



## Gender and Women's Studies

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

### Course Information:

GWS 830: Contemporary Theorizing in Gender & Women's Studies

Topic: Intersectional Feminist Theory and Praxis

UW-Madison Spring 2022

Thursday 2:30-5:00, Sterling Hall 1339

3 Credit Hours (45 hours of work per credit)

Canvas Course URL: <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/295370>

*Credit Hour Workload:* This class meets for 75 minutes per class session, twice a week. Additional learning will occur via reading and writing. For a 3 credit hour course, students should expect 135 hours of labor over the course of the semester, approximately 9 hours per week on average.

### Instructor Information:

Dr. Sami Schalk

Associate Professor

sdschalk@wisc.edu

Virtual Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:30-3:30 on Zoom (<https://uwmadison.zoom.us/j/98539788705>) or by appointment. Schedule non-office hours meetings at <https://drschalk.youcanbook.me/>

### Course Description

Examines assumptions and debates in contemporary theorizing about gender and women including what constitutes "good" gender and women studies' theorizing, how to recognize gender-based oppression when we see it, how gender, race, sexuality, and other hierarchies of power intersect, as well as the merits of transnational theorizing about gender and women. Explores whether gender and women's studies' theorizing is a form of activism, how to teach theory in gender and women's studies' classrooms, the value of cultivating distinct gender and women studies' methods, and other dimensions of putting gender and women's studies' theorizing into practice.

### Learning Outcomes

- To increase knowledge of contemporary theory in the field of Gender & Women's Studies
- To develop and hone critical thinking and communication skills, particularly writing
- To increase ability to apply theory to one's research, teaching, and/or personal life

### Required Materials

- Sara Ahmed *Living a Feminist Life* (2017)
- bell hooks *Teaching to Transgress* (1994)

- adrienne maree brown *We Will Not Cancel Us: And Other Dreams of Transformative Justice* (2020)
- Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* (2018)
- adrienne maree brown *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good* (2019)

### **Course Policies**

*Universal Design and Disability Accommodations:* I believe everyone has a right to a quality education and that classrooms can adapt to students' needs. Everyone learns differently. If you have ideas on how you can best learn and express your learning in this class, if you have an undocumented disability, or if you have a change in disability status during the semester, I encourage you to meet with me as soon as possible to discuss a learning plan. If you have a documented disability, please provide me your accommodation information within the first two weeks of class. The University accommodation policy reads as follows:

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty, will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Questions about documenting your disability can be directed to the McBurney Disability Resource Center ([mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu](mailto:mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu), 608/263-2741).

*Diversity and Inclusion:* This is a course invested in justice which moves beyond notions of diversity and inclusion to seek systemic change to end oppression and liberate all people. I acknowledge as an educator that the University of Wisconsin-Madison is a place that has long been—and continues to be—hostile to marginalized people, especially people of color, disabled people and queer and trans people. The University statement on diversity and inclusion reads as follows:

Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background – people who as students, faculty, and staff serve Wisconsin and the world. <https://diversity.wisc.edu/>

*Academic Integrity:* Students are expected to uphold University expectations for academic integrity by submitting only their own original works and ideas for all assignments in this course. Violations of academic integrity can result in a range of repercussions depending on the severity of the violation, from having to repeat the assignment to expulsion from the University. All academic integrity violations will be recorded and reported to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards (OSCCS). For

more on academic misconduct procedures at UW-Madison see: <https://students.wisc.edu/student-conduct/academic-integrity/>

*COVID-19:* Official UW Statement reads: “Students should continually monitor themselves for COVID-19 symptoms and get tested for the virus if they have symptoms or have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19. Students should reach out to instructors as soon as possible if they become ill or need to isolate or quarantine, in order to make alternate plans for how to proceed with the course. Students are strongly encouraged to communicate with their instructor concerning their illness and the anticipated extent of their absence from the course (either in-person or remote). The instructor will work with the student to provide alternative ways to complete the course work.” More information on getting tested, vaccinated, boosted or uploading your vaccination records can be found here: <https://covidresponse.wisc.edu/>

Further, I ask that we each be patient and understanding with each other and ourselves as we try to learn, teach, work and survive during a global pandemic. This will not be a “normal” semester for any of us and I want us all to do our best while recognizing that our best is going to vary from person to person based on our resources, support networks, personal obligations and health. Take care of yourself and each other this semester: Wear a mask (preferably N95 or KN95 style if you can) properly in class at all times and stay home if you feel sick or have been exposed. I am prepared to move our classes online if needed.

