Department of English

Gender Studies Minor

Spring 2016 Course Descriptions

Kristina Straub, Faculty Advisor
ks3t@andrew.cmu.edu
Baker Hall 245K

Lisa Tetrault, Faculty Advisor
tetrault@andrew.cmu.edu
Baker Hall 252

Jen Loughran, Coordinator of Curriculum & Undergrad Programs
jackson1@andrew.cmu.edu
Baker Hall 259

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Information is subject to change
76-241   Introduction to Gender Studies
Instructor:  Kate Hamilton
Meetings:   TR 1:30 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.
Prerequisite:  76-101 Interpretation & Argument

What is gender? What is sex? And how do we “perform” these identities in everyday life? Covering topics such as pornography, feminism, bros, queer theory, and transgender rights, this course will introduce you how power and inequality have historically and structurally impacted categories of gender in American society. We will read novels, scholarly texts, and even blogs in an effort to understand how gender intersects with other forms of identity (such as race, class, sexuality, ability, and nationality).

Through a combination of class discussions, written essays, and short presentations, we will ultimately understand gender as a social construct that nonetheless is meaningful, personal, and significant for all members of society.

76-342   American Women Writers
Instructor:  Kathleen Newman
Meetings:   MW 12:00 p.m. – 1:20 p.m.
Prerequisites:  76-101 Interpretation & Argument

In 1855, Nathaniel Hawthorne lamented to his publisher that “America is now wholly given to a damned mob of scribbling women and I should have no chance of success while the public taste is occupied with their trash.” Even today, The New York Times Book Review and other gatekeepers rarely give women writers the coverage that male writers receive. In this course we will trace the multiple traditions of 20th century American women’s writing and examine how women writers question, resist, subvert, and revise traditional gender roles. Our readings will address: the social construction of gender; the relationship between gender and genre; the cultural positions of women as writers and readers; women’s rights and suffrage; women and work; female sexuality and sexual freedom; constructions of motherhood; intersections of gender with race, class, and ethnicity. Readings include: The Awakening, The Bread Givers, Their Eyes Were Watching God, The Woman Warrior, Kindred, and Gone Girl. Every other week (or so) we will be reading excerpts from Feminist Literary Theory and Criticism.

76-353   Transnational Feminisms: Fiction and Film
Instructor:  Marian Aguiar
Meetings:   TR 10:30 - 11:50 a.m.
Prerequisites:  76-101 Interpretation & Argument

How do controversial practices related to women become touchstones that draw women together across cultures or, conversely, push them into separate cultural and political spheres? This introductory-level course familiarizes students with the challenges transnational feminism has posed to Western notions of feminism. To explore these contestations, we will look at a series of controversies. We will read these controversies through novels, drama, short stories and films, with some secondary theoretical readings. This course will take six case studies concerning cultural practices that have generated global debates about the status of women and issues like consent, freedom, and equality. Beginning with several works about regional/Islamic practices of veiling, we will look specifically at the close connections made between women’s practices and elements of tradition, including religion. With an eye toward historicizing feminist interventions, we will look at 19th century debates on sati, commonly called widow burning, in India, to see how certain issues became loci for global intervention during colonial periods and, later, for global feminist movements. Within the contemporary period, we will turn to cultural, economic and political practices like female genital cutting, transnational domestic labor,
global sex trade, and transnational forced marriage. For each of these controversies, we will be reading a range of positions represented in different types of writing across genre, with a focus on literary and filmic depictions.

76-412  Performance and 18th Century Theatrical Culture  
Instructor: Kristina Straub  
Meetings: TR 10:30 - 11:50 a.m.  
Prerequisites: 76-101 Interpretation & Argument

This course has the dual purpose of introducing students to performance and celebrity studies and giving them experience in using these analytic frameworks to study 18th-century literature and culture. Celebrity is a very modern phenomenon that first became a visible part of political, religious, and artistic culture over the course of the long 18th century, between 1660 and 1800. We will investigate the genealogies of modern celebrity, considering such questions as, what do the Kardashians have to do with dead English kings? What can cross-dressing actresses teach us about 21st-century drag performances? (Full disclosure: Dead English kings and cross-dressing actresses will get far more of our attention than the Kardashians or modern drag artists.)

