

Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies
WMST 100 Section 002
Fall 2015
Tuesday/Thursday 2:30pm to 3:45pm
106 Boucke Building

Shan-Jan Sarah Liu

Departments of Political Science and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Office: 117 Willard

In-Person Office Hours: 4:00pm to 5:30pm on Thursdays

Virtual Office Hours: 1:00-2:15pm on Tuesdays

**Individual assistance is also always available by appointment. I look forward to seeing you during those hours.*

Email: sarah.liu@psu.edu

**You may contact me at any time, but please note that I check email between 9AM and 6PM, Monday through Friday. I try to have a life like you all do, so please be encouraging by noting my email availability and planning accordingly!*

Course Description

This course offers an introduction to women's and gender studies, an interdisciplinary academic field that explores critical questions about the meaning gender in society. This course takes a diverse, multidisciplinary approach to expose students to the complex ways that sex, gender, and sexuality shape social, economic, and political life. Additionally, this course examines how social identities and political structures are constructed and intersected, with a focus on power and privilege, in the United States and in an international context. This course utilizes contemporary media and current politics to supplement a textual overview of the discipline of women's and gender studies.

Course Goals

The primary goal of this course is to familiarize students with key issues, questions and debates in Women's and Gender Studies scholarship, both historical and contemporary. Throughout the semester, we will "question gender" in multiple ways:

- Why has gender been a primary organizing principle of society?
- How do gendered structures of power and authority operate?
- How does gender intersect with race, ethnicity, and other social identities?
- What factors contribute to the formation and success of movements for and against gender equality and fluidity?
- How do "gendered scripts" for dress, appearance and behavior emerge among different social groups and in different societies and historical periods?
- How do we explain the sexual division of labor and the unequal status of women and girls and those activities and roles deemed "feminine" in society?
- Can we imagine a future in which we largely ignore gender or envision gender in more expansive or egalitarian ways?

My hope is for you to be better prepared to participate in and contribute effectively to the larger public conversation about the role of gender in society, to apply the critical tools of women's and gender studies in their academic, family and occupational lives, and to take more advanced classes in this field.

Course Objectives

In this course, you will have the opportunity to learn about the many ways in which gender intersects with class, race, ethnicity, sexuality and age within various spheres and institutions of society. In particular, you will become acquainted with many of the critical questions and concepts feminist scholars have developed as tools for thinking about gendered experience. You will complete this course with the ability to critically analyze themes of gendered performance and power in a range of social spheres, such as law, culture, education, work, medicine, social policy, and the family.

Required Texts

Articles and documents are posted on ANGEL or can be accessed online at Penn State Library. Textbook: *Women's Voices, Feminist Visions* (henceforth *WVWV*) (McGraw-Hill, 6th edition; eds. Susan Shaw and Janet Lee)

***WVWV* is on course reserve at the Pattee Paterno Library.

Required Viewing (in class)

<i>Tough Guise</i>	(available online)
<i>Screaming Queens</i>	(available online)
<i>Killing Us Softly 4</i>	(available online)
<i>Miss Representation</i>	(available online)
<i>The Purity Myth</i>	(available online)
<i>The Virgin Daughters</i>	(available online)
<i>The Hunting Ground</i>	(on course reserve- Music and Media Center, Pattee)
<i>Misconception</i>	(available online)
<i>Silent Choices</i>	(on course reserve- Music and Media Center, Pattee)

Course Requirements and Expectations

This course will be in a semi-seminar format where lectures will be given in the first half of the class and followed by discussions and various activities. In this course, I will be facilitating an open, respectful, and informed class setting that considers differences in identity, opinion, experience, and analysis as a fertile space for learning. Such an environment takes effort by both students and the instructor.

For students, your responsibilities are:

- **Preparation:** Complete the required readings before coming to class. We go into details of the assigned reading in class – please also bring the readings of the day to class.
- **Participation:** Participation in class is based on participation in class lecture and discussion, as well as group activities. (See details in the course component section below.)
- **Respect:** Throughout the course, I would like everyone to feel free to share her/his opinion with one another. In order to do so, we must maintain a civil environment, even when we are discussing controversial topics. You are responsible to actively listen to others and treat others' contributions respectfully, even if you share disagreements. I will not tolerate any language or acts of discrimination and intimidation.

