# Department of Gender and Women’s Studies

**Assessment for 2018-2019**

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The goal of this assessment was to evaluate GWS 300 (Women as Agents of Change) with regards to SLOs # 3 and # 4 in Section F. Below is the description of Section F under GE requirements in the University Catalogue:

**Comparative Cultural Studies/Gender, Race, Class, and Ethnicity Studies, and Foreign Languages (6 units, Section F)**

Comparative Cultural Studies coursework provides students with an introduction to the cultures and languages of other nations and peoples, the contributions and perspectives of cultures other than their own, and how gender is viewed in these cultures. Courses in this section will be referred to in this Catalog with the abbreviated phrase Comparative Cultural Studies.

**Goal:**Students will understand the diversity and multiplicity of cultural forces that shape the world through the study of cultures, gender, sexuality, race, religion, class, ethnicities and languages with special focus on the contributions, differences and global perspectives of diverse cultures and societies.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Students will:

1. Describe and compare different cultures.
2. Explain how various cultures contribute to the development of our multicultural world.
3. Describe and explain how race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, sexuality and other markers of social identity impact life experiences and social relations.
4. Analyze and explain the deleterious impact and the privileges sustained by racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, classism, homophobia, religious intolerance or stereotyping on all sectors of society.
5. Demonstrate linguistic and cultural proficiency in a language other than English.

## Assessment Design:

GWS did not offer any courses that fall under Section C during Spring 2019 semester when the assessment was carried out. Based on discussion with Jack Solomon, Director of the Office of Academic Assessment and Program Review, it was decided that assessing a course that fulfils a Section F requirement would be the next best option. The course assessed for 2018-2019 is GWS 300: Women as Agents of Change. This is an upper division GE course open to majors and non-majors. GWS offers approximately 8-9 sections of this course each semester with enrollment of approximately 35 students per section. The department offers fully on-line, hybrid and fully in person sections of GWS 300 each semester that are taught by tenure-track as well as adjunct faculty.

To participate in this years’ assessment I worked with 4 different sections of GWS 300 (2 of them were my own, and 2 sections taught by 2 other faculty). One of the professors who was teaching an on-line section of GWS 300 forgot to administer the pre-test in her class, and unfortunately we had to drop her section from the assessment process. Of the three sections assessed, one was a fully on-line class, and two were hybrid sections. The enrollment in each section was between 30-35 students. The purpose of including an on-line section was to simultaneously assess (on a smaller scale) if there are differences in the instructors’ ability to meet learning outcomes when a course is taught on-line vs. hybrid format.

With input from GWS faculty I designed a pre and post-test to assess learning around key concepts pertaining to Section F’s SLOs 3 and 4. These tests were ungraded, and faculty either posted them on-line or administered hard copies in class. The pre-tests were administered in the 2nd week of classes to assess prior knowledge of the concepts as students began the course. The post-tests were administered in weeks 14 & 15 to measure shifts in student knowledge based on their participation in the course. Questions 1and 2 were clearly and directly related to the SLOs being assessed, i.e. to “Describe and explain how race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, sexuality and other markers of social identity impact life experiences and social relations,” and to “Analyze and explain the deleterious impact and the privileges sustained by racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, classism, homophobia, religious intolerance or stereotyping on all sectors of society.” Questions 3 & 4 were focused on assessing more specific knowledge about how those marginalized by different systems of power and privilege push back against the sources of their oppression, i.e. the central focus of the course “Women as Agents of Change.” Below are the questions on the pre and post-test.

## Questions:

1. What does it mean to have power/privilege based on gender or sexuality? Give one example from the past or present.
2. How does gender based discrimination/exclusion impact the lives of women? Give an example from the past or present.
3. Can you give an example of how women have been involved in pushing for social change in their lives (whether it be as individuals or in different collectivities at the local or global levels)?
4. Do you know of a specific feminist organization or movement that works within or beyond the U.S.? If yes, write a few lines sharing your knowledge about the work they do.

Each question was worth 1 point, making it possible for students to earn up to 4 points.

## Rubric

Rubric used to grade pre and post assessments:

1. Does not answer any part of the question (0 out of 1)
2. Vaguely hints at an answer but fails to provide adequate response to the question (0-.25)
3. Partially answers the question (.25-.99)
4. Completely and adequately answers the question (1/1)

## Results of pre and post assessments surveys

### Section I. (Shaikh) Thursday hybrid class results:

Pre-tests:

Number of students who attempted pre-test: 29

Total cumulative points scored: 75.75/116

Average pre-test score per student: 2.61/4

Average grade: 65% or D

Post-tests:

 Number of students who attempted post-test: 29

Total cumulative points scored: 97.3/116

Average post-test score per student: 3.35/4

Average grade: 84% Or B

Result: **An increase from an average D score to a B**

### Section II. (Beyene) hybrid class results:

Pre-tests:

