

# WOST 101 Introduction to Women's Studies

## Course Syllabus: Spring 2014

Instructor: Joyce Dougherty, Ph.D.

Office: PPHAC Room 310

Office Hours: Thursday 5-6 p.m. and by appointment

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course is designed to be an introduction to women's studies; an academic field that focuses on the meaning of gender in such social spheres as family, education, work, and the law. It is interdisciplinary, with an emphasis on multicultural and global issues that impact the lives of women. There are two required texts: Bonnie G. Smith's Women's Studies: The Basics, and Gloria Steinem's Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions.

### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

Upon completion of this course, a successful student will be better prepared to participate in and intelligently contribute to the larger public conversation about the role of gender in the United States and around the world. Assignments are designed to build and/or strengthen all of the following:

- Analysis and Problem Solving Skills
- Interpersonal and Leadership Skills
- Project Management and Organizational Skills
- Research and Information Management Skills
- Self- Management and Work Habits
- Written and Oral Communication

### ATTENANCE AND PARTICIPATION: THE CLASSROOM AS COMMUNITY

This course is structured in a format that blends lectures, discussions, and student presentations. As a student in this class, you become a part of an intellectual community actively involved in exploring the meaning of gender in society. While consensus on every issue may not be possible, the expectation is that the classroom will be a safe, supportive environment in which ideas and differences can be shared in a respectful and positive way.

It is essential that everyone faithfully attend and come to class prepared. More than two unexcused absences (missing one week of class) will impact the attendance and participation portion of your final grade. For an absence to be considered "excused" an email must be received prior to the class with an explanation as to why you cannot attend (i.e., illness, family emergency, etc.) and proper documentation must be received upon your return to class.

### ASSIGNMENTS:

**Short Papers and Class Discussions (20 percent of the final grade):** You will be expected to write four (4) short papers (one to two pages maximum, double-spaced, 12 point font) and come to class prepared to discuss what you have written. The thoughtfulness of each written work and how effectively you express your thoughts in class will be worth five (5) percent of your final grade (4 papers for a total of 20 percent). You will be expected to read all of the essays in each section of the

Steinem book and identify which of her essays meant the most to you and why, and which meant the least to you and why. Each paper will be due on the following dates via email no later than 6 a.m.:

- Paper on the essays in "Learning from Experience": **January 29**
- Paper on the essays in "Other Basic Discoveries": **February 19**
- Paper on "Five Women": **March 12**
- Paper on "Transforming Politics": **March 26**

**Major Group Project (worth a total of 80 percent of the final grade):** One of the issues brought to the forefront of our collective social conscience during the so-called "second wave of feminism" during the 1960's and 1970's was the call to end violence against women. The unfortunate reality is that domestic violence is still prevalent in the United States and around the world. Working in five groups of four to five, the goal of each group will be to present a **comprehensive document** that analyzes the problem and proposes ways to end domestic violence. That document will consist of four key sections (no longer than 5 pages in each section, double-spaced, 12 point font with each section worth 10 percent of the final grade):

- 1) Define the problem
- 2) Identify the causes
- 3) Outline strategies to end the violence
- 4) Describe how key strategies will be implemented

A draft copy of each section will be **due on in class on February 26 (midterm)**. The drafts will be reviewed with particular attention paid to the organization of each section, the quality of writing, and scholarship. Proper citation of sources will be critical, the expectation being that all group members abide by the established norms of academic honesty. Upon return from Spring Break, each group will be expected to set up an appointment with me to review the draft and any suggested revisions. **All final documents are due April 2.**

A one page **progress report** from each group (**worth 10 percent of the final grade**) will be due and presented in class on January 22. This report must identify who is responsible for which of the four sections of the document and why that person or persons is best suited for that assignment. It will need to include a timetable that demonstrates the document will be completed on time.

Each group will be expected to **present their work in class** beginning April 2 through April 16. Each group will be given one class period for their presentation (**worth 20 percent of the final grade**). The goal will be to convince the rest of the class that your group has compiled the most comprehensive analysis and effective strategies that can be implemented in ways that will ultimately achieve the goal of ending domestic violence. The last class on April 23 will consist of an open discussion of peer, and self-evaluations to determine which group did the best work (this will be **worth 10 percent of the final grade.**)

#### **EXTRA CREDIT:**

On Tuesday, **March 18** at 7 p.m., Evelyn Murphy will be coming to the College to speak about the Wage Project, highlighting the issue of equal pay for women. If you attend this event, and write a brief (one page or less) review of the presentation (summarizing what you thought about the presentation and its relevance to our class) you will receive extra credit **worth 5 percent of your final grade.**

## **Addendum to the WOST Syllabus Spring 2014**

Based on the feedback from the class on January 13 indicating the vast majority of students have little or no knowledge of women's studies and/or the role of gender, the following revisions are being made to the original syllabus (see the second to last paragraph of the original syllabus):

All four sections of the written version of the Major Group Project will **still be due on April 2** (via email no later than 6 a.m.), however, the **group presentations will not start until April 9** (those presentations will still be worth 20 percent of your final grade). This will give more time to cover basic information early on in the semester, and still have time to cover the key topics of the role of gender as it impacts the family, education, work and women involved in the criminal justice system. Instead of having the entire class (70 minutes) for the group presentations, **each group will have only 30 minutes** (not including time for questions) and two group presentations will be scheduled for each class beginning April 9 and ending on April 16. The last day of class will still be reserved for an open discussion of peer and self-evaluations (and those evaluations will still be worth 5 percent of your final grade).

### **Disability Support Services**

Students who wish to request accommodations in this class for a disability should contact Elaine Mara, assistant director of learning services for academic and disability support at 1307 Main Street, or by calling 610-861-1510. Accommodations cannot be provided until authorization is received from the Academic Support Center. Students with other needs/concerns are encouraged to make an appointment with Dr. Ronald Kline in the Counseling Center (all other disabilities). The Counseling Center is located at 1307 Main Street (610) 861-1510. Please refer to the Moravian College Student Handbook under Academic Resources for more information.