WGSS 430: Women of Color in the U.S.
Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program
Oregon State University ECampus (3 credits)

Instructor: Dr. Liddy Detar
Contact Information  liddy.detar@oregonstate.edu (please specify your course number when emailing)
Days Offline: Saturdays. Please allow 24 hours for me to respond to your queries.

Pre-requisites: Students should have taken either WS or WGSS 223 or WS or WGSS 224, or an equivalent course.

Blackboard: This course will be delivered via Blackboard, your online learning community, where you will interact with your classmates and with the Instructor. Within the course Blackboard site you will access the learning materials and syllabus; discuss issues; and submit assignments. To preview how an online course works, visit the Ecampus Course Demo.

For technical assistance with Blackboard and related issues see http://ecampus.oregonstate.edu/services/technical-help.htm/

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, students will explore the contemporary experiences of women of color in the U.S. We will develop a framework for analyzing history and experience through the lens of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual identity, and national belonging, and then examine particular areas in the lives of women of color. Our focus throughout this term will be on forms of violence against women of color, including sexual violence, domestic violence, state violence, discursive violence, militarized violence, economic injustice, as well as gendered forms of violence associated with the welfare state, reproductive politics, the prison industrial complex, immigration policy, war, militarism, and genocide. Through examining structural, systemic, and institutionalized forms of violence against women of color, we will develop an understanding for the ways in which sexism, racism, colonialism, classism, and heterosexism intersect. We will also analyze strategies of resistance and empowerment developed by women of color. Exploring the ways in which women of color in our communities are working for social change will be a central goal of the course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

As a result of having taken this course, students will be able to:

- analyze the intersections of gender, race, class, sexuality, and nation, and understand the ways in which these socially constructed categories intersect in the writings and experiences of women of color

- explain the ways in which women of color have historically been marginalized and/or
excluded within the field of women’s studies and mainstream feminist movements, as well as the ways in which women of color have challenged such marginalization

- analyze power, particularly in terms of structural and institutionalized forms of oppression

- analyze the diversity of experiences among women of color in the U.S., and see the ways in which these different experiences have been shaped by specific cultural contexts and social processes.

- analyze the gendered dynamics of racism and colonialism from the perspectives of women of color

- examine issues such as globalization, immigration, militarism, war, sexual violence, cultural representation, reproductive justice, and state violence from the perspectives of women of color

- offer a theoretical framework for critical analysis of the multiple forms of violence against women of color, including institutionalized and state forms of violence

- recognize the interconnectedness of movements led by U.S.-based women of color and movements for social justice among women of the global South

- demonstrate writing skills in feminist critical analysis on the interconnectedness of race, gender, class, sexuality, and nation in the experiences of women of color.

These objectives will be assessed through each student’s participation in discussion in online forums, completion of two critical essays, a review of online sources, and a final essay exam.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**


- Additional required readings for this class, marked [B], will be posted to the Blackboard site.
**Textbook:** NOTE: For textbook accuracy, please always check the textbook list at the OSU Bookstore website (http://osubeaverstore.com/Academics/) Sample syllabi may not have the most up-to-date information.

Students can also click the OSU Beaver Store link associated with the WGSS 430 course information in the Ecampus schedule of classes for course textbook information and ordering.

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**Participation in Discussion Forums (25%)** In the feminist classroom, you are responsible to your classmates as well as to yourself for the success of our joint teaching and learning. You demonstrate your commitment to the class by contributing respectfully to discussions, and engaging enthusiastically in learning activities.

All students are expected to post on our Blackboard discussion site at least two times each week. Each week you will have a set of readings and reading questions, and these may form the basis of your discussion postings. For full credit, your initial posts must be submitted by 11:00 pm PST on Friday night, and your responses to colleagues should be posted by 11:00 pm PST on Sunday, each week.

**Review of Online Women of Color Sources (10%)** For the course, you should explore at least three online social, political, or activist-oriented websites addressing women of color communities. Discuss your findings in a short (approximately 500 words, or 2 pages double-spaced) essay, explaining: what the organizations do, how they do it, and what effects their work may have on women of color communities.

- This assignment is due Friday of Week 4

**Critical Essays (40%)** For this course, you will write two short analytic papers (approximately 1,000-1,200 words each), synthesizing and critically analyzing the readings. Topics for your essays will be provided in advance by the Instructor. This paper should demonstrate mastery of the readings while also asserting your own ideas and arguments about the topics we have addressed.

- Critical essay #1 is due Friday of Week 6
- Critical essay #2 due Friday of Week 8

**Final Exam (25%)** At the end of the term, you will be asked to complete a final exam consisting of short essay questions. You will be required to select three essay topics from five options, to demonstrate your understanding and mastery of the reading material and content of this course. Each of the three essays should be approximately 250-300 words, resulting in an exam of approximately 750-900 words in length.

- The exam will be distributed online at the beginning of Week 10. The Final Exam is due the Monday of Finals week by 11:00pm PST. Late final exams are not accepted.
GRADING SCALE

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Note on Incompletes: Incomplete (I) grades are given only in documented emergency cases (usually only for a death in the family, major illness or injury, or birth of your child), and if the student has completed the majority of the coursework (in other words, usually everything but the final). If you are having any difficulty that might prevent you completing the coursework, please do not wait until the end of the term; contact the instructor immediately.

Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities: Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the Instructor of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at 737-4098.

Statement on Academic Dishonesty: Many students do not understand what academic dishonesty is. It is important to become familiar with its different forms and the University's definitions. At Oregon State University academic dishonesty is defined by the Oregon Administrative Rules 576-015-0020.1.a-c as: An intentional act of deception in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or effort of another person or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic work. Academic dishonesty includes:

• CHEATING - use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information or study aids or an act of deceit by which a student attempts to misrepresent mastery of academic effort or information. This includes unauthorized copying or collaboration on a test or assignment or using prohibited materials and texts.

• FABRICATION - falsification or invention of any information (including falsifying research, inventing or exaggerating data and listing incorrect or fictitious references.

• ASSISTING - helping another commit an act of academic dishonesty. This includes paying or bribing someone to acquire a test or assignment, changing someone's grades or academic records, or taking a test/doing an assignment for someone else (or allowing someone to do these things for you). It is a violation of Oregon state law to create and offer to sell part or all of an education assignment to another person (ORS 165.114).

• TAMPERING - altering or interfering with evaluation instruments and documents.

• PLAGIARISM - representing the word or ideas of another person as one's own OR presenting someone else's words, ideas, artistry or data as one's own. This includes copying another person's work (including unpublished material) without appropriate referencing, presenting someone else's opinions and theories as one's own, or working jointly on a project, then submitting it as one's own. Academic dishonesty cases are handled initially by the academic units (collection of evidence and documentation of incident, meeting with student regarding the situation, determination of responsibility and academic penalty) but will also be referred to the Student Conduct Coordinator for action under the rules. For more information on expectations for student conduct, see
http://oregonstate.edu/admin/stucon/achon.htm.

In an academic community, students and faculty, and staff each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment, whether online or in the classroom. Students, faculty, and staff have the responsibility to treat each other with understanding, dignity and respect. Disruption of teaching, administration, research, and other institutional activities is prohibited by Oregon Administrative Rule 576-015-0015 (1) and (2) and is subject to sanctions under university policies, OSU Office of Student Conduct.

Finally, students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g., on discussion boards, email postings) in compliance with the university's regulations regarding civility. Students will be expected to treat all others with the same respect as they would want afforded themselves. Disrespectful behavior to others (such as harassing behavior, personal insults, inappropriate language) or disruptive behaviors in the course (such as persistent and unreasonable demands for time and attention both in and out of the classroom) is unacceptable and can result in sanctions as defined by Oregon Administrative Rules Division 015 Student Conduct Regulations.

**Guidelines for a Productive and Effective Online Classroom:** What you put into an online course reflects your level of professionalism. All communication, whether on the discussion board or by email, should be proofread for content, grammar, and mechanics and should reflect fairness, honesty, and tact.

- **Online threaded discussions are public messages:** you should assume that all writing in this area will be viewable by the entire class or assigned group members. Messages meant specifically for the instructor should be sent via email.

- **Posting of personal contact information is discouraged** (e.g. telephone numbers, address, personal website address).

- **Participate actively in the discussions,** having completed the readings and thought about the issues. Reread and proofread your comments before submitting them.

- **Pay close attention to your colleagues contributions to the discussion.** Ask clarifying questions when appropriate. These questions are meant to probe and shed new light, not to minimize or devalue the contributions of others.

- **Assume the best of others** in the class and expect the best from them. This includes refraining from value judgments or personal attacks.

- **Value the diversity of the class.** Recognize and value the experiences, abilities, and knowledge each person brings to class.

- **Sexist, racist, homophobic, and victim-blaming statements** will not be tolerated in the classroom space—nor will apologia for these behaviors.

- **Take care not to generalize about groups** who think differently than you do—keep the focus on issues/ideas/policies, etc. rather than on moral judgments.
• Be open to be challenged or confronted on your ideas or prejudices. None of us are immune from prejudices—and the purpose of our discussion is to help everyone grow and evolve in their perspectives.

Communicating with the Instructor: If you have questions about the syllabus, assignments, or course content, please ask! Send me an email from your OSU email account to liddy.detar@oregonstate.edu. Remember to include your course number (WGSS 430) in both the subject line and body of your email in addition to a greeting, brief summary of the issue, and a sign-off.

Email Response Time: during the regular online week, you can expect a response to emails within 24 – 48 hours. Emails received on Thursdays will generally be returned on Sunday. I am offline Saturdays. If you did not understand my response to you or have additional questions, please follow up with me. However, please do not email multiple times before I have had a chance to respond. Allow yourself plenty of time to complete your work, use the online resources for technical assistance, and rest assured that I will get back to you as soon as I can.

Student Evaluation of Teaching: We encourage you to engage in the course evaluation process each term – online, of course. The evaluation form will be available toward the end of each term, and you will be sent instructions through ONID. You will login to “Student Online Services” to respond to the online questionnaire. The results on the form are anonymous and are not tabulated until after grades are posted.

NOTE to prospective students: This syllabus is intended to provide students who are considering taking this course an idea of what they will be learning. A more detailed syllabus will be available on the course Blackboard site for enrolled students and may be more current than this sample syllabus.