

Perspectives on Women
GAH 2358-001
MWF 11:20-12:35, F210
Richard Stockton College of New Jersey
Fall 2011

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Required text: Susan M. Shaw and Janet Lee, eds. *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions*. 5th edition. 2009. ISBN 978-0-07-351232-7

Other texts (you will be assigned **one** of the following texts for a group presentation):

- Ama Ata Aidoo, *Changes: A Love Story*. Feminist Press (1993)
- Edwidge Danticat, *Breath, Eyes, Memory: A Novel*. (1998)
- Nawal El Saadawi, *Woman at Point Zero*. Zed Books (2007)
- Eve Ensler, *Necessary Targets: A Story of Women and War*. Villard (2001)
- Nora Okja Keller, *Comfort Woman*. Penguin Books (1998)
- Taslima Nasrin, *Revenge: A Fable*. Feminist Press (2010)
- Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*. Pantheon (2004)

Course description: This course serves as an introduction to women's, gender, and sexuality studies, taking a humanistic approach to understanding the experiences, historical conditions, and concerns of women, in the present and in the past. We will be critically examining a variety of texts, including personal narratives, historical documents, literature, film, advertising, and cultural criticism and scholarship on women, as well as participating in on-campus lectures and events.

Course Objectives:

- To examine the commonalities, differences, continuities and changes in women's experiences, with a particular focus on intersections of race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, marital and parenting status, age, religion, and nationality across time and place
- To understand the social construction of gender and sex, focusing on how gender and sex operate and maintain power, and how they are embedded in institutions and social practices.
- To learn about feminism(s) as ideologies for social change and a means of analysis in academic disciplines, including historical perspectives on social change movements in the U.S. and/or abroad, and participation in an activist project.

Course Methods:

- Cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural study of women's lives;
 - Gender analysis: asking about the role of gender in everything we study;
 - Sharing and learning from our own and each other's experiences;
 - Working in small groups to encourage everyone's full participation;
 - Encouraging cooperation and collaborative learning.
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Email Policy:

1. Use Blackboard email for all course-related correspondence. Please remember to provide a coherent subject line. Also, remember to include your full name in the text of the email.
2. I usually check email each day in the morning. Please plan your email questions accordingly and, while I often respond immediately, allow a twenty-four hour time frame for my reply.
3. Always try to visit my office hours with specific questions about course material. If you were absent, contact a classmate with questions about missed material and then visit office hours if you still have questions.
4. Visit me during office hours to discuss grades. This includes final grades. Grades should be discussed in person during office hours or other arranged meetings. I will not discuss grades via email.

Office Hours Policy: Think of my office as an extension of the classroom and use my office hours to discuss any aspect of the reading and material covered during class: come chat with me about your class projects, writing, questions about the reading, lecture or discussion, ideas you wish to develop, reading and interpretive strategies you'd like to try, and so on.

Course Requirements

Attendance: Regular attendance is required. More than four absences will lower your grade. More than seven will be grounds for failure of the course. If you arrive to class after I have taken attendance, you will be considered late. Two lates will equal one absence.

Participation: You are expected to come to class having completed the assigned reading and/or writing and prepared to discuss the texts and your own work. Reading, writing, and discussion are the foundation of this course. If you aren't ready to speak, listen, or debate issues when you come to class, then you aren't really prepared. The Women's, Gender, and Sexuality studies classroom is a place that requires open, thoughtful discussions; we will be covering material about which intelligent people feel strongly and often disagree, material that may even challenge your values and beliefs. I expect that you will often argue with me and with each other; I will insist that all of us listen carefully and respectfully to one another's views. Remember that you are not being graded on your views or politics, only on the effectiveness of your engagement with the readings and discussions.

Journal: You will be keeping a journal for reactions to readings and other assignments, and to aid you in being prepared for class discussion. Most of these will be short responses to a specific prompt or question graded on the scale below. Journal responses must be completed at home. You should always bring your journal to class, where I will from time to time grade entries in class or ask you to turn your journal in for grading. You can type entries and collect them in a folder or binder or handwrite entries (if I can't read your handwriting, however, I will ask you to type them); most students may find it best to do a combination of both, and so to keep your journal in a simple pocket folder or small binder. Journals will be graded on the following scale:

3= shows stretching of the mind, compares information, brings in outside information, demonstrates hard thinking or mastery of concepts

2= shows basic understanding of concept, satisfactory

1= shows lack of basic understanding of concept, off topic, too short, unsatisfactory

