

# RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

## Transforming Classroom Norms as Social Change: Pairing Embodied Exercises with Collaborative Participation in the WGS Classroom (with Syllabus)

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TRADITIONAL HOUSEHOLD DUTIES ROLES  
COURTESY OF PIXABAY

Despite teaching topics in introductory Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) classes such as transgender theory, gender violence, and menstrual politics, I am nonetheless surprised by the post-feminist position students often take about housework. Housework, it seems, is an issue of the past, something too trivial to examine in the university classroom, too lacking in political implications. Those raised by single parents bristle at the suggestion that household labor is gendered: "My mom did everything herself. She never had a man around to fix things!" Other families are exceptions to the rule: "My dad does all the cooking because my mom is a terrible cook." Students from affluent backgrounds defend their families' reliance on domestic labor by insisting that they treat their maid as "part of the family" or reject an analysis of race in domestic work because "our maids are white."

During a summer class on Gender, Race, and Nation that I taught as a graduate student at a land-grant university in the Deep South, a student told this story:

*"My mom and dad both go to work at 6:30, but my mom gets up an hour earlier to make breakfast, do the dishes, and get dinner started. She gets home at 5, cleans the house, and cooks dinner. As soon as my dad gets home, we [his kids] take his shoes off and rub his feet while my mom serves him dinner as he watches TV." His parents, a janitor and a housekeeper, occupied similar roles outside the house; however, for his mother, the work didn't stop at home. The entire family collaborated to make sure that "when he's at home, my dad's the king of the castle. He doesn't wait on nobody."*

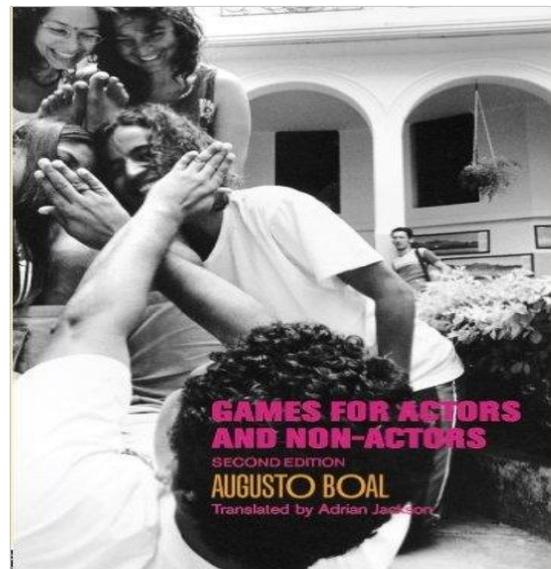
After telling his story, the student crossed his arms in front of his chest and leaned back in his seat, legs spread wide, defensively denying vulnerability. Even if his black working-class background would funnel him, like his father, into the often invisible, denigrated, and feminized labor of cleaning up after other people, he could claim male privilege within his home. Meanwhile, my queer-identified white femme body, which had resisted the lessons of a religious, working-class patriarchal upbringing in the art of homemaking, got the better of me. My already crossed legs wove even more tightly around each other as I leaned forward in my seat, physically contesting his claim to male privilege.

I want to push beyond easy analyses of this story as being about the gendered and racial nature of housework and instead reframe it as a starting point to think through how the *labor* of teaching and learning is done with and through bodies. In this scene, my student's and my respective body languages sharply accentuated our positions, which highlighted the racial, gender, educational, class, and sexual power differences between us. For my student's family, gender hierarchy within the home could reinstate his father's male privilege. My physicality spoke volumes about my refusal to accept housework as the dues of femininity. The politics of this embodied interaction made me question the work being done through and with

bodies in classrooms. I wonder: how does *classroom labor* operate invisibly? How do bodies *work* in the classroom?

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We teach and learn with and through our bodies, and our bodies operate as sites for accessing and expressing both dominant and subjugated knowledges. This essay examines two types of activities I use to access this knowledge in introductory Women's and Gender Studies (WGS) courses. The first are a series of embodied pedagogical exercises based on methods described in Brazilian theatre practitioner Augusto Boal's 1992 *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. These "gamesercises" known as *Theatre of the Oppressed* (48) involve movement, role-playing, and making living "statues."<sup>1</sup> The second are collaborative methods I use to open up new avenues for class participation, including some portions of classroom management such as creating study guides, defining vocabulary terms, and designing surveys. These tasks, like housework, are often done invisibly by the professor but are crucial to the running of the classroom community.



While very different on the surface, both activities bring to the forefront embodied relationships between labor and power in the classroom. Students typically embrace embodied methods enthusiastically, while expressing skepticism or even disdain towards Collaborative Participation (CP). I argue that by redistributing the work that is done with and through bodies during and outside of class time, these methods can challenge the top-down power dynamic that often characterizes student-teacher interactions. I posit that these methods can shift status quo power dynamics and create local change in the classroom, thereby providing a model for large-scale social change. I situate these teaching methods within the neoliberal corporate university (NCU) because my status as a full-time, yet contingent faculty member brings up larger questions of power and labor. In addition to teaching as a graduate student at a state university in the Deep South, for one year, I was employed as a lecturer of Women's & Gender Studies at another state university on the east coast. There, I taught a 4-4 teaching load ranging from intro-level to graduate seminars. This is currently my third

year as a Visiting Assistant Professor of Women's & Gender Studies at a private liberal arts college, where I also teach classes at all levels. I base the following observations largely on introductory Women's & Gender Studies classes taught in all three institutions with enrollments between 15 and 40; students at these institutions were primarily white, middle or upper-middle class, and of traditional college age. However, I also taught a sizeable proportion of students of color as well as first-generation, immigrant, and returning students, particularly at the state schools. All direct quotations from students are taken from in-class writings, institution-administered end-of-term evaluations, or personal communication with students.

## Embodied Critical Feminist Pedagogy

Feminist pedagogical praxis emerged from a tradition of progressive, emancipatory education called critical pedagogy (see Luke and Gore, and Weiler) which "interrogate[s] the pedagogical interrelationships between culture, economics, ideology, and power" and "nurtures the development of critical consciousness" (Darder *et al.* 23) in order to effect social change. A central figure in critical pedagogical thought is Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, whose *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* questions how educational systems reflect and reproduce social inequalities. One of Freire's most utilized concepts is his critique of the banking model of education, in which teachers act as deliverers of knowledge, and students operate as empty vessels who learn by absorbing specialized knowledge from an authoritative expert (72). In this familiar educational arrangement, the teacher is the active participant, the students acted upon; teachers set the goals, outcomes, topics, and schedule to which students must adapt. These entrenched power differentials, Freire argues, mirror inequitable social relations from which the oppressed can only break free if they see their oppression "not as a closed world from which there is no exit, but as a limiting situation which they can transform" (49).

Critical feminist instructors teach students how to harness their potential as active agents of social change who are also attuned to how gender, race, and other embodied markers of identity intersect to shape this emancipation (Cohee *et al.*, viii). As Bernice Fisher shows, even emancipatory methods can reproduce oppression if students don't already have critical consciousness (190), and instructors need to approach embodied methods with caution when a class includes students from different social locations. Furthermore, because gender intersects with other embodied identities such as race, class, sexuality, disability, and nationality, power discrepancies between teachers and students are often amplified rather than remedied: a teacher's power is not simply institutional because the intersections of "race, sexuality, and geopolitics . . . function in some cases to widen the power gap between the teacher and students, yet shrink it in other cases" (Ergun 88).

