

# Gender & Society

ENGL 0159 / GSWS 0002  
Tues/Thurs 5:15pm-9:05pm



## Instructor:

Liz Rose (they/them)

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays before class, or by appointment

## Course Description

This course offers an interdisciplinary introduction to Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies with a focus on the ways in which sex, gender, and sexuality mark our bodies, influence our perceptions of self and others, organize families and institutions, delimit opportunities for individuals and groups of people, and impact lived experiences. We will explore the ways in which sex, gender, and sexuality work with other markers of difference and social status such as race, class, nationality, and ability to further demarcate possibilities, freedoms, choices, and opportunities available to people. This course will cover the material and social constructions and productions of sex and gender, and the power dynamics that drive and structure gendered social orders.

## Course Objectives

- To gain an introductory understanding of the field of gender, sexuality, and women's studies
- To define, describe, and analyze different approaches to feminist thought
- To develop a basic knowledge of the gendered and racialized historical legacies of colonialism that structure society today
- To understand and be able to utilize feminism as a lens for self-reflection as well as an entry point for discussion and comprehension of academic texts, popular culture, music, films, and other media

- To become familiar with key texts and major scholars, activists, and performers who have contributed to the growing body of feminist knowledge

## **Academic Accommodations**

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 in order 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.

## **Names and Pronouns**

Students will be asked to share their name with the class when we do introductions, and are encouraged to list preferred names and pronouns on their zoom account. If your name differs from the university record or changes during our class, please let the instructor know.

In support of the University of Pennsylvania's commitment to providing an equitable and safe experience for students whose birth name and/or legal name does not reflect their gender identity and/or gender expression, Penn accepts requests from any student seeking to use a preferred first and/or middle name in University records. A student's preferred name can and will be used where feasible in all University systems unless the student's birth name and/or legal name use is required by law or the student's preferred name use is for intent of misrepresentation. Once you change your first name and pronouns in Path@penn, you can contact canvas to change your name and pronouns as well at this email address: [canvas@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:canvas@pobox.upenn.edu)

Any student, including transgender, gender nonconforming, gender variant, and non-cisgender students who wish to designate a preferred name and pronouns can do so in path@penn. Students wishing to change a birth name and/or legal name to a preferred name can meet with one of the following designated University Life trans\* allies to discuss the scope and limitations of the preferred name request:

Erin Cross, Director, LGBT Center, 215-898-5044

Rodney Robinson, Associate Director, Office of Student Affairs, 215-898-6533

## **A Note on Pronouns**

Pronouns are a common way to refer to someone in the third person instead of using a name (ie. she, he, they, zie, ze, ve--there are many!) and in our classroom, it is essential that we refer to each other by the names and pronouns that each person uses. Remember that pronouns **may or may not** specifically affirm someone's gender identity and you cannot tell what someone's pronouns are by their name or by looking at them.

You are not required to declare or share your pronouns. If you would prefer not to share, I will refer to you exclusively by name. You are welcome to include your pronouns on your canvas profile if you would like. If the pronouns you use change over the course of the semester, please let me know so I can be sure to use them.

Take care to take note of each other's pronouns. If you accidentally refer to someone by the wrong pronoun, quickly apologize, correct yourself, and move on with whatever you were saying.

## **Communication Policy & Office Hours**

I hope you take advantage of office hours to ask questions or chat about course materials-you don't have to have an academic issue to come to office hours, and I enjoy getting to know our students better. I will have a sign-up sheet after the first recitation session to visit our office hours at least once. Office hours are posted at the top of the syllabus.

Feel free to email us with any concerns or questions and I will do our best to get back to you in a timely fashion, typically within 48 hrs, Monday-Friday between 9am and 5pm eastern. Please note: if you email an hour before class, I will NOT get that message until after class.

## **Academic Integrity**

Since the University is an academic community, its fundamental purpose is the pursuit of knowledge. Essential to the success of this educational mission is a commitment to the principles of academic integrity. Every member of the University community is responsible for upholding the highest standards of honesty at all times. Students, as members of the community, are also responsible for adhering to the principles and spirit of the following [Code of Academic Integrity](#). Please familiarize yourself with it in its entirety.

## **Course Requirements**

Class Engagement and Participation: 30%

Discussion lead: 10%

Autoethnography Midterm Paper: 20%

Final Term Paper Proposal: 10%

Final Term Paper: 30%

## **Class Engagement & Participation**

### **Attendance**

Class participation comprises a significant portion of your grade. Participation is integral in this class and I expect you to contribute thoughtfully to class discussion throughout the semester. Most importantly, to achieve course learning goals, you must attend and participate in classes. However, if you feel unwell or if you are under quarantine or in isolation because you have been exposed to Covid-19 or tested positive for it, you should not come to campus or attend in-person classes or activities. Any absences should be reported through the **Course Absence Report system**. It is your responsibility to contact your instructor to create a plan for participation and engagement in the course as soon as you are able to do so, and to make a plan to complete assignments when illness delays your completion. I recognize there can be a variety of extenuating circumstances that can prevent attendance. If you have additional concerns about attendance, or if there are unforeseen circumstances that change for you over the course of the semester, please be in touch with us as soon as possible so we can discuss possible accommodations.

