

# WGS 400: Women's Lives & Conditions in Central Europe: Focusing on Poland & the Czech Republic

Class Meets: Monday/Wednesday 12:40 – 2:20

Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday/Thursday

## ***Course Description***

The purpose of this class is to explore women's conditions and lives in Central Europe. This course will strive to develop an intersectional approach to analysis as well as be aware of the bias created by our own politics of location and relationship to the world. The relationship of the concept of feminism to socialism and communism will be developed and explored. This relationship will provide a basis for understanding women's current conditions in Central Europe. Poland and the Czech Republic will be used as the primary case studies for this class. The history and legacy of women in both of these countries will be explored in order to establish a basis for understanding their social and political history. This knowledge will be used as a tool of analysis to understand why the terms and concepts of western feminism have not always translated. The history and legacy of women in both countries, as well as their conditions once they became independent democracies after 1989, and the development of feminism and women's movements will be explored in order to gain a greater understanding of the different shapes women's lives take and the different sites for change in women's lives in Poland and the Czech Republic. Other countries, such as East Germany and Russia, will also be drawn upon. This course should facilitate an in-depth multilevel analysis and understanding of women's lives in Central Europe and the critical thinking skills that will be applicable for analysis of women's lives and conditions in different regions of the world.

## ***Course Objectives***

- Promote a classroom environment where everyone feels safe to learn and explore the content.
- Understand the relationship of feminism to socialism.
- Develop a set of critical thinking skills and tools to analyze women's conditions in different countries.
- Develop a framework for viewing and understanding women's conditions in Central Europe.
- Create a basis of understanding for how political concepts and ideas affect and influence individual's lives.
- Understand and use academic sources, news sources, and historical sources in combination to create an understanding of women's lives, conditions, and potential for movements.

## ***Disability Statement***

Willamette University strives to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The Disability and Learning Service Office makes every effort to make accommodations for students with a qualifying disability or temporary medical condition and to provide academic assistance on an individual basis to any undergraduate or graduate student who requests it. Any student who requires these accommodations should contact the Disability and Learning Services Office directly at 503-370-6471.

I am also willing to work with any students with disabilities and strive to make success possible in this class for all students.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism will not be tolerated. All assignments are designed to further students' intellectual learning and critical thinking capacities. The greatest disservice students do when they commit acts of plagiarism is to their own learning process. Plagiarism runs counter to the classroom environment that is being cultivated. The classroom is a place of trust and learning. Plagiarism violates this agreement of trust and learning. Willamette's official policy on plagiarism can be found at:

[www.willamette.edu/cla/catalog/Sect3/aca.html#plag](http://www.willamette.edu/cla/catalog/Sect3/aca.html#plag).

If you are not sure if something you are engaging in is plagiarism, ASK! Engaging in plagiarism will result in a failing grade in the course and you will be reported to the CLA dean of students as per Willamette's policy.

### **Grading**

The grading will reflect students overall engagement in the course. Included within the grade will be weekly wise posting and responses, concept maps, take home tests, a final research project along with class participation. The weekly wise posting and responses along with the concepts maps are to ensure students actively engage in the material and reflect throughout the course on the relationship of the material they are learning on the world and their lives. The take home tests along with the final research projects are to ensure that students have the opportunity to engage in deeper critical thought, reflection, and application. Participation is an important element in development of students thought process and is included in grading.

You have the opportunity to earn up to 488 points:

Weekly Wise Postings (10pts @ 10 each)	100 points
Weekly Wise Responses (4pts @ 10 each)	40 points
Concept Maps (12pts @ 4 each)	48 points
Take – Home Tests (50 pts @ 2 each)	100 points
Final Research Assignment	100 points
Participation	100 points

**Total: 488 points**

## **Distribution:**

The following scale of total points earned will determine grades.

A	461 – 488	B-	399 – 413	D+	336 – 350
A-	448 – 462	C+	383 – 412	D	316 – 335
B+	433 – 447	C	364 – 382	F	315 or below
B	414 – 432	C-	351 – 363		

## **Class Organization and Format:**

Class will be organized into 6 overarching units. Although the material will vary day to day, these units offer a feeling of cohesiveness to the course. Approximately 40 pages of reading will be assigned per class period. Class will consist of a variety of activities and integrated discussion in which you should try to participate in. Class activities will help to further your understanding of the material through critical engagement and application.

