

American Studies 450
Women in American Society
Spring 2006

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Office Hours: M: 1:30-3
W: 4-5:30

REQUIRED READINGS

- ⇒ All required texts are available @ *The Little Professor Bookstore*, 725 N. Placentia
⇒ Reprint packet available at *Copyco*, 2438 E. Chapman Avenue

Reprint Packet

Joan Jacobs Brumberg

Anzia Yeziarska

bell hooks

Tanuja Desai Hidier

AMST 450 Reader

The Body Project

Bread Givers

Bone Black: Memories of Girlhood

Born Confused

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will *introduce* you to the study of women in American culture through an interdisciplinary framework. After a brief introduction to the variant conceptualizations of feminism, we will be using a wide range of sources and methodologies to understand the factors that have shaped female experience and cultural definitions of femininity, both in the historical and contemporary contexts. Close attention will also be paid to the ways in which issues of difference—including race, class, and sexuality—affect the female experience. Because of the breadth of the topics we will be covering, readings for this class are heavy. Please recognize this and plan accordingly; timely completion of the reading assignments is crucial to this course, as class time will be largely devoted to open discussion of the readings.

STUDENT LEARNING GOALS

GE Categories III.C.2. & V To understand broad unifying themes in the social sciences from cross-disciplinary perspectives; to solve complex problems that require social-scientific reasoning; to understand culture as socially-constructed, fundamental to social interaction, and complex in its interconnection of diverse experience and perspective—including but not limited to race, ethnicity, class, and gender; to recognize and evaluate how one's cultural history affects one's sense of self and relationship to others.

GE Category IV To understand the human being as an integrated physiological, sociocultural and psychological organism; to understand how the course of human life and human experience are constructed and altered through biological, psychological, social, scientific, technological, and cultural influences; to understand conceptions of the course of human life from different cultural perspectives.

**The writing requirements for CSUF GE courses will be met via written feedback regarding your performance on the 2nd and 3rd assignments, which have similar writing requirements/expectations in terms of analysis & argumentation, with the 2nd evaluated as a draft and the 3rd as a polished paper.

ASSESSMENT

Your grade in this course will be determined as follows:

100 Points	In-class Exam
100 Points	Essay Assignment
150 Points	Final Take-Home Essay Exam
<u>25 Points</u>	<u>Class Participation (Discussion) & Reading Response</u>
375 Points	Total Possible

Grading curves will not be applied in this class—you are being evaluated based on the merit of your own work. Make-up exams and late papers are not allowed without an official, compelling excuse. All work is expected to originate with you; plagiarism in any form on any assignment will result in a failing grade for the class. Thoughtful participation in class discussion will be assessed positively in determining your final grade. Correspondingly, absences and consistent lateness will be assessed negatively. An absence from one class meeting is allowed with no participation penalty. Each additional absence deducts -5 points from your total participation score. There will be short written assignments (no more than a few paragraphs) in response to course readings. These assignments will not be graded, but will count towards your overall participation score

Please complete the assigned readings by the date indicated on the syllabus. Modifications will be made to the schedule as needed at the beginning or end of each class. You are responsible for any changes to the syllabus that will be made in class. Poor attendance is not an excuse. Most students will find it helpful to bring the appropriate book to class.

COURSE OUTLINE

***A (P) is being used for readings that will be found in the reprint packet.*

- 2/1 Course outline and expectations. Please purchase course readings!!!
- 2/8 Studying Women: Introduction to Women's Studies, Defining Feminism, Feminist theories from past to present
Reading: Reprint Packet readings 1-7
- 2/15 Theories of Sex and Gender: Essentialism & Social Constructionist
Reading: Andersen: "The Social Construction of Gender"
Lorber: "Night to his Day"
Burke: Preface, pgs. 1-19 (P)
- 2/22 Lessons in Gender
Reading: Burke: pgs. 108-136, 163-184, and 187-230 (P)
In-Class Film: *But I'm a Cheerleader*
- 3/1 **In-Class Exam: Short answer & essay**

- 3/8 Creating Identity: Autonomy and issues of self
Writing Assignment #1, prompt handed out in class
Reading: Brumberg: Introduction, Ch.1
 Yeziarska: Ch. 1-7
- 3/15 Adding Dimensions: Class
Reading: Finish Yeziarska
- 3/22 Adding Dimensions: Race
Reading: Brumberg: Ch. 3
 hooks: Ch 1-36
- 3/29 **NO CLASS—Spring Break****
- 4/5 Adding Dimensions: Race
Reading: hooks: Finish hooks
 Hidier: Ch. 1-7
- 4/12 **NO CLASS****
 Independent Reading: Hidier 8-17
- 4/19 Creating Identity on the Margins
Reading: Finish Hidier
In-Class Film: *Real Women Have Curves*
- 4/26 **Essay #1 Due*
 Gendered Images in the Media
Reading: Sapiro “Gender and the Institutional Media of Communication” (P)
In-Class Film: *Mean Girls*
 **Final Assignment prompt handed out in class*
- 5/3 **Reading:** Kilbourne “Beauty and the Beast of Advertising” (P)
 Bordo “Reading the Slender Body” and “Material Girl” (P)
 Coleman “Maidenform(ed): Images of Women in the 1950s” (P)
In-Class Film: *Killing Us Softly*
- 5/10 In-Class Exercise: Advertising Analysis (please come with at least one ad from a magazine that you would like to share with the class)
Reading: Wald “Just a Girl?” (P)
In-Class Film: *Merchants of Cool*
- 5/17 Last Class: Final Essay Workshop
- 5/26 F FINAL EXAM DUE**
HHFinal Exams due in UH-313 at any time prior to but NO LATER THAN
NOON on Friday, May 26thHH