WOMEN’S STUDIES 200

Dr. Kouri          Fall 2004

MWF 1:00-1:50pm  W 7-9:45

OFFICE HOURS - I will be available to meet with students on Wednesdays 5:45-6:45pm and Mondays from 10-11am or by appointment.
OFFICE – SIERRA TOWER 203

MESSAGES (818) 677-6326. If you would like to get a hold of me, it is best to e-mail me at kristyan.m.kouri@csun.edu

web address: www.csun.edu/~kmk2296

COURSE OVERVIEW The purpose of this course is to acquaint you with new ways of thinking about women and making sense of women’s experiences. Throughout this venture, we will take a critical look at how women’s roles, both past and present, limit our choices and impinge upon our personal well-being. We will begin by examining the social construction of gender roles and the ways in which we learn the cultural rules and roles we are expected to follow. From there we will explore issues that pertain to women including race, ethnicity and social class, heterosexism, violence against women and how women resist oppression. Because we want to include the experiences of all women, issues of race and social class will be addressed throughout the entire course.

This course is also designed to provide you with female role models from both the present and the past. You will be introduced to a variety of women who have lived extraordinary lives and who have made major contributions to society. It is my hope that these women will inspire you to live your own lives to the fullest.

Introduction to Women’s Studies is a Survey Course. What this means is that we will touch upon many different issues, and our lectures will be drawn from a variety of different academic disciplines such as: Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology, History, and Art History. You can explore most of these topics in greater detail by enrolling in a variety of other courses offered by the Women’s Studies Department.
COURSE OBJECTIVES

1. To critically evaluate the cultural construction of gender.
2. To demonstrate an understanding of the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality.
3. To critically reflect on the role of feminism in contemporary society.
4. To demonstrate an understanding of how the feminist movement has impacted our own lives.
5. To learn how we can empower ourselves to be agents of change.
6. To demonstrate an understanding of the policies and practices that give rise to women’s inequality throughout the world.

SERVICE LEARNING COMPONENT

This course has an optional service-learning component. If you would like, you can donate 10 hours of your time to Glenwood Elementary School: that is one hour per week for ten weeks. You must keep a journal that integrates course theories and concepts introduced in this course into your journal entries. In return for this assignment, you will be permitted to forgo your second midterm. What this means is you don’t have to take it, and you will earn the points for this second midterm through your work at Glenwood Elementary School and your journal.

READING MATERIALS

BOOK: Women: Images and Realities by Kesselman, McNair, & Schniedwind

To be purchased at the CSUN bookstore.

COURSE READER: To be purchased at Northridge Copy Center Located in the shopping mall on Nordhoff and Reseda. Northridge Copy Center is across from Carl’s Jr. and Next to Gold’s gym.

TENTATIVE COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Objective Midterm I 50pts
2. Objective Midterm II 50pts
3. Final Exam 50pts
4. Written Assignment 50 pts
Total (approximately) 200pts
MISSED MIDTERMS – If you miss midterm one or midterm two, you will be required to take a comprehensive exam on the day of the final. It is your responsibility to let me know if you have missed a midterm.

All exams will consist of multiple-choice questions that will be based on readings, lectures, presentations, and films.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT

You will be required to write a five page sociological imagination biography/interview. Detailed instructions for this paper will be passed out in class. This paper is due on November 17, 2004.

EXTRA CREDIT OPPORTUNITIES:

Voting in the 2004 presidential election 2pts.
Attending lectures presented on campus and then writing a one page paper which summarizes that lecture -- 2pts per lecture.

A MAXIMUM OF TEN EXTRA CREDIT POINTS MAY BE EARNED.

COURSE OUTLINE

This outline is tentative, and may be changed as we move through the course. Because class discussions are emphasized, and because I want to make sure everyone understands the course material, we may go somewhat slower than what is presented in this outline.

TOPIC ONE: Making the Distinction between Sex and Gender & how Gender Changes over Time and Across Cultures

Course Reader: The Five Sexes: Why Male and Female are not Enough
The Berdache Tradition

Text: What is Women’s Studies p.8
History of Feminist Movements in the U.S.

