

W.G.S.S. GRAD SEMINARS

SPRING 2018

[Core Courses]

Victoria Hesford

Feminist Interdisciplinary Histories and Methods (WST 600)

Mondays 4:00-7:00 p.m.

Rather than begin with an exploration of “the” feminist methodology in Women’s and Gender Studies, or an account of “the” history of feminism, this course will explore what counts as “history,” as “method,” and as “evidence” in feminist scholarship. Since its emergence as a distinct knowledge project within the academy, feminism has raised questions about how we know what we know, who gets to speak and for whom, and what are legitimate fields of inquiry. Our goal will be to trace some of the ways in which feminist scholars have sought to intervene in debates about disciplinary as opposed to interdisciplinary forms of knowledge, objective as opposed to “situated” knowledge, evidence versus experience, history versus fiction, etc. A central part of the feminist project for many scholars has been an engagement in the self-reflexive questioning of the status, history, methods, and goals of feminist scholarship. This course will attempt to continue that practice. To that end, students are encouraged to engage with the material with their own projects in mind, and to use the course in order to be self-reflexive about the methods, materials, and theories they intend to use in their graduate and post-graduate work. In order to begin the self-reflexive (re)examination, we will turn to concepts such as “knowledge,” “rational,” “irrational,” “experience,” and “evidence.”

Melissa Forbis

Practicing Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies (WST 698)

Tuesdays 1:00-3:50p.m.

The teaching practicum is designed for both graduate students in Women’s, Gender & Sexuality Studies and certificate students who anticipate teaching classes outside of, or in addition to, their disciplinary home. To prepare for this likelihood, we will spend several sessions working together to construct an introductory course syllabus in Women’s, Gender, & Sexuality Studies. We will work together to generate several special topics course titles and descriptions related to students’ research interests. Practicing Women’s Gender & Sexuality Studies explores three interconnected spaces—the classroom, the field, and the university. We will move from practical, even personal, tactics and strategies—what to do in the classroom—to (inter)disciplinary imperatives and institutional structures—how fields are imagined and universities organized. At the same time, we will consider broader questions about the university as an institution in the current moment, and the place of Women’s Studies within the contemporary university. Along with a consideration of the changing practices and objects of feminist knowledge production, we will also read about and discuss the changing politics and economics of academia, and the impact of the wider academic milieu on what and how knowledge is produced. We will ask: what has women’s studies been; what kinds of interdisciplinarity or transdisciplinarity are possible in women’s, gender and sexuality studies; and finally, what might the disciplinary field and its institutionalized locations as programs and departments become?

[Departmental Electives]

Mary Jo Bona

Adv. Topics in Women's Studies – "Queer Daughters & Their Mothers: Maternal Theory in the Millennium" (WST 610)

Mondays 1:00-3:50 p.m.

This course will focus on how the discourse of mother-daughter studies has been influenced by maternal and queer theories, and inflected by life-altering events such as slavery, war, migration, and illness; modified by culturally specific traditions, complementary mothering, and transnational migrating women. We will juxtapose theoretical readings on motherhood, and feminist mothering through the prism of race, class and sexuality, alongside literary and graphic textual representations of daughters vis-à-vis their mothers. Selected authors include Jacobs, Woolf, Morrison, Kristeva, Ruddick, Chodorow, Collins, Rich, Sambuco, Cvetkovich, Carson, Lorde, Bechdel, among others.

Elizabeth Grosz

Philosophy and Feminism (PHI 615/WST 611)

Thursdays 3:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Description TBA

[Electives Outside of WGSS]

Dawn Harris

Sexualities: African and Caribbean Perspectives (AFS 560)

Mondays 4:30-7:30 p.m.

This course is designed to introduce students to the complexities of human sexuality(ies) from a perspective that places subaltern individuals at the centre of the analysis. It locates these individuals, and their sexual practices, in the tropics; first in those man-made communities where sexuality was one of the (unspoken) exigencies of colonialism, and later, in the modern era where the colonial economies have given way to "neo-colonies" that often promote themselves as playgrounds for weary Westerners. Thus, along with tackling topics on colonialism's sexual project, some of the other topics to be covered include: sexual relations between masters and slaves; race, desire, and objectification; "Other" sexualities and sexual identities and their "place"/"displacement" in African and Caribbean societies; the formation of Queer diasporas; grassroots organising from within LGBTQi communities; sexual orientation as a human rights issue; popular culture as a lens to view attitudes towards sexuality; and social attitudes towards barrier methods.

Adrienne Munich

Topics in Gender Studies – "Gender and Gems" (EGL 586)

Wednesdays 4:00 – 6:50 p.m.

Changing historical or theoretical focus on issues in gender studies, sexuality, queer studies, or women's writing.

Frank Kronenberg and Pamela Block

Disability, Occupation and Community (HAX 663)

5 online modules and 4-day intensive (March 3-6)

Inspired by disability justice social movements in the US and abroad, this course presents politically engaged critical approaches to disability that intersect community organizations, the arts and academic fields including occupational therapy, disability studies and anthropology. Broader than a medical category, disability identity recognizes the political and economic dimensions of disability inequity as it related to other forms of inequality and disadvantage. Themes include all permutations of the concept of occupy; disability justice/decolonization; participation and training for collaborations; marginalization and minorization; technology; struggle, creativity, and change.

Cassandra Evans

Disability Participation and Justice (HAX 665)

Tuesday 4:00-7:00 p.m.