Weeks 1-2: *Introduction: Creating a Theoretical Perspective*

Weeks 2-4: *Introduction: Socialism and Examination of Women's Conditions Under Socialism in Central Europe*

Weeks 4-6: *Historical and Cultural Examination of Czech and Polish Women's Lives*

Week 7-8: *Feminism: Does it translate?*

Week 10: *Women's Response in Poland and Czech Republic*

Week 11-14: *Feminist Movements and Organizations*

## **Class Text**

The majority of the reading for this class will be available via WISE. There is only one text required for this course. It will not be used till the second half of the semester. The ISBN numbers have been provided to help facilitate purchasing this book online.

*Pink, Purple, Green: Women's, Religious, Environmental and Gay/Lesbian Movements in Central Europe Today.* Edited by Helena Flam. Distributed by Columbia University Press, New York. 2001

# ISBN-10: 0880334754      # ISBN-13: 978-0880334754

## **Participation**

Participation is a vital part of this course. Participation and engagement in the reading material and discussion helps further one's learning process. Since people participate in a variety of ways, it is important that you recognize and understand your options. The majority of points will be awarded for attending class, participation in classroom activities and discussion, as well as participation in small group discussion. The small group discussions are intended to help facilitate discussion in the larger group setting.

Small Group Presentations

40 points

*More information on small group projects to follow.*

Attendance 50 points

*27 times (0 abs.) = 55 pts; 26 times (1 abs)=50 pts; 25 times (2 abs) = 42pts. 24 times (3abs)=34pts; 23times (4abs)=24 pts; 22 times (5abs)=16pts; 21 times (6abs)=6pts.*

Anonymous Course Evaluations 10 points

## ***Course Policies***

### **Attendance**

- Attendance is a vital element to success in this class. It is important for students to attend class regularly and come to class prepared. Preparation means students have read the assigned reading, completed their postings for the day, and thought about the material they are engaging in.
- Regardless of attendance, you are responsible for ALL materials covered in class. You need to do the reading for class regardless of if you were in attendance. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to contact the professor and catch up on the material or brief yourself via your peers on material covered during class.
- All university activities will be considered approved absences. However, you are still responsible for the material covered during class.
- If you miss more than 6 days of class, or 2 weeks, for any reason you will not be able to participate in the anonymous course evaluation, as you need a basis of participation and attendance to provide constructive feedback on the evaluation forms.
- Sleeping during class is unacceptable, and if you do so, it will be considered an absence as you will not be engaging in class participation.
- Excuses and validation for absences are not required. You can miss up to three classes without affecting your grade. However, I trust you to all be adults and be able to manage your time and make intelligent discussions regarding classroom attendance. If you are not there, you will not receive participation points or be able to learn.

### **Late Policies**

- Weekly wise posting has to be up by 10am the day of class. Any post after that will be docked one point per day up to 10 days.
- Tests are due the Friday they are assigned by 5pm. They have to be in my office in hard format by that time. Each day a test is late the assignment will be docked 5% up to 4 days, and 10% per day after the first 4 days.
- Emailing of the final project stages and the tests is acceptable only by special arrangement. Otherwise, they need to be submitted in hard copy.

- For each day a part of the final assignment is late, your grade will be docked 5% for the first 4 days, and 10% per day after the first four days.

## Assignments

### Weekly Wise Postings

***Points: Each post will be worth 10 points. 100 points total for the semester. Students will not post on Week 7,9, 13 and 15 due to tests and presentations. In addition, students have one other 'free week' in the semester they can choose not to post.***

Students will be arranged into two different groups. Each group will post once a week. The groups will be on a rotating schedule as to what topic they are posting on. All students will post on each topic three times during the semester. These assignments should approximately take one hour per week to read the article and respond to it. It may take up to two hours when posting on an academic article, as they should be longer. The topics are listed below:

1. News article
  - a. This news article will need to be cited in proper MLA or APA format. One paragraph will summarize the news article. The next one to two paragraphs will connect the news article to the readings. In addition, the student will be able to offer their reflection and personal response to the article.
2. Theory – Academic Article
  - a. This academic article will need to be cited in proper MLA or APA format. The first 1-2 paragraphs will summarize the article. The next 1-2 paragraphs will relate the article to class material and concepts. The last paragraph will offer the student's personal reflections, related experience, and further questions to ponder.
3. Historical Artifact
  - a. This source will need to be properly cited in MLA or APA format. This can be either an academic article, news article, website, or book that informs and offers further information on the background and history of the country or region being studied at the time. This source can reflect the social, cultural, or political background of the region/country. It will need to be 3-5 paragraphs long.
4. Personal Reflection
  - a. This will be a personal reflection on an article read in class, another posting on wise, or an issue or topic raised in class. This posting can use personal experience as a source and tool of analysis. This posting will need to be 3-5 paragraphs long.

