

WGS 105 – Introduction to Women’s and Gender Studies
Spring 2019

Professor: Lauren Gantz
Meeting Times: MWF 11-11:50AM CCC 207
Email: lgantz@uwsp.edu
Office: CCC 428
Office Hours: M 2:00PM-3:00PM, T 1:00-3:00PM, by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This class is designed to introduce you to the academic field of women’s and gender studies by exploring a wide range of issues that relate to gender in the contemporary world. It is an interdisciplinary course that includes readings, media, and ideas from the social sciences, from history and literature, from politics, and from the arts. We’ll be looking at these cultural elements and examining institutions and theoretical ideas in order to investigate the role of gender in the ways we define and express ourselves—in all our myriad gendered identities—as humans in our world. Further, we will explore how these systems create inequities of power and privilege; we’ll also study ways in which individuals and groups respond to and resist such oppression, as well as ways we, as individuals, can effect change for social justice.

The course is organized around the threshold concepts that are essential to understanding women’s and gender studies. Threshold concepts can be envisioned as ideas that take you through a doorway into new learning and perception. Departing from old ways of knowing and moving toward new understanding is also sometimes called “troublesome knowledge” because such shifts in perception can be upsetting, but ultimately rewarding. I hope that you will take away many interesting ideas that will be challenging and useful, in both your academic and personal life.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To introduce you to the academic field of women's and gender studies and help you gain understanding of its interdisciplinary methodology, evolution as a discipline, and changing position within the academy.
2. To relate the concepts and ideas of course materials to your own experiences.
3. To discuss, reflect upon, and analyze the intersections of gender, race, class, and sexuality.
4. To reflect critically, in discussion and in writing, on the materials and ideas of the course.
5. To explore the variety and diversity of gender perspectives and feminist thought.

TEXTS

Available at the UWSP University Store (or online):

Christie Launius and Holly Hassel, *Threshold Concepts in Women’s and Gender Studies* 2nd ed.
Toni Morrison, *Sula*

Available on Canvas:

Additional readings related to the course themes (these will be uploaded and announced throughout the semester).

ABSENCE AND LATENESS POLICY

You will be given **two free absences** for the semester. Absences beyond those two—for any reason other than religious observance—will impact your participation grade for the semester (see grading criteria for explanation). Please ensure you arrive to class on time; **three tardies will count as an absence, and if you are more than fifteen minutes late, you will be marked as absent for the meeting.**

If you have to miss class, you will still be responsible for turning in all assignments due on the date of your absence, and for completing the assigned course readings. I would also advise contacting a classmate for notes. Do not email me asking, [“Did I miss anything?”](#) The answer will always be, “Yes.”

RELIGIOUS HOLY DAYS

By UWSP policy, you must notify me of a pending absence due to a religious holy day within the first three weeks of class. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to complete the missed work.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

Some of the assignments in this class will require the use of sources. When you use sources in a writing assignment, you **must** cite them. MLA citation style is preferable, but use any format with which you are familiar. The use of an unacknowledged source will result, *at minimum*, in your being required to redo the assignment for reduced credit. Depending on the nature and extent of the misuse, such behavior may result in a zero for the assignment or an automatic F for the course. If you are unsure how to cite a source properly, you are welcome to ask me. Other forms of academic dishonesty, such as purchasing work, copying the work of classmates, cheating on exams, etc., will also result in a major course penalty, including possible failure of the course. A report may also be submitted to the Dean of Students. For more information about UWSP’s policies regarding academic misconduct, see: <http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/AcademicIntegrityBrochure.pdf>

EMAIL

Your UWSP email account is the university’s standard method of communication with you, and you should check it regularly. I may at times use email to contact the class as a whole, or individual students; I will routinely use the course home page in Canvas for reminders and announcements.

Be advised that while I do check my email regularly throughout the week and on weekends, I only read and respond to messages between 7AM-7PM. If you need to contact me, please do so during those hours unless it’s an emergency.

TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Computers and tablets can be used for taking or referring to notes, checking Canvas, or accessing class readings, *if* you can resist their temptations. However, if you are found using these devices for purposes unrelated to our class, I will ask you to turn them off and put them away. Repeated issues may result in a ban on such devices for the entire class. Stay on task and be considerate of my time and your classmates' time.

Cellphones should be put away and turned off or silenced. Refusal to comply with this policy will result in the student being asked to leave the classroom.

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a disability and need accommodations for this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services. Call 715-346-3365, email dissv@uwsp.edu, or visit the Office in room 609 of the Learning Resource Center.

SAFE SPACE POLICY

We are all required to be respectful of each other's identities and opinions. There will be zero tolerance for slurs, derogatory language, harassment, or belittlement of ideas. If you need clarification, please refer to UWSP's Community Rights and Responsibilities Handbook (<http://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Documents/CommunityRights.pdf>). As a general rule, use common sense and treat others as you wish to be treated. If you feel troubled or unsafe in any class discussion, please speak to me immediately so that we can resolve the problem.

The subject material of this class can be sensitive and controversial, so it is crucial that we create a climate conducive to safe and open discussion. It is expected that you will engage with the material with an open mind and a critical lens. This course also approaches gender and other dimensions of identity, discrimination and power from a systemic basis, so it is important to recognize that we cannot generalize about systems from individual personal anecdotes—while I hope that you will find the material relevant to your lives, be careful when speaking to avoid generalizations and sweeping assumptions.

If you have any concerns about the class or the material, please come and talk to me so we can try to work out a solution as quickly as possible.

PERSONAL EMERGENCIES

Any student who faces challenges that may affect their performance in this course is encouraged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Such challenges may include, but are not limited to: mental or physical health crises, food insecurity, housing insecurity, financial insecurity, incidents of hate/bias, interpersonal violence, or sexual assault/harassment. Furthermore, please notify me if you feel comfortable doing so. That will enable me to provide any resources that I possess. Be advised: **I am a mandatory reporter**. If you are a victim of sexual assault/harassment and disclose that to me, I am required to inform the Dean of Students. Think carefully about whether or not you would like to make a report before disclosing. If you've been assaulted/harassed, need support, but **do not**

want to report to the university, I would recommend contacting CAP Services' Sexual Assault and Victim Services at (715)343-7179 or their Family Crisis Center at (715)343-7125. They can help you without involving the university.

GRADING AND REQUIREMENTS

Reading and preparation for class: For all class meetings, there will be assigned readings with specific suggestions of things to look for or to think about as you read. Doing the reading, thoughtfully, *before class* is necessary preparation for you to be able to participate fully in, and benefit from, the class meeting. You should also take some notes on your observations and reactions.

Attendance and participation: You should attend class regularly and participate to the best of your ability. Class activities will include discussion and workshops. See pages five-six for grading criteria.

In-class writings: These will occur on days that reading is assigned, but no formal writing is indicated on the syllabus. These informal writings are designed to help you gather your thoughts for or from discussion and to encourage careful reading of the materials. I will collect these or check them off after they're written.

Short writing assignments: These will be more in-depth pieces that ask you to apply the assigned reading material in a specific way. The details of these writing assignments will be posted in the Canvas Writing Assignments module for each day they are assigned (as indicated on the syllabus) and will often be questions or prompts selected from your text or those I develop. Whatever the assignment specifics, these writing should total about 250-300 words. These must be typed (double-spaced, 1" margins, 12-point font) and should be brought to class when they are assigned, since we will use them in class and then I will collect them. If you must miss class, you may submit them to Canvas or e-mail them to me, but they will be marked late if posted after class.

Weekly Canvas reflection posts: Each week, you will need to complete a reflective writing that helps tie together everything that we did for the week. These reflections must be posted in the Canvas reflection posts module for each week by Saturdays at 11:59 p.m. and they should be approximately 200 words long. They will be graded according to a rubric that we will review in class in Week 2. Below are some questions to help you generate your reflections:

1. What were the key points from class discussion for the week?
2. In what new ways did the class activities and discussion help you expand your understanding of the week's readings?
3. What are you taking away from applying these ideas to your life or our culture?
4. Were there other connections or comments that you thought of after class or didn't say in class?
5. What questions do you still have about the material or topics for this week?