Feminist critiques of the "neoliberal, corporate university" (Coogan-Gehr 2) offer valuable insight into the institutionalization of students' and teachers' embodied

identities. In operating as a "well-oiled corporate machine" (Weber 128), the NCU applies business models to education, relying on an increasing contingent body of academic laborers to prioritize profits by prizing "competition, self-sufficiency, and strict individualism" (Feigenbaum 337). Scholars of feminist pedagogy have expressed concern about the effects of the increasingly corporatized university (Brulé, Byrd, Feigenbaum, Ginsberg, Mohanty, Sudbury and Okazawa-Rey, TuSmith and Reddy, Weber), often positioning emancipatory feminist goals as at odds with the hierarchical academic establishment (Ginsberg 46). This body of literature emphasizes the ways in which neoliberalism domesticates radical goals: "neoliberal intellectual culture may well constitute a threshold of disappearance for feminist, antiracist thought anchored in the radical social movements of the twentieth century" (Mohanty 970-971). By prioritizing a banking model of education that "de-historicizes and depoliticizes difference" (Bell *et. al* 26), the NCU can thwart critical pedagogical goals. Because neoliberalism's insistence upon free-market values of individual merit and effort operates to make "systemic injustices (like racism or sexism)" (Weber 127) invisible, pedagogical practices that reallocate institutionalized hierarchies may become suspect.

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Nonetheless, feminist teachers continue to balance a commitment to social justice with content knowledge while appeasing an increasingly diverse body of students-as-consumers who approach education from an economic market-driven perspective (Brulé). Students who resist emancipatory methods often identify with neoliberal values such as individual achievement, competition, and other tools of domination. Yet, if we frame student resistance to critical feminist methods as a reflection of the demands of an educational system devoted to a consumer approach to education (Bondestam), feminist instructors who wish to construct classroom communities that link the theoretical to the experiential and the personal to the political, directly working with bodies, power, and labor in the classroom can teach students how to act in response to lived experiences of oppression (Thomson 211).

Several recent edited collections, (see, for example, Byrd *et. al.*, Mayberry and Rose, Murphy and Ribarsky) offer examples of embodied classroom activities for teaching key concepts in WGS; however, few attend to the implications of utilizing these exercises within the NCU. Despite the range of innovative learning opportunities detailed in these texts, they pay little attention to how embodied activities work within and against tensions between corporate academia and emancipatory education. This paper intervenes at the juncture between critical feminist

pedagogy about embodiment and feminist critiques of the NCU, as it maps how students are both shaped by and resistant to neoliberalism. I argue that fashioning both embodied pedagogical methods as well as methods that refigure the laborpolitics of classroom management with a spirit of “serious play” (Weber 136)<sup>2</sup> allows us to work with tensions between neoliberal and critical, feminist pedagogical goals. While market forces shape student-teacher interactions, using methods such as those described below can nonetheless give students an experience of social change within the classroom.

## Power and Bodies in the Classroom

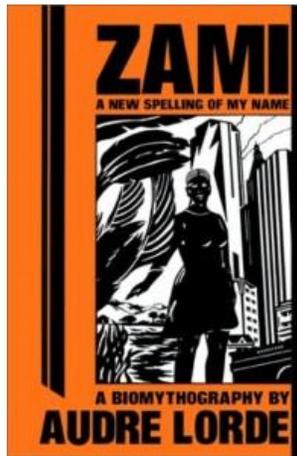
In order to resist reproducing traditional power dynamics within the classroom, feminist pedagogy reframes power as “energy, capacity, and potential,” rather than domination (Shrewsbury 8). In this environment, social identities and personal experiences become legitimate sites of knowledge production. One way to help students learn this is through harnessing the power of the body in the classroom. Power works through bodies, and feminist pedagogy can use embodied methods to reframe classroom power dynamics. Practitioners writing about embodied feminist pedagogy generally utilize one of two different approaches. The first approach uses embodied practices such as self-defense (Cermele), *qi gong* (Gustafson), mindfulness (Berila), or yoga practices (Musial) within the classroom by asking students to use their bodies differently in an academic setting. The second conceptualizes embodied pedagogy as teaching about embodied subjectivities such as fat (Boling) or black queer femme (Lewis) identities. I draw on both approaches in my understanding of embodied feminist pedagogy as a process that utilizes bodies to teach about power, privilege, and difference.

Because students have different learning styles as well as diverse educational, social, and cultural backgrounds, multiple modes of instruction, including kinesthetic methods, can best reach students with various academic needs. As Berila notes, it is crucial to reclaim the body in social justice classrooms because “oppression is held in our bodies, our hearts, our psyches, our spirits, *and* our minds” (34). Embodied methods common in introductory WGS classes include “privilege walks,” role-playing, and standing on a continuum to measure beliefs and values. These types of activities allow students to critically think about their positions on topics without necessarily discussing their thoughts vocally, fostering critical thinking about “the basis for or origin of their attitudes/beliefs” (Rozema 4). Kinesthetic activities “[energize] and [involve] students. Since all students are now required to get on their feet . . . it changes the energy in the room,” even engaging reluctant participators (Rozema 4). I utilize a range of embodied activities in introductory WGS classes and preface them with Boalian techniques of bodily demechanization such as “silly walks” to shake everyone out of routine habits of “classroom” embodiment.

### Example 1: Bodies and Power in the Classroom

I often use a performance-based activity early in the semester to (1) get students used to using their bodies in the classroom and (2) open discussion about how power works in the classroom. The “Miss Teacher” exercise pairs Boal’s “Image of Transition” exercise that generates “an argument by visual means alone” (85) with a short scene from Audre Lorde’s *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* that narrates an experience at a sight-conversion kindergarten for legally blind poor black children. I have used this exercise with groups who were reading the text for class as well as with groups that only had a photocopy of the scene; thus, the exercise could enrich textual analysis, or it could be used as a standalone lesson on critical pedagogy.

In Lorde’s scene, students must write the first letter of their first name in a special wide-ruled notebook with a crayon. Well ahead of her peers and accustomed to writing with standard paper and pencil, Lorde scrawls her entire name, “half-showing off, half-eager to please” (24). The teacher’s shaming reprimand, “I see we have a young lady who does not want to do as she is told. We will have to tell her mother about that” (24), is familiar to anyone brought up in an educational system that prizes obedience above learning. Paying close attention to this short scene offers a rich study of the power dynamics embedded in teacher-student relationships, including how gender, race, class, and disability shape classroom labor expectations. While Lorde cannot recall “Miss Teacher’s” race, Lorde’s references to her as “miss” and “lady” encourages reading her as white, and Lorde’s immigrant family’s poverty underscores her ambition.



After reading the scene aloud, I begin Boal’s “Image of Transition” by asking participants to construct an image of oppression that highlights the relationship between Audre and Miss Teacher. The “real” image students construct is usually an exaggerated model of dominance and submission: the student playing Audre cowers, often on knees with head in hands, and the student playing Miss Teacher towers above while others playing “classmates” turn their attention toward the scene and giggle, point, gasp in shock at Audre’s “misbehavior,” or look away lest Miss Teacher’s anger come their way. “Students” can dismiss, ignore, challenge, or engage with the “teacher” in various ways, but their power is responsive to the embodied performance of “teacher.”

