

SC063 WOMEN AND WORK

This course provides a concise overview of women at work. While we concentrate on women workers in contemporary American society, we will provide an historical overview of women's work patterns. We analyze the range of social, economic, and political factors underlying women's increased labor force participation over time. Our approach is holistic and feminist: we argue that in order to understand women's position in the work world, one must analyze their experience in the context of a number of societal institutions, including the familial, economic, political/legal, and the educational. We will draw upon the literature and theories from the fields of economics, psychology, history as well as sociology. We will employ first-hand accounts of women's work life experiences to illustrate the range of different occupations in which women are employed, the types of women who work (in terms of race, age, ethnicity, class, and marital status), the problems (e.g. sexual harassment, combining work and family roles) and rewards of their work.

Required Readings

Sharlene Hesse-Biber and Gregg Carter. *The Study of Working Women in America: Split Dreams*. New York : Oxford University Press, 2000.

Dana Dunn, *Workplace/Women's Place: An Anthology*. Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Co., 1997

Sharlene Hesse-Biber, *Am I Thin Enough Yet? The Cult of Thinness and the Commercialization of Identity*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.

Dorothy C. Holland & Margaret A. Eisenhart. *Educated in Romance: Women, Achievement, and College Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990.

Rhona Mahony. *Kidding Ourselves, Breadwinning, Babies and Bargaining Power*. N.Y., N.Y.: Harper Collins, 1995.

Coursepack of Required Readings: Available for purchase at the bookstore.

Additional Readings

(Available for purchase in bookstore and ON RESERVE in O'Neill Library)

Mona Harrington . *Women Lawyers: Rewriting the Rules*. New York Penguin Books, 1995.

Siriphon Sakranobanek. *The Traffic in Women: Human Realities of the International Sex Trade*. Zed Books, 1997.

Susan Eisenberg. *We'll Call You If We Need You: Experiences of Women Working Construction*. Cornell University Press, 1998.

Greta Foff Paules. *Dishing It Out: Power and Resistance Among Waitresses in a New Jersey Restaurant*. Temple University Press, 1991.

Website References

In addition to the required readings assigned each day, there are several website references which I believe will provide you with additional information to supplement lectures, class discussions, and readings. Referencing these sites is not required but will prove to be extremely useful in helping to reinforce ideas and concepts derived both in class and in the reading assignments.

DESCRIPTION OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Three (3) Reading Journal Sets and Four (4) Reaction Papers (40%)

A) Reading Journal

You are required to keep a journal in which you will record your reflections on the readings - the ideas presented by specific authors, the ways that you have integrated the readings in your thinking, and the ways in which your personal experiences relate to the issues raised in the readings. You are expected to make at least one journal entry **BEFORE** each class (in other words at least two a week). Each night after you have completed your reading assignment, your journal will serve as a venue for reflection upon that article. At the conclusion of a segment of the course, you will be required to submit all journals completed during that section. You are required to submit a journal set for the first three parts of the course. A fourth journal set is **OPTIONAL** and if completed in proper form, will be used as an **EXTRA CREDIT** assignment. Each journal entry should respond to at least one of the readings read that night; however, the more you can consider the connections and contradictions between readings, the better your journal will be. This journal will be very helpful in completing the four required papers and the final exam. Please note: when a panel presentation is scheduled, students are required to read excerpts from the book being presented and write at least one of their journal entries on that reading/ presentation's topic.

Here are some guidelines for journal entries:

Summarize the reading. Restate the author's main argument in one or two paragraphs. The restatement must be in **YOUR OWN WORDS**.

Respond to the reading. Things that could be addressed in this section: Do you agree or disagree? Why? How does the reading connect to (or not connect to) your own experience? How can it be applied to situations of everyday life?

Analyze the readings. What connections can you make between articles and their arguments.

Use concepts and terminology from the readings.

Create a discussion question.

Be creative in your entries - poems, stories, songs, etc. are great.

Please bring your journal to each class. After we have discussed the material in class, go back and reflect on your entry addressing material from lectures, films, presentations, etc.

B) Four Reaction Papers

With each journal you hand in, you will turn in a TYPED 4-5 page reaction/ position essay in which you examine the key issues that connect all the reading up to that date. The essay grade will be based on clarity, evidence of careful reading, and evidence of analytical thinking and writing about the readings. Each essay should be supported by the materials in your journal. Please proof-read your essay for spelling and grammatical errors. You must come to see me EARLY in the semester to discuss questions about journal and essay writing.

2. Oral History Project (30%)

You are to conduct an oral history interview (about an hour) with a woman about her role as a working woman. You will write up your project as an oral history of the woman who narrates her story to you. In your 8-10 page paper, you will place the woman's life into historical context and will use theoretical perspectives from the readings and your own literature review to explore the connections between this woman's experiences and the experiences of other women of her time, occupation, race, class and family circumstances. The readings from the course will assist you in framing some questions for your interviews. We will discuss the technique of oral history interviewing in class early in the semester. Please come by my office hours to discuss your project.

3. Panel Presentation and Book/articles analysis and Reflection (15%)

A) Panel Presentation

Each student is required to prepare and participate in a Panel Presentation as listed in the reading list. You will be working in groups of 7 to 9 students. The goal of this presentation is to provide an analysis of the book/set of articles to the class. Your panel should meet several times before the day of your presentation. You are to discuss the text and decide on a creative format for presentation of your ideas. Your group presentation should take no more than 40 minutes. You should meet as a group outside of class. Each group should choose sections from the text to be assigned as required reading for the day

of their presentation. Each group will meet with the instructor or teaching assistant at least two weeks in advance to discuss the presentation.

Some ideas on format of your presentation might be : (1) create a panel and hold a debate; (2) combine an explanation of the text with personal narratives that illustrate and explore the material; (3) create a slide lecture, exhibit or skit; (4) conduct an exercise in which the entire class participates; (5) some combination of the above.

A strong presentation will analytically critique the text and will clearly and concisely place the text within the context of women's work experiences. Each group member needs to play an active part in the group presentation. On the class period prior to the presentation your panel should distribute a list of discussion questions to others in the class. Your presentation will be evaluated on analytical content, creativity, and insight.

B) Writing Component

Each student will hand in a typed 2-3 page ANALYSIS of the chosen book or set of articles. This assignment must be completed independently. Your paper should analyze the author's argument as well as provide a critical evaluation of the book/articles. The book analysis paper is due one week after the presentation.

4. Final Examination (15%)

The final exam will be given in class on the scheduled exam day. We will discuss the content of the exam in class. A final exam study guide will be passed out in class during the last part of the course.