Class Facilitation: Working in groups of about four, you will sign up for a class day to facilitate discussion of the readings for that day through an example that your group selects. Your group will need to:

1. Present the main concepts from the reading
2. Select and present an example to accompany the reading that helps the class actively apply one or more of the day's concepts, and

3. Prepare 2-3 discussion questions for the class regarding the topic or the reading. Further details of this assignment will be provided in a separate handout distributed at the second class meeting.

Historical Perspectives Analysis: For this project, we will be visiting the UWSP Archives to see primary materials that will help us explore how one norm, expectation, belief or practice related to gender has changed over time and to explore historical perspectives on gender. I will provide you with a handout and guidelines with more details about the expectations and process for this assignment.

Novel Response Paper: As a class, we will be reading and discussing Toni Morrison's *Sula*. After we read and discuss the novel, you will write a literary analysis and reflection on the book. I will give you a handout with more specific details and requirements later in the semester.

Final Poster Project: For the final exam for the class you will research a topic based on your individual interest. This allows you to investigate a topic or issue that you feel passionate about and to apply the threshold concepts from the course to that topic. Our final exam meeting for the class will be a poster session displaying everyone's research. Again, I will give you a handout with more specific details.

Your grades will be determined using the following rubric:

In-class Writings	5%
Canvas Writing Assignments	15%
Canvas Reflection Posts	15%
Class Facilitation	15%
Historical Perspectives Analysis	10%
Novel Response Paper	15%
Final Poster Project	15%
Participation	10%

I will be using the plus/minus system for final grades. Please note: to ensure fairness, all numbers are absolute, and will not be rounded up or down at any stage. Thus a B- will be inclusive of all scores of 80.000 through 83.999.

A = 93-100 A- = 90-92 B+ = 87-89 B = 84-86 B- = 80-83 C+ = 77-79 C = 74-76
C- = 70-73 D+ = 67-69 D = 64-66 D- = 60-63 F = 0-60

Criteria for Participation

	Ideal	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Attendance	Is present for the entirety of each class meeting, or (rarely) is absent for a compelling reason, which is shared with the instructor promptly.	Attends consistently (at least 85% of the time). Occasional absences or late arrival are mostly for a valid reason.	Missing class, arriving late, or leaving early, more than 15% of the time, or less often but without explanation.

Preparation	Always gives evidence of preparation when called on or quizzed.	Gives evidence of preparation when called on or quizzed at least 85% of the time.	Gives evidence of being unprepared more than 15% of the time.
Attentiveness	Consistently comes equipped (book, notebook, etc.) to class. Is always listening actively when not speaking.	Usually comes equipped and is listening actively when not speaking.	Attends to something other than class activities (e.g. texting, Facebook, studying for another class).
Quality of Contributions	Makes comments that stand out for the level of careful thought they demonstrate about the material and the unfolding conversation.		Makes comments that reflect inattentiveness to others' contributions, are irrelevant, or otherwise tend to derail the conversation.
Classroom Community	Improves the conversation in a significant way. (E.g. helps draw others out, makes extra effort to contribute if shy, etc.)		Impairs the conversation in a significant way. (E.g. dominates discussion, talks while others are talking, treats other students or their ideas with disrespect.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND LATE WORK:

Take-home assignments: In order to pass the course, you must complete every assignment. Take-home assignments are due *by the beginning of class* on the due date unless otherwise specified.

Late take-home assignments will lose a letter grade **for each calendar day (note: not each class day)** they are late. Extensions are negotiable if, knowing your own academic schedule and obligations, you anticipate needing more time for an assignment. You must speak with me in person **at least two calendar days before the assignment is due.** Together we will arrive on a later due date that must fit into the syllabus (i.e., the new due date must precede any other due dates for the unit). I will hold you to that new due date and deduct points if you miss it. Do not e-mail me the day before something is due to ask for an extension; I will refuse. Plan ahead.