I will contribute to this environment by:

- Treating all students with respect.

- Welcoming diverse viewpoints, experiences, and interpretations of the class materials.
- Challenging your thinking, beliefs, and analysis of issues, concepts, and ideas in this class.
- Making sure every student has the opportunity to speak at least once before allowing students to speak multiple times.

Electronic Devices

There are some occasions where you may need to use computer, cellphone, etc. in class. However, you will not need them most of the time, so please turn off your electronic devices or put them away. While open laptops and other similar devices may be used for note-taking and reading texts, I would rather have you listening to one another with attention. I'm as addicted to social media as anyone, but please do your email/Facebook/Twitter, etc. in your own time.

Course Components

I. Participation (20%)

Your participation grade is based on two components: attendance and participation in class. I will pass around a sign in sheet for you to sign at the beginning of every class.

You should attend every class. I understand that extenuating circumstances arise that can make this difficult. I understand that extenuating circumstances arise that can make this difficult, but if circumstances make you miss more than three classes, you may have overextended yourself and you may fail this course. Unless you are missing an exam, an assignment, or are absent due to a long-term illness or issue, you do not need to notify me if you need to miss class.

In addition to showing up for class, active participation in class is essential to your learning and performance in the course. Participation in class includes participating in group activities and classroom discussions, e.g. speaking up in class, sharing your thoughts, responding to my questions, etc. Thoughtful participation requires that you complete all of the course readings on time and to reflect on them enough to bring something cogent to class meetings. “Good” class participation is not just a function of quantity, but also quality. Simply coming to class does not guarantee a high participation grade; the frequency and quality of your comments also matter. You can earn maximum participation points by participating regularly and respectfully. Here are some things you can do to earn maximum credit for participation:

- Attend class
- Participate openly and regularly in discussions
- Ask questions when you have them – no matter how big or small
- Always consider and question but never disrespect others’ contributions
- Try not to interrupt or monopolize the conversation
- Help create discussion openings by which other students may participate
- Stay on topic

If you have difficulty speaking in public or for some other reason do not feel comfortable participating in the manner described above, please speak with me within the first few days of class so that we can brainstorm ways for you to be more actively involved in class.

II. Five Discussion Forum Posts (15%; each discussion 3%)

The best learning takes place when a student like yourself engages in the texts you read, asks questions, mounts objections to ideas, tries to figure out why the author wrote the article the way s/he did—and what relation this article has to your own experiences and perceptions. In this class discussion forum, you may offer your responses, questions, confusions, recognitions. Questions are provided in the class schedule section below. You only need to complete **five** out of the ten

discussion forums. Your responses are due by **5pm on the Friday** of the week discussion questions are provided.

These postings should be either thoughtful postings of questions based on the texts or thoughtful responses to those questions. To receive a perfect score, your posting must be well-developed, thoughtful, and useful for facilitating class discussion that week. You should write *at least* one to two paragraphs in response to that topic's question. This portion of your assessment will address the *quality*, not simply the quantity of your weekly posts.

III. Two Exams (35%; each exam 17.5%) *There is no final examination.

Exam 1 will cover all of the materials from 8/25 to 10/1. I will provide a study sheet and an in-class preparation the class session before the exam. Exam 1 will take place on 10/13.

Exam 2 will cover all the materials from 10/6 to 11/10. I will provide a study sheet and an in-class preparation the class session before the exam. Exam 2 will take place on 11/10.

