Boston College ENG2125/HIST2502/SOCY2225—Introduction to Feminisms
Fall 2015
Tuesdays/Thursdays 4:30 – 5:45pm
Location: Lyons Hall 202

Instructor: Professor. Kyoung-yim Kim, Ph.D.
Office: 409 McGuinn Hall
Email: kyoung.kim@bc.edu
Office Hours: McGuinn Hall 409, Wednesdays 3:30-4:30pm and by appointment

Course Description and Objectives
This course is an introduction to the major concepts, topics and debates that animate the field of women’s and gender Studies. The course will begin by clarifying some common concepts and misconceptions about this field, and explore its rich interdisciplinary legacy. Then we examine how modern gender identities arose, what role science has played in structuring them, and how we reproduce them on an everyday basis. We approach masculinity and femininity not as unchanging categories, but rather as varying in relationship to race, class, sexuality and nation. Moving through the course, we ask how some of the key political and economic forces that shape our time, such as militarism, state security and globalization, rely on and change gender roles and gendered work. We also analyze media representations of sexuality and beauty standards, and how they are perpetuated, resisted and subverted. Along the way, we examine the potential for feminist activism on such issues as politics, sexual diversity, reproductive rights, labor rights, representation, sport, and welfare policies. The texts across the year will include works by feminist economists, sociologists, historians, political scientists, biologists, poets, novelists, filmmakers and performance artists.

Although the course introduces you to a variety of political perspectives and theories, the basic outlook, you will find, is transnational- which means that we focus on the connections between regions and times, rather than treating our own context as static and self-contained. Through a variety of assignments, you will consider what feminism can mean, from your intimate life to your connections with people elsewhere.

Some of the ideas and theories you will encounter are considerably difficult. You must be prepared to give this course your utmost effort, and the most important requirement is that you engage sincerely with the assigned readings.

Course Materials

Additional course readings—marked in the syllabus with the word Reserve/Canvas will be available to students via the library and via our Canvas website. These articles are via our Canvas course website.
In-class Group Exercise: **10%** Based on the two assigned readings for the week, we will do a group exercise on gender, sexuality and race/ethnicity in adolescent years. Specific instructions will be given prior to the class.

**THREE Reading Responses: 15% (3×5%)** Students are expected to complete THREE reading responses over the semester (Due: Sept15; Oct13; Nov10). Each reading response should not exceed two pages. Students will discuss the readings and reflect on connections to other readings and to themes of the course. You will also reflect on previous discussions. A more detailed guidelines for the assignment will be discussed in the class.

**In-class Mid-term Test (Argumentative Essay): 20%** Halfway through the semester, students will write an in-class mid-term exam. It will be 4-5 page essay using some of the theoretical material we have been exploring via our reading. Students will analyze an item from our culture (film, article, opinion essay, etc.) and will apply some of the theoretical readings we have done in class to analyze it. Students will be graded based on the strength of their thesis, how well arguments are supported with evidence, and the clarity and persuasiveness of their writing.

**Feminist Activism Project: 25%** Feminist work often engages with activism as well as analysis, so one of the assignments this semester will be to engage in a group project that explores this intersection. This will hopefully not only enable you to see feminism in action outside of the classroom and to engage in it yourself, but also to empower you to see yourself as an agent capable of acting with others in order to create social change. A discussion group in the class will be formed, and it will be allotted to this assignment, but most of this work will be done outside the classroom and on a project of your group’s choice. The projects will be presented to the class in the last week of class:
- Research Paper highlighting an oral history interview with women actively working to enhance the lives of women;
- Identify problematic gender relations on campus and develop a campus awareness campaign;
- Document a local community based organization work.

Further details will be discussed in class and students will have amply in class time to develop projects.

**Final Exam: 20%** The class will conclude with a final exam, which will be comprehensive and cover the entire syllabus. The format and content will be discussed in class.