Students then “freeze,” holding their positions, discussing what they note about everyone’s positions. Then, students create an “ideal” version in which each actor moves in a way “in which the oppression will have been eliminated and everyone in the model will have come to a plausible equilibrium” (Boal185-186). Classes often depict characters holding hands or reading together, embarking on a shared learning experience. Finally, participants make static images of transition: on handclaps, they move from the “real” scene to the “ideal” scene and note who moves, how much, and how much

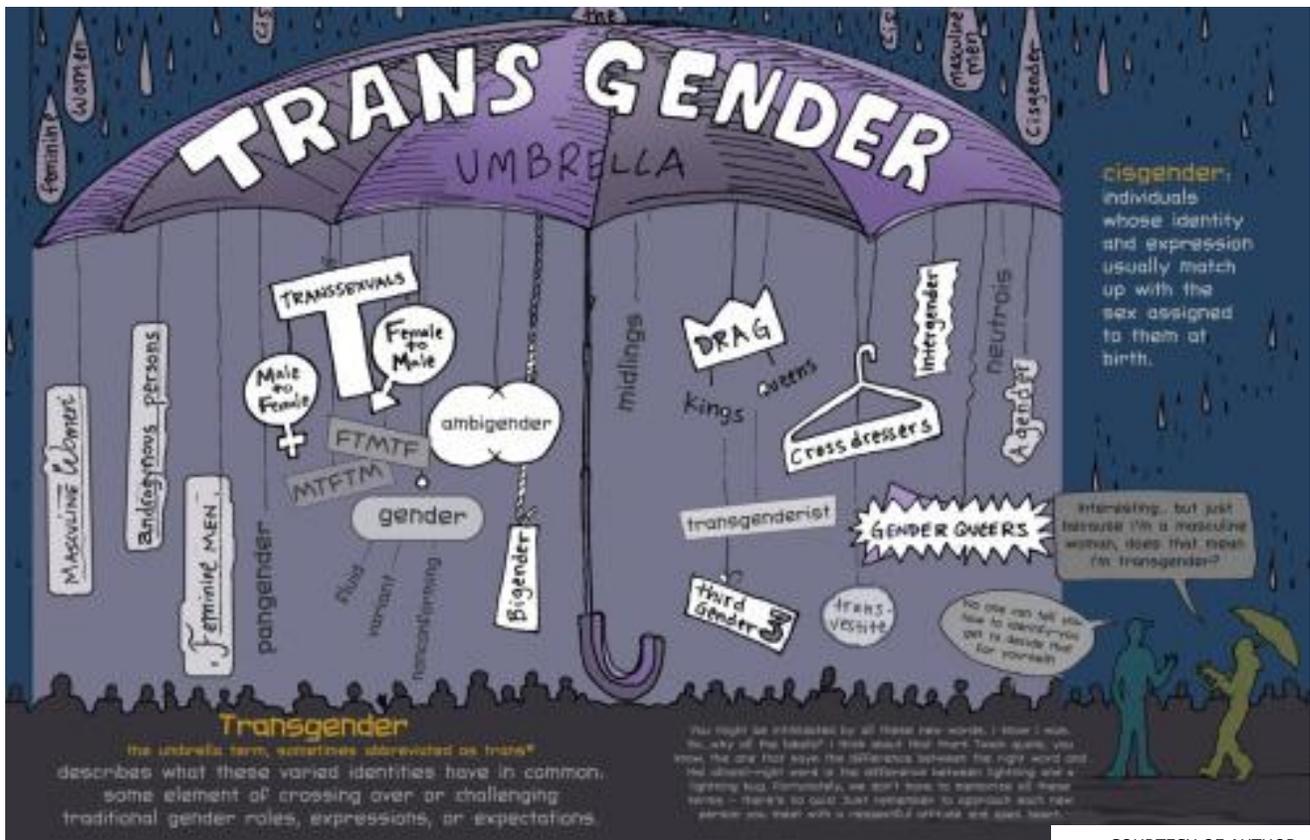
effort each participant must exert to shift. Usually “Miss Teacher” moves the most, suggesting that serious effort is needed to dismantle power by those already in positions of power. The point of the exercise, according to Boal, is to spark actual change to move from fantasy to realized ideals (186). A class that’s reading the text can discuss how “Miss Teacher” embodies a white masculinized authoritarian position, regardless of her actual racial and gender identities, to socialize poor, disabled, and/or black children as docile, whereas a class that’s not reading the text can gain an entry point for dismantling oppressive power dynamics within the classroom.

**Example 2: Embodying the Social Construction of Gender**

After introducing students to the fundamentals of WGS such as feminism, social location, and identity from a critical feminist point-of-view, the second, three-week unit of my introductory Women’s & Gender Studies courses is on the social construction of gender. I use the recently-published *Threshold Concepts in Women’s and Gender*

biological and social models of gender, excerpts from Michael Kimmel’s *Guyland* to show how masculinity is socially constructed, and the recently-released documentary *Three to Infinity* to expose students to the spectrum model of gender.

During the first week of instruction in this unit, when students are new to the concept, I utilize a simple embodied exercise to teach at least three interrelated concepts: (1) gender cannot be reduced to physical bodies, yet we read gender through bodies, (2) we “do” gender constantly (Lorber), and (3) there are important differences between sex, gender identity, and gender expression. It is crucial to preface this activity by telling students that they do not have to participate in the activity if it makes them uncomfortable and by clearly articulating that I’m deliberately utilizing cultural stereotypes to deconstruct the “truth” of them. The exercise asks students to instruct me to first sit and then walk “like a lady” and then “like a man.” As I perform the different motions, students report what they notice, and I ask whether they



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*Studies* as a backbone to the course; the text is broken into four “threshold concepts” that are crucial to doing advanced work in the discipline: the social construction of gender, privilege and oppression, intersectionality, and feminist praxis. In addition to reading the textbook chapter on the social construction of gender, I also assign Judith Lorber’s “The Social Construction of Gender,” selections from Julia Serano’s *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity* to present a model of gender construction she calls “intrinsic inclinations,” selections from Anne Fausto-Sterling’s *Sex/Gender: Biology in a Social World* to further probe at

think these habits are inborn or learned. I am also clear about my own embodied habits as a cisgender, somewhat femme woman who is currently embodying the role of professor. Afterwards, students join me in sitting and walking both “like a man” and a “like a woman,” then discuss how they felt in each.

This activity serves as the starting point for a rich discussion about how gender is done in myriad ways through routine, mundane actions such as sitting, standing, or walking and how we are taught to read gender in ways that reinforce cissexist and sexist myths about

gender and physical bodies, probing students to question whether these bodily habits are inborn or learned. We discuss cultural location; for example, in U.S. culture, men are discouraged from sitting with their legs crossed (which students often argue is anatomical), while elsewhere—such as France—men routinely sit with crossed legs. This can open space for critical reflection about how *others* enforce gendered ways of moving throughout the world. Interestingly, most students, regardless of institutional context or gender, racial, sexual, or class identity, find traditionally “male” ways of sitting and walking more comfortable, casual, confident, and relaxed. The assigned readings challenge students to ask how gender expression is read differently on differently raced bodies, how gender expression is often conflated with sexuality, how power and confidence is associated with butch or “masculine” embodiments, and how femme ways of sitting/standing are disparaged. This exercise deepens engagement with theories of gender essentialism from trans and gender-nonconforming perspectives.