*Late Policy:* All major assignments will lose 2% for each day late unless an extension is requested in advance or a disability accommodation plan is already in place. To request an extension, students should write Dr. Schalk prior to the assignment deadline. **For the final, students should also provide evidence of progress on the assignment thus far in their e-mail.**

### **Grading and Assignments**

This course is graded on the UW-Madison grading system: A (93-100%), AB (88-92%), B (83-87%), BC (78-82%), C (70-77%), D (60-69%), F (below 60%). The assignments are weighted as follows:

Class Engagement	20%
Praxis Presentations (3)	30%
Final Paper/Project Proposal	10%
Final Paper/Project Presentation	10%
Final Paper/Project	30%

*Class Engagement:* This is a qualitative assessment of your engagement with the class overall including: coming prepared (having read the material and taken notes), speaking in class (including asking questions), responding and interacting with your peers, being aware of the space that you take up, and being respectful of everyone in the space. This is a discussion-based seminar. If there are things that would help you actively participate, please let me know. Class engagement is 20% of your final grade and will be assessed as follows:

- A – Exceptional:** Consistently high quality contribution to the class community; a standout member of the class community
- AB – Strong:** An mix of high quality contributions and good quality contributions to the class community
- B – Very Good:** Consistently good quality contributions to the class community
- BC – Good:** Inconsistent but overall good quality contributions to the class community
- C – Decent:** Limited or low quality contributions to the class community
- D – Poor:** Did not actively contribute to the class community
- F – Very poor:** Was actively disruptive to the class community on more than one occasion

### *Praxis Presentations (3)*

Throughout the semester students will be expected to do 3 short (5 minute) presentations (orally or via pre-recorded captioned video) in which they explain how a specific theory or concept from the week's readings could be practically applied to or enacted through their research method, teaching, future career practices, or interpersonal lives. The class will then have an opportunity to ask questions, respond and otherwise discuss this proposed praxis application of the week's material.

The presentations will be grading on quality and clarity of the presentation (including staying within the time limit) and how clearly and convincingly the theory or concept is translated into praxis. Students will have to opportunity to choose which weeks on which to present, up to 4 students per class through April 7 when final paper/project proposals are due. Sign up using SignUp Genius:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F44A4AA2CA7F4C25-praxis>

Praxis presentations (and resulting discussions) will occur in the last 45 minutes of class each week. Each praxis presentation is worth 10% of the final grade for a total of 30% of the final grade.

### *Final Paper/Project Proposal*

The final paper/project proposal should be a 2-4 page document outlining the final paper or project including a description of the final, an explanation or rationale of how it aligns with or fulfills the goals of the class to explore contemporary intersectional feminist theory and praxis, and an annotated bibliography of at least 4 outside sources (beyond those read in class) that will inform the paper/project. An annotated bibliography provides the citation and a brief (1 chunky paragraph) summary of the article's thesis/argument, method(s), and findings as well as how the work will be used within or inform the final paper/project. The proposal is worth 10% of the final grade.

### *Final Paper/Project Presentation*

On the last day of class all students will do 5-7 minute presentations (live or via pre-recorded captioned video) of their final paper/project followed by 3-5 minutes of questions and discussion from peers. Students will be graded on the quality and clarity of the presentation as well as how well they answer questions. The final presentation is worth 10% of the final grade.

### *Final Paper/Project*

Students will create a final paper or project informed by contemporary intersectional feminist theory and praxis. Some options include:

- Traditional research analysis paper (15-20 pages): This paper would apply a theory or concept from class in order to analyze a piece of media, art, policy, news story, etc. and make original arguments about the object of analysis using contemporary intersectional feminist theory from class as well as a significant number of additional sources from outside of class.
- Critical literature review (10-15 pages): This literature review would survey how certain intersectional theories or practices are being used within a particular field or sub-field within the last decade. A critical literature review not only explains what exists in the current literature, but

also contains a synthesis section in which the author summarizes broad trends and provides a critical analysis or critique of the gaps and misunderstandings or misuses of these theories or practices and the potential impact or effects within that field or sub-field.