0= not completed, vastly off topic, or demonstrates lack of understanding, very unsatisfactory

Women in the World research paper: The culminating project for this course will be a 6-page research paper focusing on issues affecting women in the world today. You will have two choices for approaching this paper. You may focus on **two** current issues facing women **one** of the countries explored in the group presentations (Bangladesh, Bosnia, Egypt, Ghana, Haiti, Iran, Korea), or you may focus on **one** current issue facing women in two different countries (one from the list above and another of your choice). We will discuss the project and the kinds of issues you might focus on in class throughout the semester. Your paper must include a works cited of no fewer than 6 secondary sources, formatted in MLA style. You will need to turn in a one-page prospectus for this project on 11/2. Final paper due in class on Monday, 12/5.

Group Projects

- **Teaching Presentation:** You will prepare and present an in-class performance (about 2/3 of our class period) based on your group's interpretation of one of the books listed under "Other Texts" (the groups/books will be assigned during Week 2). There will be two class periods set aside for working on the project, but you will also need to arrange to meet outside of class several times with your group for preparation. The presentation may be dramatic, artistic, or whatever the group chooses. Since all of the books focus on a particular non-US culture, the presentation should give us a brief background about the country/culture on which the book focuses, and the role of women in that culture. Themes/issues examined in this course should be incorporated into your presentation. Your presentation should **actively** include and educate your audience about the issues and ideas you are raising. One or two class periods before your presentations, you should distribute copies of a short excerpt from your book (no more than 10 pages) to the class. If you give one copy of your excerpt to me at least a full week in advance of that date, I can have it copied for you; otherwise the copying is your responsibility. **Each member of the group must participate in both the preparation and the presentation, and write a short assessment (instructions will be provided later). You will be graded as a group on the project, and individually on the evaluation.**
- **Class Activism Project:** All class members will participate in a class activism project. This class project identifies a key women's issue for our community and produces some type of activism related to this issue. The class project will illustrate the principles of feminist activism with regard to the topic the class selects. Some websites that might help you think about topics from a feminist and activist perspective are: Feminist Majority Foundation (www.FeministCampus.org). Guerilla Girls (<http://www.guerrillagirls.com/>), Ms. Magazine (www.MsMagazine.com), the Feminist Global Newswire at the Feminist Majority Foundation (<http://www.feminist.org>); Women's e-News (<http://www.womensenews.org>); and the Center for Women and Information Technology (<http://www.umbc.edu/cwit/>). The class activism project could involve a class performance or panel presentation, petition drive, the creation of pamphlets, posters, videos, handouts, surveys, and/or volunteer activities. Instructor, individual, and classmate evaluations determine your grade for this project. Consult the assignment sheet on Blackboard for more information. Individual research on a local women's issue due: Oct. 10. Class project completion due: Dec. 7.

Due Dates for Assignments:

Journals: 9/9, 12, 14, 19, 23, 28, 30, 10/7, 14, 17, 28, 11/4, 9, 14, 28, 12/2.

Complete journals due on 12/2 for final reading and evaluation.

Teaching Presentation assessments: due on the class immediately after the presentation.

One-page prospectus for research paper: 11/15

Women in the World paper: 12/5

Class Activism Project--Individual Research on local woman's issue: 10/10

Class Activism Project—Reflective Paper: 12/7

Activism project must be completed by 12/7.

Grading: (Note: all assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade for this course)

Your grades will be calculated as follows:

Journal entries: 35% (reaction papers and in-class writing will be included in this grade).

Research paper and prospectus: 25%

Group presentation: 15%

Assessment of group presentation: 10%

Class Activism Project: 15%

Other grading policies:

Bring your journal with you to every class. I will be collecting and grading these randomly. You get one chance to request a one-class extension for your journals if you are unprepared when I collect them—no questions asked. After that, they will be graded down accordingly.

The final research paper may not be turned in late. Do not procrastinate. You will need some time to gather and absorb the information you need to write the paper. Do not try to write the whole paper and the works cited the night before it is due. You can't always anticipate computer or printer problems, writer's block, accidental erasure of files, power outages, or dogs eating paper. Give yourself enough time to deal with problems should they occur.

In accordance with the College's policy, I do not give incomplete grades unless there are extremely serious circumstances, and then, only by prior arrangement.

