

Gender Studies Comprehensive Course Syllabus

Micklo, Fall 2019

Course Description:

In this class we will analyze the causes and effects of sex differences in our society. We will begin with the essential debate: is biological difference or social modeling the principal factor in determining differences? Then, we will look more closely at the question through case studies. We will examine several readings that complicate the premises and assumptions of this debate. We also examine cultural modes that illuminate the context of this debate, including politics, cinematic and literary representations of the sexes, gender and finance, and questions of language use. The course catalyzes meaningful debate and calls on students to gather evidence and think through their beliefs.

Instructor: Ms. Erin Micklo (pronouns she/her/hers)

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630-907-5489

Office: A109A (inside the Writing Center)

Office Hours: A day: 10:30-11:30 p.m., B day: 12:30-2:00 p.m., I day: 1:30-3:00 p.m.

In addition, there is an appointment sign-up sheet on a clipboard hanging outside my office door. Most days I am available from 10 a.m. (after class) until 4:30 p.m.

Teaching Assistant: Sarah Brennan (she/her/hers) sbrennan@imsa.edu

Meeting Days, Time, and Room: ACD days, Mod 2 and 8, A117

Text(s) / Materials:

There will be a wide variety of readings, many of which are/will be accessible in electronic format on our course Edmodo. The two novels we will be reading (*The Power* by Naomi Alderman and *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood) will be distributed in class.

Essential Content/SSLs and Outcomes:

Gender Studies has been designed so that students gain skills and experience in many areas. The course emphasizes a few domains in particular, listed here by English standards:

A.8 applying knowledge gained from literature as a means of understanding contemporary and historical economic, social, and political issues and perspectives. [SSL-III.B; IL-2.B.5b]

B.2 examining logic, rhetoric, and grammar. [SSL-IV.A]

- C.1 using speaking and discussion skills to participate in and lead group discussions. [SSL-I.A, IV.B; IL-4.B.5b]
- C.2 delivering formal and informal oral presentations
- D.1 generating ideas and questions, and posing problems. [SSL-I.B]
- D.2 using techniques for analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of data from a variety of sources. [SSL-I.A-B; IL-4.A.4b, 5b, McREL-7.IV]
- D.3 creating a research presentation related to academic topics and presenting the findings in oral or multimedia formats, using contemporary technology. [SSL-III.A, IV.B, V.B, IL-3.B.5, 5.C.5a]
- E.5 respecting others' perspectives

Instructional Design and Approach:

Gender Studies is awash in authentic controversy and debate, and thus leads naturally to much good discussion. The course is designed to spark deliberation, because it investigates living debates (biological versus social causes of sex differences, for example) that inform social policy, as well as conceptions of the sexes that inform everyday life. Discussions are often student-directed, within some bounds.

Over the semester every student is responsible for two presentations to the class: the first, in pairs, will introduce one gender-related topic (usually connected to some recent readings) and lead the class in an original activity; the second, solo, will discuss your personal podcast assignment. Students design their activity presentations themselves, and in general they determine their research topics for individual papers themselves.

Student Expectations:

Some topics and readings in this class are quite challenging. They may involve sexual content or new and unusual ideas. In addition, the personal nature of gender may invite anecdotes and opinions from some students that are beyond your own experience. **In the class I expect that you will approach readings and discussions with maturity and respect.** Disagreement will probably prove to be the lifeblood of the course (indeed, the fundamental debate of the class is ongoing), but productive disagreement is courteous and tolerant. If this is a communication skill that you need additional practice in, all the better.

This course demands the courage to investigate what you do not know and what you think you already know. Please try to face this investigation with openness and intellectual honesty – these will serve you well through complicated terrain. Your beliefs may change, and you will come to know yourself better. Further—give yourself the space and opportunity to allow for some of your ideas to change.

Reading:

Careful reading is essential for this class. Please set aside time to read with attention. Reading loads are not always equal. Plan accordingly. I will mark down your participation grade if it is clear that you have not read the material. You must be

prepared for a reading quiz every time you are given a reading assignment and often you WILL have a quiz to reward careful and consistent reading.

Participation:

Active, engaged, and (perhaps most importantly!) productive participation is expected and required. Questions are just as valid as comments, and often much more so; please share your confusions and whatever inchoate ideas that you haven't fully worked out yet! The class will be a collaborative idea space.

