# WGS 105 - Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

Fall 2020

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Zoom Office Hours: M 10AM-12PM, T 12PM-2PM, by appointment

Optional Synchronous Sessions: W 3:30-4:45PM

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class is designed to introduce you to the academic field of women's and gender studies by exploring a wide range of issues that relate to gender in the contemporary world. It is an interdisciplinary course that includes readings, media, and ideas from the social sciences, from history and literature, from politics, and from the arts. We'll be looking at these cultural elements and examining institutions and theoretical ideas in order to investigate the role of gender in the ways we define and express ourselves—in all our myriad gendered identities—as humans in our world. Further, we will explore how these systems create inequities of power and privilege; we'll also study ways in which individuals and groups respond to and resist such oppression, as well as ways individuals can effect change for social justice.

The course is organized around the threshold concepts that are essential to understanding women's and gender studies. Threshold concepts can be envisioned as ideas that take you through a doorway into new learning and perception. Departing from old ways of knowing and moving toward new understanding is also sometimes called "troublesome knowledge" because such shifts in perception can be upsetting, but ultimately rewarding. I hope that you will take away many interesting ideas that will be challenging and useful, in both your academic and personal life.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- 1. To introduce you to the academic field of women's and gender studies and help you gain understanding of its interdisciplinary methodology, evolution as a discipline, and changing position within the academy.
- 2. To relate the concepts and ideas of course materials to your own experiences.
- 3. To discuss, reflect upon, and analyze the intersections of gender, race, class, and sexuality.
- 4. To reflect critically, in discussion and in writing, on the materials and ideas of the course.
- 5. To explore the variety and diversity of gender perspectives and feminist thought.

In addition to the above, this course also fulfills the following objectives for the GEP U.S. Diversity requirement:

- 1. Describe how people or institutions in the United States have constructed diverse identities and cultures based on ability, ethnicity, gender, language, nationality, race, religion, sexuality, socio-economic status, etc.
- 2. Explain how individuals or groups in the United States have responded to the experience of discrimination and inequality.
- 3. Demonstrate understanding of and empathetic insight about diverse cultural perspectives in the United States.

## **TEXTS**

You are not required to purchase from the University Store. Used copies, photocopies, digital copies, and library copies are perfectly acceptable, provided that you read the same assigned sections of text as everyone else. If purchasing our required books will cause you insurmountable financial difficulty, please reach out to me so that I can get you access to our readings.

#### Purchase:

Christie Launius and Holly Hassel, *Threshold Concepts in Women's and Gender Studies* 2nd ed.

Toni Morrison, Sula

#### On Canvas:

Additional readings related to the course themes (these will be uploaded and announced throughout the semester).

# COURSE STRUCTURE AND TECHNOLOGY

This class will be delivered entirely online through the course management system Canvas and the videoconferencing platform Zoom. If you have not activated your UWSP e-mail account, please visit the Manage Your Account page to do so. You will use your UWSP account to login to the course from the Canvas Login Page, and you will use it to activate your UWSP Zoom account.

If you would like, you can get training on Canvas through the <u>Self-enrolling/paced</u> <u>Canvas training course</u>. Zoom also offers <u>live trainings</u> every day, as well as <u>video</u> <u>tutorials</u>.

View this website to see minimum recommended computer and internet configurations for Canvas. View this website to see minimum recommended computer and internet configurations for Zoom.

You will also need access to the following tools to participate in this course. If you do not have access to these items, please let me know ASAP.

- Webcam (optional)
- Microphone for Zoom meetings
- Laptop or desktop computer (some Canvas features aren't accessible on

tablets or mobile devices)

- A stable internet connection (don't rely on cellular)
- A scanner, smartphone, or digital camera for digitizing/photographing handwritten documents for upload to Canvas

### **TECH SUPPORT**

**UWSP Technology Support** 

- Visit with a Student Technology Tutor
- Seek assistance from the <u>IT Service Desk</u> (Formerly HELP Desk)
- IT Service Desk Phone: 715-346-4357 (HELP)
- IT Service Desk Email: techhelp@uwsp.edu

### Canvas Support

Click on the button in the global (left) navigation menu and note the options that appear:

| Support Options   | Explanations  |
|---|---|
| Ask Your Instructor a Question Submit a question to your instructor         | Use Ask Your Instructor a Question sparingly; technical questions are best reserved for Canvas personnel and help as detailed below.        |
| Chat with Canvas Support (Student) Live Chat with Canvas Support 24x7!      | Chatting with Canvas Support (Student) will initiate a <i>text chat</i> with Canvas support. Response can be qualified with severity level. |
| Contact Canvas Support via email Canvas support will email a response       | Contacting Canvas Support via email will allow you to explain in detail or even upload a screenshot to show your particular difficulty.     |
| Contact Canvas Support via phone Find the phone number for your institution | Calling the Canvas number will let Canvas know that you're from UWSP; phone option is available 24/7.                                       |
| Search the Canvas Guides Find answers to common questions                   | Searching the Canvas guides connects you to documents that are searchable by issue. You may also opt for Canvas video guides.               |

All options are available 24/7; however, if you opt for "ask your instructor a question," I may not be available immediately.

