**TGST 3301-001: Introduction to Women’s, Genders, And Sexualities Studies**

T/R 3:30-4:45pm, Spring 2020
RFEB 101

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*I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus, as the need arises.*

**Course Description**
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has decreed that “We should all be feminists” and Beyoncé has sampled her definition of “Feminist” in “Flawless”: “Feminist: the person who believes in the social, political, and economic equality of the sexes.” Are you a feminist? Does that word terrify you or strike you as alien, unclear, or old school? This course will introduce you to major theories and histories of feminist critique. We will analyze cultural representations of women across a variety of media forms and learn how peoples’ lives have been shaped by structures of gender inequality. This interdisciplinary course will also examine the roles of women in patriarchal society, with emphasis on how intersectional factors such as race, class, disability, and sexuality contribute to the oppression of women and ways they can be challenged through feminist critical practices.

A bit of a content warning: these texts deal with graphic depictions of sex, sexual assault, and violence. I believe we can engage with such texts in thoughtful, mature, and productive ways. Specific warnings will be provided.

**Required Texts**
bell hooks. *Feminism is for Everybody” Passionate Politics*

All other texts will be available on Blackboard. Please print and annotate before class.

**Course Goals and Student Learning Outcomes**
Students who successfully complete ENGL 3349 will be able to

- understand foundational concepts in Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, including the roles that class, race, gender, sexuality, age, ability, and other axes of difference play in our culture and society.
- engage with feminist theory and criticism and to use these materials to deepen your engagement with cultural texts and lived experiences.
- persuasively analyze a variety of genres and media; we’ll be analyzing words and images and exploring a diverse and genre-bending group of texts including a popular book aimed at de-
stigmatizing feminism, an adapted TEDx talk, a graphic novel/memoir, a visual album, several films and TV episodes.

- think critically about unequal power structures and oppressive systems in your lived experiences, in popular culture, in institutions, and in the state.
- understand how feminist social and political action will benefit all people.
- apply knowledge and understanding, which serves as a foundation, to future study in Gender, Women and Sexuality Studies.

**Assessment:**

Your final grade for this course will be determined by the following breakdown of the percentage weighting of each course component:

1. Close Analysis Practice Post (to Blackboard) 50 points
2. Midterm Exam 200 points
3. Activist Connections 100 points
4. Oral History Project 250 points
5. Zine Project 250 points
6. Attendance & Participation 150 points

**Course Grading Scale:**

- 890-1000: A
- 790-890: B
- 690-790: C
- 590-690: D
- 590 or below: F

**Close Analysis Practice Post (50 points):** This semester you will practice and develop your analysis skills working with a cultural text from our course by submitting 1 short response to our course blackboard site. This short (1 page) response will be directed by more specific instructions and will be submitted electronically via the Discussion Board area on our course Blackboard site. The short analytical write is designed to encourage you to write-to-learn and the emphasis is placed on the process of closely engaging with course materials. The Post will be given full credit for 50 points IF you turn it in on time, submit your own work, and follow the instructions. In addition to the points, you will receive a lot of feedback from me.

**Midterm Exam (200 points) (In Class Exam):** This exam will involve short answer questions that ask you to analyze a specific moment in one of our course texts and will also involve a longer essay question that you will be able to prepare notes for in advance of the exam. Further details and practice questions will be handed out in class.

**Oral History Project (250 points):** This project is an individual writing assignment in which you will interview a woman of a different generation (with at least a twenty year age difference between you). Your interview should take place in person or over the phone, and you may interview a family member. You will need to prepare interview questions in advance and should plan for the interview to take a minimum of 30 minutes. After doing the interview, you will write a 3 to 4 page, typed, double spaced paper, which discusses the experiences of your interviewee and places them in the context of the readings that we have done in class.
Activist Connections (2-3 pages) (100 points): You will identify and attend 1 campus, community, or virtual activist event that relates to the themes of the course (this may be a speaker series, protest or rally, live chat, art show, virtual conference, performance, public celebration, or teach-in). You may choose an event you are helping to plan, or you may choose one you will just attend. You should take notes while attending the event to analyze later. After attending the event, you will write a 2-3 page analysis of that event, drawing on at least 2 readings from the class—you should think critically about what the event was trying to achieve, how that goal was communicated to organizers and participants, the form of the event and why that form was useful or not useful for achieving the event’s goal, and the historical, cultural, or political significance of the event in its specific context.