### Weekly Wise Responses

***Points: Each post will be worth 4 points. Total of 40 points for the semester. Students will not post on Week 7,9,13, and 15 due to tests and presentations. In addition, students have one other 'free week' in the semester they can choose not to post.***

Each student will be required to offers a 3-4-sentence response to a peer's posting on wise each week in addition to their posts. Reading everyone's weekly wise posting is encouraged, however, this assignment functions to ensure that students read at least one of their peers and actively thinks and engages with other classmates posting once a week. This should not take students more than 30 minutes to read and respond to a post.

### **Concept Maps**

***Points: Each concept map will be worth 12 points. Total of 48 points for the semester.***

At the end of 4 of the 6 units, students will complete a concept map. The concept map will fill an 8 by 11-inch piece of paper. It will link together the concepts covered in the unit and within the class as a whole. The purpose of the concept map is to engage in an active learning practice instead of rote memorization. It will help students understand how concepts link and work together. Depending on the unit, these concepts maps may be completed in class. They are not intended to take the student more than 15-20 minutes.

### **Take – Home Tests**

***Points: The total points for the test will be 100 points, divided between the tests depending on the number of questions on each test. Test will be handed out the Friday before they are due, questions will be addressed concerning the test the following Wednesday, and tests are due, hard copy, to my office by 5pm the Friday they are due unless otherwise arranged.***

Two take home tests will be administered during the course. These tests will require students to critically reflect on the material they have learned during the course. They will challenge the students to articulate the theories and perspective they have learned during the course as well as apply these theories and perspective to real life situations. The tests will require students to draw diagrams, concept maps, and write short answers. The goal of the tests will be for students to be able to apply and articulate the material they have learned during the course so they see and understand the applicability of the material to the world around them.

These tests should take no longer than an hour per questions to respond to. The tests may contain between 5-8 questions. This will require a commitment of at least five to eight hours from students. However, since these are take home tests the students should not have to invest additional study time if they have read the reading and been participating in class.

### **Final Research Project**

***Points: Each research project 100 points.***

The final research project will be divided into mini- assignments along the way to ensure students stay on schedule and continually invest and work on the project. These projects will allow students to investigate a different international region, issue, or person. Students will have the option of looking into a particular issue or topic that interests them in a foreign country. Students will also have the option of studying a woman who interests them in one of the countries or regions covered in the course. Students will also have the option of research a non-profit organization and how it address issue in a particular country or region as well as how it functions. Further

information on possible topics and research areas will be provided around the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of class.

**Research Proposal – 20 points**

At this point in time, students will submit a prospectus. This will outline the topic they have chosen and the research they have conducted so far. It will demonstrate critical thought about their topic and show that the student has access to enough sources to complete the assignment.

**Thesis – 10 points**

By this point in time, students should have conducted enough research to solidify their thesis topic. In this assignment, students will articulate the research topic they have come up with. At this point in time, students will need to state the form in which they are going to present their final project. (Paper, art project, video presentation, skit, etc.)

**Paper or Alternate Media Project – 50 points**

This paper will be between 10-12 pages long. It will need to be concise and through. If students choose to, they can create a video presentation (digital storytelling project, play, etc) or art project.

**Presentation – 20 points**

Students will present their project in a 10 to 15 minute presentation to the class.

**Attendance Assignments**

**Small Group Project**

***Points: 40 points***

The small group project is worth 40 points and is included in the point break down for participation. This assignment functions to provide different means and expression of participations so all students in the class feel they have a comfortable format to participation in. This assignment will help students to build communication and group negotiation skills. Each group will be assigned to a different topic area, and will have to evaluate different responses to this issue in different regions. This may entitle looking at an non-profits response, the media's response, or government response. The groups will be responsible for presenting this information in an engaging, interactive format. The presentations will be 15 minutes long with 5 minutes for discussion questions. More information on the assignment as well as group placements will be handed out.

**Course Evaluation**

***Points: 10 points***

This will be an anonymous course evaluation. It will be more detailed and in-depth than the course evaluation than the one offered by Willamette University. This course evaluation will be used to improve the class. I take this feedback very seriously and expect thoughtful feedback.

The course schedule for this semester is listed below. The readings listed need to be read by the date noted on the schedule. The schedule may change in response to the needs and interests of the class.

## **Weekly Schedule**

### ***Introduction & Creating a Theoretical Perspective***

#### ***Week One***

- (M) Syllabus, class policies, introductions
- (W) Caren Kaplan, "The Politics of Location as Transnational Feminist Critical Practice" (Online)
- Adrienne Rich, "Notes Towards a Politics of Location" (Online)

Learning Objective: You should begin to questions and examine the position and lens through which you examine the world. These readings should help create a basis of your own grounds for evaluations and allow you to see and expand upon these grounds.