Disability studies is an area study that focuses on the experiences and representation of disability across multiple realms – including social, environmental, cultural, regional, historical, economic and political. This course will explore the concepts of “Participation” and “Justice” as they relate to disability experience. It will introduce research strategies – participatory methods and methodologies – for disability studies research in the applied social and health sciences. We will discuss ethical issues in this type of research. To understand what the concepts of “Participation” and “Justice” mean to disabled people both in research and in daily life, students will be exposed to social analysis, healthcare discourse, and research on the evolution of healthcare practices, cultural beliefs, and social structures influencing the treatments, services, and opportunities available to disabled people in the United States and internationally.

Nancy Tomes

Seminars on Nation, State, and Civil Society – “Body Politics” (HIS 553)

Wednesdays 4:30 – 7:30 p.m.

This course will explore the many ways historical bodies have figured in both theoretical debates and political controversies over the past three decades. As our point of entry, we will look at the evolution of the terms “medicalization,” “biomedicalization,” “somaticization” and “pathologization,” concepts that are widely used in the humanities and social sciences to track the rise (and fall) of medical knowledge and expertise as a form of “biopower.” We will explore the theoretical evolution of those terms in the work of Michel Foucault and his later interpreters such as Nikolas Rose; then we will sample historical works that apply those perspectives. I am particularly interested in exploring the dynamics of medical authority: how it is accepted, resisted, and/or subverted. Common readings may include books such as Kathleen Brown’s *Foul Bodies*, Jennifer Lambe’s *Madhouse*, Joanne Meyerowitz’s *How Sex Changed*, and Laura Briggs’s *How All Politics Became Reproductive Politics*. In addition to the common readings, students will have the chance to do further reading on topics that interest them. Although work on medicalization tends to focus on the 19th c. and onward, the ideas we will be discussing can be applied to earlier periods, so students with those interests are very welcome. Course requirements will include several in-class presentations, one short book review, and a critical review and annotated bibliography (approximately 10-15 pages total) on a topic of the student’s choice.

Daniel Levy

Special Seminars – “Sociology of Solidarity” (HIS 557/SOC 514)

Wednesdays 10:00 – 1:00 p.m.

This is a course for graduate students with an interest in the changing historical and sociological significance of solidarity. Solidarity a foundational principle of the social sciences has received scant theoretical attention since its pervasive modern use dating to the 19th century. This class seeks to explore whether and how the basic premises of national solidarity are circumscribed by global developments. Identity politics, worldwide webs of affiliation driven by technological advances, transnational social movements and related developments, are some of the phenomenon that should prompt us to rethink solidarity. Instead the notion of solidarity has been so foundational that it has morphed into un-reflected assumptions rather than exploring the malleability of solidarity itself. National solidarity was seen as a primary response to the risks and uncertainties of modernity. Global culture and political norms from human rights to environmentalism have catalyzed a reimagining of solidaristic groups. This course will explore theoretical avenues of solidarity and their historical-empirical manifestations. Particular attention will be on the link between the Global Human Rights Regime and the way it informs new practices of solidarity.

April Masten

Research Seminars on Social & Cultural History-“Stalking & Digesting the Unusual” (HIS 601)

Mondays 4:30 – 7:30 p.m.

This seminar provides graduate students with advanced training in the methods of historical research and writing. The main goal of the course is for each participant to produce a 30-page paper suitable for publication in an academic journal. Readings and class discussion will focus on developing and illustrating an argument of interest to a broad group of scholars. Everyone’s topic must be historical in nature, but theoretical perspectives and methods from other disciplines are welcomed. During our discussions we will reflect on questions such as, what makes historical work distinctive? What are the possibilities and limitations inherent in any historical archive? What constitutes a historical source? Are all texts potential documents? Why was a record or text produced and who read it? What were its modes of circulation? Who did it privilege and who exclude? How might different groups or communities of meaning-makers have altered its use and importance? What were the social, cultural, political and intellectual contexts of its production? Students will be responsible for writing several drafts of their papers, bringing to class and discussing examples of their primary sources, and offering constructive feedback of their fellow students’ work.

Megan Craig

PHI 508: Dwelling, Shelter, Art

Tuesdays 1 - 4 PM (NYC)

What does it mean to dwell? Where and how have humans and other creatures fabricated dwelling places? What are the ethical and political implications of dwelling? This seminar will explore the concepts of dwelling and shelter as they relate to aesthetics and practices of architecture, habitation, shelter, clothing, weaving, and temporary structures. We will engage with various texts and works over the course of the semester, but our investigations will be guided by Heidegger's *Building, Dwelling, Thinking*, Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, sections of Levinas's *Totality and Infinity*, and Gloria Anzaldua's *La Frontera*.

Megan Craig

PHI 506: Beauty

Thursdays 1 - 4 PM (NYC)

John Keats famously asserted, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty." This seminar investigates theories of the beautiful and beauty from Plato through Heidegger, with additional readings by poets, artists, and critics who have written about beauty and its implications beyond aesthetics. Some of the issues we will consider and discuss include: the relationship between beauty and divinity, beauty and truth, beauty and sense perception, and the place of beauty in the realms of ethics and politics. We will close the semester with a close reading of Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. This is a writing intensive seminar.

Bonita London-Thompson

Prejudice & Discrimination (PSY 549)

MON/WED 11:00 – 12:20pm

This course will provide an overview of theoretical perspectives, research methods, empirical findings, and practical applications of psychological research on prejudice, stigma, and intergroup relations. Critical thinking about theorizing and research in this area will be emphasized during class discussions and through a course project.