****Missed Exams:** *Illness, death in the family, or other traumatic events unfortunately is part of life. A make-up exam will be given if you contact me within 24 hours and provide explanation.*

IV Group Essay/Blog post (20%) due December 8

Your final project in this class will be the integration of conceptual "tools" of *intersectional* analysis of a current event reported in the news during this fall. With a group, you will research and interpret a current event/news item of your choice relating to a topic we examine in class. Examples of current events may include but not limited to: abortion, immigration, same-sex marriage, affirmative action, rape/sexual violence, presidential candidate debates, discrimination in the arts and entertainment. You will write a 4-6 page, **single** spaced paper and deliver a presentation in class using course materials and lecture notes to help ground your intersectional analysis. Your task is to craft an argument that explicitly addresses the ways in which gender and sexuality interact with other structures of difference to produce to the cultural messages about your chosen news event. Once you choose a topic, consider the following:

- Review the event.
- What is the issue at stake? Is there any historical precedent for this event?
- What are the supporters' and opponents' positions on this issue event?
- How is the event covered in the media? How have they depicted the individuals involved?
- How does intersectionality shape the occurrence of the event or the coverage of the event?
- What are your thoughts on this current event?

Together as a class, we will create a blog where your essays will be posted. Each group will receive a joint letter grade and evaluation of their essay. Each group will also be asked to report to me how much effort each member contributes to the essay. You must upload the paper on the ANGEL dropbox by **2:30pm, Tuesday, December 8.**

Your paper should be 4-6 pages, single spaced. Font: Times New Roman; font size: 12; one-inch margins. APSA, MLA, or any other academic citation style will be accepted.

****Late assignments** will be penalized five points each calendar day after the due date and time.

V. Group Presentation (10%)

With a group, you will present your analytical analysis of the news event of your choice in effective way to the class, along with several follow-up discussion questions. The goal for this presentation is

to create awareness about the ways in which gender and sexuality play a role in your chosen event. You are encouraged make an impact beyond the classroom. The presentations can be done in any format, including using PowerPoint slides, showing a video clip that you create, designing a social media campaign, skit, etc. The presentations should be no more than 10 minutes. Your media or presentation outline is required to be uploaded on ANGEL dropbox prior to your presentation so other students in the class have access as well. Each group will also receive a joint letter grade and evaluation of their presentation. Each group will also be asked to report to me how much effort each member contributes to the presentation.

Further explanation of assignments will be discussed in class.

VI. Extra Credit

Extra credit opportunities will be available periodically during the semester and will be added to the participation grades. These opportunities will be announced in class and via email. No late extra credit will be accepted.

Class Grade Scale

A: 94—100%	B: 83—86%	C: 70—76%
A-: 90—93%	B-: 80—82%	D: 60-69%
B+: 87—89%	C+: 77—79%	F: 59% and Below

Grades in this class are based on mastery of the class material. This doesn't just mean attending class and reading the material; it means analyzing and understanding the material—and being able to articulate the material thoughtfully and precisely through assignments, discussion, and exams. At the end of the semester, I do not allow extra credit, “round up,” barter, to improve your final grade.

Important Dates

September 3	Class Cancelled
October 13	Exam 1
November 12	Exam 2
November 19	Group project topic due
November 24 and 26	Thanksgiving
December 8	Group essay due and group presentation
December 10	Group Presentation

Academic Integrity

The Department of Political Science and the Department of Women's Studies, along with the College of the Liberal Arts and the University, takes violations of academic dishonesty seriously. Observing basic honesty in one's work, words, ideas, and actions is a principle to which all members of the community are required to subscribe. All course work by students is to be done on an individual basis unless an instructor clearly states that an alternative is acceptable. Any reference materials used in the preparation of any assignment must be explicitly cited. Students uncertain about proper citation are responsible for checking with their instructor. In an examination setting, unless the instructor gives explicit prior instructions to the contrary, whether the examination is in-class or take-home, violations of academic integrity shall consist but are not limited to any attempt to receive assistance from written or printed aids, or from any person or papers or electronic devices, or of any attempt to give assistance, whether the one so doing has completed his or her own work or not. Lying to the instructor or purposely misleading any Penn State administrator shall also constitute a violation of academic integrity. In cases of any violation of academic integrity it is the

policy of the Department of Women's Studies to follow procedures established by the College of the Liberal Arts. More information on academic integrity and procedures followed for violation can be found at: <http://laus.la.psu.edu/current-students/academics/academic-integrity/college-policies>

Disability Services

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. If you have a disability-related need for reasonable academic adjustments in this course, contact the Office for Disability Services. For further information regarding policies, rights and responsibilities please visit the Office for Disability Services (ODS) Web site at: www.equity.psu.edu/ods/. Please contact me early in the semester—I am happy to work with you regarding accommodations.