## Zoom Support

Zoom operates a 24/7 Support Center with video tutorials and a virtual assistant.

#### **EMAIL AND INSTRUCTOR RESPONSE TIMES**

Your UWSP email account is the university's standard method of communication with you, and you should check it daily. I will use email to communicate with you at least twice a week about course materials, assignments, and upcoming deadlines.

If you want to reach me, it is best to do so by email, as I do not always see Canvas messages in a timely fashion. **Be advised that I only read and respond to email messages between 7AM-7PM Monday through Friday.** Please contact me during those hours, unless it's an emergency.

I will respond to student emails within 24 hours of receiving them, except on weekends. If you haven't heard from me within that time frame, please re-send your message.

If you have a question about the course that isn't confidential or personal in nature, please post it in the Course Q & A Discussion forum. I will post answers there so that all students can view them. Students are encouraged to respond to each other's questions, too.

#### STUDENT EXPECTATIONS AND NETIQUETTE

In this course you will be expected to complete the following types of tasks.

- communicate via email
- complete internet and library database searches
- download course materials from the LMS
- read documents online
- view online videos
- record online videos
- participate in online discussions
- complete peer reviews in Canvas
- upload documents to Canvas to submit an assignment
- participate in synchronous online discussions (optional)

You will also be expected to abide by basic netiquette. Netiquette is a set of rules for behaving properly online. Working as a community of learners, we can build a polite and respectful course community.

The following netiquette tips will enhance the learning experience for everyone in the course:

- Do not dominate any discussion.
- Be cautious in using Internet language. For example, do not capitalize all letters since this suggests shouting.
- Popular emoticons such as ⊚ or ⊗ can be helpful to convey your tone but do not overdo or overuse them.
- Avoid using vernacular and/or slang language. This could possibly lead to misinterpretation.

- Share tips with other students.
- Think and edit before you push the "Send" button.
- Do not hesitate to ask for feedback.
- Use proper salutations and sign-offs in email messages.
- If using virtual backgrounds in Zoom, make sure they're appropriate.
- If not using virtual backgrounds in Zoom, make sure that there is nothing in your environment that is inappropriate or would make others uncomfortable.
- Dress appropriately if you plan to be on camera during a Zoom meeting (in other words, please wear clothing that would be okay for going out in public).
- Mute your microphone when you are not speaking in Zoom.
- If you live with others, be respectful of their privacy and consider disabling your camera if they are home during a Zoom session.

## **COURSE POLICIES**

#### ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability and verification from the <u>Disability and Assistive Technology Center</u> and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact your instructor as soon as possible. It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation of disability to Disability Services and meet with a Disability Services counselor to request special accommodation *before* classes start.

The Disability and Assistive Technology Center is located in 609 Albertson Hall and can be contacted by phone at (715) 346-3365 (Voice) (715) 346-3362 (TDD only) or via email at <a href="mailto:datctr@uwsp.edu">datctr@uwsp.edu</a>.

#### STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Some of the assignments in this class will require the use of sources. When you use sources, you must cite them. MLA citation style is preferable but use any format with which you are familiar. The use of an unacknowledged source will result, at minimum, in your being required to redo the assignment for reduced credit. Depending on the nature and extent of the misuse, such behavior may result in a zero for the assignment or an F for the course. If you are unsure how to cite a source properly, please ask me. Other forms of academic dishonesty, such as purchasing work, copying the work of classmates, etc., will also result in a major course penalty, including possible failure of the course. A report may also be submitted to the Dean of Students. For more information about UWSP's policies regarding academic misconduct, see the Academic Integrity Brochure.

#### SAFE SPACE POLICY

We're all required to be respectful of each other's identities and opinions. There will be

zero tolerance for slurs, derogatory language, harassment, belittlement of ideas, or belittlement of others' work. If you need clarification, please refer to <a href="UWSP's Community Rights and Responsibilities Handbook">UWSP's Community Rights and Responsibilities Handbook</a>. As a general rule, use common sense and treat others as you wish to be treated. If you feel unsafe in any class discussion, please speak to me immediately so that we can resolve the problem.