- Praxis paper (10-15 pages): A praxis paper expands a praxis presentation from earlier in the semester by proposing and demonstrating at length via illustrative example(s) (either lived/practiced or proposed) how a particular contemporary intersectional feminist theory (or more than one) could/should be practically applied to or enacted through a specific research method, teaching or career practice, or interpersonal behaviors/interactions and the benefits of value of such an application/enactment. This can be academic, professional, or activist focused, with a specific audience in mind you are showing how to apply this theory in a particular area. The voice/tone/style of the paper will vary depending on your intended audience.
- Creative project (varies by project): Create a piece of art (visual art, performance art, short story, creative-critical essay, zine, podcast, etc.) that is a creative expression of or response to a particular theory or concept from class. All creative projects will be accompanied by a 3-5 page artist statement explaining how the creative project is an expression/enactment of a particular intersectional feminist theory or concept discussed during the semester.

Final project/papers are worth 30% of the final grade.

## Course Schedule

### Week 1

January 27, 2022

- Class welcome and overview

### Week 2

February 3, 2022

- Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall. "Toward a field of intersectionality studies: Theory, applications, and praxis." *Signs*. 38.4 (2013): 785-810.
- Christie Launius and Holly Hassel. "Chapter Five: Feminist Praxis" *Threshold Concepts in Women's and Gender Studies : Ways of Seeing, Thinking, and Knowing*. Routledge. (2018)
- Christian, Barbara. "The race for theory." *Feminist studies* 14.1 (1988): 67-79.

### Week 3

February 10, 2022

- Sara Ahmed *Living a Feminist Life*

### Week 4

February 17, 2022

- Loretta J. Ross (2017) "Reproductive Justice as Intersectional Feminist Activism." *Souls*. 19:3, 286-314
- Teresa K. Lloro (2021) "An intersectional feminist food studies praxis: Activism and care in the COVID-19 context." *The Journal of Environmental Education*. 52:5, 303-313

- Ackerly, Brooke, and Jacqui True. (2010) "Back to the future: Feminist theory, activism, and doing feminist research in an age of globalization." *Women's Studies International Forum*. Vol. 33. No. 5.

#### Week 5

February 24, 2022

- bell hooks *Teaching to Transgress*

#### Week 6

March 3, 2022

- brown *We Will Not Cancel Us: And Other Dreams of Transformative Justice*

#### Week 7

March 10, 2022

- **Virtual Asynchronous Class: Online Praxis Presentations and Discussion**

#### Week 8

March 17, 2022

- **Spring Break**

#### Week 9

March 24, 2022

- Piepzna-Samarasinha *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice*

#### Week 10

March 31, 2022

##### \* Class visit from Dr. Jina B. Kim

- Jina B. Kim "Crippling the Welfare Queen: The Radical Potential of Disability Politics". *Social Text* 1 September 2021; 39 (3 (148)): 79–101
- Jina B. Kim and Sami Schalk "Reclaiming the Radical Politics of Self-Care: A Crip-of-Color Critique" *South Atlantic Quarterly* 1 April 2021; 120 (2): 325–342
- "Introduction: Co-authorship as Feminist Writing and Practice" (<https://culanth.org/fieldsights/introduction-co-authorship-as-feminist-writing-and-practice>)
- **Optional:** Any other articles from the "Co-authorship as Feminist Writing and Practice" series (<https://culanth.org/fieldsights/series/co-authorship-as-feminist-writing-and-practice-1>)

#### Week 11

April 7, 2022

- Brown *Pleasure Activism: The Politics of Feeling Good*: Section One, Section Two and Section Three Sub-Section (pages 1-124 and 190-234)
- **Final Paper/Project Proposals due**

Week 12

April 14, 2022

- **Brain break: Class cancelled. Take a nap during this class period.**

Week 13

April 21, 2022

- Patrisse Cullors “Q&A: Nap Ministry’s Tricia Hersey talks rest and racial justice”  
<https://prismreports.org/2020/09/03/qa-nap-ministrys-tricia-hersey-talks-rest-and-racial-justice/>
- Social Distance Podcast: “You Are Worthy of Sleep with Tricia Hersey” (podcast episode)  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2020/04/you-are-worthy-of-sleep/610996/>
- Explore *The Nap Ministry*: Website, Instagram and/or Twitter

Week 14

April 28, 2022

- ***TBD based on class interests and needs***

Week 15

May 5, 2022

- **Final Paper/Project Presentations**

Week 16

- **Finals due May 10, 2022 by midnight**