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Performing “gamesercises” such as the two described above allows for the simultaneous emotional and cognitive processing Iverson calls “imagination-intellect” that “disrupt[s] the mind/body dichotomy that situates that which is embodied in opposition (and subordinate) to that which is rational, and to trouble conceptions of power and authority and of knowledge production and transmission” (190-191). Throughout the semester, students may also embody other concepts such as *intersectionality*, *lesbian baiting*, or *compulsory heterosexuality*. This embodied work helps students understand the complex interactions between the individual and the social. Instead of using class time to lecture so that students absorb the lessons cognitively, embodied exercises can open space “to empower individuals to see themselves as agents of social change” (Iverson, 181). These activities can broaden student awareness of corporeal difference, make knowledge accessible to a wider range of learners, and ground abstract, theoretical concepts. Embodied activities can also highlight the expected docility of student embodiment to enable discussions of how labor expectations within the classroom rely on ableist assumptions of being able to sit still for long periods of time; climb stairs; push heavy doors open; and carry heavy books, notebooks, or laptops that can push the limits of bodily ability for many.<sup>3</sup>

***While most students report enjoying and learning from embodied activities, the entertainment aspect can nonetheless reinforce the student-as-consumer model.***

These exercises suggest how power framed as subordination and domination works through bodies in mundane, everyday situations. But, what does it mean if students (and teachers) have different abilities to

dramatize power or the lack of it? These exercises work best in classrooms in which students are similarly able-bodied. For example, how would a Deaf student respond to spoken cues? How would a Blind student see various actors’ positions at the end of the activity? How might wheelchair users or students using crutches move in response to each statement? In discussing the “arsenal of theatre of the oppressed,” Boal notes that, “No one should undertake or continue any exercise or game if they have some injury or condition which might be exacerbated by taking part – a back problem, for instance. In Theatre of the Oppressed no one is compelled to do anything they don’t wish to do” (49). Boalian activities often utilize participants as observers or notetakers so that anyone can opt out of the physical exercises. Each exercise can also work well with a range of abled bodies; for example, those with mobility limitations can participate as they are, Blind students can engage through touch, or Deaf students can respond to visual cues. Furthermore, this exercise is illuminating: different power dynamics can become salient, depending on the embodied identities of the participants. For example, when a white male student played “Miss Teacher,” “students” in the scene did not rebel much, and the class read “Audre,” played by a white woman, as victimized (where, perhaps, a student of color would have been read as defiant). However, when a woman of color played “Miss Teacher,” “students” were more disobedient, and the “solution” at the end involved hand-holding, while the “solution” for the male “Miss Teacher” required him helping “Audre” one-on-one. The exercise changes depending on the demographics, and it’s useful to do it more than once with different actors to imagine different outcomes.

While most students report enjoying and learning from embodied activities, the entertainment aspect can nonetheless reinforce the student-as-consumer model. Mohanty warns that the emancipatory theory that underlies critical praxis can “become a commodity to be consumed; no longer seen as a product of activist scholarship or connected to emancipatory knowledge, it can circulate as a sign of prestige in an elitist, neoliberal landscape” (970). Students’ enthusiasm about embodied activities can serve neoliberal ends by helping them consume course concepts with engagement. Student understanding of embodied learning as “not academic” can be grounded in neoliberal goals that prioritize breadth rather than depth of knowledge. Without “feminist pedagogical emphasis on social action,” the embodied work described above “will not necessarily translate into a different way of being and acting civically” (Iverson, 191). Thus, I balance kinesthetic activities with another kind of embodied labor: a semester-long reconfiguration of participation I’ve developed called Collaborative Participation.

## Collaborative Participation as Shared Labor

De-centralizing teachers’ authority is key to critical feminist pedagogy, re-fashioning professors as models of “the kind of redistribution of expertise” they want students to emulate (Byrd *et al*, 9). Below, I discuss two examples

of methods I've developed to share labor and power where appropriate through collaboration.

### **Example 1: Collaboration on Classroom Policies**

I prioritize collaboration during the first day of class by developing a contract that establishes guidelines and policies such as in-class technology use and discussion norms. This is often the first time students' attention is drawn explicitly to the labor involved in classroom design. Participating in the formation of classroom policies, guidelines, and ground rules allows students to think critically about the learning process as well as share in the labor and responsibility as co-creators of the classroom environment.

Typically, students collaborate well on establishing communication guidelines or technology policies. However, some experience this as "a waste of time" because, as one student at a public state university put it, "a good discussion either happens or it doesn't. There's nothing we as a class can do about it," or, as another student notes, "If the professor is doing their job, things should just flow naturally." In contrast, a student at a private liberal arts college states, "The professor was someone who would not step up as a professor and create structure. . . . It felt as if she was making us do her job to decide what she is doing." Both groups maintain a general position that designing and maintaining the classroom environment is primarily the result of a teacher's talent as well as the conviction that this labor should happen without explicitly discussing it during (admittedly limited) class time. The private liberal arts student's indignation at being asked to collaborate, however, may suggest a stronger consumer mentality.

While collaboratively establishing shared ground rules and expectations can take considerable time, space, and labor, they are crucial to increase student agency because, as James Slevin argues, "Critical inquiry and exchange are supported by a pedagogy that levels the playing field not just by bringing academic norms and expectations into the open but through classroom practices explicit in their interrogation and critique of those norms" (53).

### **Example 2: Collaborative Participation**

Collaborative Participation [CP] is a model of participation I've developed over several years. I developed the concept from "class jobs," which I heard about through word-of-mouth, when a colleague returned from a talk by Chris Emdin, a scholar known for his innovative "Hip-Hop" approach to education. The key point of Emdin's "jobs" is to build a sense of community and shared responsibility in predominately Black high school classrooms. Emdin, a Black man teaching students of color in an urban setting, did not design his "jobs" as a feminist pedagogical practice, but rather as a way to participate in shared community. After talking with my colleague, I adapted them for WGS classrooms. However, I quickly modified the "job" model because of strong student resistance. With CP, the logistics vary every semester depending on the number of students in a course and student interest. I divide participation into three categories: online, in-class, and outside-of-class. Students sign up on an open document on Blackboard, and they

must complete up to four options over the course of the semester. I designed CP to offer a clear-cut means to earn participation points while also distributing agency within the classroom: by encouraging regular communication and collaboration between students and their peers (as well as between students and me), creating a sense of community, and offering a model of feminist praxis. Because CP is more hands-on than most participation, it takes time to discuss, implement, and adjust each semester.

In the first category, students can engage with the class online in one of three ways: (1) post to the class "Coffee Shop" forum by continuing class discussions or sharing relevant media items several times throughout the semester, (2) post a list of defined key terms from a reading assignment, or (3) post an outline to guide students through a difficult reading. Online participation is especially beneficial for students who find it difficult to speak up in class.

