Gender in our Communities and Cultures

This is an introductory course to critical gender studies. There are several key components to this class:

- Both theory and real experiences are central to this class. This class features a constant dialogue between theory and the real world. We will be using culture to understand theory and theory to understand culture.
- This class aims to embody the feminist notion that the personal is political. Hence, there is space to explore real and personal experiences as they relate to our discussions and readings.
- This class is exploratory and must be approached creatively and with an open mind. We will all aim to creatively create links between readings, between cultural artifacts, between readings and cultural artifacts, between this class and lived experiences, and between our and others' experiences.

Our Roles

Me:

To provide you with course materials

To facilitate and moderate class discussions

To thoughtfully address your concerns and questions

To review and provide useful and timely feedback to your work

To support and work with you throughout the semester on your progress

To make sure you leave the classroom at the end of the semester new ways of thinking about our world

You:

To read for comprehension, not just completion

To participate in class; both actively engage others and actively listen

To approach me or your classmates with questions and concerns

To argue with ideas, not people

To be supportive of your peers

<u>Assignments</u>

Cultural Artifacts:

Every Wednesday, several of you will be asked to bring in a cultural artifact that you have found connects to either the readings assigned for the week or to something that we've previously read. By "cultural artifact," I mean a form of media that you can show the class (for instance, as a song, a video clip, an art piece, a news article, an article of clothing, etc.). In about 5 minutes, you must present your artifact to the class, thoroughly justify and explain how it relates to what we're studying in our class, and what it means to you or society at large. Your short presentation will then be open to questions. A very wide variety of artifacts will be accepted, as long as they are *properly explained and justified in relation to the class.* Feel free to ask if you're not sure if or how your artifact will work for this assignment. As an example, I will present The Lost Bois' "Reading Rainbow" as my cultural artifact on the first week of

class.

Responses:

Every other week, you will be required to write a short 300-word response to any previous cultural artifact presentation. In your response, relate the cultural artifact to class readings in way that we haven't already done. If at all possible, relate the cultural artifact to your life and experiences. Does it mean anything to you? Do you see anything interesting in the artifact? On the first week of classes, we will determine who will be writing responses on which weeks.

Final Project:

For your final project, you will choose one of two options. [Anyone who wishes to present their final project with the class will have of opportunity to do so at our end-of-the-semester party. This is not mandatory but highly encouraged!]

Creation: Create your own cultural artifact (song, art piece, video, poem, article of clothing, etc.). You will then write a short 3 – 4 page paper explaining how the cultural artifact relates to what we've learned in this class. What does it say about the theories we've learned, our world and (y)our experiences? Basically, the paper will be a more formal and comprehensive version of the cultural artifact presentations you will be giving and seeing all semester.

Paper: Submit a 1-page informal proposal for a topic you'd like to explore that relates to the class. You and I will work with your proposal to create a prompt for a 4 - 6 page paper you will write.

Assessment

There will not be any formal grades, but all assignments will receive detailed feedback. We will together monitor and discuss your progress over the semester. As long as conscious effort and improvement are demonstrated over the course of the semester, you will be fine. If not, we will work together to make sure you demonstrate your efforts and improvements.

Reading List

Week 1: Importance of Theory & Reading

Maria Lugones and Elizabeth Spelman, "Have we got a theory for you!" bell hooks, "Theory as Liberatory Practice"

The Lost Bois, "Reading Rainbow" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1zqzGuDgjI

Week 2: Social Systems

Allan Johnson, "Patriarchy, the System; An It, Not a He, Them, or an Us" Michael Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia"

Ad: http://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2011/04/27/some-men-just-need-to-be-slapped-policing-masculinity/

Week 3: Social Constructionism

Judith Lorber, "Night to His day: The Social Construction of Gender"

Suzanne Kessler, "The Medical Construction of Gender"

Harvard Sailing Team:

Boys Will Be Girls - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gspaoaecNAg

Girls Will Be Boys- http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=paNiEdFTvuA&feature=fvwrel

Week 4: **Gendering Childhood**

DuCille, "Black Barbie and the Deep Play of Difference"

Michael Kimmel, "What are Little Boys Made of?"

A Girl Like Me, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWyI77Yh1Gg

Week 5: Performance, Policing and Play

Candace West & Don Zimmerman, "Doing Gender"

Richard Majors, "Cool Pose and Masculinity"

Diamond Rings, "All Yr Songs": http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o6IUKa25e80

Guest Artist: Catherine Opie

Week 6: Intersectionality: Race

Norma Alarcon, "The Theoretical Subjects of *This Bridge Called My Back* and Anglo-American Feminism"

Staceyann Chin: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ofsVwH40 k

Week 7: Intersectionality: Race

JeeYeun Lee, "Beyond Bean Counting" in Colonize This

Guest Speaker: Vickie Nam

The Lost Bois, "The Race" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SruDVl6OaVk&feature=related

Week 8: Intersectionality: Class

Johnnie Tillmon, "Welfare as a Women's Issue" Gwendolyn Mink, "The Lady and the Tramp"

Guest Scholar: Jennifer Streeter

Week 9: **Intersectionality: Sex**

Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Five-Sexes: Why Male and Female Are Not Enough"

Hanna Rosin, "A Boy's Life," The Atlantic, November 2008,

http://www.theatlantic.com/doc/200811/transgender-children

Week 10: Intersectionality: Sexuality

John D'Emilio, "Capitalism and Gay Identity"

"Hir" http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GmfkdOAg-xk&feature=related

Week 11: Intersectionality: Sexuality

Leila Rupp, "Loving Women in the Modern World"

Guest Scholar: Judith Halberstam

Tribe 8, "Estrofemme"

MEN, Credit Card Babie\$

Week 12: Femininity and Power

Sharpley-Whiting, "Beauty Culture and Diasporic Sex Tourism" Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power" Julie Ruin, "V.G.I."

Week 13: The Body and Survival

Vivyan Adair, "Inscriptions of Poverty on the Female Body"
Silvana Naguib, "Understanding Sexual Harassment: A Primer for Dudes"

"Amber Alert" - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14r2hFC3J5M&NR=1
Julie Ruin, "I Wanna Know What <3 Is"

Week 14: Safe Spaces and Communities

Kath Weston, "Gay Families as the 'Families We Choose"

MEN, "My Family" (Joan Armatrading cover)

Field Trip to SMYRC or other local youth community center

Week 15: Voices

Bikini Kill, "Riot Grrrl Philosophy" Baumgardner & Richards, "Third Wave Manifesta"

Yellow Rage: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y22ty-VPpbA
Bikini Kill, "Rebel Girl" & "Starfish"
Kathleen Hanna, "Stepping up the Mic"