TOPIC TWO: Culture, and the Social Construction of Gender.

Course Reader: Culture and Meaning – pp 1-9 & 17-21
Harriet Beecher Stowe
The Grimke’ Sisters
Betty Friedan
Sojourner Truth

Text: Dominant Ideas about Women p. 45
The Problem that Has no Name p. 46.
TOPIC TWO, CONTINUED

To Be Real p. 54
Blazes of Truth p.57
JAP: The New Antisemitic Code Word p.59
On Being a “Good Girl” p. 63
In Search of Liberation p.60

TOPIC THREE: How gender, race, class, and nationality shape a woman’s experience.

Course Reader: Slavery’s New Face
  Blacks Need Not Apply
  Another Kind of Warrior

Text: Differences Among Us p.356
  Take a Closer Look p.360
  Defining Racism p.360
  Codes of Conduct p.365
  An Autobiography p.368
  The Legacy of Class p.371
  Tired of Playing Monopoly p.371
  Jewish and Working Class p.387
  Poverty Hopelessness and Hope p.390
  White Privilege p.424

Midterm I: Wednesday September 29, 2004
Midterm I will include readings, lectures, and films from topics One, Two, & Three.

TOPIC FOUR: How women learn the rules they’re expected to follow and the roles they’re expected to play.

Course Reader: From Both Sides Now
  A woman can learn anything a man can.
  A Quilting Bee Bounty
  Hunks and Handmaidens
  Mary Cassatt
  Frida Kahlo
  Bell Hooks
  Caroline Herschel
  Sofya Kovalesvsky
  Margaret Mead
  Madame Curie

Text: Learning Gender p.68
      Klaus, Barbie, and other Dolls I’d like to see p.70
      Gender Equity in the Classroom p.77
TOPIC FOUR, CONTINUED

- Gender Bias in the SAT Math Exams p.78
- Race, Ethnicity and Self-Confidence p.78
- Something’s Wrong Here and It’s not me p.83
- Female Images and Roles in Music p. 103
- Multineers in Mainstream Music p.106

TOPIC FIVE: GENDER AND WOMEN’S BODIES

Text: Gender and Women’s Bodies p.119
- Teen Mags p.96
- Media Images, Feminist Issues p. 99
- Female Beauty p.122
- The Beauty Myth p.123
- The Body Politic p.133
- Breaking the Model p.137
- Arroz Con Pollo vs. Slim-Fast p.141

MIDTERM II: Wednesday November 3, 2004
Midterm II will include readings, lectures, and films from topics four and five.

TOPIC SIX: HOMOSEXUALITY & HETEROSEXISM

Text: The Perils of Heterosexism p.394
- Homophobia and Sexism p.394
- Cat p.399
- Chicana Lesbians p.403
- Livin in a Gay Family p.406
- I Lost it at the Movies p.408

Reader: On Lesbians, Spinsters, and Nuns
- Sappho:The Literati of Lesbos
- Still Needing the “F” Word.

TOPIC SEVEN: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Text: Violence against Women p.444
- Violence against Women in intimate Relationships p.447
- Battering: Who’s Going to Stop It p.448
- A Letter from a Battered Wife p.454
- Countdown p.457
- La Princessa p.462
- Violence in Intimate Relationships p.463
TOPIC EIGHT: HOW WOMEN HAVE RESISTED OPPRESSION

Text:  
Changing our World p.504  
Feminism as a Social Movement p.507  
Introduction to Home Girls p.524  
The Development of Chicana Feminist Discourse p.530  
Presenting the Blue Goddess p.539  
Blame it on Feminism p.542

Reader:  
Susan B. Anthony & Elizabeth Cady Stanton  
Gloria Steinem  
Shirley Chisolm

Last Day of Formal Instruction: Friday December 3, 2004

FINAL EXAMS: Will include all readings lectures and films in topics six, seven, & eight.