The second type of participation happens in class. Examples include: re-cap the previous class, prepare an opening question, report on a campus event, report on recommended reading, or facilitate a portion of class discussion. Two end-of-class options mark the end of class, providing a sense of closure: "Listener" or "Reflective Activity." For example, the "Listener" takes five minutes at the end of class to report on what they heard in class, emphasizing that active listening is a key skill for quality discussions. Students have modified these options over time, adding some and eliminating others. For example, I used to have an "Attendance Taker" option; however, students strongly opposed it, though some did report appreciating the extra motivation to get to class early, attend consistently, and learn their classmates' names.

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The final category, outside-of-class, includes group work such as Professor Feedback Panel, Study Guide Team, Assignment Consulting Board, Film Screening Organizers, or Satisfaction Surveyors, among others. In general, students collaborate in groups of two to four to work with me throughout the semester on one aspect of classroom design, management, or student experience. For example, the Professor Feedback Panel discusses with me what's going well, areas of student concern, and helps brainstorm solutions to problems, opening possibility for changes to the class. These options are more time-intensive and as such are weighted more heavily, but they benefit students directly while also giving me a better understanding of student experience in the course. I have found that students are often eager to discuss any frustrations or uncertainties about the course and to work toward a solution that upholds the learning goals. There must be, of course, an environment of trust for students to be willing to communicate about struggles without fear of punishment via grades. While there is potential for students to approach these from a consumer-driven perspective by, for example, attempting to influence

grading policies, emphasizing collaboration-as-process alleviates those temptations for the most part.

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What I like about CP is that it can counter competitiveness. Fostering collaboration runs counter to neoliberal goals of competition and individualization—for example, one student argued that I shouldn't "force" students to write Study Guides for everyone because other students can utilize them without doing the work. However, I believe that there are benefits to offering participation credit for creating open and accessible study guides for the class: it can broaden students' understanding of participation, accommodate more students' learning styles, highlight the collaborative nature of knowledge, give students a clear means to earn credit for their participation, and make the classroom a more welcoming and inclusive space.

Student responses, however, are mixed. Some students drop the course immediately. Others shift their thoughts throughout the semester. One student writes, "At first, I didn't like it. Near midterm I realized how power in our classroom was equally distributed . . . I like how we had the power to determine our rules and could lead our discussions." Of course, it is neither possible nor desirable for professors and students to equally share power, as professors' training, content knowledge, and responsibility to evaluate student work allows them certain forms of earned privilege that do not necessarily need remedying. Other students appreciated having participation options and built-in communication, which made them feel comfortable with each other as well as approaching me. In addition to redistributing power in the classroom, another student found that CP could "teach us skills that are beneficial to have as students such as organization, communication and team work." Importantly, many who reported positive experiences with this aspect of the course aligned themselves with the social justice goals of feminism.

Students who resisted Collaborative Participation most often addressed particular issues such as a perceived increased work burden, fairness, the "trivial" nature of the work, and appropriate division of labor. For example, some students interpret CP as intending to reduce my workload: "I thought the fact that the students had jobs to help the professor out and 'to give us participation and a say in the class' very unprofessional on her part and made me feel like we were in elementary school." Another found CP effective "as a theoretical concept [in which] everybody was supposed to have a say in how things are done," yet he also articulated a struggle with authority in ways that suggest that careful framing is necessary when implementing the CP model of participation: "assigning class jobs is only giving the illusion of empowerment. What I mean is, if you have a child and you tell him/her that he/she can get his/her shower before dinner or after dinner, he/she feels like he/she has the choice. In reality, however, whichever option the child chooses, he/she is getting a shower and dinner. There's really no choice in the matter."

Infantilization is a theme in both responses; the first, by drawing parallels to elementary school, suggests that while shared power might be productive with small children, the "professional" (read: masculine) world operates on a system of power-over. The second student's use of the verb "assigning" rather than "designing" or "utilizing," reminds us that pedagogical methods are implemented and understood within neoliberal power dynamics that are also gendered and racialized, even when we attempt to remedy this. While this student could have used military or workplace analogies to describe a top-down command to labor, he nonetheless framed them in terms of domestic, often feminized labor. Relegating professorial authority to that of a parent offering a child the illusion of choice frames the reallocation of power as domestic rather than an impetus to social change. In other words, this student struggled to conceptualize how CP could foster true change within neoliberal institutions. Perhaps my own embodiment, as white, relatively young, and femme-presenting, influences students to think of me in terms of an elementary-school teacher or parent of a young child.



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CP could reproduce gendered and racial power dynamics. Having students choose how they will participate alleviates concern about teachers assigning inappropriate tasks. However, power dynamics among students can be reproduced. For example, one student noted that caretaking labor was gendered—only women signed up for options that involved caretaking. Other more problematic situations could go undetected by faculty. For example, a Black woman explained to me after a course that when she collaborated with a white, gay male student, she ended up doing the majority of the work and felt she had little say in challenging him, holding him accountable, or speaking to me during the course because of gendered and racial power dynamics.

Despite some challenges in implementing Collaborative Participation, I offer it here as a model for others to adapt to suit their needs. I argue that students who directly contribute to the often-feminized labor of classroom management and community-building must become active learners and knowledge creators rather than mere

consumers. I postulate that students prefer embodied methods because they can be aligned with neoliberal goals of individualized “edutainment,” while CP can challenge the student-as-consumer model. However, power re-allocation contrasts with students’ increasing lack of political efficacy within the NCU. While the student-as-customer may be always right, students have little, if any say, in university policies, such as tuition rates that impact them for decades after graduation. Thus, having a component of class process-oriented rather than product-oriented can threaten students who take a consumer approach to education, but it nonetheless offers a deeper engagement with key concepts, experience working with the theories presented, and a more egalitarian model of shared responsibility that is necessary for serious social change.

## Conclusion: Enacting Embodiment and Collaboration While Contingent

To recall the anecdote with which I opened, teaching and learning are embodied practices that can express, challenge, uphold, and subvert power dynamics. Overall, WGS courses teach students how to understand the impact of intersected, embodied identities such as gender, race, class, sexuality, nationality, and disability from individual to institutional levels. However, this work happens within a neoliberal context that frames education largely as a product for consumption rather than process so that “teaching about and against oppression [are not] valued by those holding power within [academic institutions]” (Byrd *et al.* 2010, 1). The two learning strategies I’ve discussed—embodied performative activities and Collaborative Participation—work together to engender student agency, yet doing this work is risky because it disrupts traditional classroom norms. As discussions about “flipped” classrooms in Robert Talbert’s blog post on *The Chronicle of Higher Education* suggest, professors still hotly debate what kind of labor should be done during “contact hours” and by whom (2014). If the classroom is the prime observable location of faculty labor, then, what does this analysis of embodied classroom labor highlight about larger questions of power that haunt the academy as a whole?

***Employing feminist pedagogical methods can be risky for professors who are unsecure in their employment, but it can also be very risky for students who expect to operate efficiently within the neoliberal academy, where power, and thus responsibility, is not expected to be shared.***

My answer is that academic power devalues collaborative and participatory labor by making it invisible. Thus, we need to (1) make labor visible by honoring the behind-the-scenes work that leads to successful classes and (2) acknowledge that effective classes require student-teacher collaboration, working together or working

*withrather than working for.* The student-as-consumer model necessitates that certain types of labor ought to be invisible. For example, the methods described above take considerable time and effort to implement. In an academic culture in which disciplinary scholarship is the primary measure for employment, promotion, reappointment, and tenure, teaching introductory courses is often relegated to those lowest on the academic pecking order, and the work of researching pedagogical methods “is often viewed by deans and department heads as frivolous and not valid scholarship” (TuSmith and Reddy 2002, 316). Nonetheless, this labor is important and must be made visible.