If you miss class and are unexcused when we have a reading quiz, you will receive a zero. If your absence was an excused one, you will receive a N/A for that quiz—ie—the quiz neither helps nor hurts you.

Currents Event Contributions: I would welcome and appreciate you bringing articles from the newspaper or other news outlets that pertain to things we are talking about in class and I will incorporate your contributions into your participation grade.

Revision:

You may revise **within 10 days** of the paper's return. I suggest you meet with me if you are unsure about the changes to make or would like to talk through an adventurous rewrite. The final grade will be an average of the original grade and the revision.

If you earn a 79 or below on a paper, you MUST meet with me and revise that paper. If you earn an 80-89 on a paper and wish to revise, you must meet with a Writing Center tutor during the revision process AND attach documentation of the tutor session to the revised essay. If you are a Writing Center tutor, you must work with another tutor as you revise. Papers that receive a grade of 90 or higher are not revisable, but I am happy to meet with you if you would like to discuss your paper and how to improve your writing in future essays.

When handing in a revision, you must submit both the original and the revised version. If you no longer have the original paper (with my comments) your paper is not eligible for revision. **Late papers cannot be revised.**

Class activities cannot be redone, so plan carefully (and daringly). Homework and quizzes also cannot be revised.

Late papers:

For every class day that the paper is late, the top grade possible will drop by 10 points for a maximum of 25 points. Papers not submitted by a week past the due date will receive a zero.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty:

Plagiarism or cheating of any kind—even “just one time”—will be punished. All work that you turn in to me must be your own. When in doubt, cite your source. The academic honesty standards for all IMSA students apply in this class. All academic dishonesty will

be reported to the administration and your parents/guardian(s). Most cases of plagiarism occur when a student either does not understand an assignment, or does not allot adequate time to complete it properly. Make sure you talk to me if you have concerns about an assignment, and always give yourself the necessary time to complete your work. Take pride in your OWN accomplishments!

IMSA has a very strict stance toward plagiarism, and I have followed official protocol when academic integrity problems have surfaced in the past. In short: if you have ANY questions about how or when to cite a source you've consulted, make sure to ask me. Please do not risk failing an assignment because of misinformation about citation, paraphrase, etc.

Assessment Practices, Procedures, and Processes:

Assignments:

Essays will be due on a variety of topics over the semester. Each essay must have a clear point and supporting evidence; you should be concise and discriminating so that your paper is as powerful as possible. However, there is no word limit for each essay – you will have to decide for yourself how much writing and analysis you need to do to honor the assignment and your own ideas.

You will make two presentations in this class. The first will be an original class activity that you lead with a partner in order to introduce that day's reading. You will choose what day to present and you will design the activity yourselves. The second presentation will be an individual one, where you have the opportunity to share elements of your personal podcast project.

Grading:

Essays & Projects	55%
Presentations (2)	20%
Participation	15%
Homework/Quizzes:	10%

On grades for written work:

“A” work is eloquent, cogent, and sometimes profound (exceeds expectations); “B” work is committed but a bit prosaic or clunky (meets expectations for assignment); “C” work suffers from serious writing and/or comprehension errors (does not meet expectations for this assignment).

Extra Credit: You may earn 3 points per quarter by working with a Writing Center tutor for an essay for this class as long as you provide a “proof of tutoring” form to me prior to the last day of the quarter. This session is for the pre-writing or first draft of an essay—you will NOT receive extra credit for the revision of an essay.

Sequence of Topics and Activities: (order and time allotted may be adjusted as needed)

Units of Study:

- **Gender Foundations** (2 weeks)
- **Power, Privilege and Inequality** (4 weeks) – including *The Power*
- **LGBTQIA+ Issues and Rights** (2 weeks)
- **Gender in the Workplace** (2 weeks)
- **Gender & Politics** (2 weeks)
- **Reproductive Rights & Sexual Violence** (3.5 weeks) –including *The Handmaid's Tale*

Major Assessment Schedule:

Quarter 1: 2 essays, 1 presentation

Quarter 2: 1 essay, 1 podcast (counts as an auditory essay, 1 presentation)