

Syllabus

Modern American Women

WS 3301 W01

Fall 2009

Instructor: Dr. Kathy Johnson

General Description and Course Objectives

As a discipline, the goal of Women's Studies is to enhance students' knowledge, interest, and understanding of the contributions, challenges, needs, and aspirations of women--and of the way that gender shapes the lives of both women and men. Furthermore, Women's Studies seeks to re-examine material from much of the rest of the curriculum with a focus on women's perspectives and an awareness of the gender system. The "modest proposal" in Women's Studies then is study of history, language, literature, and culture from new and illuminating perspectives. In focusing on women as a group, we must, by definition, study the interaction of race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, geography, class, age, sexuality, and disability. Women are a group that encompasses great diversity. Women's Studies is a dynamic and rapidly expanding interdisciplinary field of study and provides its students with the opportunity to use several theoretical/critical frames such as the historical, sociological, psychological, political, legal, literary, ethnographic, and aesthetic. In the last twenty-five years, Women's Studies programs have been introduced at leading universities throughout the world and, happily, with the offering of a women's studies minor Sul Ross finds itself among these outstanding institutions.

WS 3301, according to the 2008-2010 Catalog, is a topics number which means that WS 3301 can offered as different subjects. One semester, for example, it might be International Women, whereas another semester it might be Women in Film or Women in Literature. This semester, however, it is Women in Modern America. We will focus on American women specifically and approach the topic historically. Thus, we will begin with some background on the nineteenth century women's experience and movement and then move forward in time to a consideration of the events, changes, and continuities in the twentieth century. We will examine gender role definitions, the changing nature of women's work and of women in the family, the impact of the depression and the two world wars, the consumer society of the 1950's, women in the Civil Rights movement, the second wave of the women's movement in the late 1960's and 1970's, issues in period from 1975 to 2000, and end with some conjectures about women's lives in the twenty-first century.

Course Objectives

- 1.) understanding issues crucial to women's lives in the twentieth century America
- 2.) understanding how the history of America in the twentieth century affected and changed American women
- 3.) understanding the effects of the gender systems in the lives of both women and men
- 4.) analyzing gender issues using the ideas of race, class, ethnicity, religion, age, disability, geographical location, religion
- 5.) developing skills in critical thinking
- 6.) developing skills in computer and internet use
- 7.) developing writing and documentation skills

Attendance and Discussions

For an online course, when students "attend" varies. I will measure attendance by the posts made on the "discussion board" and by examining the statistics section of Blackboard available to instructors. For discussions, two posts are required per discussion board. You may post more, if desired. I will post a discussion question for each week in the semester. 1.) Each student should respond to that question directly by means of a discussion thread. 2.) In addition, each student should pick a response of another student and respond to that. This is meant to be the electronic version of a class discussion. The grade for discussion will be determined by the number and the quality of your posts. Each student needs to participate in ten discussion boards. **Each discussion board will close after two weeks.** In order to succeed in online courses, students will need to manifest more self-starting behavior and more self-discipline than in the traditional classroom. *Although it seems obvious, I feel I must point out that, whether you are attending a web-based or a traditional class, excessive absences make it difficult to earn a passing grade.*

Required Text

Nancy Woloch, Women and the American Experience, 4th ed. (New York and Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2006.

Click on the "Schedule" button for the weekly reading assignments and other due dates.

This is not a course in which you work at your own pace. The due dates and deadlines are real.

Tests and Book Review

In addition, then, to participating in ten discussions, there will be a midterm and a final. Each will be open-book and take-home. The final is not comprehensive. Each exam will have an identification and an essay section. Finally, a seven to ten page book review is required. Students must use the bibliographies in the Woloch test to select an additional book (not the text) to read and write about in a review. Click on the “Review” button for further information.

The midterm and final are each worth one hundred points, as is the book review. The completion of ten discussions as outlined above is worth one hundred points. Thus, it is possible to earn a total of four hundred points. Grades will be assigned on a standard percentage basis:

90-100 = A

80-89 = B

70-79 = C

60-69 = D

0-59 = F

“A” papers are well-written and tightly organized. All questions are answered thoroughly and comprehensively with no factual errors. Answers demonstrate comprehension of the reading assignments as well as lectures, handouts, links, and all other material presented on the course web pages. The ability to think critically must be demonstrated. In addition, each answer must be thoroughly documented—all relevant sources must be cited properly. The work must be free of spelling and punctuation errors. It must contain no fragments and run-ons or other rudimentary mechanical errors.