We will study some of the most powerful recent theories of performance and celebrity; we will read plays and other performance genres that took up time and space on the 18th-century stage. In addition, we will explore beyond the London theaters to consider the nature of performance in its many cultural forms: What are the connections between theater and the quieter performances of political pamphlets, newspapers, and novels as they occupy physical and mental space in coffee houses and libraries? Can a print text be performative?

Finally, we will examine various relationships between performance and culture. How does performance in the early modern period shape gender and sexuality as well as class and race relations?

76-423  Transnational Feminisms  
Instructor: Marian Aguiar  
Meetings: TR 1:30 p.m. – 2:50 p.m.  
Prerequisites: 76-101 Interpretation & Argument

How do controversial practices related to women become touchstones that draw women together across cultures or, conversely, push them into separate cultural and political spheres? This course introduces the challenges transnational feminism has posed to Western notions of feminism. To explore these contestations, we will look at a series of controversies. This course will take six case studies concerning cultural practices that have generated global debates about the status of women and issues like consent, freedom, and equality. Beginning with several works about regional/Islamic practices of veiling, we will look specifically at the close connections made between women’s practices and elements of tradition, including religion. With an eye toward historicizing feminist interventions, we will look at 19th-century debates on sati, commonly called widow burning, in India, to see how certain issues became loci for global intervention during colonial periods and, later, for global feminist movements. Within the contemporary period, we will turn to cultural, economic and political practices like female genital cutting, transnational domestic labor, global sex trade, and transnational forced marriage. For each of these controversies, we will be reading a range of positions represented in different types of writing across genre, including scholarly writing, legal cases, media debates, films and literature.
79-200  Introduction to Historical Research
Instructor:  Laurie Eisenberg
Meetings:  MW 1:30 – 2:50 p.m.
Prerequisite:  None

Introduction to Historical Research acquaints students with how historians practice their craft in interpreting events from the past. As a class, we will work together through a progression of readings and exercises from an early American history textbook. By the second half of the semester, students will have identified their own topics, in any time period or field of history, and be working to develop research papers, incorporating the analytical techniques covered in the textbook. The goal is for students to learn with the skills required to identify a research topic, find and work with many kinds of sources, create a strong thesis statement, design a persuasive paper, and produce a properly formatted and well written research paper.

79-209   Women and Gender in East Asia, 1600s to the Present
Instructor:  Jiacheng Liu
Meetings:  TR 3:00 – 4:20 p.m.
Prerequisite:  None

This discussion-oriented course examines the role of women and gender politics in East Asian history. We will learn about the changing conceptions and discourses of women and femininity and discuss how women's place in family and community was related to the larger social and political order. We will also explore the actual practices of women that varied over time, region, and social class and understand their negotiation of identities and subject positions. Topics include sexuality and prostitution, marriage and family life, elite women, women's work and reproduction, female chastity and virtue, politics of love and sympathy, and women's role in the 20th-century revolutions and contemporary globalization.

79-222   Between Revolutions: The Development of Modern Latin America
Instructor:  Karen Faulk
Meetings:  MWF 11:30 – 12:20 p.m.
Prerequisite:  None

When the Haitian Revolution began in 1789, everything south of the newly created United States was under European colonial rule, slavery was an established institution, and the Catholic Church held considerable power over the daily lives of people. However, when the Mexican Revolution began in 1910, Spanish and Portuguese colonialism had collapsed along with slavery, and the power of the church had greatly diminished. New societal institutions emerged that reflected novel ideas about the role of secular nation-states, “free market” economies, and the meanings of "civilization." This course will use scholarly writings, fiction, film, and video to analyze the profound changes that took place in Latin American society during and between these two important revolutions. We will pay attention to the lives of both elites as well as the "everyday" people who helped to shape the region's history.
79-320  Women, Politics, and Protest  
Instructor: Lisa Tetrault  
Meetings: TR 10:30 – 11:50 a.m.  
Prerequisite: None  

This course examines the history of women's rights agitation in the United States from the early nineteenth-century to the present. It investigates both well-known struggles for women's equality—including the battles for women's voting rights, an Equal Rights Amendment, and access to birth control—and also explores the history of lesser-known struggles for economic and racial justice. Because women often differed about what the most important issues facing their sex were, this course explores not only the issues that have united women, but also those that have divided them.

