

## WGSS 100.01/AMST 100.01: **Race, Class, & Sexuality in U.S. Feminisms**

Spring 2008 / TR 3:00-4:30 pm / OLRI 243

Instructor: Rachel Raimist      Email: [r.aimist@macalester.edu](mailto:r.aimist@macalester.edu)  
Office: Old Main 310      Mailbox: Old Main 409 (WGSS office)  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00 to 2:30 and by appointment

### **Course Description:**

This course frames key issues, questions, and debates in feminist theory across disciplines. Through analytical reading, writing, and discussion this course engages feminist scholarship to discuss history, identity, ability, colonialism, and nationalism. Central to the course will be a focus on the social construction of identity, and the many ways in which gender, race, class, sexuality, ability, and nationality work to constitute experience. We will analyze sites of power, privilege, resistance, agency, and organizing in feminist work for social justice to develop understandings of gender as a tool to organize society based on difference and power. We will read scholarly texts, articles, view film and television programs, analyze media messages, and explore websites and popular culture to understand key ideas in U.S. feminisms.

**Required Text:** (Available in the bookstore & on reserve in DeWitt library)  
*Women's Lives: Multicultural Perspectives* Eds:Kirk and Okazawa-Rey  
and later in the term, we will collectively read: *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: The Non-profit Industrial Complex* edited by Incite! Women of Color (2007). [Will be available in bookstore by late September or early November]

Additional articles assigned will be available online at DeWitt Wallace library electronic reserves, given in class, or available through Moodle site.

### **Course Moodle page:**

Log in through <http://lester.macalester.edu>

**Course blog:** <http://100courseblog.blogspot.com>

Please see handout for detailed instructions on how to post.

### **Course Requirements:**

#### **Attendance and Participation**

You are expected to attend class. *One* excused absence will be permitted without negatively affecting your grade. In addition, you are expected to actively participate in class activities and discussions.

Learning is an active process of exploring, interpreting, analyzing, discussing, and writing. The grading criteria for this course reflect the importance of both process and product. Students are responsible for all information disseminated in class and all course requirements, including deadlines and activities.

Please note:

- All assignments must be completed to pass the course.
- Late assignments will be penalized.
- Late finals will not be accepted. No exceptions!

### **Academic Integrity**

All students are expected to abide by the Macalester College academic integrity guidelines found in the *Student Handbook*.

Instances of suspected academic dishonesty (cheating, plagiarism, and using the same paper in more than one course) will be handled as outlined in the guidelines.

### **Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability, or any other needs you think may affect your ability to perform well in this class, please see me so that arrangements can be made to accommodate your situation.

### **Grading**

Your final grade for this course will be determined by the number of points you accumulate throughout the term from the following assignments:

Media Journal (one entry per week, 14 entries)		10 pts
2 Event write-ups (artistic, scholarly or activist)	2 x 5 pts	10 pts
Ad[busting] or shot by shot analysis		5 pts
Midterm Paper		10 pts
Book chapter presentation		5 pts
Reality TV analysis		5 pts
Media analysis paper		10 pts
Final Group presentation		10 pts
Final paper		15 pts
Attendance and participation		20 pts

**Total points: 100 pts**

90 – 100+ pts = A / 80 – 89 pts = B / 70 – 79pts = C / 60 – 69 points = D / below 60 points = F

### **Resources**

The Max Academic Excellence Center: help with student writing

Open M-F 9am to 4:30 pm, Sun – Thurs 7-10pm

Kagin Commons, 1<sup>st</sup> floor / [www.macalester.edu/MAX](http://www.macalester.edu/MAX)

## **ONGOING ASSIGNMENT DETAILS:**

### **Media Journal**

This journal will also be a place for you to trace topics, ideas and news/media-related items that connect to course concepts and that are of interest to you. This will serve as informal research to help you complete formal assignments and may help you determine the topic of your final paper.

