

*Syllabus Draft – Subject to Revision*  
**GSWS002: GENDER & SOCIETY**  
Summer Session II 2022

**Course Instructor:** Alicia Meyer (she/her)

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**Office Hours:** by appointment via Zoom, chat session, or phone

**Course Description:**

This course will introduce students to the ways in which sex, gender, and sexuality mark our bodies, influence our perceptions of self and others, organize families and work life, delimit opportunities for individuals and groups of people, as well as impact the terms of local and transnational economic exchange. We will explore the ways in which sex, gender, and sexuality work with other markers of difference and social status such as race, age, nationality, and ability to further demarcate possibilities, freedoms, choices, and opportunities available to people.

**Required Texts:** All reading assignments will be PDFs or other forms of electronic media made available through Canvas. There are several films and clips that we will watch that are available through Canvas and Van Pelt Library.

**Assignments and Evaluation:**

Attendance and Participation: 20%

If you need to miss a class, please reach out to me beforehand. You are permitted to take one absence, but, because this is an accelerated course, any further absences will result in a deduction of your final grade.

Reading Quizzes: 20%

Before every class there will be a short, 2-3 question reading quiz that engages the materials assigned for that day.

Reflection Exercises: 40%

Each week you will be provided with writing prompts that ask you to write critically about the materials read and discussed in class that week. Exercises will be due each Friday and will ask you to write no more than a paragraph (500 words) on a topic from the week.

Final Project: 20%

At the end of this course, you will revisit one of the reflection exercises that you created earlier in the class and expand it into either 1) a short, critical paper, or, 2) a creative project.

**Accessibility Statement:**

The University of Pennsylvania provides reasonable accommodations to students with disabilities who have self-identified and been approved by the office of Student Disabilities Services (SDS). Please make an appointment to meet with one of your professors as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations and your needs.

If you have not yet contacted SDS, and would like to request accommodations or have questions, you can make an appointment by calling SDS 215.573.9235. The office is located in the Weingarten Learning Resources Center at Stouffer Commons 3702 Spruce Street, Suite 300.

**Difficult Content and Building the Feminist Classroom:**

We are committed to our classroom being a shared space where we can all work collaboratively.

We each learn in different ways. If circumstances affect your performance in the class, please let us know.

Together, we can decide how to best accommodate your learning preferences and alter the course to meet your needs.

Our course materials and discussions will engage depictions of violence, racism, sexism, sexual abuse, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, and other topics that may elicit intense responses and disagreement. Throughout the course, we will have frank and challenging conversations on these subjects and about our personal and institutional responsibilities. As your instructor, I will work to facilitate conversations that are respectful of every student and that are attentive to the conditions that produce uneven degrees of safety in the classroom.

**Academic Integrity:**

All Penn students are bound by the Code of Academic Integrity and are assumed to have read and understood it. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, please see the University of Pennsylvania's [Code of Academic Integrity](#).

**Late Work:**

If you encounter circumstances that impede your ability to submit an assignment on time, please contact me at least 24 hours in advance of the assignment deadline. Except in the event of a last-minute emergency, no written work will be accepted late.

**Resources at Penn:**

Penn's student services are operating remotely during the COVID19 outbreak. Please reach out to them directly or contact me if you are interested in working with any of these resources.

[Penn Women's Center](#)

[Penn LGBT Center](#)

[Penn Violence Prevention](#)

[Weingarten Learning Resources Center](#)

[Office of Student Disability Services](#)

[Writing Center](#)

[Counseling and Psychological Services](#)

[First Generation Low-Income \(FGLI\) program](#)

[The Office of the Chaplain](#)

### Tentative Schedule

\*Please read all assigned readings for the class of the day they are assigned.

#### **Week 1: Introduction to Feminist Thought**

*Thursday: Women of Color Feminism*

Read:

Selections from *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981)

Audre Lorde, “The Uses of the Erotic,” in *Sister Outsider* (1984), 53–58 and  
“The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master’s House” in *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981), 94–97

bell hooks, *Ain’t I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism* (1981), 1–13

Gloria Anzaldúa, “Movimientos de rebeldía y las culturas que traicionan” and “La conciencia de la mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness,” from *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987), 15–23, 77–91

Adrienne Rich “Taking Women Students Seriously.” *On Lies, Secrets, and Silences: Selected Prose 1966-1978*. New York: W.W. Norton.

#### **Due Friday, Reflection Exercise 1**

#### **Week 2: Intersectionality: Theory and Action**

*Tuesday: Intersectionality*

Read:

Kimberlé Crenshaw, “The Urgency of Intersectionality” (2016)

Judith Butler, “Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire.” *Gender Trouble*. New York: Routledge, 1990. 1-22.

