

Women, Sex and Power (WST 01D)

Fall 2022: Tuesday/ Thursday/ 11:20-12:45/102 Barnard Hall

Instructors:

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“Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.”

Zora Neale Hurston (1942)
*Dust tracks on a road: an
autobiography, 91*

Course Goals and Objectives:

The goals for this interdisciplinary course include: 1. To introduce students to the major ideas and concepts of Women's Studies by acquainting them with a variety of gender-related issues, comparing the many different experiences of women around the world; 2. To provide students with a knowledge of the historical roots of the problems facing women; 3. To introduce students to analytical tools for studying the constructions of gender, sex, race/ethnicity, and class as well as their interconnectedness and their impact on women's lives; 4. To create an interdisciplinary foundation of knowledge and an understanding of basic concepts and problems in Women's Studies for students to bring into more discipline-specific courses offered in various departments, such as literature, performance studies, drama, sociology, philosophy, psychology, and history.

Required Texts:

Heather Raffo, *Nine Parts of Desire* (on Blackboard)

Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*, ISBN 978-0385490818

Ika Hügel-Marshall, *Invisible Woman: Growing Up Black in Germany*, ISBN 978-1433102783

Fatima Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*, ISBN 978-0201489378

Additional Readings:

You will find many of our course materials in the Course Documents section of our Blackboard site.

Grading:

The final grade will be comprised of the following:

Class Participation: 20%

Short Response Papers to Readings, Films, and Speakers: 50%

Handmaid's Tale paper 10%

Final Performance Project: 20%

Responsibilities and Policies of our Class Community:

Writing assignments and their due dates will be given out throughout the semester. We expect all work to be completed in a timely manner. If you have a specific problem, please speak to the instructors **before** the assignment is due.

Students attend college to learn how to think. We need others to help us understand, to articulate and repeat ideas in ways that make them stick in the memory, and to stay engaged. Each of us is responsible for the classroom communication climate and is expected to participate in keeping discussions lively and respectful. Our aim is to learn together in a meaningful way. Discussion of assigned readings is a primary component of your class participation. You should come to class every session having completed the assigned readings and be willing to respond to them and to each other's views in a thoughtful and respectful manner.

Since Spring 2020 our world has undergone enormous struggles and changes. Not just because of the pandemic, but also because of the global fury that was unleashed by George Floyd's horrific death. This course will dissect the systems and practices that have led to and support racism, sexism, homophobia, and other prejudices. We will interrogate and analyze

the intersectionality and impact of these issues. Further, this class will examine modes of resistance that have emerged to fight oppressive systems and structures -- movements such as Black Lives Matter and Black Trans Lives Matter are but two examples.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

9/6: Introductions. “Post-Covid” world – what have we learned? What is next? What are our responsibilities and opportunities for connection, enlightenment, enrichment, engagement, exchange and building communities now?

Histories of Resistance

9/8: Watch: “The F WORD.”

9/13: **Read:** *Declaration of Independence*
Declaration of Sentiments (BB)

Sojourner Truth, *Aren't I a Woman?*(BB) Essay by Nell Irwin Painter (BB)
Staples, Brent: “How the Suffrage Movement Betrayed Black Women,” July 28, 2018

https://www.nytimes.com/2018/07/28/opinion/sunday/suffrage-movement-racism-black-women.html?rref=collection%2Ftimestopic%2FAnthony%2C%20Susan%20B.&action=click&contentCollection=timestopics®ion=stream&module=stream_unit&version=latest&contentPlacement=3&pgtype=col

9/15: **Read:** *Trifles* (BB) by Susan Glaspell.

9/20: **FIRST RESPONSE PAPER DUE.** *Discussion:* What’s at stake in the midterm elections?

9/22: **Read:** *Red Stockings Manifesto* (BB), *Combahee River Collective Statement* (BB) Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (selection)
<https://www.marxists.org/reference/subject/ethics/de-beauvoir/2nd-sex/introduction.htm>

9/27: **Response paper 2 due.** *Discussion:* What’s at stake in the midterm elections?

Non-Western Feminisms?

9/29: **Read:** *Dreams of Trespass*

10/4: *Dreams of Trespass* cont.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDER AND RACE

10/6: **Read:** Lorber, "The Social Construction of Gender" (BB)

10/11: **Read:** *Invisible Woman*

10/13: **NO CLASS. FALL BREAK.**

10/18: **Third response paper due. Read:** (continue) *Invisible Woman*

10/20: **Read:** Patricia Hill Collins, "Mammies, Matriarchs..."

10/25: **Screen:** Rosie the Riveter.

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS AND TECHNOLOGIES

10/27: Film: *The Pill*. **Fourth Reaction Paper due.**

11/1: **Read:** *The Handmaid's Tale*

11/3: In-class research day with Prof. Georgina Martorella, Hofstra librarian on reproductive rights and the election

11/8: *The Handmaid's Tale* continued.

11/10: ELECTION DAY connections. **Anthropologist's performance.**

11/13 *Handmaid's Tale* paper due.

11/15: **European Union Policies on Gender Parity, Reproductive and LGBTQ rights. Guest Speaker: Heather MacRae, York University, Canada**

Reading: On Blackboard

11/17: EU and rights continued.

Reading: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0152>

11/22: Discussion of research in performance.

PERSONAL NARRATIVES, COMMUNITY STORIES

11/29: One page paper due. Read: *Nine Parts of Desire*.

12/1: PREP for final project and class conclusions. Interview due.

12/6: Final Performances

12/8: Final Performances

12/13: FINALS DAY – finish Final Performances

For specific policy wording relating to the following important matters: *Academic Dishonesty; Student Access Services; Deadlines and Grading Policies; Absences for Religious Observance; Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct; the Center for Academic Excellence*, see [Hofstra Policies: Wording for Syllabuses](#) on the Hofstra Provost's webpage.