WMST 430: GENDER, LITERATURE, & THE ARTS

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

WMST 430 explores the impact of gender on the production, reception, and cultural understanding of art, literature, and film. We will cover different concepts, perspectives, and approaches to gender in art, literature, and film, analyzing how concepts of difference, systems of power, and structures of inequality have been created, resisted, and changed in canonical and non-canonical works. Course readings will draw on a wide range of sources, including fiction, personal narrative, film, history, cultural studies, and more. WMST 430 involves substantial reading, discussion, and writing and emphasizes critical and analytical skills expressed orally, in writing, and in other media.

NOTE: Students should review the course WebCampus page as well as this syllabus in the first week of class and check WebCampus at least once a week for new information and announcements during the semester.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Books (listed in order assigned)
Freeland, Cynthia. But Is It Art?: an introduction to art theory. Oxford University Press. 0192853678
Strickland, Carole. The Annotated Mona Lisa. Andrews McMeel. 0740768727
Alcott, Louisa May. Little Women. Penguin Classics. 0143106651
Portis, Charles. True Grit. Overlook. 146830125X
hooks, bell. Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics. South End Press. 0896086283
Moore, Mandy. Yarn Bombing: the art of crochet and knit graffiti. Arsenal Pulp Press. 1551522551
Seeley, Megan. Fight Like a Girl. NYU Press 0814740022
Eugenides, Jeffrey. Middlesex. Picador. 0312427735
Bechdel, Alison. Fun Home. Mariner Books. 0618871713
Satrapi, Marjane. The Complete Persepolis. Pantheon. 0375714839
Cruse, Howard. Stuck Rubber Baby. Vertigo. 1401227139
Fey, Tina. Bossypants. Little, Brown. 0316056898

Articles and other short readings are listed in detail on the schedule and can be accessed through WebCampus (WC).
CORE OBJECTIVES
This class satisfies Core Objectives 10 and 13 of the Silver Core Curriculum, and integrates Core Objectives 1 and 3:

• CO10 – Diversity and Equity
Students will demonstrate an understanding of diversity through courses that focus on topics such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, religion, physical ability, language, and/or social class with an emphasis on the analysis of equity. Students will apply and evaluate approaches or modes of inquiry used to analyze diversity and equity and the social barriers to these goals.

• CO13 – Integration and Synthesis
Students will be able to integrate and synthesize Core knowledge, enabling them to analyze open-ended problems or complex issues.

• In addition, through papers and other course assignments, students will integrate knowledge and skills gained from CO1 (Effective Composition and Communication) and CO3 (Critical Analysis and Use of Information).

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

• Demonstrate familiarity with major concepts in and approaches to studies of gender through writing assignments. (CO1, CO10)
• Develop ways to think about the form and content of art, visual, and written culture. (CO3, CO13)
• Sharpen critical skills in reading, discussing, and writing about how gender theory intersects with art, literature, and film. (CO1, CO3, CO10, CO13)
• Examine how art and literature shape, present, and interrogate gender. (CO10, CO13)
• Respond to course material in a variety of ways that demonstrate communication competencies in writing and other media. (CO1, CO13)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Technology: I expect you to attend class faithfully, to arrive on time, and to stay the full class period. I do not allow any kind of electronic devices in class (including tablets or laptops) unless necessary as an individual accommodation for a documented disability or part of a classroom activity. Arriving late, leaving early, using any disallowed device, or allowing a device to ring or vibrate is disrespectful to our shared learning mission.

Participation (15% of grade): Participation includes completing the readings, participating in class discussions, and completing any and all in-class assessments (i.e. quizzes and group work). All in-class assessments will be open book, meaning you must bring readings to class.

Weekly Assignments or Reading Notes (15% of grade): Each week, you are required to turn in a brief assignment related to the assigned readings. Unless otherwise noted, this assignment is a page of typed notes on that week’s reading. Each set of notes must include the following: 1) 3-4 quotes from the reading; 2) a paragraph discussing a central idea you think the reading presents; and 3) a
question that you would like to analyze with the class. Your Reading Notes must be completed before class and you should expect to be called on to discuss them.

**Formal Writing:** There will be three formal writing assignments. These require you to demonstrate careful reading and to synthesize this with your broader learning in the class.