Patricia Hill Collins

Cathy Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?” (1997), 21–51

*Thursday: Queer Liberation*

Read:

ACT UP NY, *Queers Read This*, (1990)

Eve Sedgwick, “Queer and Now” in *Tendencies* (1993), 1-9

David Wojnarowicz, *Close to the Knives: A Memoir of Disintegration* (1991), 84–110

Sarah Schulman, “Introduction: How Change is Made” in *Let the Record Show: a Political History of ACT UP in New York, 1987-1993* (2021), 5–34

#### **Due Friday, 5:00pm EST: Reflection Exercise 2**

#### **Week 3: Racialized Gender**

*Tuesday: Decolonizing Feminism*

Read:

Grace Kyungwon Hong and Roderick Ferguson, “Introduction,” *Strange Affinities: The Gender and Sexual Politics of Comparative Racialization* (2011), 1–22

Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck and Angie Morrill. “Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging

Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy.” *Feminist Formations* 25.1 (2013), 8–34

Erin Khuê Ninh, “Without Enhancements: Sexual Violence in the Everyday Lives of Asian American Women” from *Asian American Feminisms and Women of Color Politics*. Edited Lynn Fujiwara, Shireen Roshanravan. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2018.

Sara Farris, “Introduction.” *In the Name of Women’s Rights: The Rise of Femonationalism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017. 1-21.

*Thursday: Trans Studies*

Read:

Susan Stryker, “My Words to Victor Frankenstein Above the Village of Chamounix Performing Transgender Rage” *GLQ* 1.3 (1994), 237–254

Andrea Long Chu, “On Liking Women” (2018)

Gayle Salamon, "Introduction," "Chapter 1: Comportment" and "Coda: Two Days in February" from *The Life and Death of Latisha King: A Critical Phenomenology of Transphobia* (2018), 1–58, 161–169

**Due Friday, 5:00pm EST: Reflection Exercise 3**

**Week 4: Embodiment**

*Tuesday: Mothering*

Read:

micha cárdenas, Pregnancy: Reproductive Futures in Trans of Color Feminism. *TSQ* 1 May 2016; 3 (1-2): 48–57.

Loretta Ross, “The Color of Choice: White Supremacy and Reproductive Justice.” *Color of Violence*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2016. 53-65.

Alexis Pauline Gumbs, "m/other ourselves: a Black queer feminist genealogy for radical mothering." *Revolutionary Mothering* (2016), 19–31.

*Thursday: Beauty*

Read:

Selection from Roxane Gay, *Hunger: A Memoir of (My) Body*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2017.

Selection from Sabrina Strings, *Fearing the Black Body: The Racial Origins of Fat Phobia*. New York: NYU Press, 2019.

**Due Friday, 5:00pm EST: Reflection Exercise 4**

**Week 5: Work**

*Tuesday: Sex and Work*

Read:

Taffy Brodesser-Akner. “Miss American Dream: How Britney Spears went to Vegas and became a feminist role model. No, really.” *Matter*, 2014.

Jessica Pressler, “The Hustlers at Scores: A modern Robin Hood story: the strippers who stole from (mostly) rich, (usually) disgusting men and gave to, well, themselves.” *The Cut*, 2015.

Sarah Maslin Nir, “The Price of Nice Nails.” *The New York Times*, 2015.

Elizabeth Broeder, “TRASHGiRRRLLLLZZZ: A Manifesto for Misfit ToYZ.” 2016.

Watch:

*Framing Britney Spears*. Directed by Samantha Stark and produced by Jason Stallman, Sam Dolnick, and Stephanie Priess. 2021. *The New York Times*.

Listen: (Playlist made available on YouTube and Spotify)

Thursday: *Work and the Family*

Read:

Kellie Carter Jackson. “‘She Was a Member of the Family’: Ethel Phillips, Domestic Labor, and Employer Perceptions.” *Women’s Studies Quarterly*. Vol. 45. Is. 3/4. 2017. 160-173.

Aren Z. Aizura, “The Romance of the Amazing Scalpel: Race, Labor, and Affect in Thai Gender Reassignment Clinics” in *Mobile Subjects: Transnational Imaginaries of Gender Reassignment*. Duke University Press, 2018. 174-206.

Elizabeth Wallace, “The People Behind the Mop Buckets.” 2015.

**Due Friday, 5:00pm EST: Reflection Exercise 5**

**Week 6: Feminist Futures**

Tuesday: *Feminist Futures*

Read:

Paul B. Preciado, “When Statues Fall” (2020)

Read excerpts from the Penn & Slavery Project

Listen: “The Case for PILOTs at Penn” (on spotify and apple podcasts)

Brittney Cooper, selections from *Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower* (2018)

Kyla Schuller, selections from *The Trouble with White Women: A Counterhistory of Feminism* (2021)

Hil Malatino, “The Promise of Repair: Trans Rage and the Limits of Feminist Coalition.” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* (2021) 46:4, 827-851

**Due Thursday, 5:00pm EST: Final Project**