The subject material of this class can be sensitive and controversial, so it is crucial that we create a climate conducive to safe and open discussion. It is expected that you will engage with the material with an open mind and a critical lens. This course approaches gender and other dimensions of identity, discrimination, and power from a systemic basis, so it is important to recognize that we cannot generalize about systems from personal anecdotes—while I hope that you will find the material relevant to your lives, be careful when speaking to avoid generalizations and sweeping assumptions.

Some of the material that we cover may be triggering. I will always offer content warnings for such readings and/or viewings. If you know that a particular assignment will be triggering to you, then you and I should discuss how you would like to approach the material. I am happy to offer options including: submitting your discussion post to me privately rather than posting it publicly, completing an alternate assignment, etc.

If you have any concerns about the class or the material, please come and talk to me so we can try to work out a solution as quickly as possible.

#### PERSONAL EMERGENCIES

Any student facing challenges that may affect their academic performance is encouraged to contact the <u>Dean of Students</u> for support. Such challenges may include but are not limited to: mental or physical health crises, family crises, food insecurity, housing insecurity, financial insecurity, incidents of hate/bias, interpersonal violence, or sexual assault/harassment. Furthermore, please notify me if you feel comfortable doing so. That will enable me to provide any resources that I possess, including flexibility on assignment deadlines, taking an incomplete in the course, or withdrawing from the course.

Be advised: I am a mandatory reporter. If you disclose to me that you have been a victim of sexual assault/harassment, hate/bias, or any crime, I am required to inform the university. Likewise, if you disclose to me that you are experiencing thoughts of self-harm, or have engaged in self-harm, I must inform the university. Think carefully about whether or not you would like to make a report before disclosing to me, or to any UWSP employee. If you do not want to report, but still want to let me know that you're dealing with a personal issue, you should speak in generalized terms.

If you've experienced any of the aforementioned issues, please check out the Campus and Community Resources page on Canvas. I've compiled a list of organizations and agencies you can turn to for help—both on-campus and off.

#### ASSESSMENT

UWSP regularly assesses the General Education Program (including this course) to ensure that we are providing you with the best education we can. As part of this effort, samples of student work may be shared, anonymously, with a small group of faculty members. If you have any questions about the assessment process or concerns about how your work may be used, please come talk with me.

## **GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**Reading and preparation for class:** Each week, there will be assigned readings with specific suggestions of things to look for or to think about as you read. Doing the reading thoughtfully is necessary preparation for you to be able to participate fully in, and benefit from, the class. You should also take some notes on your observations and reactions.

**Participation:** You should visit our Canvas page regularly (ideally several times a week) and complete all required discussion forum posts. Attendance at our optional synchronous meetings will earn you extra participation credit. See pages 8-9 for criteria.

**Short writing assignments:** These will be more in-depth pieces that ask you to apply the assigned reading material in a specific way. The details of these writing assignments will be posted on Canvas. Whatever the assignment specifics, these writings should total about 250-300 words.

**Presentation:** Working in groups of 5-6, you will sign up for a week to present on material from *Threshold Concepts*. Your group will need to record a video presentation that:

- 1. Explains the main concepts from the reading.
- 2. Presents a cultural example to accompany the reading and applies one or more of the concepts from our reading to help analyze that example.
- 3. Offers 2-3 discussion questions for the class regarding the topic or the reading.

**Historical Perspectives Analysis:** For this project, we make use of digitized materials from the UWSP Archives and/or The Long 19th Amendment Project. You'll investigate primary materials that will help us explore how one norm, expectation, belief, or practice related to gender/sexuality has changed over time.

**Novel Response Paper**: As a class, we will be reading and discussing Toni Morrison's *Sula*. After we read and discuss the novel, you will write a literary analysis and reflection on the book.

**Final Project:** For your final project, you will research a topic based on your individual interest. This allows you to investigate a topic or issue that you feel passionate about

and to apply the threshold concepts from the course to that topic. You will need to create a slide presentation on your topic and write a short reflection.