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### Course Assignments and Grades

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due Dates</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class Group Exercise based on the readings</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Sept22 (Gender in High School)</td>
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<tr>
<td>THREE Reading Responses</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Due: Sept15; Oct13; Nov10 (before class starts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class Mid-term Test</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Oct 20 (covering material discussed in weeks of Sept1-Oct13)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feminist Activism Project</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>Project results will be presented in the class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Exam date/time will be posted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance &amp; Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Grade to be calculated following final lecture</td>
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*Note:* Assignments this semester will be to engage in a group project based on the theoretical material we have been exploring via our reading. Students will analyze an item from our culture (film, article, opinion essay, etc.) and will apply some of the theoretical readings we have done in class to analyze it. Students will be graded based on the strength of their thesis, how well arguments are supported with evidence, and the clarity and persuasiveness of their writing.
Class Attendance and Participation: 10% Class participation is key to this class throughout the semester. Students should come to class well-prepared to discuss the readings, particularly the discussion sections in each week and should also be prepared to do in-class group exercise, short written responses, verbal exercises, and bringing material to class to discuss (such as media articles, images, video clips, etc.).

Email Policy: Emails will be answered within 24 hours, except for weekend days (when I cannot guarantee to check my email as regularly). I do not check email between the hours of 9 pm and 8 am. Please keep emails short and to the point; longer commentary may be better discussed during office hours. Written work will not be accepted via email except through prior arrangement.

Written Work: Assignment sheets will be made available on the class website, and due dates are specified in the syllabus. Written work submitted later than fifteen minutes after midnight on the due date will be lowered by a third of a grade for each day late, except in cases of illness or emergency. All sources MUST be cited. Please use in-text citation. For example: American teenage girls seem to be in a liminal state, for "as a society, we discarded the Victorian moral umbrella over girls before we agreed on useful strategies and programs--a kind of 'social Gore-Tex' to help them stay dry" (Brumberg, 1997. p. 201).

Works Cited:

NOTE. Proper in-text Chicago citation utilizes the LAST NAME of the author, the YEAR of the publication date, and the PAGE number, in that order. I will also accept MLA citation. No other forms of citation will be accepted.

Be sure to include the works cited page. All papers must be word-processed, spellchecked, double-spaced, with reasonable margins, and (if printed out) stapled. Please include page numbers and use a font no smaller than ten point and no larger than twelve. I highly encourage you to proofread as grammar and punctuation are essential parts of writing well. Clear and readable prose is also highly esteemed! Papers with frequent grammatical and/or spelling errors will be ineligible for a grade higher than a B.

Class Participation and Courtesy: I require and expect all students to treat each other with courtesy. Harassment, whether physical, sexual, or verbal, will not be tolerated in this class. We may be discussing some sensitive and sometimes upsetting topics; I expect this classroom to be a safe space for students to express their views. If you have any problems or questions, I encourage you to bring them to me.

Policy on Late Assignments and Missed Deadlines: Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Accordingly, assignments are due in lecture on their due dates and you are required to hand in your assignment by the beginning of lecture on the due date. Emailed assignments will not be accepted. A late assignment will be penalized with a 20% grade reduction per day, unless they are accompanied by a doctor’s note, or by other official documentation detailing a serious matter. The final examination is due on the stipulated date and
time noted above with place T.B.D. For the Final Examination, 1 per cent of the student’s overall course grade will be deducted for each day (24 hour period) late without an acceptable and documented reason.

**Academic Integrity:** Academic integrity is expected of all students. All work turned in must be the work of the student whose name appears at the top of the paper, except where you have specifically requested and received permission for a collaborative effort. All students are expected to cite their sources fully (whether from texts, interviews, or online). If you have any questions on when or whether to cite, please do not hesitate to ask. You may not turn in work for this class which you have previously turned in for other classes. Plagiarism will be dealt with according to the Academic Honesty Policy; plagiarized work will result in a failure of the class and further sanctions, at the discretion of Boston College, may result.

**If you have a disability** and need to request accommodations for this course, please register with Kathy Duggan, the Associate Director of Academic Support Services at the Connors Family Learning Center (www.bc.edu/connors), for learning disabilities or ADHD, or Paulette Durrett, Assistant Dean of Students with Disabilities (http://www.bc.edu/disability), for medical, physical, psychological, and temporary disabilities. Advance notice and appropriate documentation are required for accommodations.
**Fall 2015 Lecture Outline**

(Readings/reading dates are subject to change.)