The contingent nature of much academic employment drives this analysis of classroom labor within the NCU because the power of the market to influence the classroom particularly impacts contingent professors. The student-as-consumer model necessitates that certain types of labor ought to be invisible, and meeting with students and ensuring consensus among the class takes considerable time and effort. Given the fierce competition for academic positions, as a Visiting Assistant Professor, I am highly aware of my own disposability within the academic marketplace, which makes me especially attuned to student evaluations and anxious to end each semester with a group of students who are happy consumers of the product offered (Lewontin). In this way, attention to student satisfaction is an often invisible but nonetheless crucial part of the labor of academics, especially those whose ability to secure employment hinges upon high student ratings.

Employing feminist pedagogical methods can be risky for professors who are unsecure in their employment, but it can also be very risky for students who expect to operate efficiently within the neoliberal academy, where power, and thus responsibility, is not expected to be shared. As Brulé shows, students who position themselves as educational consumers operate to maximize their options within a hostile labor market often resist the goals of social change because this critique threatens their means to success within the neoliberal institution. Students face very real pressure to stand out from classmates to secure employment in a dwindling market, which encourages competition. With corporatization comes expectations of similarity (*i.e.*, chain restaurants), and egalitarian pedagogy challenges this homogeneity. As David Perry notes in a 2015 article in *Chronicle Vitae*, students have little real power, and they position themselves as consumers to claim what power is available to them. Strong identification and alignment with traditional models of education can create tension, even hostility, if feminist methods challenge expected structures and classroom norms that students have learned to navigate with success. Thus, student rejection of the methods described in this essay can be framed as anxieties about their own insecurity within the NCU.

Given this context, then, should we understand the embodied work described above as empowering or a relinquishment of faculty responsibility to prepare students for their future? The work of making power visible and remedying unjust uses and abuses of power lies at the root of WGS as a discipline, and feminist teachers continually

interrogate the function of critical feminist pedagogical methods within a neoliberal context that frames education largely as a product for consumption. While students may challenge nonstandard teaching methods, a growing proportion of students does not flourish under traditional teaching methods and is excited about the possibilities for change critical feminist methods can offer. I argue that using both embodied activities and collaborative participatory practices can help meet the needs of diverse groups of students. As one student notes, "The classroom has a power structure where the teacher has power over the students, and there are unspoken rules that students know to live by. [CP] facilitate[s] education by practice—starting in the classroom." Thus, even though utilizing embodied, collaborative methods runs the risk of negative evaluations, because they can give students the experience of enacting change at the classroom level, I see merit in continuing to collaborate with students to shape these methods so that radical teachers live up to their goal of empowering students to understand themselves as autonomous, responsible, and whole subjects capable of enacting change. This, I believe, is the goal of WGS as a discipline and thus well worth the risk for both feminist teachers and our students.

## Notes

1. Boal's embodied theatrical methods ask participants to become attuned to the mechanization of the body, moving students from a position of passive spectators who are recipients of an instructor's performed discourses to active constructors of their own knowledge. Boal designed his methods to help oppressed populations access the body's potential for expression to help imagine and bring about social justice.

2. Weber advocates using active, engaged feminist pedagogical methods she calls "serious play" that "expose neoliberal and postfeminist 'politically neutral' logics" (131) by "acknowledg[ing] embodied epistemologies" (136). Keeping bodies central in teaching, she argues, "give[s] credence to the messiness that is endemic to the 'sense of struggle' always a part of the power relations feminism seeks to expose" (136).

3. While outside the scope of this paper, in a class committed to social justice for people with marginalized identities, care must be taken to avoid reinforcing compulsory able-bodiedness during kinesthetic exercises; however, participating in these activities can serve as an opening point for exploring how (dis)ability shapes knowledge production.

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# Intro to Women's & Gender Studies

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Hamilton College  
Fall 2016

Welcome to Intro to Women's Studies! Right now, you might be wondering: what *is* Women's Studies, anyway? As a field, Women's Studies encompasses many disciplines and points of view. In this introductory class, you will be primarily learning how to take a gender studies scholar's perspective, a way of seeing the world that is focused on how power works in, on, and through people, communities, and institutions. This interdisciplinary course explores the basic concepts and perspectives of Women's & Gender Studies from an intersectional angle, that is, examining the ways in which gender intersects with race, ethnicity, nationality, class, sexuality, sexual identity, disability, and other categories. The concepts of gender—the roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a society considers appropriate for men and women—privilege and oppression, intersectionality, and feminist praxis will be at the core of this course. Throughout the semester, we will consider the following questions asked by feminist scholar Estelle Freedman: "What difference does gender make? For which women does it make a difference?"

Like most of the gender studies courses taught in the United States, this course is grounded in feminism(s). Feminism has always been a controversial and dangerous term. While its definition and practices continue to shift, put simply, feminism is a belief system and activist practice aimed at transforming women's experiences of themselves in families, in the workplace, in relationships, and in the educational and political arenas. Feminism is not a monolithic term: different types of feminisms advocate for different aspects of women's lives to be changed, but historically, feminists fought to create courses centered on women's experiences. It is a tribute to the past and continuing work of feminist scholars and activists that I teach this course from a feminist perspective.

## Goals:

After taking this course, you will:

1. Understand the definition of feminism and the relationship between feminism, as a social movement, and the discipline of Women's & Gender Studies
1. Know the history behind feminist activism, social movements, and field of study
2. Understand debates about theories of gender construction, including: biological essentialism, social constructionism, and intrinsic inclinations
3. Be able to define "privilege" and "oppression" from a WGS perspective and apply this knowledge to your own life and experiences as well as the experiences of people who are different from you based on gender, race, class, size, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, or ability
4. Define "intersectionality" and use it as a theoretical lens to ground feminist debates, discussions, and activism
5. Draw on models and examples of feminist activism to design an activist project

I have designed this course with all of Hamilton's educational goals in mind, and while this course touches upon all of them, I draw your attention in particular to these five:

- **Intellectual Curiosity and Flexibility**
- **Communication and Expression**
- **Understanding of Cultural Diversity**
- **Disciplinary Practice**

- **Ethical, Informed and Engaged Citizenship**

**Required Texts:**

Launius, Christie and Holly Hassel. *Threshold Concepts in Women's and Gender Studies: Ways of Seeing, Thinking, and Knowing*. New York: Routledge, 2015. ISBN: 978-1138788800  
Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *We Should All Be Feminists*. New York: Anchor Books, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-101-91176-1

You will also be following these blogs. Please bookmark them or add them within the first week of class:

*Bitch* Magazine, Weekly Reader, Blog, or Facebook  
Black Girl Dangerous, Blog, Facebook, or Twitter  
Colorlines, Blog, Facebook, or Twitter  
"Everyday Feminism," Web Subscription or Facebook  
"Gender & Society," Web Subscription, Facebook, or Twitter  
"Guerrilla Feminism," Web Subscription or Facebook

Finally, you will be accessing a significant number of readings through Blackboard. Please factor the cost of printing and ink into your book budget for the semester.