1pm class – Monday December 6, 2004 12:45-1:45pm

Wednesday night class– Wednesday December 8, 2004  8-9pm

STATEMENT OF UNDERSTANDING

I understand that in this class:

1. traditional ways of thinking about women and men will be challenged, and I may find this process discomforting.

   a. if I do not like a particular framework/theory discussed in class, I will refrain from taking out my anger on Dr. Kouri.

   b. I will also be required to listen and learn about these frameworks even though I may not agree with them.

2. I will be responsible for completing all of the readings.

   a. the readings will be integrated into the lectures rather than fully outlined in class.

   b. I can make an appointment to meet with Dr. Kouri if I have difficulty understanding the readings or if I would like to discuss any of the course materials.

   c. exam questions will be drawn from lectures, readings, films, and other presentations.
d. if I have difficulties taking multiple-choice exams or experience problems writing essays, help is available through the Learning Resource Center, phone 677-2033.

e. The best way to study for the objective test is to take notes while you are doing the readings and go over those notes before the test. To pass this class, it is imperative that you keep up with the readings.

3. I need to be attentive during class, and if I have something I must immediately say to the person next to me, I am free to leave the room and engage in conversation.

a. students who persist in disrupting the class will have points deducted from their extra credit score, and will be asked to leave the room for the remainder of the class period.

4. A sign-in sheet will be passed out for Dr. Kouri’s own personal records.

5. I will need to keep the scantron that I used for my multiple choice exams and make copies of all of the written work I have turned in.

6. an emphasis will be placed on listening to the voices of all people, and I will need to politely listen to viewpoints different from my own.

a. talking about gender and race are sensitive subjects, and many well meaning people make inadvertent comments that some people might find offensive.

b. If an incident such as this occurs, I am free to politely explain to the person why they find this comment troubling.

7. Cheating and Plagiarism are serious offenses and if you are caught cheating you will receive an automatic F on the test. If you are caught turning in a paper that does not consist of your original work you will receive an automatic F on the paper. Furthermore, if you are caught engaging in any of these acts of academic dishonesty, your name will be submitted to William Watkins, Vice President of Academic Affairs. Dr. Watkins will in turn add your name to a list of people who have engaged in academic dishonesty. If you are caught engaging in academic dishonesty a second time, you may be expelled from the University.

a. When it comes to the sign-in sheet, signing a name for an absent friend is considered cheating. If you are caught forging a friend’s signature, neither one of you will be counted for credit that day or all other days that the forgeries have occurred.
8. It is common for students to come to Dr. Kouri at the end of the course or even after
the course is over asking “Is there anything I can do improve my grade? Can I write a
paper for extra credit?” There is nothing you can do. If you want a good grade come to
class, keep up with the readings, and start studying early on.

GRADING POLICIES

Grading is based on a straight percentage scale. Students who receive the following
percents of the total possible points (Approximately 200 points) will receive the
following grades:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-94%</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>93-90%</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>89-87%</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<td>86-84%</td>
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<td>83-80%</td>
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<td>79-77%</td>
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<td>76-74%</td>
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COMMON OCCURRENCES - It is common for students to come to me at the end of the
semester or even after the course is over asking “Is there anything I can do improve my
grade? Can I write a paper for extra credit?” There is nothing you can do. If you want a
good grade come to class, keep up with the readings, and start studying early on.

ESSAY TESTS & WRITING PROJECTS - For many students taking this class, the
essay tests and/or written projects, will be the greatest Challenge. The grading policy for
essay tests and written assignments is as follows:

There is usually a high degree of agreement among professors as to what good and
bad work looks like. Here are examples of common features.

A - All assignments are neat and on time. They are complete with every question and
every part of the question answered. The student is able to communicate a clear
command of the specifics, and can communicate the analysis presented in class. The
student is able to integrate/synthesize material in original ways. The writing is clear and
often elegant. AN A PAPER IS AN AMBITIOUS PAPER WHERE THE STUDENT
HAS MADE EXCEPTIONAL EFFORT.