 Number of students who attempted pre-test: 30

 Total cumulative points scored: 97.5/120

 Average score per student: 3.24/4

 Average pre-test grade: 81% OR B-

Post-tests:

Number of students who attempted post-test: 25

Total cumulative points scored: 83.7/100

Average score per student: 3.348/4

Average post-test grade: 83.7% OR B

#### Results: **An overall increase from an average B- score to a B**

### Section III. (Shaikh) Fully on-line Friday course results:

Pre-tests:

Number of students who attempted pre-test: 29

Total cumulative points scored: 92.1/116

Average score per student: 3.175/4

Average pre-test grade: 79% OR C+

Post-tests:

Number of students who attempted post-tests: 17

Total cumulative points scored: 64.25/4

Average score per student: 3.779/4

Average post-test grade: 94% OR A

#### Results: **An overall increase from a C+ score to an A**

Note: The large discrepancy in the number of students who attempted the pre-test versus those who took the post-test (i.e. 29 vs. 17) in Section III raised the possibility that those who did take the time to complete an ungraded assessment survey at the end of the semester may be a self-selected group of high performing students. In this case, the pre-test results would reflect an average of an entire incoming class, whereas the post test scores would reflect only those who are already diligent and high performing students, i.e. a skewed increase in pre and post scores. As a corrective, I went through the names of the students in pre and post-tests, and was able to find 16 students who completed both the pre and post-tests. I then did a secondary assessment to compare the answers of these 16 students with one another. Given that this was an on-line class and students uploaded their response to canvas, I was able to find the names of students. This would not have been possible for the in-class assessments conducted, as students were instructed to not write their names on the tests they took. Below are the secondary assessment results for Section III:

Pre-test

Number of students: 16

Total score: 52.6/64

Average score 3.28/4

Average grade: 82.2 OR B-

Post-tests

Number of students: 16

Total score: 60.25/64

Average score: 3.76/4

Average grade: A

#### Results: **In a smaller sample size of 16, there was still an improvement from a B- to an A in Section III.**

## Analysis

* Students entered the class with some prior knowledge that allowed them to answer questions 1 and 2, i.e. systems of privilege and power and the impacts of discrimination, as well as very rudimentary examples of the effects of gender-based discrimination.
* Most frequent examples of gender-based discrimination identified by students in the pre-tests were those of 1) the on-going wage gap between men and women, and 2) women’s struggle for suffrage in the U.S. It is clear that at some level of their educational life they are exposed to these two gender-based disparities. As a result, most students scored very high on questions 1 and 2.
* Most frequent examples given of an organization or movement fighting for women’s rights was #metoo movement in the U.S. The second most frequent mention was of the Women’s Marches that have gained prominence in the last few years, i.e. since 2017. Perhaps this is a function of the high visibility of these movements in social and other media.
* By far the question that students were least able to answer in the pre-test was #4, i.e. to give an example of an organization within the U.S. or abroad that is working toward promoting gender justice. The scores in this category were exceptionally low. Once again #metoo came up a few times in response to this question.
* Most students (except for 2 or 3) mentioned a feminist organization working outside the U.S. in response to question 4. In other words, students’ knowledge of global efforts to fight gender-based discrimination was negligible upon entering this class.
* Students showed most improvement in their responses to question #4 (i.e. example of a feminist organization) across all sections. In the post-tests students named movements from Liberia, Argentina, Armenia, Pakistan, etc. as well as naming specific people such as Berta Careces (Hondurus), Angela Davis, Bernice Young (journalist covering sexual violence and immigrant service workers), Ya Basta, TransLatina, and many others. Numerically this meant that for question 4 student improved from scoring an average of .53/1 t o .83/1 in section I.; .46/1 to .53/1 in section II., and .45/1 to .68/1 in section III. As you can see these post-test scores are still quite low. This is an issue of concern. However, this test was administered prior to their final project for which each student was asked to identify a women’s rights or feminist organization of their choice and write a brief paper on it. Perhaps if the post-test was administered after the final paper, students would have shown further improvement in this question.
* What is surprising, however, is that in the post-test responses to question 4 many did not name the different organizations working on behalf of women’s rights/feminism that we did cover in class. This leads me to believe that we (the professors) did not give clear enough instructions that students are being asked to draw on materials covered in class in their responses. Perhaps this lack of clarity made students think that the post-survey is asking them to draw on their general knowledge, as opposed to utilizing specific material they have learned during the semester. This is a flaw in the design and administration of the assessment process that must be taken into consideration in future assessments.
* Given that many students came in with fairly solid responses to questions 1 and 2 already, the least improvement was seen in these questions.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of this assessment, I return to the question of whether GWS 300 does meet SLOs 3 and 4 in Section F. The results indicate a definite improvement in student knowledge across all three sections.

## future Recommendations

* Create questions that are more specific to minimize overlap in student responses
* Give clear instructions that students should draw on course materials to answer questions to the best of their abilities in the post test