

Saint Martin's University
WS 400 Women's Studies Seminar
Spring 2007

Tuesdays & Thursdays
10:50AM – Noon

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Course Description

This advanced study in women's studies is designed to serve as a capstone experience for students with minors in this field. We will review feminist approaches to explaining gender issues, women's experiences, and their representation. You will also become familiar with feminist research methods and policy relevance.

Required Texts

--Gwyn Kirk, Margo Okazawa-Rey eds. Women's Lives: Multicultural Perspectives Publisher Boston : McGraw-Hill

Selected articles (online):

1. Mary Margaret Fonow and Judith A. Cook, "Feminist Methodology: New Applications in the Academy and Public Policy," *Signs, Special Issue: New Feminist Approaches to Social Science Methodologies* vol. 30 no. 4, Summer 2005, pp. 2211-2235.

<http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/SIGNS/journal/issues/v30n4/300402/300402.web.pdf>

2. Simona Sharoni, "Doing Research On/With Women in Conflict Zones: Some Ethical Considerations."

<http://simonasharoni.com/Docs/Ethics.pdf>

Course Expectations, Requirements, and Grading

- ***Regular Attendance, participation & preparation (10%)***

Because this class involves experiential learning in the classroom, which cannot be reproduced if missed, students are expected to attend ALL class sessions, arrive on-time and leave when class ends. You should notify me before class if an illness or emergency requires you to miss class.

This course is based on extensive reading and discussion of a wide variety of material. It is imperative that students come to class prepared to discuss and analyze the material assigned for

that class. This means you should have read all of the materials, taken notes on them (including noting areas where you have questions or would like clarification), and devised your own questions to stimulate group discussion. Your notes should enable you to discuss each author (by name), her/his central points, and specific examples you want to mention from her/his work.

- ***Weekly Response Papers (30%)***

In order to facilitate synthesis and integration of the various readings on each topic, you are expected to write weekly response papers, addressing at least 3 of the questions for reflection from the class text. These questions can be found after the authors' overview and before the selected readings. The response paper doesn't have to read like a synthesis paper. It could simply take the form of answers to the questions you choose to focus on. Please write the question and then formulate your answer. You are expected to use at least one reference to a reading in each answer.

Suggested length: 1-2 pages

Deadline: Every Thursday

- ***Integration essay: My Women's Studies journey (15%)***

This assignment is designed to help you examine the contribution of Women's Studies to your intellectual and personal journey. Here are some questions you may want to address:

1. Why did you choose to minor in Women's Studies?
2. List and discuss the courses you have taken, significant readings, and key learning experiences that occurred in each course
3. What are some issues/themes that would be useful to you outside of school in your daily life and career explorations in the present and in the future?

Suggested length: 3-5 pages

Deadline: February 6

- ***Interview and write-up (15%):***

This assignment is designed to provide you with some hands-on experience using the interview as a feminist research method. You are expected to interview someone you consider a young feminist activist or someone who has taken more than 2 Women's Studies courses. Interview questions and definitions of appropriate interviewees will be discussed and developed in class. The interview should last at least 30 minutes and no more than one hour. You should audiotape the interview.

1. Listen to the interview and transcribe it.
2. The interview write-up paper should address the following questions:
 - (a) Imagine that the interview is part of a larger research project for which you would do a number of interviews. Clearly state the research question (purpose) guiding this hypothetical research in a few sentences. Very briefly describe your hypothetical sample.
 - (b) What did you learn about interviewing as a research method? Reflect critically on your own experience doing the interview, relating your experience to assigned readings.

(c) What did you learn about your interviewee's experiences relevant to the substantive purpose of your research? What theme(s) emerged in the interview? Selectively incorporate and discuss direct quotes from the interview to illustrate your answer.

(d) As an appendix to the paper, attach a signed human subjects consent form (discussed in class), the interview schedule or questions that you asked (or planned to ask), and at least a partial transcription of the interview.

Suggested length: 3-5 pages

Deadline: March 6

▪ ***Critical review of a scholarly article in a feminist journal: (15%)***

The objectives of this assignment is to acquaint you with the contemporary scholarly debates in Women's Studies, feminist theory and gender studies. Here are some easy steps to follow for successful completion of this assignment:

1. Identify an issue or theme that you would like to know more about
2. In the library conduct a search for an article on the issue/theme in a scholarly feminist journal
3. You should choose a recent article (published no earlier than 2003)
4. Read the article and address the following questions:
 - (a) What is the theory that informs the article?
 - (b) What type of research have the author(s) conducted for the article?
 - (c) What is the research question(s) and/or central thesis of the article?
 - (d) What is the empirical evidence used to address the central question or substantiate the thesis?
 - (e) What are the article's key conclusions?

Suggested length: 2-3 pages

Deadline: March 20

List of feminist journals:

Women & Politics

Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Politics

Women's Studies International Forum

Gender & Society

NSWA Journal (A publication of the Women's Studies Association)

Feminist Studies

Feminist Issues

Feminist Review

Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies

Gender & History

Journal of Gender Studies

Journal of Women's History

▪ ***Policy Paper (15%)***

This assignment is designed to help you translate what you study into practice. Choose one of the topics addressed in chapters 3-12 in the course's text and write a policy paper calling for action on a particular issue or problem. For example, you may choose to focus on the issue of sweatshops and address your policy paper to the college's administration. If you choose to focus

on violence against women, you would find some ideas for policy and legislative initiatives on p. 261. You can find other ideas in the “Taking Action” section of each chapter.

Your paper should include a brief overview of the issue/problem. This should be written clearly without academic jargon. You may include statistics or brief quotes from the literature, if appropriate.

Please make sure that you state clearly who are the policy makers you are addressing.

You should include at least 4 bibliographical references at the end of your paper.

Suggested length: 2-3 pages

Deadline:

Course Outline:

Week 1 Feminist Theories and Theorizing

1/16 Syllabus review and framework for course

In class reading: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp.2-9

1/18

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 12-59

Week 2 Identities and Social Locations

1/23

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 61--92

1/25

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 92-119

Week 3 Gendered Bodies and Beauty Ideals

1/30

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 121-144

2/1

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 144-163

Week 4 Gender and Sexuality

2/6

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 165—183

Due: Integration essay

2/8

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 183--201

Week 5 Gender and Health

2/13

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 203--224

2/15

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 225--247

Week 6 Violence Against Women

2/20

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 249--264

2/22

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 265--289

Week 7 Contemporary Feminist Research

2/27

No class. Independent work on interview

3/1

No class. Independent work on interview

Read:

Fonow & Cook (online)

Sharoni (online)

Week 8 Relationships, Families, and Households

3/6

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 291—337

**Due: Interview write-up*

3/8 International Women's Day Action-Research project

No readings

*****March 10-18 Spring Break*****

Week 9 Work, Wages, and Welfare

3/20

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 339—359

**Due: Scholarly journal analysis*

3/22

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp.359--385

Week 10 Living in a Global Economy

3/27

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 387--406

3/29

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 407--437

Week 11 Gender, Crime, and Criminalization

4/3

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 439--463

4/5

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 464--481

Week 12 Gender, War & Peace

4/10

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 483—501

Due: Policy paper

4/12

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 501--531

Week 13 *Gender and the Environment*

4/17

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 533--553

4/19

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 553--567

Week 14 *Creating Change: Theory, Vision, and Action*

4/24

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 570--592

4/26

Read: Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, pp. 592--610

Week 15 *Beyond the Women's Studies classroom: Course Evaluation*

5/1