Grading Scale:

100-93: A	82.9-80: B-	69.9-67: D+
92.9-90: A-	79.9-77: C+	66.9-63: D
89.9-87: B+	76.9-73: C	62.9-60: D-
86.9-83: B	72.9-70: C-	59.9 & below: F

Accommodation for Students with Special Needs: Stockton College complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations should contact the Learning Access Program located in the West Quad Bldg., Suite 110, or by calling 652-4988. More information can be found at <http://www2.stockton.edu/wellness/lap.html>.

Academic Honesty: Stockton College expects students to maintain the highest standard of academic honesty. You should make yourself aware of Richard Stockton College's Academic Honesty Policy, which can be found in the Student Handbook. You should also make yourself familiar with the penalties for violations of the policy and your rights as a student.

Please be aware that plagiarism (one form of academic dishonesty) includes, but may not be limited to:

using all or part of a source, either directly or in paraphrase, either intentionally or unintentionally, whether that source is published, or online, or taken from a fellow or former student, without properly acknowledging that source.

If you are found to have represented the work or ideas of others as your own, intentionally, or unintentionally, you will face serious consequences, as follows:

1. If this is the first time the student has been found to have plagiarized, he/she will receive an "F" for that paper or assignment and/or the course.
2. For second offenses of plagiarism, the student will receive an F for the course.
3. Whenever possible, a student who is found to have plagiarized a paper or assignment, in full or in part, should meet with the professor of the class for which the paper is written in order to review and discuss the suspect work.

Additionally, in accordance with [Stockton College policy](#), faculty will report all instances of plagiarism to the Provost of Academic Affairs. Students may be subject to discipline by the college, such as being placed on academic probation or expelled. If you have a question specific to a paper you are working on, please bring it to my attention. I will be happy to discuss areas of ambiguity that may exist in your mind.

Course Schedule (*subject to change—check Blackboard regularly for updates)

Readings are from *Women's Voices* unless noted otherwise.

Week 1

Wednesday, 9/7

Introduction to the course, Teaching Presentations, and Class Activism Project.

What is Women's Studies?

Friday, 9/9

Read pages 1-22. Journal entry 1: Try to name 20 significant women from American history. List them in your journal entry. Then, go to the web site and reflect on this year's inductees and the mission of the National Women's Hall of Fame (<http://www.greatwomen.org/home.php>). Write about 300 words, total.

Week 2

Monday, 9/12 Read pages 23-33. Journal entry 2: question 4 page 41.

Assign teaching presentation groups.

Wednesday, 9/14 Read pages 33-41. Journal entry 3: After reading Marge Piercy's poem, reflect on who your personal heroines are. (You may write your reflection as a paragraph or two, or as a poem.)

Systems of Privilege and Inequality

Friday, 9/16 Read pages 42-67. Complete learning activity on pg 43 in class.

Week 3

Monday, 9/19 Read pages 67-82. Journal entry 4, learning activity, page 45. Go directly to <http://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/selectatest.html> While there take a gender, age, and race preference test. Allow at least 30 minutes for this. Describe your results and your reaction to them. (Note: I will not judge you on your results—you can be honest; many preferences are a result of our culture and your level of exposure, not your personality.) Write about 300 words, total.

Wednesday, 9/21 read pages 82-103. Teaching presentation groups meet in class (second half). Post minutes from group meetings on Blackboard.

Learning Gender

Friday, 9/23 Journal entry 5: Complete learning activity on page 110. Read pages 105-128. Distribute *Comfort Woman* handout.

Week 4

Monday, 9/26 Read 128-145. ***Group presentation on Nora Okja Keller, *Comfort Woman*

Wednesday, 9/28 Read 145-162. Journal entry 6: Answer question #3 on page 162.

Friday, 9/30 Read 163-185. Journal entry #7: Complete one of the tasks in the learning activity on page 173. Write about 300 words total. (Instead of going to a store to look at cards, you can go to an on-line site like: <http://www.123greetings.com/> or <http://www.americangreetings.com/ecards.pd>) Distribute *Changes* handout.

Week 5

Monday, 10/3

Show and Tell: Bring to class an example of feminists in action or a location where feminist action is needed. Search the web for articles and/or web sites; browse the newspaper—college, local, regional, national—for articles; draw from personal experience. Be prepared to explain how your example illustrates feminists in action or how feminist action may intervene.

Wednesday, 10/5 Read 186-195. ***Group presentation on Ama Ata Aidoo, *Changes: A Love Story*

Friday, 10/7 Read 195-212. Journal entry 8: Reflecting on Elisa Albert's essay, write about a time where you or someone you knew as a child crossed a line of "appropriate" gender behavior, either as a performance, or a joke, or by mistake. How did you or others respond? Looking back, how do you feel about these actions and responses?