**PART 1. EXPLORING THE FIELD**

**September 1** Overview of the Course/Introduction to Feminism, Women's, and Gender Studies

*Guided Reading Questions: What are the gender issues in everyday life? Who is feminist? What are the feminist issues?*

- Untangling the “F”-word (Myth 1, 2, & 3). In Women's Lives. TEXTBOOK, pp. 3-17.

**September 8** What is Feminisms?

*Guided Reading Questions: What is the value of using the term ‘feminisms’ rather than feminism? What does this mean for how we think about the category of ‘women’?*

- Ellis, Becky. 2007 Why Feminism Isn't For Everybody. Briarpatch (March/April): 8-10. Reserve

**PART 2. CONTEXTUALIZING MODERN GENDER IDEOLOGIES**

**September 15** The Scientific Construction of Sex and Gender

*Guided Reading Questions: How has science played a role in constructing how we think about sex and gender? What does this mean for perspectives on the biological basis of sex and gender?*


1st Reading Response Due

**September 22** Femininities and Masculinities

*Guided Reading Questions: How might we connect last week’s discussion with the racialized and sexualized gender identities? What does an intersectional approach bring to the conversation?*


In-Class Group Exercise: Gender in High School
PART 3. GENDER, RACE AND EMPIRE

September 29  Gender, Race & Colonizing Knowledge

Guided Reading Questions: Why is it problematic to use ‘race’ as a biological category? In what ways has colonialism been both a raced and gendered process?

  Reserve/links.

October 1. Last Date for Undergraduates to drop a course

October 6  Racism, Imperialism and Early and Contemporary Feminisms

Guided Reading Questions: How did Sojourner Truth’s ‘And ain’t I a woman’ speech introduce an intersectional approach to women’s movements? How have feminists used the vocabulary of slavery versus emancipation, created through the anti-slavery movement, to talk about their own oppression and to argue for women’s rights?

- Sojourner Truth (1851). ‘And ain’t I a woman?’ Speech. Canvas
- DasGupta, Sayantani (Oct 8, 2012). “Your women are oppressed, but ours are awesome”: How Nicholas Kristof and Half the Sky Use women against each other. Racialicious http://www.racialicious.com/2012/10/08/your-women-are-oppressed-but-ours-are-awesome-how-nicholas-kristof-and-half-the-sky-use-women-against-each-other/ Links.

PART 4. GENDERING NATIONALISM AND CITIZENSHIP

October 13  Nationalism and Collective Gender Identities

Guided Reading Questions: What is the relationship between women, the state and nation building? What is the connection between nationalism, masculinity and state security?

October 20  Formulating Reproductive Rights and Sexual Health

Guided Reading Questions: How does the history of racism, colonization and imperialism affect reproductive justice? How have women organized to gain access to education and power over their reproductive rights and sexual health?


In-Class Term Test—October 20: 75 minutes (covering materials discussed in weeks of Sept1-Oct13)

October 27  Gender, Family and Social Policy

Guided Reading Questions: How does the state operate to enforce a heteronormative, nuclear family structure? What strategies have feminists and other equity seeking groups used to pressure the state to recognize more diverse and varied forms of families?


PART 5. GENDER, LABOR AND THE DOMESTIC SPHERE

November 3  Social Reproduction

Guided Reading Questions: What is the significance of the argument that the performance of domestic work produces gender? What do you think Global Women’s Strike organizer Selma James meant when she said “Unwaged housework is the heart of every economic sector?“


November 10  Commodification and Care Work

Guided Reading Questions: How might we connect last week’s discussion with the conditions of paid domestic work? What does an intersectional approach bring to the conversation?

PART 6. FEMINIZATION IN EVERYDAY LIFE

November 17 Gender, Bodies, and Beauty

Guided Reading Questions: Why is representation an important issue for Women and Gender studies? We are surrounded by images of bodies on the internet, on television and in magazines –what do these images tell us about contemporary ideals of beauty in our society?


November 24 Feminization and the Workplace

Guided Reading Questions: Provide a definition of emotional and aesthetic labour in your own words. How are they an important dimension of the workplace in these readings?


Thursday, November 26: Thanksgiving Holiday, NO CLASS

December 1 In-class Presentation on Activism Projects I (five group presentation)

December 8 In-class Presentation on Activism Projects II (three group presentation)
Class Wrap-up & Final Exam Preparation

December 10-11, Study Days