Zine Project (250 points total) (Due during our final exam meeting time): For your final project, you will create a zine with a small group. You will work together to choose a topic and then collaborate on the material. You will be asked to work on your zine intermittently throughout the semester and then groups will present your zines to the rest of the class at the end of the semester. Additionally, each student will write a paper that discusses your topic in relation to and supported by class resources and information from the course readings. While this is a “group project,” you will receive an individual grade, and your final paper will help me assign your grade. More information will be given out about the final project.

Attendance & Participation (150 points): Your participation grade will be based on your active engagement with class materials, your frequent and thoughtful contributions to class discussions of all shapes and sizes, your active listening to your classmates and to me, your productive work in frequent in-class small group activities, your reflections upon and completion of the assigned reading, and your coming to class prepared (with materials, thoughts, questions, and assigned work) every day. In order to engage actively with these texts and to promote lively discussions, you will need to prepare diligently for class each day—I encourage you to thoroughly mark up your texts (write all over them, use post-it notes, keep a reading journal on a separate page if you prefer), flag key passages that interest you, jot down questions as they occur to you, and come to class ready to discuss and to contribute questions and themes, passages, and patterns that you find particularly intriguing and worth talking about. For our frequent Blackboard readings (i.e. the electronically circulated ones), you will need to print them out, follow all the instructions for marking up your texts as above, and bring them to class with you in order to effectively participate on those days (and to earn full points for each class day).

POLICIES
Disabilities Accommodations
The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116.

If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance at (361) 825-5816.
**Academic Advising**
The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

**Dropping a Class**
I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class. Friday, April 10th is the last day to drop a class with an automatic grade of “W” this term.

**Participation**
A student’s class participation is vastly hindered by said student not coming to class. Plan to attend every class. If you have a legitimate problem, I’m willing to try and work something out. However, you must, if at all possible, bring such problems to my attention before class. If you have mandatory absences (for sports or religious observances), they must be brought to my attention well in advance, but they will not count against you.

**Late Papers**
I love met deadlines. I will not accept late assignments—papers and Blackboard posts—simply because of the necessity of having those items for class activities. All papers and writing assignments must be ready to be turned in at the beginning of the class they are due. However, I am willing to talk about problems and see if we can come to a reasonable solution if you approach me in advance.

**Grade Appeals**
As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: [http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf](http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, [http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html](http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html).

**Statement of Civility**
Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

**Academic Integrity/Plagiarism**

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in a failing grade.

**Statement of Academic Continuity**

In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Course Schedule** (please come to class having read and annotated the texts on the day listed)

**Wk 1: Situating Oppressions:** 1/21: Intro, syllabus, Frye “Oppression,” Adichie’s TedTalk

1/23: *This Bridge Called My Back*: “The Bridge Poem,” “La Güera,” “Invisibility is an Unnatural Disaster” (suggested) “It’s in My Blood, My Face,” “Gee, You Don’t Seem Like an Indian from the Reservation”


**Wk 3: Feminist Work** 2/4: hooks *Feminism is for Everybody* (chp 1-9)

1/6: hooks *Feminism is for Everybody* (Chp 10-19)

**Wk 4: Intercultural Exchange** 2/11: Anzaldúa *La Frontera/Borderlands*, Tong “Multicultural, Global, and PoCo Feminisms)
2/13: Coco Fusco “The Other History of Intercultural Perspective,” Hazel B. Carby “The Multicultural Wars”


2/20: Artist: Jenny Saville, Diana Meyers, “Jenny Saville Remakes the Female Nude,”


**Wk 7: Medical Gaze: Women and Disabilities** 3/3: Owens *Medical Bondage*, film *No Mas Bebes*

3/5: Mitchell and Snyder’s *Vital Signs*, Kafer *Feminist/Queer/Crip*

**Wk 8** 3/10: Spring Break

3/12: Spring Break

**Wk 9** 3/17: Moraga *Heroes and Saints*

3/19: *Heroes and Saints*

**Wk 10** 3/24: Cvetokich *Depression: A Public Feeling*, Baggs “In My Own Language”

3/26:

**Wk 11: Families** 3/31: d’Emilio “Capitalism and Gay Identity,”

4/2: Halberstam *Queer Art of Failure* (screening *Finding Nemo*)

**Wk 12** 4/7: Wilson *Full Surrogacy*

4/9: Munoz *Disidentifications*, film *Paris is Burning*

4/10: **Last Day to Drop a Class**

**Wk 13: Ugly Feelings** 4/14: Ahmed *Feminist Killjoy*

4/16: Ferguson *The Reorder of Things*, Roxanne Gay *Bad Feminist*

**Wk 14** 4/21: Bechdel *Fun Home*

4/23: *Fun Home*
Wk 15 4/28: Lynda Barry *One Hundred Demons!*

4/30: Zine Workshops

Wk 16 5/5: Zine Workshops