Your grade will be calculated according to Hamilton College Regulations, as follows:\*

**Excellent Good Satisfactory Poor Failure**

98-100: A+ 88-89: B+ 78-79: C+ 68-69: D+ 55-60: F  
94-97: A 84-87: B 74-77: C 64-67: D 0-55: FF  
90-93: A- 80-83: B- 70-73: C- 60-63: D

**Assignments:**

Please save all returned work with feedback

**Participation: 20%**

It is important to create a supportive, safe, open, and inclusive classroom atmosphere that values the educational process and learning goals. Our class structure will mirror the values and practices of the discipline of Women's & Gender Studies by centering on guided, student-driven discussions that take place in a classroom space arranged to promote an engaged, egalitarian, collaborative, and participatory environment. Your participation will be graded on:

**Collaborative Participation: 100 points, 20%**

Because this is a discussion-based course, you will be graded on your contribution to the classroom community through collaboration and reflection. As a group, we will come to a consensus about what we need in our class during class discussions and expand our understanding of what counts as participation.

*Please see separate sheet for more information on your options for earning participation credit.*

**\*Attendance** is calculated as part of your participation score. Because this is a discussion-based class, your attendance is necessary in every class period. This number is calculated from the number of times you've attended class divided by the total number of times we've met as a class. **You are permitted a total of two absences without penalty – there is no need to communicate these to me; you may take them as needed.** In the event of an emergency that will keep you from attending class for more than two class periods, please contact me ASAP. Because it is disruptive to the learning process, you will lose ½ a participation point for each time you arrive late or leave early.

**Writing Assignments, 75% total:** This course is Writing-Intensive (WI). Because learning to write well is an ongoing process, the faculty has committed to a WI Program that will assist you in

learning to write well in multiple disciplines throughout your time at Hamilton. This course provides you with the opportunity to write frequently; learn how to write in different genres; and receive feedback on your writing from me, tutors at the Writing /ESOL Center, and each other. We will also devote some course time to addressing common problems I observe in written assignments as well as concerns students might raise in class. Expect to engage in a significant amount of critical thinking, synthesis, and analysis through writing. The process of re-vising, of seeing your work with new eyes and rethinking your approach to assignments, constitutes the bulk of what scholars and professional writers do and will be built-in as part of your writing during this course. This course requires 4 short mini-blogs as well as two response papers, a take-home midterm, written participation evaluations, and a final project with a written component. These are spaced over the course of the semester and constitute the majority of your course grade (75%). You are required to have a writing conference with the Writing /ESOL Center for each Response Paper and are strongly encouraged to confer with the Writing/ESOL Center on all of your assignments, even when it is not required.

**Late Policy:** Late assignments will be accepted only in emergency situations. If requesting an extension, please email me in advance, and limit your requests to one per semester. I am committed to returning papers that were submitted on time within two class meetings if possible, three at most. If you submit your work late, I will grade it at my convenience.

**Revision Policy:** You may revise one paper (choose wisely!) if you earn less than a B, but you must notify me via email after 48 hours but within two weeks of receiving graded comments to schedule a meeting to discuss your revision strategy. I will average the two grades. I am also happy to meet with you prior to a due date to discuss a paper draft. Please arrange an appointment at least 1 week in advance of the due date and email me the whole draft.

**A note about Arguments:** The most important skill you can master during your time at college is writing succinct, clear, and persuasive arguments that are well structured and supported by evidence. Our in-classwork is designed to ensure understanding, synthesis, and application of the skills and concepts learned, and your writing assignments are designed to help you develop analysis and argument. Think about it: what's more powerful than shaping the way that people think about an issue?

#### **Mini-Blogs: 4 @ 5% each (20%)**

In order to connect course material with current events, you will follow several feminist blogs either on the Internet or on Facebook/Twitter. You will write your own 2-3 paragraph-long blog post 4 times this semester and post it to the Mini-Blog forum on Blackboard. To start each blog, first choose a recent post that interests you. To write your post, explain your own position on the topic raised by the blog. Utilize specific course concepts, relevant key terms, and at least one direct quotation from the reading and one from your chosen blog.

Make sure that you do not simply summarize, but rather synthesize multiple viewpoints and put forward your own position on the topic. Finally, be creative and have fun with this project: engage your readers by posing questions or including a video, image, audio, or link to another piece. Remember to include a link to the article you're responding to!

The goal of this assignment is to develop specific writing skills, receive feedback about your writing from me, and apply course concepts. The blogs are due at 10:00pm on Thursday evenings, and you must also respond substantially to at least two of your peers' posts by midnight. Feedback and final grades will be based on the rubric posted on Blackboard, which assesses the clarity and strength of your writing, critical thinking skills, and overall engagement with this assignment. Each post is worth **50** points (40 points for the post, 10 for your comments on others' posts)

#### **Response Papers: 2 @ 10% each (20%)**

Twice this semester, you will write a 750-1000 word response paper to develop specific writing skills, receive feedback from me, and synthesize and apply course concepts. Each paper explores a concept central to learning how to think like a gender studies scholar. Your paper will offer a close reading of material we've read for class, including at least **2 properly cited direct quotations** and **2 key terms from course texts**. Your paper should demonstrate not only that you've read the

text(s) and concepts, but also that you understand its context and argument, and that you can articulate and substantiate your reactions to it. Your response is a formal essay and, as such, should have a carefully constructed argument, including clear thesis, use MLA style headings, formatting, in-text citations, and Works Cited, and include a Word Count at the end.

**You are required to go to the Writing Center or ESOL Center for each response paper no more than 48 hours before the deadline**

Please submit proof of attendance. See individual assignments for more information:

- Topic 1: The Social Construction of Gender (current cultural artifact) **Due Th 9/29 by 11:59pm**
- Topic 2: Personal Identity Narrative **Due Th 11/3 by 11:59pm**

**Midterm Exam, 15%:** Your midterm will be a take-home, written examination, comprised of several short answer questions. I designed this examination to test content knowledge and skill at analysis, synthesis, application, and writing. **Due Tuesday, October 11<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm**

**Final: 3 components totaling 25%.** Working in groups of 2-4 (or alone), you will choose one of the four

options below to pursue a final project related to this semester's work that interests, intrigues, perplexes, or even upsets you.

- *Option 1:* You may choose a **traditional 6-8 page research paper**, through which you may pursue: (1) a scholarly question, (2) a campus-based issue, or (3) a larger social problem.
- *Option 2:* is an **Activist/Scholar project** that is either based on campus or locally.
- *Option 3, Art as Activism* allows you to develop an artistic piece and accompanying artist statement.
- *Option 4* is a **Pedagogical Project** that investigates an educational issue; including (1) researching texts *not* used in this class and making an argument for substitution, (2) designing an alternate or specific version of this course, (3) designing a larger unit of at least four weeks that was not taught in this course, or (4) developing an assignment that would assess skill and knowledge on a key concept in the course. This project develops and assesses your ability to collaborate as well as synthesize, apply, and write about course concepts.

To develop these skills, each group will complete and receive feedback from me on:

- **1). Proposal & Annotated Bibliography, 5%, due 11/15 @ 11:59pm**
- **2) Mini-lesson, 5%, due Thursday 12/15 @ 9am (final exam period for the course)**
- **3) Research project, 15%, Thursday 12/15 @ 11:59pm**

Feedback and final grades will be based on the rubric posted on Blackboard.