#### Your grades will be determined using the following rubric:

| Short Writing Assignments        | 15% |
|----------------------------------|-----|
| Group Presentation Video         | 15% |
| Historical Perspectives Analysis | 20% |
| Novel Response Paper             | 20% |
| Final Project                    | 20% |
| Participation                    | 10% |

I will be using the plus/minus system for final grades. Please note: to ensure fairness, all numbers are absolute, and will not be rounded up or down at any stage. Thus a B- will be inclusive of all scores of 80.000 through 83.999.

$$A = 93-100$$
  $A = 90-92$   $B + = 87-89$   $B = 84-86$   $B - = 80-83$   $C + = 77-79$   $C = 74-76$   $C - = 70-73$   $D + = 67-69$   $D = 64-66$   $D - = 60-63$   $F = 0-60$ 

### **Criteria for Participation**

|                             | Ideal  | Satisfactory   | Unsatisfactory   |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|
| Completion                  | Submits responses to all required discussion forums, or (rarely) misses one for a compelling reason, which is shared with the instructor promptly. | Posts in required discussion forums consistently (at least 85% of the time). Occasional missing posts are mostly for a valid reason. | Misses more than<br>15% of the required<br>discussion posts, or<br>less often but without<br>explanation.  |
| Preparation                 | Always gives evidence of having done the required readings or pre- writing work needed for discussion posts.                                       | Gives evidence of preparation for discussion posts at least 85% of the time.   | Gives evidence of waiting until the last minute to post or failing to complete pre-writing work more than 15% of the time.                               |
| Quality of<br>Contributions | Makes comments that stand out for the level of careful thought they demonstrate about the material and the unfolding conversation.                 |  | Makes comments<br>that reflect<br>inattentiveness to<br>others' contributions,<br>are irrelevant, or<br>otherwise tend to<br>derail the<br>conversation. |
| Class Community             | Improves the conversation in a significant way. (E.g. helps draw others  |  | Impairs the conversation in a significant way. (E.g. dominates discussion, treats  |

| out, asks good   | other students or |
|------------------|-------------------|
| questions, etc.) | their ideas with  |
|                  | disrespect.)      |

### **Extra Credit Opportunities**

Attending optional synchronous Zoom sessions and/or replying to more than one classmate's discussion post will earn you one extra credit point each, applied toward either your short writing assignment grades or your participation grade. I will also keep an eye out for relevant events on campus or online that you may attend for additional extra credit points.

### SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS, LATE WORK, FALLING BEHIND:

In order to pass the course, you must complete every assignment. Late assignments will lose a letter grade for each calendar day they are late. Extensions are negotiable if, knowing your own academic schedule and obligations, you anticipate needing more time for an assignment. To request an extension, you must contact me at least two calendar days before the assignment is due. Together we will arrive on a later due date that must fit into the syllabus (i.e., the new due date must precede any other due dates for the unit). I will hold you to that new due date and deduct points if you miss it. Do not e-mail me the night before something is due to ask for an extension; I will refuse. Plan ahead.

You must build in time for possible technological failure ("my computer crashed") or contingency ("I left my flash drive with my paper on it at home"). Late work is late, regardless of circumstance.

If you find that you have any trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, make sure you let me know as early as possible. Make sure that you are proactive in informing me when difficulties arise during the semester so that I can help you find a solution. That said, it is your responsibility to understand when you need to consider dropping the course or requesting an incomplete.

### OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

The <u>Tutoring-Learning Center</u>, located in the basement of the library (Room 018), can provide help with writing and many other skills you will need to succeed in college. Their regular hours are Monday – Thursday 9:00am – 8:00pm, Friday 9:00AM – 1:00PM. Appointments are recommended but not required. Phone 715-346-3568 or email <u>tlctutor@uwsp.edu</u>.

The TLC now offers an Online Writing Lab in addition to face-to-face tutoring. I strongly encourage you to use their services.

# **COURSE SCHEDULE**

\*Subject to change at instructor's discretion

|                             | TO READ/VIEW   | TO DO/SUBMIT BY  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| <b>WEEK 1</b> Sept. 2 - 5   | <ul> <li>Read/View all items in the "Start Here" Module on Canvas</li> <li>Read/view all items in the Learning Outcomes and Student Expectations Module</li> <li>Make sure to read assignment sheet/rubric and watch video explanation for Group Presentations assignment</li> </ul> | <ul> <li>MIDNIGHT SATURDAY</li> <li>Introduce Yourself         Post</li> <li>Best Practices and         Classroom         Community Post</li> <li>Pre-Course Survey</li> <li>Sign up for group         presentation</li> <li>Submit any questions         about the syllabus or         course to the General         Q &amp; A</li> </ul> |
| <b>WEEK 2</b> Sept. 7 - 12  | <ul> <li>Read Threshold Concepts ch. 1</li> <li>Read Susan Feiner's         "Thinking Like a Feminist Economist"</li> <li>Watch the following video lecture:         <ul> <li>Key ideas from Threshold Concepts ch. 1</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   | Short Writing     Assignment 1     Short Writing     Assignment 2  |
| <b>WEEK 3</b> Sept. 14 - 19 | Read Threshold Concepts ch. 2      Watch the following videos:   | Short Writing<br>Assignment 3  |
| <b>WEEK 4</b> Sept. 21 - 26 | <ul> <li>Read Historical         Perspectives Analysis assignment sheet/rubric     </li> <li>Watch the following video lectures:</li> </ul>  | <ul> <li>Select your archival<br/>item and your<br/>contemporary item</li> <li>Complete discussion<br/>board post about your</li> </ul>  |