Class Schedule

T 8/25: Introduction

Discussion of class expectations, assignments, exams, and reading schedule

TH 8/27: What is Women's and Gender Studies?

WVFFV: Shaw and Lee 1-13, 24-27

WVFFV: Guy-Sheftall 30-32

ANGEL: A Declaration of Sentiments

ANGEL: Ain't I a Woman?

T 9/1: Still Needing the F Word: The Myths Associated with Feminism and Post-Feminism

WVFFV: Shaw and Lee 19-23

WVFFV: Baumgardner and Richards 34-37

ANGEL: Christian, Jenna. "A Reply to Lauren Southern's 'Why I'm Not a Feminist.'" *Everyday Geopolitics* Houston. May 3, 2015.

<https://everydaygeopoliticshouston.wordpress.com/2015/04/10/a-reply-to-lauren-southern-why-im-not-a-feminist/>

ANGEL: Peterson, Anne Helen. "In 'Trainwreck,' Amy Shumer Calls Bullshit on Postfeminism." *Buzzfeed* July 18, 2015

<http://www.buzzfeed.com/annehelenpetersen/postfeminist-bullshit#.len6vr1ol>

TH 9/3: No Class (American Political Science Association's Annual Conference)

T 9/8: Learning Gender

WVFFV: Shaw and Lee 116-119, 131-133

ANGEL: Peterson, Anne Helen. "The Problem with 'Gone Girl' is that There's no 'Cool Girl.'" *Buzzfeed* October 2, 2014.

<http://www.buzzfeed.com/annehelenpetersen/gone-girl-no-cool-girl#.dfyxmE1w5>

Discussion Forum (Posting due by 5pm Friday): How is gender reinforced by patterns of interaction in society? How is femininity racialized? How does gender ranking reinforce sexism?

TH 9/10: Gender: Masculinity

WVFFV: Shaw and Lee 125-130

ANGEL: Kimmel, Michael. "Masculinity, Mental Illness and Guns: A Lethal Equation?"

http://www.cnn.com/2012/12/19/living/men-guns-violence/index.html?hpt=hp_c1

T 9/15: In-class film: *Tough Guise*

Discussion Forum (Posting due by 5pm Friday): How is masculinity racialized? What are some benefits to boys and men of putting on the “tough guise?” When is it an effective and adaptive response and when is it self-destructive and dangerous to others?

TH 9/17: Sex and Gender: “Hardwired” or a product of Culture?

WVFFV: Lorber 141-143

WVFFV: Fine 144-149

ANGEL: Peterson, Anne Helen. “The Trouble with ‘It Girls.’” *Buzzfeed* Jan. 21, 2015.

<http://www.buzzfeed.com/annehelenpetersen/the-trouble-with-it-girls#.bo2M1JK3Z>

T 9/22: Transgender Identities, Transgender Histories, Transgender Revolutions

Online at Penn State Library: Susan Stryker, Chapter 1 from *Transgender History* (2008).

Online at Penn State Library: Susan Stryker, pages 63-75 from *Transgender History* (2008).

TH 9/24 In-class film: *Screaming Queens*

T 9/29: Intersectionality: Difference of Bodies, Difference of Experience

WVFFV: Shaw and Lee 49-67

WVFFV: Taylor 93-95

WVFFV: Wendell 101-107

ANGEL: Hitselberger, Karen. “What You’re Really Saying When You Call Me ‘Inspirational.’” *Claiming Crip* September 20, 2015 <http://claimingcrip.blogspot.com/2015/09/what-youre-really-saying-when-you-call.html>

Discussion Forum (Posting due by 5pm Friday): How aware have you been about your “privilege” or lack thereof? Can you think of ways in which your position or status in society has given you more or less access to something you value, or that society values? In what ways have you “seen difference” as a social construction in your own life—particularly with regard to gender, but also to race, or to class, or to ability, or to any of the other categories you have identified yourself as affiliating with?