\*In order to pass the class, students must complete all assigned work and engage with the class on a regular and meaningful basis. I strongly encourage you to work with the Writing Center or ESOL Center for each major writing assignment. In keeping with community standards, I expect that all work submitted adheres to the Hamilton College Honor Code. For this course, it means that all work is solely yours, and anything that is not your own is properly cited.

**Women's Studies Research Guide** - <http://libguides.hamilton.edu/WomensStudies>

## **Course Schedule:**

### **UNIT 1: What is WGS?**

#### **Week 1: What is This Thing Called Women's Studies?**

*Recommended:* Kirk and Okazawa-Rey, Ch. 1, "Untangling the 'F'-Word & Paula Gunn Allen, "Who is Your Mother?"

Red Roots of White Feminism"

Th 8/25: Welcome to class!

## **Week 2: Identities, Feminism, & Women's and Gender Studies**

*Recommended:* Jennifer Baumgardner & Amy Richards, "A Day Without Feminism"

T 8/30: *Threshold*, Intro & Becky Thompson, "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism"

Th 9/1: Kirk & Okazawa-Rey, Ch. 3, "Identities and Social Relations: Who am I? Who Are My People?," Ijeoma

A., "Because You're a Girl," & Susan Muaddi Darraj, "It's Not an Oxymoron: The Search for Arab Feminism"

Blog 1 due by 10:00 pm; responses due by midnight

## **UNIT 2: Constructing Gender**

### **Week 3: The Social Construction of Gender**

*Recommended:* Judith Lorber, "The Social Construction of Gender"

T 9/6: Ch. 2 *Threshold* "The Social Construction of Gender"

Th 9/8: Julia Serano, "Blind Spots: On Subconscious Sex and Gender Entitlement" & "Intrinsic Inclinations:

Explaining Gender and Sexual Diversity" from *Whipping Girl*

Blog 2 Due by 10:00 pm; 2 responses by midnight

### **Week 4: The Social Construction of Masculinity**

*Recommended:* Anne Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes, Revisited"

T 9/13: Michael Kimmel, Ch. 3 of *Guyland*, "Bros Before Hos: The Guy Code"

Th 9/15: Jackson Katz, "Violence Against Women: It's a Men's Issue," Tony Porter, "A Call to Men," & "I'm aMan" Draft Paper 1: make Writing /ESOL Center appointment

### **Week 5: Breaking Down the Gender Binary**

*Recommended:* Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sex/Gender: Biology in a Social World*, 99-123

T 9/20: Watch & discuss *Three to Infinity* Be prepared to discuss your cultural artifact for Paper 1 in class

Th 9/22: Watch & discuss *Three to Infinity*

## **UNIT 3: Privilege & Oppression**

### **Week 6: Understanding Privilege & Oppression**

*Recommended:* Allan Johnson, "Privilege, Power, Difference, and Us"

T 9/27: Ch. 3 *Threshold* Bring your thesis statement for Paper 1 to class!

Last day for Writing /ESOL Center appointments!

Th 9/29: Peggy McIntosh, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" & Lisa Weiner-Mahfuz, "Organizing 101: A Mixed-Race Feminist in Movements for Social Justice"

Response Paper 1 Due by 11:59 pm

### **Week 7: Classism & Heterosexism**

*Recommended:* Vivyan C. Adair, "The Missing Story of Ourselves: Poor Women, Power, and the Politics of Feminist Representation"

T 10/4: Felice Yeskel, "Adding Classism to the Agenda" & Dorothy Allison, "A Question of Class"

Th 10/6: Suzanne Pharr, "Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism"

Blog 3 due by 10:00 pm; 2 responses by midnight

### **Week 8: Midterms!**

*Recommended:* Kimmel, "Introduction: Toward a Sociology of the Superordinate"

T 10/11: No class. Work on midterms. Due @ 11:59pm

Th 10/13: No class. Fall Break!

## **Unit 4: Intersectionality**

### **Week 9: Intersectionality**

*Recommended:* Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color"

T 10/18: *Threshold* Ch. 4 & Audre Lorde, "There is no Hierarchy of Oppressions"

Th 10/20: Patricia Hill Collins, "Toward a New Vision: Gender, Race, and Class as Categories of Analysis and

Connection" & Kimberly Springer, "Queering Black Female Heterosexuality"

Blog 4 due by 10:00 pm; 2 responses by midnight

### **Week 10: Women of Color and Feminism**

*Recommended:* Lynn Weber, "A Conceptual Framework for Understanding Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality"

T 10/25: Combahee River Collective Statement & Jewel Woods, "The Black Male Privilege Checklist" Be prepared to discuss your story for Paper 2 in class.

Th 10/27: May-lee Chai, "Dreaming of Oz: A Literacy Narrative" & Rebecca Hurdis, "Heartbroken: Women of Color Feminism and the Third Wave"

Draft Paper 2: make Writing /ESOL Center appointment

### **Week 11: Thinking Intersectionally: Different Ways of Knowing**

*Recommended:* Vivian M. May, "The Case for Intersectionality and the Question of Intersectionality Backlash"

T 11/1: Gloria Anzaldúa, "La Conciencia de la Mestiza" in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

Last day for Writing /ESOL Center appointments! Bring thesis to class

Th 11/3: Susan Wendell, "The Social Construction of Disability"

Response Paper 2 Due by 11:59 pm

### **Week 12: Current Events Application: Election**

*Recommended:* Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House"

T 11/8: Election Day: Reading TBA on gender, race, power, & privilege in Presidential election

Th 11/10: In-class work on Project Proposal & Annotated Bibliography

## **Unit 5: Feminist Praxis**

### **Week 13: What Next? Feminist Models of Social Change**

*Recommended:* Michael Kimmel, "Why Men Should Support Gender Equality"

T 11/15: Ch. 5 *Threshold* Annotated Bibliography & Project Proposal due @ 11:59pm

Th 11/17: Byron Hurt, "Why I am a Black Male Feminist"

### **Week 14: Engaging Feminist Praxis**

T 11/29: bell hooks, "Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Among Women"

Th 12/1: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "We Should All Be Feminists."

### **Week 15: Final Feminist Praxis Projects**

T 12/6: In-class work on final projects

Th 12/8: In-class work on final presentations

**Final project presentations:** Thursday, December 15 9-12

*\*Note: This syllabus is a contract between you and me. Please make sure you download and print a copy for your records. I reserve the right to make changes in the course schedule and will document any changes on*

*Blackboard. It is your responsibility to keep up to date by visiting the Blackboard page for this course daily.*

### **Recommended Further Reading:**

Freedman, Estelle B. *No Turning Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women*. New York: Ballantine, 2002. Print. ISBN: 978-0345450531

hooks, bell. *Feminism is for Everyone & Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*

Hernández, Daisy and Bushra Rehman, eds. *Colonize This!: Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism*. Berkeley: Seal Press, 2002. Print. ISBN: 978-1-58005-067-8  
Kimmel, Michael & Abby Ferber, eds. *Privilege: A Reader*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Boulder: Westview Press, 2013. Print. ISBN: 978-0813348711  
Tarrant Shira. *Men and Feminism*. Berkeley: Seal Press, 2009. Print. ISBN: 978-1-58005-258-0



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