### **A note on wellness**

Please be in touch if you need additional support or accommodations and remember that taking care of yourself and your loved ones should be your top priority. I am always happy to discuss options to find an appropriate balance for the semester. Please don't hesitate to reach out.

### **Participation**

In class, I encourage you to ask questions, make clarifications, and share your thoughts about the readings, recordings, and viewings. To prepare for class, take notes while you are reading, listening to, and watching course materials. Look up names or concepts that are unfamiliar to you. I recommend keeping a running list of keywords/terms that we encounter throughout the semester. Starting class discussions with a question is always encouraged! Similarly, I encourage students to bring points of clarification to the class, such as "I am still unclear about how this author is using this word" or "the main argument of this text was difficult for me because...". Bringing these kinds of comments to class helps us identify difficult concepts together and move toward greater understanding.

Ways to participate can include:

- asking & answering questions on lecture presentations and discussion posts
- participating in class discussions by sharing opinions, asking questions, and responding to the readings and course materials
- sending me questions and comments in advance of class

### **Difficult Content & Building a Feminist Classroom**

In a feminist classroom, first and foremost is the creation of a respectful environment for learning. In this class, we will be discussing some difficult topics. As your teacher, I will never do

anything to intentionally shock or upset you; it is also my intention to create a challenging and intellectually stimulating environment, which will occasionally involve unpacking and processing difficult topics. Please be conscious of the fact that others may have (and will have!) opinions different from your own. If you are having difficulty dealing with a class discussion, reading, viewing, or listening excerpt, you may voice these concerns in class or you may discretely step out of class (in this event, please send me a quick email afterward).

If you are someone who is confident about speaking in class, try to be mindful of how much time you are occupying and try to invite others into the conversation. Also, be mindful of others' experiences when you speak. Avoid making assumptions about anyone's experience. Respect each others' names, gender pronouns, and expressed identities; no one is required to share information about their identities or experiences. Do not hesitate to approach me if you feel there are measures I can take to make the classroom a more hospitable space for you.

### **A note on late work**

Assignments are due on the date listed in the syllabus/on canvas. 1 week extensions will be considered under extenuating circumstances, with the exception of the final paper, for which I cannot grant extensions in order to get grades submitted on time. Improvement over the course of the semester will be considered heavily for the final grade submission.

## **Assignments**

### **Class Discussion Lead (10%)**

**(once only, due the morning one day before class):**

In this assignment you will **record a video** in which you help lay out key questions for the class discussion on **one main text or other content item** for a particular week. You can select any week from the syllabus to present, and any item not yet accounted for during that week. **You will record a video on zoom in which you introduce the work, its author, and broader context, and will help the class develop an understanding of its key concerns. The video should be 10-15 minutes long.** Who is the author of this text and what is their history and context? What motivated them to create this text or content? What is the main argument? What key questions does the work raise, and what is at stake in the variety of answers available for each one? These are some of the questions your presentation will address. Please end your presentation with several questions for the class about the text or topic. **Your video presentation is due by 9 am EDT the day before class as an attachment submitted to the discussion board.** Students will sign up for presentation days after our first class meeting.

### **Participation (30%)**

**In-class participation and Response Discussion Posts (every class, due by 9 a.m. before class)**

In addition to active, in-class participation, every student will submit a written discussion post responding to the discussion lead presentations. **This response is due by 9 am EDT the morning**

**of each class.** You should touch on at least three texts/presentations, attempting to answer the questions posed by the presenter and bringing in your own ideas and questions. Remember that the goal is not to “get it right,” but to explore the complexities of the issues brought up by the readings and by your classmates. **The response should have three parts:**

- 1. a direct response to the questions posed in the presentations**
- 2. a key quote or scene that stood out to the student**
- 3. a critical reflection of the ideas discussed.**

Reactions should be approximately 500 words and should be posted on the discussion board on canvas by 9 a.m. EDT the day of class meetings.

### **Autoethnography Midterm Paper (20%)**

This essay should synthesize one of the key approaches that we have discussed in class. It will take up one theoretical text and explain the arguments and keywords of the text, and use key quotes to show how the arguments and ideas might be applied to cultural production (a film, piece of writing, visual art, etc.). The aim of the essay should be to clearly outline the ideas as if you are explaining the ideas to a friend or family member unfamiliar with the field.