- **Book Review, due Week Four. (10% of grade)**
- **Short Paper, due Week Seven, required length is 5 pages. (10% of grade)**
- **Longer Paper, due Week Thirteen, required length is 8-10 pages. (20% of grade)**

**Project & Presentation:** The course culminates in a “capstone project” that will be presented to the course at the final class meeting. (30% of grade)

**GRADING SCALE**

I use a standard grading scale with percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93-100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-92%</td>
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<td>87-89%</td>
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**POLICIES**

_**Phone & Technology:** Using electronic devices, or allowing them to ring or vibrate, is unacceptable. If I see you using any device – laptop, tablet, phone, etc. – I will collect it for the class and it will negatively affect your participation grade. The only exceptions to this policy are an individual accommodation for a documented disability._

**Principles of Respectful Discussion**

This course examines serious and complicated material and analyzes feminist, anti-racist, queer, and other critical scholarship. Some material may link to your own experience and some may seem alien to you. Differences of opinion are welcomed, but disrespectful and prejudicial language is not. I expect respectful and energetic discussion, and I will not tolerate offensive or abusive language, disruptive behaviors, or visible signs of boredom or disrespect. Please also note that dynamic discussion requires both speaking and active listening. If you find speaking difficult, feel free ask for help. If you find speaking easy, work to make sure your participation includes listening to and making space for others. Also be sure to learn the names of your fellow students’ and of the authors we read.

**Office Hours and Writing Center:** I welcome your visits to my office hours. If my regular hours do not fit your schedule, please email me to set up an appointment at another time. I also encourage you to visit the Writing Center for help with essay assignments.

**Email Communication:** I make every attempt to respond to emails quickly (within 24 hours, or 48 hours on weekends). You can facilitate my reply by being sure your email shows your full name and a subject line and by following guidelines for professional communication.
Students With Disabilities: I am committed to providing equal opportunities for everyone. If you need to request accommodations for a disability, please alert me and contact the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building Suite 100, 775-784-6000, http://www.unr.edu/drc).

UNR Policy on Audio and Video Recording: “Surreptitious or covert videotaping or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may be given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.”

Academic Honesty: I do not tolerate plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty. As stated in the University Administrative Manual, plagiarism means “submitting the language, ideas, thoughts or work of another as one's own; or assisting in the act of plagiarism by allowing one's work to be used in this fashion.” This refers to material from any source, including online. Penalties for plagiarism include an F in the course and a report to Student Judicial Affairs. It is your responsibility to understand and avoid plagiarism and other academic dishonesty. If you have questions, visit me and/or the Writing Center. Academic Standards are defined in the University Administrative Manual, 6,502.

Schedule

**Complete readings by the date they are listed and bring copies of readings to class.** Participation will be measured through quizzes and other assessments, all of them open book. Readings posted on WebCampus are designated as (WC).

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<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Introduction to Class &amp; Theory</th>
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<td>T 1.22</td>
<td>Reading: “My Last Duchess, “In An Artist’s Studio,” and “Lady of Shalott,” poems distributed and discussed in class</td>
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<td>R 1.24</td>
<td>Reading: <em>But Is It Art?</em> Intro + ch 1 &amp; 2; Peter Barry “Theory before “Theory”” excerpts and “Feminist Criticism” chapter from <em>Beginning Theory</em> (WC)</td>
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<td><strong>Work Due: Weekly Assignment.</strong> Reflect on the ten tenets of liberal humanism that Barry describes. <strong>Write a paragraph</strong> on which tenets you most strongly identify and disagree with and explain why. Come to class with copies for everyone.</td>
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<th>Art, Aesthetics, and Gender</th>
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<td>WEEK 2</td>
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<td>T 1.29</td>
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Work Due: Mark each time you see a female artist in The Annotated Mona Lisa; compile a list of all female artists you found in the book. Choose one image to share – doesn’t have to be by a woman – and think through it first using Barry’s description of “humanist” critique and then using his description of feminist criticism.

R 1.31
Reading: Freeland, ch 4 & 5, The Guerrilla Girls' Bedside Companion to the History of Western Art (all).
Work Due: Draft a 600-800 word review of the book. Bring it to class. The review must be aimed at a general college-educated audience—the same group of people that read The New Yorker and Harper’s. The review must summarize the Guerrilla Girls’ ideas and explain the merits and weaknesses of those ideas. The review must cite Barry’s ideas on liberal humanism. (Remember to use proper footnotes or parenthetical citations for this and all future course assignments.) The review must include ideas of your own not discussed in class and you must express a strong opinion of the book. This draft counts as a Weekly Assignment; Final draft due next Thursday.

WEEK 3

T 2.5
Reading Bodies

R 2.7
Reading: Mulvey on “the gaze” (WC); Nochlin “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” (WC); Nochlin “Morisot’s Wet Nurse” (WC)

WEEK 4

T 2.12
Reading: Harriet Jacobs Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl

W.A.R. ! Women Art Revolution! Screening in class
(83 minutes: arrive early if you possibly can!)
Work Due: Book Review final draft due in lieu of weekly assignment.