B - All assignments are neat and on time. They are complete with every question and
every part of the question answered. The student has a good command of specifics and is
able to back up statements with examples. The student can communicate the analysis
presented in class. The student demonstrates a clear understanding of course material, and
writes with care. A B PAPER IS A GOOD PAPER.
C - All assignments are neat and on time. The student has a basic grasp of the course material with only minor deficiencies in understanding. The student also makes use of examples drawn from course materials and conveys some understanding of the analysis presented in class. There are only minor problems in writing. The student, moreover, may not have completed certain parts of the assignment.

A **C** PAPER IS ONE IN WHICH THE STUDENT DOES THE BARE MINIMUM NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE ASSIGNMENT.

D - Assignments may be late, incomplete, and sloppy. There may be writing problems e.g. no editing or spell check. There is failure to address entire questions or parts of the questions. Assignment directions may be ignored. There is evidence of some exposure to the course material, but it is very minimal. The understanding is seriously deficient, the analysis is flawed, and there is a high degree of generality. What this means is the student is not able give specifics or examples that are derived from course materials.

F – The paper is incomplete. There are major problems in writing, and organization, and the student fails to proof read paper. There is little or no indication that the student has done the reading and there is little evidence that the student knows anything about the course at all. In other words, the student doesn’t know anymore than a person who has not taken the course.

**COMMON MISTAKES**

1. The student makes a statement but fails to back up that statement with an example. I cannot tell whether or not you fully understand the course material unless you explain the points you are making in full, providing examples derived from course materials to support your statements.

2. Failing to answer the entire question, or not answering every part of a question.

3. Outlining the facts presented in the course but failing to explain those facts using the analysis presented in class. In this class we are taking facts and explaining why these facts occur using a specific analysis/framework.

4. Taking exact phrases, sentences, or passages from someone’s written work and presenting it as one’s own - otherwise known as plagiarism. If you use the words and phrases of another author, you **MUST** put them in quotations and cite the author’s name. Plagiarism is a serious matter and may result in an F in the class and even expulsion from the University. Many students make this mistake unknowingly, and other students do not believe that the professor grading their paper will be aware of the plagiarism.

**VIP** - **Plagiarism is very easy to spot.**

5. Some students lack basic writing skills. For example I’ve had students who did not know how to write a simple sentence and who did not know where to make paragraph
breaks. **This Is Unacceptable.** If you have problems with writing, please call the learning resource center at 677 - 2033 and have them help you with your writing.

**COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS IN THE GRADING PROCESS.**

The University hires professors who have acquired expertise in a certain area and are hence deemed competent to evaluate a student’s work. In essence, all of your professors at CSUN, and elsewhere, are hired to not only teach but to evaluate their students’ performances. When students are unhappy about their grades, however, they may present the following arguments.

1. Five other students read my paper, and they all believe it deserves more than a C. This proves that you graded me unfairly.”

Response: If the students were qualified to evaluate the papers, the University would not need to hire professors. Hence, if students were qualified to teach college courses and grade college papers, they wouldn’t even need to attend a University at all.

2. “This phrase came right from the book. This demonstrates that I understand the course material, and you still docked me five points.”

Response: Just because you have presented a sentence, phrase, or fragment of course material does not mean that you have demonstrated that you understand that material. Grades also depend on the way you synthesize and analyze what you present.

3. “I read four other students’ papers, and they wrote exactly the same thing I did. You gave them all A’s and I received a C.

Response: Just because you have presented some of the same facts doesn’t mean that you have analyzed the course material correctly. Remember, in this course you will be presented with different kinds of analyses which explain social phenomenon, and you are expected to be able to demonstrate that you understand that analysis.

**IF YOU ARE NOT HAPPY WITH A GRADE YOU RECEIVE ON A WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT:**

You must first review the grading policy, and then, in writing, explain why you believe you deserve a better grade. Next you must make an appointment to come and talk to me about your grade, and I will be happy to go over your paper with you.

**REMEMBER - you are here to learn, and criticisms aren’t designed to put you down or to make you feel bad, but to help you achieve excellence!**
I have read the Syllabus, Statement of Understanding, and Grading policy and clearly understand what is expected of me.

Print Name______________________________________ WS 200

Signature______________________________________Date_______________