**Due Friday, July 14th at 5 pm EDT as a Word document submission on Canvas.**

### **Final Essay Proposal (10%)**

Please submit a written proposal (200 words) for the final essay, explaining your primary text, key theoretical texts, and general argument. After the proposal is submitted, you will schedule a time to meet with the instructor to discuss the project. **Due Friday, July 28th at 5pm as a Word document submission on Canvas**

### **Final Essay (30%)**

Throughout the semester, we will be practicing feminist analysis. The final term paper is an opportunity for you to choose your own “object” for analysis that is an appropriate length for an 8-10 page term paper. Examples include a film, song or album, current event, specific policy issue, medical practice, etc. Additional details will be provided on the canvas assignment prompt. **The paper proposal should include a tentative title, short outline, and introductory paragraph that presents a clear thesis statement. Due Friday, Wednesday July 3rd at 5 pm EDT as a Word document on canvas.**

<b>Points</b>	<b>Grade</b>		
93-100	A	76-79	C+
90-92	A-	73-75	C
86-89	B+	70-72	C-
83-85	B	66-69	D+
80-82	B-	60-65	D

# Course Schedule

The schedule may change as needed. The instructor will announce all changes on canvas.

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## Week 1 Foundational Terms

Key concepts: intersectionality; medical racism; sexuality and the sciences; trans / transgender; nonbinary; gender nonconforming; sex; gender; queer; intersex; racialized gender, Black feminism; knowledge production

### ***For May 28th***

**Participate:** Post on the discussion board and respond to two other posts

**Engage:**

- Watch: Introductory lecture on sex/gender distinction
- Listen to: Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, "[Until Black Women are Free, None of Us will be Free](#)"
- Watch: *Understanding the Complexities of Gender*: Sam Killermann at TEDxUofIChicago (2013) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NRcPXtqdKjE>

**Read:**

- Combahee River Statement
- Kathryn Bond Stockton, "When Was Gender?" from *Gender(s)*, 2021.

### ***For May 30th***

**Participate:** Discussion leads post video presentations on the discussion board, others respond!

**Engage:**

- Watch: "What Intersectionality Really Means for Movements: Prof Kimberlé W. Crenshaw" The Laura Flanders Show: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9dcj5tegl7l&t=12s>
- Gender diversity & identity in Queertopia - VPRO documentary <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c1LB8kDW67M>

**Read:**

- Emily Martin, "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles"

- C. Riley Snorton, “Anatomically Speaking: Ungendered Flesh and the ;Science of Sex” from *Black on Both Sides*, 2017.
- Heath Fogg Davis, “Introduction: Sex Stickers,” *Beyond Trans: Does Gender Matter?*
- Susan Stryker, “(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies”

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## Week 2

### Auto-Ethnography and Disability Justice

Key concepts: autobiography; biomythography; auto-ethnography; oppositional knowledge; politics of recognition; passing; crip studies; fat phobia; diet culture; disability justice

#### **For June 4th**

**Participate:** Discussion leads post video presentations on the discussion board, others respond!

#### **Engage:**

- Watch Lecture on Elements of auto-ethnography
- Denice Frohman, “[First Kiss](#)”
- Joshua Whitehead (minute 7:00-26:00):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ZxJ2MmEu2M>

#### **Read:**

- Christian, Barbara. “The Race For Theory,” *Cultural Critique*. Spring, 1987, No. 6.
- Audre Lorde, *Zami*, 1982. Chapter 1-4, p 9-42
- “Portrait: An entire rainbow of possibilities” by Gary Bowen, in *Trans liberation : beyond pink or blue*, Leslie Feinberg, 1998.
- Cherríe Moraga, “La Güëra,” from *Loving in the War Years: Lo Que Nunca Paso' Por Sus Labios*, 1983

#### **For June 6th**

**Participate:** Discussion leads post video presentations on the discussion board, others respond!

#### **Engage:**

- Listen: “[Fat Phobia & Diet Culture](#)” with Laverne Cox & Virgie Tovar  
Note: In addition to the actual podcast, let’s discuss the opening advertisements!
- Watch: Jari Osborn’s [Picture This](#) (2017)

#### **Read:**



- Ellen Samuels, "My Body, My Closet: Invisible Disability and the Limits of Coming-Out Discourse"
- Sabrina Strings, "Introduction" in *Fearing the Black Body: The Racial Origins of Fat Phobia*, 2019.
- Milbern and Piepzna-Samarasinha, "Crip Lineages, Crip Futures: A Conversation by Stacey Park Milbern and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha," *Crip Genealogies*, Mel Y. Chen et. al, 2023.

