



**MCGS 10 - Introduction to Women's Studies**

**Catalog Description**

**Transfer Status:** CSU/UC

**Unit(s):** 3.00

**Lecture:** 51.00 Contact hours/102.00 Out of class hours/153.00 Total hours/3.00 Unit(s)

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**Course Description:** This course is designed to introduce students to women's studies as an interdisciplinary field of knowledge that explores critical questions about the meaning of gender in society. This course provides a foundational understanding of the experiences, contributions, and challenges faced by women throughout history and across cultures. By exploring key concepts, theories, and perspectives, students will gain insight into the complex issues surrounding gender, identity, and power dynamics in contemporary society. Women's studies strives to provide equal education to students by making the study of the history and culture of women and women's experiences, generally omitted from the traditional curriculum, the central focus of scholarship. Topics may include law, culture, education, work, social policy, the media, and the family. (C-ID SJS 120).

**Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, the student should be able to:

1. Describe women's studies.
2. Critically assess how gender intersects with other social identities (e.g. sex, sexuality, transgender, race/ethnicity, class, etc.).
3. Analyze and compare key concepts of different feminisms, including radical, lesbian, liberal, socialist, women of color, eco-feminism, trans feminism, transnational feminism and global feminism among others.
4. Examine historical and current issues surrounding women's sexuality and health.
5. Describe women's work and employment opportunities in the U.S. and around the world.
6. Analyze the roots and impacts of violence against women.
7. Explain and critique women's historical and current participation in activism and social change.
8. Critically assess the oppression of women through religion, educational systems, family structures, politics/law and various forms of media, including how it intersects with other forms of oppression (e.g. gender binarism, transphobia, sexuality, racial/ethnic, class, etc.).

**Course Content**

| Topic Titles / Suggested Time Topic                                                                                                                                                                                |                |
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| <u>Lecture</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                |
| <u>Topics</u>                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <u>Lec Hrs</u> |
| Introduction to Women's Studies                                                                                                                                                                                    | 2.00           |
| Introduction to concepts such as sex, gender, patriarchy, gender socialization and intersectionality                                                                                                               | 3.00           |
| Theories of gender identity formation                                                                                                                                                                              | 3.00           |
| Women's health, sexuality, reproductive rights, and reproductive justice                                                                                                                                           | 6.00           |
| Women's labor, employment and class status in the U.S. and worldwide                                                                                                                                               | 3.00           |
| Women and family                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 3.00           |
| Women and religion                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 3.00           |
| Women and education                                                                                                                                                                                                | 3.00           |
| Women, power and politics/law                                                                                                                                                                                      | 6.00           |
| Representation of women in various media                                                                                                                                                                           | 3.00           |
| Roots and impacts of violence against women                                                                                                                                                                        | 3.00           |
| Historical and current U.S. feminist theories and movements, including radical, lesbian, liberal, socialist, women of color, eco-feminism, trans feminism, transnational feminism and global feminism among others | 6.00           |
| Intersection of gender with other social identities (e.g. sex, sexuality, transgender, race/ethnicity, class, etc.)                                                                                                | 3.00           |
| Gender binarism                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 1.00           |
| Trans identities, expression and oppression                                                                                                                                                                        | 3.00           |
| <b>Total Hours:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>51.00</b>   |

**Methods of Instruction**

- A. Class Activities
- B. Collaborative Group Work
- C. Discussion

- D. Guest Speakers
- E. Homework: Students are required to complete two hours of outside-of-class homework for each hour of lecture
- F. Lecture
- G. Multimedia Presentations
- H. Reading Assignments

## Methods of Evaluation

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- A. Exams/Tests
- B. Papers
- C. Oral Presentation
- D. Homework
- E. Class participation
- F. Written Assignments
- G. Class Discussion

## Examples of Assignments

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### Reading Assignments

1. Read the provided article on feminist theory. As you read, note the author's claims and their use of supporting evidence. Who is the intended audience and what is the intended message? Do you agree or disagree with the author? Why or why not? Please be prepared to share your findings with your group in class discussion.
2. Read the two articles regarding the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA), one article is in favor of its passage and the other is not. Critically analyze both articles, decide if you do or do not support the ERA and provide at least three examples of why. Please bring your examples to class and be prepared to share your opinion with the class during the ERA debate.

### Writing Assignments

1. Interview a self-identified feminist as a way to broaden and deepen your views of how persons come to think of themselves as feminists and what that means for their lives. Please use the provided interview questions and compile your findings into a three-page paper, typed, and double-spaced. In addition to the interview findings, please address what the diversity of feminisms reveals about historical inequities related to gender.
2. Examine the use of words that describe, define, and discriminate against women and how women are left out of many everyday phrases (e.g. policeman, congressmen, cavemen, postman, man the table, men at work). In a reflection paper, you will describe what you noticed about sexist and oppressive language - Who uses it the most often? When? In what circumstances? In your opinion, does this type of language relate to real-world inequities that affect women and girls? What is problematic about this language? Provide one example of something you learned from this exercise and one way in which you think we can improve sexist and oppressive language. Your reflection paper should be typed, double-spaced, and at least three pages in length.

### Out-of-Class Assignments

1. For homework, this assignment will require you to create a poster-size collage of media representations of women (e.g. magazines, newspapers, advertisements). What do these images represent, teach society, and influence how women and men see themselves and each other? Bring this poster-size collage to class and prepare a three-minute presentation on your findings.
2. This assignment requires you to create a one-page mind map: a visual representation of some aspect of your thoughts and feelings about women and gender studies. Your mind map might express your interpretation of one or more of our readings, the intersection of the readings with your own lived experiences, your own social location, and so on. You will create your mind map out of any materials that you wish (paper, food, fabric, metal, coins, paint, etc.). Bring your finished one-page mind map to class on the due date and be prepared to explain it to the class.

## Recommended Materials of Instruction

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Bonnie G. Smith. (2019). Women's Studies: The Basics. *Routledge*, 2nd. 9781138495937.

L. Ayu Saraswati, Barbara L. Shaw, and Heather Rellihan. (2020). Introduction to Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies: Interdisciplinary and Intersectional Approaches. *Oxford University Press*, 2nd. 9780190084806.

Katherine Spillar. (2023). 50 Years of Ms.: The Best of the Pathfinding Magazine That Ignited a Revolution. *Knopf*, 1st. 9780593321560.

### Zero Cost Textbook

Introduction to Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies by Miliann Kang, Donovan Lessard, Laura Heston, and Sonny Nordmarken. 2017. UMass Amherst. 9781945764028

## Minimum Qualifications

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History (Masters Required)  
Sociology (Masters Required)  
Women's Studies