Week 6

Inscribing Gender on the Body

Monday, 10/10 View: *The Vagina Monologues* (Video, 78 minutes) **Local issue report due.**

Wednesday, 10/12 Read 213-33, 270-277. Complete and discuss film and readings.

Friday, 10/14 Read 241-270. Journal entry #9. Answer questions 2 and 5 on 277-278.

Week 7

Monday, 10/17 Video: *Still Killing Us Softly* (32 minutes). Journal entry 10: Choose a magazine ad

that you think presents a particularly positive or negative view of women, and explain your reasoning. Bring a copy of the ad to class.

Activism Change and Feminist Futures

Wednesday, 10/19 Read: 640-654. **Local Reports:** share local reports in small groups; begin selection of class activism project.

Friday, 10/21 Read: 655- 673. **Class Project:** select and begin planning class activism project; assign individual and small group duties.

Week 8

Monday, 10/24 Class Activism Project Work Day. Post team report of work accomplished to Blackboard.

[**Tuesday, 10/25** – Preceptorial advising day]

Health and Reproductive Rights

Wednesday, 10/26 . Read 279-312. Video: Margaret Sanger: A Public Nuisance (1992, 28 minutes)

Friday, 10/28 Read: 313-332 Journal #11 -- Answer question 2 or 3 on page 353 in at least 300 words. Distribute *Revenge* Handout.

Week 9

Monday, 10/31 Read: 340-352

***Group presentation on Taslima Nasrin, *Revenge*

Wednesday, 11/2 – Preceptorial advising day

1 page prospectus for final research paper due on Blackboard by midnight

Family Systems, Family Lives

Friday, 11/4 Read: 354-37. Journal #12 – Answer question 1 on 390 in at least 300 words. Distribute *Breath, Eyes, Memory* handout.

Week 10

Monday, 11/7 Read:379-390.

***Group presentation on Danticat, *Breath, Eyes, Memory*

Women's Work Inside and Outside the Home

Wednesday, 11/9 Read: 391-429. Journal #13 Complete learning activity on page 396.

Distribute *Woman at Point Zero* handouts.

Friday, 11/11 Read: 429-448.

***Group Presentation on *Woman at Point Zero*

Week 11

Monday, 11/14: Class Activism project work day. Post team report of work accomplished to Blackboard.

Women Confronting and Creating Culture

Wednesday, 11/16 Read 450-472 Journal 14: Complete learning activity on page 459

Video: *Dreamworlds II: desire/sex/power in music videos* (57 minutes)

In class: reaction paper on the video.

Friday, 11/18 Read: 479-484, 490-500. Distribute *Persepolis* handout.

Week 12

Monday, 11/21 Read: 473-475, 477-479

***Group presentation on Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*

Wednesday, November 23 thru Sunday, November 27: Thanksgiving Break—enjoy!

Week 13

Resisting Violence Against Women

Monday, 11/28 Read: 503-534 Journal #15: Respond to at least two of the questions on page 462; write about 300 words total. Distribute *Necessary Targets* handout.

Wednesday, 11/30 Read 534-547

***Group presentation on Eve Ensler, *Necessary Targets: A Story of Women and War*

Epilogue and Reflections

Friday, 12/2 Read: 666-676. Journal #16: Respond to question 1 on page 677. Also consider: has your definition of feminism changed at all in the last 13 weeks?

Journals must be turned in for final reading.

Monday, 12/5

Final Research papers due in class. Individual presentations

Wednesday, 12/7

Individual presentations and class post-mortem

Final exam period: Monday, Dec. 12, 11:30-2:00 pm (May be used if we have to give up additional classes for projects, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc.)

Acknowledgments: This course and syllabus would not be possible without the work of the many women's studies teachers, students, theorists and activists whose words and works preceded it. Some of the specific individuals, groups, and documents I have collaborated with, borrowed from, or consulted in order to create this course include: the Women's Studies Programs at Richard Stockton College and Rutgers University; *Women and Gender-related Course Syllabi on the Web*:

<http://www.umbc.edu/cwit/syllabi.html>; and Alison Piepmeier's "Perspectives on Women in the World" syllabus (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/AnS/english/piepmeier/ws201ss01.html>), Heather McGovern's and Kristin Jacobson's "Perspectives on Women" syllabi, Stockton, Spring 2004 and Spring 2009 respectively.