**Auto-ethnography Midterm Due on Friday, July 19th at 5 pm**

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### Week 3 Transnational Feminisms

Key concepts: Western feminism; Third World feminism; Hegemonic masculinity; migration; globalization; neoliberalism; World Bank; IMF; identity politics, intersectionality, assemblage, diaspora, fugitivity, travesti, post feminism; commodities; War on Terror

**For June 11th**

**Participate:** Discussion leads post video presentations on the discussion board, others respond!

**Midterm Evaluation:** Please complete the google form before class on Tuesday

#### Engage

- "Marielle Franco: Killed for defending the people of Rio", Amnesty, 2018.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9Ofg0ObVvY>
- Sementes: Mulheres pretas no poder [Seeds: Black Women in Power] (film, 2020)  
<https://video-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/watch/seeds-black-women-in-power-sementes-mulheres-pretas-no-poder>

#### Read

- Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others"
- Harsha Walia, "Dispossession, Deprivation, Displacement: Reframing the Global Migration Crisis"
- Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses"

**For June 13th**

**Participate:** Discussion leads post video presentations on the discussion board, others respond!

**Engage**

- “Un violador en tu camino” Collective Street Performance by La Tesis, Santiago de Chile, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSHUS2lehOY&t=11s>
- “Manifiesto Against Police Violence,” Pussy Riot and Las Tesis, 2020 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPfcb9aTcl0&t=344>
- Professor Is Empowering & Inspiring Future Generations of Feminists Across Latin America | NowThis <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSfjQ8hHGDo>

**Read**

- Felipe Rivas San Martín and Jorge Díaz, “No Body without Fiction: Towards a Representation of Sexual Dissidence in Chile”
- Martin and Shaw, “Chilean and Transnational Performances of Disobedience: LasTesis and the Phenomenon of Un violador en tu camino”
- Verónica Gago, *Feminist International*, excerpt.

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## Week 4

### Labor and Settler Colonialism

Key concepts: colonialism; postcolonialism; logics of coloniality; heteropatriarchy; decolonization; ethnographic refusal; sovereignty; indigenous epistemologies; surrogacy; reproductive labor; gestational labor; mother-worker; Black feminism, mothering, reproductive justice

#### ***For June 18th***

**Participate:** Discussion leads post video presentations on the discussion board, others respond!

#### **Engage**

- [Decolonizing Sex](#) *All My Relations Podcast* with Kim TallBear
- Watch: Lecture on “Decolonize is not a metaphor”

#### **Read**

- Arvin Mail, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill, “Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections Between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy”

#### ***For June 20th***

**Participate:** Discussion leads post video presentations on the discussion board, others respond!

#### **Engage**

- “1619 Project, Episode 2: Race” on Hulu  
<https://www.hulu.com/series/the-1619-project-7ba3407a-299c-4a10-8310-bbcdd6ab4653>

#### **Read**

- Alexis Pauline Gumbs, “m/other ourselves: a Black queer feminist genealogy for radical mothering”
- Christina Crosby and Janet R. Jakobsen, “Disability, Debility, and Caring Queerly,” 2020

**Final Term Paper Proposal Due Friday, June 21st, at 5 p.m.**

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## Week 5

### Institutional Politics, Surveillance, and Imperialism

Key concepts: abolition; militarism; TSA; homonationalism; surveillance; imperialism; conscription; militarized masculinity; medical model of sexuality; institutional responsibility

#### ***For June 25th***

**Participate:** Discussion leads post video presentations on the discussion board, others respond!

#### **Engage**

- Listen: *Backstory* “Serve & Protect: A History of Policing” (in “Files” folder of canvas)

#### **Read**

- Alex Vitale, “The End of Policing” (or excerpt from Celeste Winston)
- Read excerpts from the [Penn & Slavery Project](#)

#### ***For June 27th***

**Participate:** Discussion leads post video presentations on the discussion board, others respond!

#### **Engage:**

- “Abolitionist Body Politics” with Kathy Brown from *Gender Gawn* (2021)  
<https://directory.libsyn.com/episode/index/show/genderjawn/id/20658578>

#### **Read:**

- Toby Beauchamp, “Flying Under the Radar”

#### ***For July 2nd***

**Participate:** All students post a short video presenting their final paper, all students respond asking at least one question of at least two different presentations

#### **Engage:**

- Watch: Annalise Ophelian (dir.) *Major!* (Film, 2015)  
[https://mediaspace.library.upenn.edu/media/Major%21/1\\_5cx8loyc](https://mediaspace.library.upenn.edu/media/Major%21/1_5cx8loyc)

**In Class:** Students will give informal presentations on their final projects and answer questions from the class (including those posted on canvas)

**Final Essay Due on Wednesday, July 3rd at 5pm EDT**