You will need to collect material weekly (news stories, photographs, blog links, etc.) for this assignment throughout the course. When you complete the assignment you should have 14 entries total.

Your overall analysis of media's coverage and representation of women and the LGBTQ community, traced through your journal, will be presented in a six page analytical paper you will submit on December 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The media journal asks you to pay regular attention to media commentary in both mainstream and alternative news sources - newsmagazines, newspapers, radio, television, and blogs, in order to become familiar with when, where, and in what contexts or situations women and LGBTQ issues receive media attention. It also asks you to compare different types of sources (commercial or public, and media outlets like television, radio, print, and Web-based, as well as local, national, and international sources) to explore potential differences in treatment.

If you are like me, an Internet news and blog addict, you know already that it is not very difficult to find stories about women and LGBTQ experiences. If you are not a person who normally reads newspapers or newsmagazines, listens to news radio, or watches televised news, this assignment may require you to do some things you haven't previously taken the time to do.

In your journal reflection essay, you will be required to analyze what you have collected. You may see a particular issue that is of interest to you (that you may want to pursue for your final research and paper) or you may notice a particular slant to news items from particular news sources. It may be most fruitful to collect items that spark a reaction from you. It will be much easier to respond to items that you are inspired by or are really angered by.

## **!! First Media Journal Entry Assignment: RNC or Current Event Analysis**

Attend an activist event and write your reflections of the experience, considering what you understand about feminism, activism, gender, race, class and sexuality. If you cannot attend an RNC event, locate news articles or features focused on event coverage. Make sure you note the source, provide the title, author, date, publisher, & available web address (if found online). Your response (suggested 300 to 500 words) should summarize the event or article (what does the event or author argue, how do they support their claims). You should try to explain what questions and assumptions it (the event or media clip) raises, what a feminist analysis might bring to it, and your reading of this issue/event.

### **Event Write-ups: First due by Oct 1<sup>st</sup> / Second due by Dec 1<sup>st</sup>**

Attend an event related to any of the class topics. You should look for events that are scholarly, activist and/or artistic. Events may be clearly one or all three. This may be a lecture, talk, film screening or performance. Document your attendance with a short report (300 to 500 words), which can be posted to the course blog at any time before midnight on the deadline dates. Include event title, date, sponsor, and location on the report. If you question whether an event is acceptable, ask the instructor.

**!! Please note:** Assignment details for other course assignments will be given throughout the term.

## Course Schedule: [subject to revisions]

Week 1:

### Tues. 8/28 Introduction to the Course

- Framing key Ideas and concepts of feminisms
- How to access website and post to course blog
- Theater games: building our classroom community

#### Assignments:

- Blog post: "Top 10" introduction: what you love, hate, admire, dream about, or like to do when you aren't here [feel free to use your real name or an alias; keep in mind a blog is PUBLIC!]
- Reading: WL pp 1 - 9

Week 2:

### Tues. 9/2 Local Activism Day! [no formal class meeting]

- Participate (or view) media about RNC
- Apply feminist lens of analysis to local happenings

OPTIONAL: Tentative Guest Speaker: Green Party VP nominee Rosa Clemente. Meeting on the lawn of the capital (exact location TBD). [Suggested] FREE Event: Ripple Effect, a daylong festival propelling a new wave of progressive action, on the lawn of the capital building (outside the RNC). More information - <http://livewithsubstance.org/rippleeffect>

#### Assignments:

- Begin your MEDIA JOURNAL (on-going through term)
  - First Entry: Feminist analysis of media coverage of the RNC
  - One suggestion is "Ripple Effect" event analysis or local media story about RNC (note representation of gender, race, class...), national or local press coverage (which you can revise to a 300 to 500 word entry, and post to the course blog, as one of your required event write-ups!)
- Reading: WL pp. 11 - 37