#### ***Week Two***

- (M) Kolmar and Bartkowski, "Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender" 49-50 (FT)
- Kimberle Crenshaw, "Intersectionality and Identity Politics" 533-42 (FT)
- Winona LaDuke, "Mothers of Our Nations" 525-29 (FT)

Learning Objective: These readings will introduce you to the perspective of intersectional analysis, which will be a crucial tool for the course. It will encourage you to think of the different social, economic, and political intersections in these women's lives.

### ***Introduction to Socialism and Examination of Women's Conditions Under Socialism in Central Europe***

- (W) Barbara Einhorn, "The 'Woman Question': The Legacy of State Socialism" p. 17-39 (Online)

Learning Objective: Begin to understand how socialism viewed and shaped women's issues in Central Europe. Gain a greater understanding of the social and political context of Central Europe.

### ***Week Three***

- (M) Choa, “Women & Socialism” 19-25 Women Under Communism (Online)
- (W) Heidi Hartman, “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union” 1-43 (Online)

Learning Objective: Develop a critical understanding of how socialism and Marxism shaped women’s lives. Explore the complexity of the relationship of feminism to Marxism, and how these concepts worked against and with one another.

### ***Week Four***

- (M) Choa, “Women’s Employment & the Disruption of Family Relationships (57-63) (On-line)

Learning Objective: Understand how the policies of socialist views of women were played out in individual women’s lives in Central Europe in terms of their work and family relationships. Develop a greater understanding of the context of these women’s lives and the legacy these women now share.

### ***Historical and Cultural Examination of Czech Women’s Lives***

- (W) Petra Hanakova, “The Viscitudes of Czech Feminism” 1-5 (On-line)

Murray Weidenbaum, “An American Look at the Czech Republic: An economic outlook” 735-738 (Online)

Czech Republic: Survey on the Status of Women p. 1-4  
Women’s International Network News Autumn 2000 (Online)

- (F) ***Research Proposal due at 5pm, hardcopy, to my office.***

### ***Week Five***

- (M) Feminism in the Czech Republic: Post- Communism and Beyond  
By: N.H. Lohrbeer p. 1-23
- (W) Feminism in the Czech Republic: Post- Communism and Beyond  
By: N.H. Lohrbeer p. 23-53

Learning Objective: Wednesday will serve as an introduction into the social and political background of the Czech Republic. Monday and Wednesday will serve to

introduce more specifically women's historical conditions and activism in the Czech Republic.

### ***Historical & Cultural Perspective of Polish Women's Lives***

#### ***Week Six***

(M) Malgorzoata Fidelis, "Participation in the Creative Work of the Nation: Polish Women Intellectuals in the Cultural Construction of Female Gender Roles, 1864-1890" p. 108-125 (Online)

Anna Zarnowska, "Women's Political Participation in Inter-war Poland: Opportunities and Limitations" p. 57-65 (Online)

(W) "Polish Women in the 90's" Sections 1-9.  
<http://temida.free.ngo.pl/rapcont.htm>

Pawel Zalecki, "Religious Revival in Poland. New Religious Movements and the Roman Catholic Church" p. 66-80 (Pink, Purple, Green)

Learning Objective: Develop an understanding of women's historical and social conditions in Poland in order to foster an understanding the history of Polish women and the legacy Polish women have to draw on when they become a democracy again.

### ***Feminism: Does it translate?***

#### ***Week Seven***

(M) "An Allergy to Feminism: Women's Movements Before and After 1989" 182-215 (Cinderella Goes to Market) (Online)

Steven Saxonberg, "In the Shadow of Amicable Gender Relations? The Czech Republic" p. 33-46 (Pink, Purple, Green)

(W) Jirina Sikolva, "Why Western Feminism Isn't Working in the Czech Republic" p. 1-7 (Online)

Marianne A Ferber & Phyllis Hutton Raabe, "Women in the Czech Republic: Feminism, Czech Style" p. 407-424 (Online)

(F) ***Test Due by 5pm to Office***

#### ***Week Eight***

(M) Charlotte Perkins Gilman, "American Feminism and Pedagogy: The Case of Poland" p. 36-40 (Online)

(W) Beth Holmgren, “Bug Inspectors and Beauty Queens: The Problems of Translating” 15-31 (Online)

(F) **Thesis due, 5pm hardcopy, to my office**

Learning Objective: Understand and explore the disconnect between translations and cultural history concerning the term feminism. Think about the power of the term feminist/feminism and the relationship and importance of the term to women’s issues, movements, and mobilization.