TH 10/1: Intersectionality: Race/Class/Gender and Identity

WVFFV: hooks 37-39

WVFFV: Collins 72-78

WVFFV: Lorde 85-86

WVFFV: Yeskel 95-99

ANGEL: Cooper, Brittney. “The Women of #Black Lives Matter.” *Ms. Magazine* Winter 2015.

T 10/6: Inscribing Gender on the Body: “Beauty” and Body Image

WVFFV: Shaw and Lee 188-199

WVFFV: Fikkan and Rothblum 233-245

ANGEL: Anne Helen Peterson, “What’s Really Behind the Ridicule of Renee Zellweger’s Face” *Buzzfeed* Oct 21, 2014.

<http://www.buzzfeed.com/annehelenpetersen/whats-really-behind-the-ridicule-of-renee-zellwegers-face#.bfjXpWR7M>

Discussion Forum (Posting due by 5pm Friday): How do beauty norms affect women and men differently? How does a focus on beauty for women maintain women’s subordinate status? How are power relations reflected and reinforced in beauty norms?

TH 10/8: In-class film: *Killing Us Softly 4*

T 10/13: Exam 1

- You will take this exam online on the ANGEL course site.
- Go to the Lessons tab, find the “Exam 1” folder. The exam is inside.
- The exam has a time limit of 1 hour and 15 minutes once you begin the exam.
- You may only submit the exam once.
- The exam will “open” at 6am. The exam is due by 11:59pm.

TH 10/15: Women and the Media

WVFW: Shaw and Lee 258-266

WVFW: Woolf 276-278

WVFW: Douglas 283-287

WVFW: Havrilesky 293-295

ANGEL: Sady, Doyle, “Dear Leslie Knope”

<http://www.feministe.us/blog/archives/2010/03/27/weekend-arts-section-dear-leslie-knope-of-tvs-parks-and-recreation/>

Discussion Forum (Posting due by 5pm Friday): How are television and film examples of what Susan Douglas calls “enlightened sexism”? Give specific examples from current TV shows, films, or other media. How do these shows focus viewers’ gaze away from barriers to women’s equality?

T 10/20: In-class Film: *Miss Representation*

TH 10/22: Who Run the World? Race, Gender, and Feminism in Popular Culture

***You will be assigned only ONE of the following readings in class on October 20.*

ANGEL: Tamara Winfrey Harris, “All Hail the Queen? What Do Our Perceptions of Beyoncé Say About us” *Bitch Magazine* (59):

<http://bitchmagazine.org/article/all-hail-the-queen-beyonce-feminism>

ANGEL: Hadley Freeman, “Beyoncé: Being Photographed in Your Underwear Doesn’t Help Feminism,” *The Guardian* 15 Jan 2013

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jan/15/beyonce-photographed-underwear-feminism>

ANGEL: M. Shadee Malaklou, “Reading Beyoncé’s SUPERPOWER as a love letter to BLACK RADICAL INSURGENCY: An open letter to white feminists who want to remind us that Beyoncé’s music is just “art”

<http://jesusfuckingchristblog.com/2013/12/15/reading-beyonces-superpower-as-a-love-letter-to-black-radical-insurgency-an-open-letter-to-white-feminists-who-want-to-remind-us-that-beyonces-music-is-just-art/>

ANGEL: Adegoke, Yomi, “In her response to Nicki Minaj, Taylor Swift has just proven that she’s white feminism’s off-beat, bambilegged patronus,” *The Independent* 26 July 2015

<http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/in-her-response-to-nicki-minaj-taylor-swift-has-just-proved-how-shes-white-feminisms-offbeat-bambilegged-patronus-10408320.html>

ANGEL: Williams, Stereo, “Miley Cyrus Whitesplains Race to Nicki Minaj and Misses the Point Entirely,” *The Daily Beast* August 28, 2015

<http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/08/28/miley-cyrus-whitesplains-race-to-nicki-minaj-and-misses-the-point-entirely.html>

Discussion Forum (Posting due by 5pm Friday): What are your reactions to the article you're assigned? What connections can you draw from what is happening in pop culture and what is stated in the article with the course materials?