### Thurs. 9/4 Feminist Theoretical Frameworks

- Discuss key concepts: gender, oppression, marginalization, theory, praxis as foundational to course
- Discuss history and the Women's Movement, framings of feminism, modes of feminist knowledge production
- Learn critical media literacy and tools to analyze media
- Clip: *Iron Jawed Angels* (Katja Von Garner, 2004)

#### Assignment:

Reading: WL pp. 38 – 59

Week 3:

**Tues. 9/9 Identity [Women of Color Feminisms]**

- Discuss how and why feminism has produced many feminisms
- Consider top-down patriarchal model of feminism, and interrogate how and why women of color articulate many feminisms

**Assignment:** Reading: WL pp. 61 – 92 plus 231 - 236

**Thurs. 9/11 Case Study: Hip-hop Feminism /“Our Revolution”:** Sarah Jones

- Question the framing of hip-hop + feminism
- Discover instances of resistance for w.o.c. in hip-hop

**Assignment:** Reading: WL pp. 92 (bottom) – 119

Week 4:

**Tues. 9/16 Identity [whiteness and ethnicities]**

- Examine the role of identity and lived experience in feminist knowledge production (producing theory)
- Interrogate power, privilege, and identity

**Assignment:** Reading: WL pp. 121 - 164

**Assignments:**

- Screening: *Dreamworlds 3: Sex, Desire and Power in Music Video* (Sut Jhally, 55 minutes, 2007) !! Showing outside of class in library!!

**Thurs. 9/18 Bodies + Beauty [manufactured media images]**

- Consider the affect of capitalism on the lives of women
- Discuss impact of normative beauty ideals
- Watch: airbrushed photos / Dove Real beauty clips

**Assignment:**

- Course blog post: Analysis of advertisement, shot by shot analysis of a music video, or adburst (post by noon on 9/23!) [detailed instructions will be given in class and on the course blog]
- Reading: WL pp. 165 - 183

Week 5:

**Tues. 9/23 Sexuality [understanding the social construction of desire]**

- Understand the construction of gender and sexuality
- Examine the impacts of compulsive heterosexuality

- Discuss queer theory, genderqueer community, and theories of gender as performative and can be used as a political act

**Assignment:** Reading: WL pp. 183 - 200

**Thurs. 9/25 Sexuality [organizing, gender performance & resistance]**

- Discuss the role of identity in directing (film authorship)
- Read the film with a feminist lens of analysis (consider gender, race, class), representation, and uses of film as organizing tool
- Discuss feminisms theories of sex work & pornography
- In-class screening: *Live Nude Girls Unite!*

**Assignment:** Reading: WL pp. 203 - 231

Week 6:
---------

**Tues. 9/30 Women's Health**

- Understand the significance of the medicalization of pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause
- Discuss the effects of inequalities based on race, class, sexuality & age on health & ability to control fertility
- Learn the work of the feminist health movement

**Thurs. 10/2 Women's Health: Reproductive Rights**

- Examine battleground over women's bodies, health & freedom, what are the issues; what are the stakes?
- In-class Screening: *Abortion Diaries* (Penny Lane, 30 min, 2005)

**!! Assignment: Midterm Paper (5-7 pages) due 10/7** [details given in class]

Week 7:
---------

**Tues. 10/7 !! Midterm assignment due**

- In-class screening: *Girls Rock!*  
(Arne Johnson & Shane King, 2007, 90 min)

**Thurs. 10/9 Discussion** (*Girls Rock!* & Midterm reflections)

**Assignment:** Reading: WL pp. 249 - 279

Week 8:

**Tues. 10/14 Violence [against Women]**

- Examine the many kinds of gender violence that particularly affect women and girls
- Understand government interventions to deal with violence against women entails contradictions and unintended consequences
- Learn the importance of activism against violence