|                                 | TO READ/VIEW  | TO DO/SUBMIT BY<br>MIDNIGHT SATURDAY  |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
|                                 | <ul> <li>Explanation of         Historical         Perspectives         Analysis</li> <li>UWSP Archives         instructional video</li> </ul>  | experience with the archives  |
| <b>Week 5</b> Sept. 28 – Oct. 3 | Look at example historical perspectives analyses     Watch the following video lectures:  | Submit rough draft of<br>Historical<br>Perspectives Analysis  |
| <b>WEEK 6</b> Oct. 5 - 10       | <ul> <li>Watch video lecture on<br/>peer review<br/>procedures/tips</li> </ul>  | Complete peer review<br>of Historical<br>Perspectives analyses  |
| <b>WEEK 7</b> Oct. 12 - 17      | <ul> <li>Read instructor/peer feedback on historical perspectives analysis</li> <li>Read Threshold Concepts ch. 3</li> <li>Watch the following video lectures:         <ul> <li>De-brief on historical perspectives analyses</li> <li>Classmates' presentations on ideas from Threshold Concepts</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul> <li>Revised draft of<br/>Historical<br/>Perspectives analysis</li> <li>Short writing<br/>assignment 4</li> </ul> |
| <b>WEEK 8</b> Oct. 19 - 24      | <ul> <li>Read Threshold Concepts ch. 4</li> <li>Watch the following videos:         <ul> <li>Kimberlé Crenshaw's TED Talk on Intersectionality</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   | Short Writing     Assignment 5  |

|                                | TO READ/VIEW  | TO DO/SUBMIT BY MIDNIGHT SATURDAY                     |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
|                                | <ul> <li>Classmates'         presentations on         ideas from         Threshold Concepts     </li> </ul>   |   |
| <b>WEEK 9</b> Oct. 26 - 31     | <ul> <li>Read Threshold Concepts ch. 5</li> <li>Read "Accomplices vs. Allies"</li> <li>Watch the following videos:         <ul> <li>Dr. Omi Osun Joni L. Jones's "Six Rules for Allies"</li> <li>Classmates' presentations on ideas from Threshold Concepts</li> </ul> </li> </ul>          | Short Writing     Assignment 6                        |
| WEEK 10<br>Nov. 2-7            | <ul> <li>Read Sula pgs. 1 – 66</li> <li>Read Novel Response         Paper assignment         sheet/rubric</li> <li>Read Vladimir Nabokov's         "Good Readers and Good         Writers"</li> <li>Watch the following         videos:         <ul> <li>Explanation of</li></ul></li></ul> | Short Writing<br>Assignment 7                         |
| <b>WEEK 11</b><br>Nov. 9 - 14  | <ul> <li>Read Sula pgs. 67-137</li> <li>Watch the following videos:         <ul> <li>Emerging themes in Sula</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   | Discussion post: ideas<br>for Novel Analysis<br>paper |
| <b>WEEK 12</b><br>Nov. 16 - 21 | <ul><li>Finish Sula</li><li>Read example Novel<br/>Analysis papers</li></ul>  | Rough draft of Novel     Response paper               |

|  | TO READ/VIEW   | TO DO/SUBMIT BY<br>MIDNIGHT SATURDAY  |
|--|--|---|
| WEEK 13<br>Nov. 23 – 25<br>Thanksgiving Week | Watch the following videos:  | Complete peer review of novel analyses  |
| WEEK 14<br>Nov. 30 – Dec. 5                  | <ul> <li>Read peer and instructor feedback on Novel Analysis paper</li> <li>Read the final project assignment sheet/rubric</li> <li>Watch the following videos:         <ul> <li>Library Instruction for WGS</li> <li>Explanation of final project assignment</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul> <li>Revised draft of novel analysis paper</li> <li>Discussion post: potential topics for final projects</li> </ul> |
| <b>WEEK 15</b> Dec. 7 - 12                   | <ul> <li>Take a look at example final projects</li> <li>Watch the following video:         <ul> <li>Successful vs unsuccessful final projects</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   | Submit rough draft of<br>written reflection<br>portion of final project<br>for instructor review                        |
| FINALS WEEK<br>Dec. 14 - 19                  | Read instructor feedback<br>on written reflection  | Submit final project  |