R 2.14
Reading: Harriet Jacobs Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl
In class: Catch up: Discussion of W.A.R. and other essays and ideas we have not yet had time to talk about; start Jacobs discussion
Histories. Literatures.

WEEK 5 Educating Girls and Women: Class, Race, Power
T 2.19
Reading: Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women* (as far as you can!); bring Jacobs to class
Work Due: Reading Notes

R. 2.21 Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women* (to the end if you can!)

WEEK 6 Educating Girls and Women:
T 2.26
Reading: Louisa May Alcott, *Little Women* (finish); *True Grit* (first half)

R 2.28 Reading: Charles Portis, *True Grit* (finish)
Work Due: Weekly assignment. Thesis paragraph for SP accompanied by bullet point outline with evidence.

WEEK 7 Media Instruction – Class Meets in @ONE at Knowledge Center
T 3.5 & R 3.7 – BOTH DAYS
Media Instruction – Class Meets in @ONE at Knowledge Center

Readings: Charles Berger, Chapter 2 of *Ways of Seeing* (WC)
Work Due: No weekly assignment; Short Paper due on Thursday 3.7

WEEK 8 Working Visions
T 3.12
Reading: hooks: Intro and ch. 1-8; Moore & Prain: all
* Check her teaching site: http://www.berea.edu/appalachiancenter/people/bellhooks.asp
* You can see her on video with this search:
  https://www.google.com/search?tbm=vid&hl=en&source=hp&biw=1052&bih=533&q=bell+hooks&gbv=2&aq=f&aqi=g10&aqi=&oq=
Reading Notes: Follow the guide to doing Reading Notes (above), but think about: Why are we reading *yarn bombing* and *hooks’ book* together? How do each of these work out visions of social justice? How do they think about how to include “everybody”? Which social groups are interconnected through these projects? How do they help us understand identities and power and action? Can you make connections between the gender issues discussed in the novels we’ve read so far and “yarn bombing”?

R 3.14
Reading: Megan Seeley, *Fight Like A Girl* (chapters TBA)
Check out following websites: Craftivism.com; craftivist-collective.com; search for other forms of feminist art interventions and share!
WEEK 9 VACATION March 16-24
Read ahead if you like. Think about your capstone project!

WEEK 10 Gender Trouble
T 3.26
Reading: Judith Butler Intro to *Gender Trouble*, “performativity” (WC)

R 3.28
Reading: *Middlesex* first third
Work Due: Reading Notes.

WEEK 11
T 4.2
Reading: *Middlesex* as far as you can!
Work Due: Capstone Project proposal due in lieu of weekly assignment.

R 4.4
Reading: *Middlesex* to end.
Viewing *Ma Vie en Rose* (first part) in class

WEEK 12
T 4.9
Viewing *Ma Vie en Rose* (to end)
Reading: no reading this week – get a head start on graphic novels.

R 4.11
NO CLASS: work on LP and capstone project
Work Due: No written work is due this week: work on LP and capstone project.

Words and Images

WEEK 13 The Graphic Novel
T 4.16
Reading: *The Complete Persepolis* (the complete), all.

R 4.18
Reading: Flex day: likely a few theoretical articles - TBA
Work Due: LP due in lieu of weekly assignment.

WEEK 14 Graphic Novel, continued:
T 4.23
***Bring copies of all graphic novels each day.
Reading: *Fun Home* (all)

R 4.25
Reading: *Stuck Rubber Baby*
Work Due: Write a one paragraph analysis of how one of the cells of one of the graphic novels visually and “thematically” engages with one of or some of the issues we’ve discussed so far.
Incorporate visual analysis: what is foregrounded? Backgrounded? How does the depth/lack of depth of field, coloration/lack of coloration, “energy” or “stasis” of the cell help it make its meaning? How does the cell engage with larger arguments the text is making. Scan or photocopy the cell you wish to discuss.

**WEEK 15**  
**Women and Humor**  
T 4.30  
Reading: *Bosypants*, all

**R 5.2**  
*Bridesmaids*  
Work due: Work on capstone project in lieu of weekly assignment

**WEEK 16**  
T 4.7  
*Bridesmaids* (to end)  
Work due: Work on capstone project in lieu of reading and weekly assignment

**Conclusion**

**WEEK 17**  
**Conclusion**  
T 5.14  
Final Class meeting is TUESDAY MAY 14 from 12:30 – 2:30  
Capstone Project Presentations