79-325  U.S. Gay and Lesbian History  
Instructor: Tim Haggerty  
Meetings: MW 3:00 – 4:20 p.m.  
Prerequisite: None  

US Gay and Lesbian History offers an overview of the changing context and circumstances of sexual minorities in American culture. From early constructions of moral opprobrium, criminal deviance or medical pathology, the LGBT community emerged in the twentieth and twenty-first century as a political constituency and a vital part of contemporary society. Students should be aware that this course will necessarily address issues of intimate relations and sexuality as well as broader historical issues.

79-400  Advanced Seminar in Global Studies  
Instructor: Emanuela Grama  
Meetings: TR 9:00 – 10:20 a.m.  
Prerequisites: 79-275 Introduction to Global Studies, Theoretical and Topical Core must be complete or concurrently enrolled.  

This research seminar is the capstone course for Global Studies majors. The course is designed to give you a chance to define and carry out a research project of personal interest. The first few weeks of the course will be devoted to developing a research topic and locating sources. We will then work on how to interpret and synthesize sources into a coherent and compelling thesis before you begin drafting your paper. Your research may be based on in-depth reading of a body of scholarly work, field notes from ethnographic observations, archival research, analysis of literary or visual media, or some combination of these sources. Incorporation of some non-English language sources is strongly encouraged where possible. Independent work, self-initiative, participation in discussion, and peer evaluations are required. There are several interim deadlines that will be strictly enforced in order to ensure successful completion of the course.

82-238  Topics in Chinese Culture: Gender and Sexuality in China  
Instructor: Zhongxin Sun  
Meetings: TR 12:00 – 1:20 p.m.  
Prerequisite: None  

Courses offered under this repeatable title will focus on aspects of modern and contemporary Chinese culture, including, for example, literature, the arts, theater and music, and gender studies. Through the critical analysis of original sources in translation, film, as well as outstanding works of scholarship, students will gain a deeper
understanding of important developments in modern and contemporary China and will learn how to locate and evaluate sources of knowledge about China for future study. This course and all source materials will be in English. No knowledge of Chinese is required.

82-300  Topics in Cross-Cultural Studies: Arab Identities & Gender Roles in Conflict Zones  
Instructor: Nevine Abraham  
Meetings: MWF 1:30 – 2:20 p.m.  
Prerequisite: None

This course focuses on the processes of self-definition by Arab men and women in conflict zones in the Middle East and North Africa with relation to national and religious identities, social stratification, sexuality/homosexuality, and gender roles. Students will learn about the social, economic, and political contexts of the films and literary works representing the Maghreb, Egypt, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, the Gulf countries, and Yemen. This course fosters a better understanding of Arab societies and the hybrid identities that negotiate their presence and space within. Students will have the opportunity to engage in a video-conference dialogue with students in the American University in Cairo, Egypt, attend an Arab film during CMU’s International Film Festival, and interview native speakers of different Arab countries to further their learning of Arab culture.

85-221  Principles of Child Development  
Instructor: Sharon Carver  
Meetings: TR 3:00 – 4:20 p.m.  
Prerequisite: None

This course is about normal development from conception through adolescence. Topics include physical, perceptual, cognitive, emotional and social development. Students will learn facts about children at various points in development, theories about how development works, and research methods for studying development in infants and children. Students will be encouraged to relate the facts, theories and methods of developmental psychology to everyday problems, social issues and real world concerns.

85-350  Psychology of Prejudice  
Instructor: Chante Boyd  
Meetings: TR 10:30 – 11:50 a.m.  
Prerequisite: 85-241 Social Psychology

This course is devoted to the study of both traditional and more modern forms of prejudice and discrimination and the psychological processes that can arise from categorizations and stereotyping. The class provides an overview of the cognitive and emotional underpinnings of prejudice and discrimination as it pertains to many forms of inequality. The psychological theories underlying these behaviors will be examined as well as their impact on the lives of stigmatized individuals. Its goal is to examine a number of social differences and understand how prejudice can impact many areas of society. In addition to the traditional forms of prejudice based on such things as race, gender and age; other inequalities that result from less traditional groupings such as social class, appearance, and disability and will be explored. Research on issues of social identity, intergroup relations and the reduction of prejudice will be examined through readings and class activities.