### ***Small Group Presentations***

#### ***Week Nine***

(M) – ***Small Group Presentations***

(W) – ***Small Group Presentations***

### ***Women’s Responses in Poland/Czech Republic***

#### ***Week Ten***

(M) Elzbieta H. Oleksy, “Women’s pictures and policies of resistance in Poland” p. 162- 171 (Online)

Elzbieta Matynia, “Feminist Art and Democratic Culture: Debates on the New Poland” p. 1-20 (Online)

Agnieszka Jucewicz, “Polish Feminists: Forging a Sisterhood” p. 26- 28 (Online)

(W) Phyllis H. Raabe, “Women, work, and family in the Czech Republic – and comparisons with the West” p. 51-60 (Online)

Koenig , “Czech Women & Higher Education Dagmar Kotlandova” p. 1-4 (Online)

Einhorn, Barabara. “Self-determination under Threat: The State and Reproductive Rights” p. 74-112 (Cinderella Goes to Market) (Online)

Learning Objective: Explore the location of women’s interests and movements in Poland and the Czech Republic post- 1989. Why is art and images of women so important in Poland? In the Czech Republic, how does the historical context situate the focus on family relations and education?

### ***Feminist Movements & Organizations***

#### ***Week Eleven***

(M) Angela Coyle, “Fragmented feminism: Women’s organizations and

citizenship in ‘transition’ in Poland” p. 57-65 (Online)

Ewa, Hauser, “Traditions of Patriotism, Questions of Gender: The Case of Poland” p. 78-104 (Post-Communism and the Body Politic)

(W) Katja M. Guenther, “A Bastion of Sanity in a Crazy World”: A Local Feminist Movement and the Reconstitution of Scale, Space, and Place in an Eastern German City” p. 551-575 (Online)

Eva Kavkova, “The doom of Czech women’s organizing – accident or conspiracy?” p. 1 – 3 (Online)

Learning Objective: Understand and explore the evolution and social situations of women’s organizations in Central Europe post 1989. Take into consideration the social, cultural, and political history of this region as a tool of analysis for understanding the current state of women’s organizations and movements

### ***Week Twelve***

(M) Jochen Kleres, “Cherries Blossoming in East(ern) Germany?” p. 135-149 (Pink, Purple, Green)

Krzysztof Kliszczynski, “A Child of a Young Democracy: The Polish Gay Movement, 1989-1999” p. 161-168 (Pink, Purple, Green)

(W) Mihaly Riszovannij, “Self-Articulation of the Gay and Lesbian Movement in Hungary after 1989” p. 140-160 (Pink, Purple, Green)

Andrea Peto, “Continuity in Change: Hungarian Women’s Organization” p. 47-56 (Pink, Purple, Green)

Learning Objective: Examine the intersection of sexual orientation with women’s movements and conditions in Central Europe since 1989. Take into consideration the political and social climate of the region. How does Polish’s religious revival movement affect and include the polish gay movement?

### ***Week Thirteen***

(M) Gaer, Felice, “Women, International Law & International Intuitions: The Case of the United Nations” p. 66-76 (Online)

Margaret Snyder, “Unlikely Godmother: The United Nations and the Global Women’s Movement” p. 24-50 (Online)

- (W) Silke Roth, "Sisterhood and Solidarity? Women's Organizations in the Expanded European Union" p. 460- 487 (Online)

(F) **Test Due to Office by 5pm**

Learning Objective: Local and global communities are connected more today than ever before. It is important to understand the relationship of organizations such as the European Union and the United Nations to women's conditions in individual countries. Consider how the European Union and the United Nations has both positive and negative affects on women's lives in Central Europe.

**Week Fourteen**

- (W) Shana Penn, "Women's Movements On-Line: The New Post-Socialist Revolution" p. 125-143 (Online)

Myra Marx Ferree and Tetyana Pudrovskya, "Transnational Feminist NGOs on the Web: Networks and Identities in the Global North and South" p. 247- 274 (Online)

- (W) Myra Marx Ferre, "Globalization and Feminism: Opportunities and Obstacles for Activism in the Global Arena" p. 3-23 (Online)

Learning Objective: Explore the influence technology has had on women's movements and non-profit organizations and the social inequality inherent in these systems. Think critically on the global relationship of feminism and the local conditions of women in Central Europe.

**Final Research Presentations**

**Week Fifteen**

(M) – Final Presentations

(W) – Final Presentations

- (F) **Final Projects due, 5pm hardcopy, to my office (50pts).  
Course Evaluations due 5pm (10pts).**