ask Dr. hooks? (12)
- March 1 (Tuesday) Labor Day—Classes Cancelled
- March 3 (Thursday) Discuss hooks’ text **Assignment:** Read pp. 55-118 in hooks’ *Feminism...* and write a critical response of 1-2 pages. (13)
- March 8 (Tuesday) Class completes discussion of *Feminism is for Everybody*; Film: “Jane: An Abortion Service”
Assignment: Complete Study Guide for *Images...*”Health and Reproductive Freedom”— pp. 309-374, and complete Study Guide (14)
- March 10 (Thursday) Grade Accounting Sheets Due in Class for Assignments 1-14
- March 14-20 **Spring Break—ENJOY!**
- March 22 (Tuesday) Discussion of *Images* assignment on reproductive freedom.
Assignment: Complete reading from Kevin Powell. Write a one page response. **Due March 24 (15)**
- March 24 (Thursday) **Assignment:** Read *Ms. Magazine* (To Be Announced) and four book reviews; prepare for quiz. **Due March 29 (16)**
- March 29 (Tuesday) **Assignment:** Read *Images*, Part VIII, Changing Our World: “Feminism as a Social Movement”— pp. 535-595 and complete study guide. **Due March 31 (17)**
- March 31 (Thursday) Film: “Iron-Jawed Angels”
Assignment: Read *Dessa Rose* (1-71) and answer question, Thursday April 5 (18)
- April 5 (Tuesday) Complete film, “Iron-Jawed Angels”
Assignment: Continue reading *Dessa Rose* (75-159)
Short Paper; discussion of *Dessa Rose*;
- April 7 (Thursday) Complete *Dessa Rose*.

Assignment: Read *Images*, Sexuality and Relationships, pp.153-174, and complete study guide. **Due April 12 (19)**

April 12 (Tuesday)

Film: “Barbie Nation;” Complete Discussion of *Dessa Rose*.
Assignment: Read *Images*, Part III “Gender and Women’s Bodies: Female Beauty”—pp.115-139-- and complete study guide. **Due April 14 (20)**

April 14 (Thursday)

Assignment: Read *Images*, Part IV: Institutions that Shape Women’s Lives: “Women and Work”— pp. 169-212, and complete study guide. **Due April 19 (21)**

April 19 (Tuesday)

Film: “**The Accused**”
Assignment: Read *Images*, “Violence against Women,” pp. 477-534, and complete study guide. **Due April 21 (22)**

April 21 (Thursday)

Complete Film and discussion: “**The Accused**”—Assignment

April 26 (Tuesday)

Present Findings on Domestic Violence in Kentucky and suggestions/possible solutions

April 28 (Thursday)

Final Grade Accounting Sheets Due in Class