T 10/27: He for She? Preparation for Group Project

ANGEL: McKenzie, Mia. "Why I'm Not Really Here For Emma Watson's Feminism Speech At the UN." *BlackGirlDangerous* September 24, 2014.

<http://www.blackgirldangerous.org/2014/09/im-really-emma-watson-s-feminism-speech-u-n/>

During class, I will discuss the details of the group project. We will use Emma Watson's "He for She" campaign as an example of a current event and Mia McKenzie's response to her campaign as an example of an intersectional analysis of a current event. You will also have a chance to meet with your group to discuss ideas.

TH 10/29: Sex, Power, and the Purity Myth

WVFW: Valenti 334-338

Online at Penn State Library: Valenti, Jessica, Introduction and Chapter 1, *The Purity Myth* (2009)

Discussion Forum (Posting due by 5pm Friday): Recall from a recent movie, film, or other media and analyze the gender politics. What do you learn about the ways gender norms shape sexual scripts?

T 11/3: In-class film: *The Virgin Daughters*

WVFW: Springer 356-360

TH 11/5: Resisting Gender Violence

WVFW: Shaw and Lee 537-553

ANGEL: Kimmel, Michael. "The Bro Whisperer." *The Atlantic*.

<http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2015/01/the-bro-whisperer/383506>

Discussion Forum (Posting due by 5pm Friday): How do violence and the threat of violence exert social control over women? Do you ever fear gender-based violence? How do you think your gender affects your answer to this question?

T 11/10: In-class film: *The Hunting Ground*

TH 11/12 Exam 2

- You will take this exam online on the ANGEL course site.
- Go to the Lessons tab, find the "Exam 2" folder. The exam is inside.
- The exam has a time limit of 1 hour and 15 minutes once you begin the exam.
- You may only submit the exam once.
- The exam will "open" at 6am. The exam is due by 11:59pm.

**I will be traveling out of town for the annual conference of the National Women's Studies Association on this day, so my office hours will be rescheduled to 4:00-5:30pm on Wednesday 11/11 instead.*

T 11/17: Women's Health and Reproductive Justice

WVFW: Shaw and Lee 372-376, 384-394

Luna 414-423

ANGEL: Little, Anita. "Black Women Left Behind." *Ms. Magazine*. Summer 2015.

Discussion Forum (Posting due by 5pm Friday): Why is reproductive choice important for women? What have been the consequences of women's loss of control over their reproductive processes?

TH 11/19: In-class film: *Silent Choices*

Group project topic due. To avoid duplicated topics, you will submit two or three ideas, with your preferences ranked, no later than the beginning of this class.

T 11/24: No class (Thanksgiving)

TH 11/26: No class (Thanksgiving)

T 12/1: Women and Labor: State, Law, and Social Policy

ANGEL: Sandberg, Sheryl. 2013. "Why I Want Women to Lean In." Excerpt from *Lean In. Time*

ANGEL: hooks, bell. 2013. "Dig Deep: Beyond Lean In." October 28, 2013. *Feminist Wire*.

<http://thefeministwire.com/2013/10/17973/>

WVFW: Ehrenreich 517-522

TH 12/3: Group Project

During class, you will have an opportunity to work with your group on finalizing your group essay and presentation.

Discussion Forum (Posting due by 5pm Friday): How do governmental laws and policies maintain social inequality? What might a truly "just" governmental system look like?

T 12/8: Group Essay Due and Group Presentation

TH 12/10: Group Presentation