“B” papers are adequately written and organized and free of major factual errors. Critical thinking skills must be demonstrated. There must be sufficient documentation—sources must be cited in a recognizable style (Turabian, APA, MLA). The paper shows no eccentric documentation. The mechanics of writing must be good. Ideas are supported and organization is present.

“C” papers adequately answer the question asked, but support of the main ideas could be stronger. They show some attention to documentation but not enough. The writing style may be problematic. Mechanical errors are present. Organization could be stronger. Some of the facts are skewed.

“D” papers manifest an inadequate development of ideas. Documentation is lacking or insufficient. The question asked is often minimally addressed. Mechanics show difficulty.

Fragments and run-ons may be present. Other grammatical problems may be present. Organization is poor. There may be redundancies and factual errors.

“F” papers may not meet the required lengths, be suitably documented, or be properly formatted. Such work may not answer the questions asked. Grammar and stylistic problems are present. The work may contain spelling errors and fragments and /or run-ons. Organization may be weak or non-existent. Factual errors may be present. Ideas may not adequately supported.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities should contact the Counseling and Prevention Department to find out your rights and responsibilities as well as services which may be available on campus. Because it receives federal funds, Sul Ross State University must comply with the American Disabilities Act.

Plagiarism and Cheating

Plagiarism is defined by the American Association of University Professors as "taking over the ideas, methods, or written words of another, without acknowledgement and with the intention that they be taken as the work of the deceiver. . . . It is theft of a special kind, for the true author still retains the original ideas and words, yet they are diminished as that author's property and a fraud is committed upon the audience that believes those ideas and words originated with the deceiver." (American Association of University Professors, "Statement on Plagiarism," csep.iit.edu/codes/coe/aaup-h-htm, p. 3, 5/21/01.) To turn in another student's paper or portions of that paper or to submit a purchased paper is plagiarism. To copy phrases, sentences, paragraphs, or pages from a book, article or web page is plagiarism. Anyone who plagiarizes will be given a "zero" on that particular assignment at the very least. But I also reserve to assign an "F" for the course grade.

The policy is the same for exams. Anyone who cheats on an exam will be given a "zero" for that particular test. I also reserve the right to assign an "F" for the course grade.

The following web sites define plagiarism and/or give examples:

<http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/01/>

Please visit these sites. Claiming ignorance about plagiarism is no defense. In addition, the Sul Ross State University Handbook proscribes plagiarism and cheating. Please read this over.

SafeAssign

SafeAssign is an plagiarism-detection program which Sul Ross State University has subscribed to via Blackboard. I will be using this feature this semester.

Late Work, Incompletes, E-mail Attachments, and the Submission of Work

Because of persistent abuse of the grade, I no longer give incompletes. In addition, for essentially the same reasons, I do not accept late work. I will not accept work submitted as an e-mail attachment. All papers and exams must be submitted through the Digital Drop Box on or before the deadline. Thus, students must turn in the midterms, book reviews, and finals in one Place: the Digital Drop Box. I will check the originality reports created by SafeAssign and read the paper itself in the Digital Drop Box.

Technical Assistance

If you are new to Blackboard, please take a look at the help screens on Blackboard itself. If you still need help, call Tim Parsons, the Blackboard administrator, at 837-8668 during business hours or Letitia Wetterauer at 837-8849 for Blackboard help on the weekend. You can also call the Help Desk on campus at 837-8765 or off campus at (888) 691-5071. **Remember, acquiring computer and Blackboard proficiency is the student's responsibility. If you do not have adequate computer skills or if you cannot access the Internet, you should register for a non-Web class.**

Writing Assistance

For those students with access to the Sul Ross campus, please utilize the Writing Lab in MAB 102. Excellent tutors are available to assist you with your writing needs—from developmental to advanced. And it's free!

Office Hours and Contact Information

Office Hours: MW 3:30-4:45 p.m.

TTH 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

and by appointment

Office: MAB 103 C

Please be aware that I do not hold office hours after the last day of class, during finals, or over breaks.

Telephone and Voice Mail: (432) 837-9744 (Since I share my office with other instructors, it might better to e-mail me, if you have privacy issues.)