You must build in time for possible technological failure ("my computer crashed") or contingency ("I left my flash drive with my paper on it at home"). Late work is late, regardless of circumstance.

In-class assignments and activities: In-class writings can **only** be made up under extraordinary, unavoidable circumstances. You must provide me with documentation of the reason for your absence.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Copies of all course documents and additional resources will be available in **Canvas**.

The **Tutoring-Learning Center**, located in the basement of the library (Room 018), can provide help with writing and many other skills you will need to succeed in college. Their regular hours are Monday – Thursday 9:00am – 8:00pm, Friday 9:00AM – 1:00PM. Appointments are recommended but not required. Phone 715-346-3568 or email tlctutor@uwsp.edu.

COURSE SCHEDULE

**Subject to change at instructor's discretion*

W 1/23	Introduction to the Course
F 1/25	Establishment of Class Values and Best Practices Sign-Up for Group Facilitation
M 1/28	Read <i>Threshold</i> chapter 1 Short writing assignment: complete prompts 1-2 from pg. 23
W 1/30	Canvas Readings and Short Writing Assignment
F 2/1	Read <i>Threshold</i> chapter 2, pgs. 29-52 Group Facilitation 1
M 2/4	Read <i>Threshold</i> chapter 2, pgs. 52-82 Group Facilitation 2
W 2/6	Archive Visit
F 2/8	Canvas Readings and Short Writing Assignment
M 2/11	Canvas Readings and Short Writing Assignment
W 2/13	No Class-Writing Day
F 2/15	PEER REVIEW OF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ANALYSIS
M 2/18	Revision Workshop
W 2/20	Historical Perspectives Analysis Conferences
F 2/22	Historical Perspectives Analysis Conferences
M 2/25	HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ANALYSIS DUE Read <i>Threshold</i> chapter 3 pgs. 89-113 Group Facilitation 3

W 2/27	Read <i>Threshold</i> chapter 3 pgs. 113-31 Group Facilitation 4
F 3/1	Canvas Reading and Short Writing Assignment
M 3/4	Read <i>Threshold</i> chapter 4 pgs. 141-155 Group Facilitation 5
W 3/6	Read <i>Threshold</i> chapter 4 pgs. 155-179 Group Facilitation 6
F 3/8	Canvas Reading and Short Writing Assignment
M 3/11	Read <i>Threshold</i> chapter 5 pgs. 191-206 Group Facilitation 7
W 3/13	Read <i>Threshold</i> chapter 5 pgs. 206-225 Group Facilitation 8
F 3/15	Canvas Reading and Short Writing Assignment
M 3/18	SPRING BREAK
W 3/20	SPRING BREAK
F 3/22	SPRING BREAK
M 3/25	Read <i>Sula</i> pgs. 1-29 Read Nabokov, “Good Readers and Good Writers” (Canvas)
W 3/27	Read <i>Sula</i> pgs. 30-48
F 3/29	Read <i>Sula</i> pgs. 49-66 Short writing assignment: Close-reading a passage from <i>Sula</i>
M 4/1	Read <i>Sula</i> pgs. 67-85
W 4/3	Read <i>Sula</i> pgs. 89-111
F 4/5	Read <i>Sula</i> pgs. 112-137 Short writing assignment: Topic proposal for Novel Response paper
M 4/8	Finish <i>Sula</i>
W 4/10	No Class—Writing Day
F 4/12	PEER REVIEW OF NOVEL RESPONSE PAPER

M 4/15	Revision Workshop
W 4/17	Novel Response Paper Conferences
F 4/19	Novel Response Paper Conferences
M 4/22	NOVEL RESPONSE PAPER DUE Library Day: Research for Poster Projects
W 4/24	Library Day: Research for Poster Projects
F 4/26	Solo Research Day: No Class
M 4/29	Poster Project conferences
W 5/1	Poster Project conferences
F 5/3	Poster Project conferences
M 5/6	Poster Project Preparation/Planning
W 5/8	Poster Project Preparation/Planning
F 5/10	Poster Project Preparation/Planning
W 5/15 12:30-2:30PM	Final Exam Period: Poster Presentations