**Assignment:** Reading: WL pp. 339 – 355 and 376 - 385

**Thurs. 10/16 Work, Wages and Welfare**

- Discuss power, privilege and do intersectional analysis of readings and media about work and everyday lives
- Understand the effects of race and class on women's work opportunities and wages historically and currently;
- Interrogate the basis of the welfare system & its effects
- Watch clips: *Waging a Living* and *Rich Kids* docs

**Assignment:** Reading: WL pp. 387 - 415

Week 9:

**Tues. 10/21 Living Violence [in the Global Economy]**

- Understand the significance of the global economy for women in the United States, and our global impact
- Learn that living comfortably in the United States is directly related to other women living in poverty (like in Juarez)
- Screening: *Senorita Extraviada* (Missing Young Woman) (Lourdes Portillo, 2001, 74 min)

**Assignment:** Reading: WL pp. 416 - 435

**Thurs. 10/23 Discussion of film and readings + mapping exercise**

- Understand our participation and role in global economy
- Understand why nation is key analytic category in feminist lens of analysis

**Assignment:** Reading: pp. 439 - 481

Week 10:

**Tues. 10/28 Women, Crime and Criminalization**

- Understand the high level of incarceration of women in this country, and its relationship to race and class
- Complicate our beliefs by examining the macro-level factors (such as poverty, racism, and the prevalence of physical and sexual abuse) that affect women caught up in the criminal justice system
- Examine the harshly custodial and punitive, rather than rehabilitative nature of the jail/prison system
- Explore the relationship of the “prison-industrial complex” to privatization and globalization & no more prisons mvmnt

**Assignment:** Reading: *Imagining Medea*, Rena Fraden (excerpts)

**Thurs. 10/30 In class screening:**

Medea Project's *We Just Telling Stories: Theater for Incarcerated Women* (Larry Andrews, 2001, 55 minutes)

**Assignment:** Reading: *TBD* (maybe Joy Jones and Ruth Gilmore)

Week 11:

**Tues. 11/4 Prison Industrial Complex: Local Perspectives**

Guest Speaker/Artist: Tish Jones

**Assignment:** Reading: *WL* pp. 483 – 531

**Thurs. 11/6 Women and the Military**

- Understand the central place of militarism in U.S. society, economy, and politics (military industrial complex)
- Explicate the many ways gender is “deployed” in the interests of militarism and U.S. power
- Learn the effects of U.S. bases and military operations
- Discuss feminist critiques of war and militarism and the need to redefine security

**Assignment:** Group Reading: [assigned chapters of *The Revolution will not be Funded: Beyond the Non-profit Industrial Complex*]

Week 12:

**Tues. 11/11 Women and the Military** [continued]

- Possible screening or online interactive discussion w/ black woman currently serving in Afghanistan

**Assignment:** Prepare your NIC “book reports”

**Thurs. 11/13 Non-profit Industrial Complex** [chapter reports]

- Students will present chapter summary
- Present analysis of author’s argument
- Discuss social service v. social justice models

Week 13:

**Tues. 11/18 Creating Change: Service v. Social Justice Models**

- Finish discussion of *The Revolution will not be Funded!*
- Discuss final projects, organize groups

**Thurs. 11/20 Final Projects: group meetings**

**Assignment:** Email one page final project proposal by Sunday, 23rd at midnight! (one proposal per group)

Week 14:

**Tues. 11/25 NO CLASS!** [Use time to work on final project w/group!]

**Assignment:** “Reality” TV Analysis: Watch one hour of “reality” TV and post 800 word analysis to course blog

**Thurs. 11/27 NO CLASS: Give Thanks!**

**Assignment:** Write media analysis paper (6 pages) [details given in class]

Week 15:

**Tues. 12/2 Media Discussion: sharing our journals and reflections**  
Media Analysis Paper Due

**Thurs 12/4 Final presentations** [will continue final exam day, if needed]  
**Final Papers Due** (3 -5 or 8-10 pages depending on project)

**Final Exam Period: [reserved for presentations!]**

Wednesday, December 10 1:30 to 3:30