

GND 100 00 2: INTRODUCTION TO GENDER STUDIES
Cedar Crest College
Spring 2009
W 1-3:30 p.m.
Curtis Hall 208

Professor Mary H. Snyder

Hartzel Hall 220

Office hours: T 1-3 p.m. or by appointment

Office phone: 610-437-4471, x4483

Email: mhsnyder@cedarcrest.edu or
Merre727@aol.com

Texts

Buchwald, Emilie, Pamela R. Fletcher, and Martha Roth, eds. *Transforming a Rape Culture*.
Rev. Ed. Minneapolis, MN: Milkweed Editions, 2005.

Cunningham, Michael. *The Hours*. New York: Picador, 2002.

Douglas, Susan. *Where the Girls Are: Growing Up Female with the Mass Media*. New York:
Three Rivers Press, 1995.

Wolf, Naomi. *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women*. New York:
Harper Perennial, 2002.

Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. 1929. New York: Harcourt, 1989.

Course Description

GND 100: Introduction to Gender Studies is a three-credit course, taught primarily in a discussion format with brief lectures to provide a context for discussion. In this course, we will examine the social construction of gender and its implications for women and men in the context of personal relationships, the family, the classroom, and the workplace. We will also consider the significance of representation of gender in the media, as well as the interrelationships among gender, race, class, and sexuality.

Course Objectives

As a course that provides a framework for the Gender Studies minor, GND 100 has the following objectives:

- to introduce students to the topic of gender as a social construct that shapes behaviors, belief systems, values and institutions.
- to heighten students' awareness of the influence of gender on virtually every aspect of their lives, from the purely personal to local, national, and global levels.
- to foster students' abilities to analyze gender dynamics within a variety of contexts.

- to encourage students to reflect upon their personal beliefs and experiences as these relate to their roles as women.
- to promote students' abilities to communicate their understanding of the significance of gender in various contexts through the spoken and written word.

Course Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate their understanding of a range of theoretical explanations of gender difference, as well as their understanding of how various conceptions of gender may help to shape behaviors, belief systems, and values. Additionally, students will be able to apply their awareness of the social construction of gender to an examination of institutions and cultural practices influenced by gender expectations. Finally, students will demonstrate their ability to be reflective in their consideration of the effects of gender on their own lives and the lives of others.

Assessment of Course Outcomes

The successfulness of GND 100 in achieving its outcomes will be assessed, in part, by the ability of students to complete course assignments successfully. Students will demonstrate their understanding of theoretical explanations of gender behaviors and beliefs in both oral and written expression through class discussion, response papers, midterm and final exams, and a research project.

Honor Philosophy

The Cedar Crest Honor Philosophy states that students shall uphold community standards for academic and social behavior to preserve a learning environment dedicated to personal and academic excellence. It is based upon the principle that, as a self-governing body, students have the ability to create an atmosphere of trust and support. Within this environment, individuals are empowered to make their own decisions, develop personal regard for the system under which they live, and achieve a sense of integrity and judgment that will guide them through life.

Classroom Protocol

Appropriate classroom behavior is implicit in the Cedar Crest Honor Philosophy. Such behavior is defined and guided by complete protection for the rights of all students and faculty to a courteous, respectful classroom environment. That environment is free from distractions such as late arrivals, early departures, inappropriate conversations, and any other behaviors that might disrupt instruction or compromise students' access to their Cedar Crest College education.

That being said, I want our classroom discussions to be lively and engaging. We will be exploring complicated and possibly unfamiliar territory in this class, and it's imperative that we maintain the classroom as an open space of engagement where everyone is comfortable voicing their thoughts on the readings/topics as well as asking questions. I expect you all to express your opinions and thoughts with each other in a respectful manner at all times. No rudeness or intolerance will be accepted. Disagreements are to be expected, and welcomed; they lead to moments of clarity in discussion, but they must occur within the parameters of a mutually respectful working relationship with classmates.

Important note: No use of cell phones during class (including texting!) and no checking email or random browsing of the Internet (eg. Facebook!) during class.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of using someone else's ideas or words and passing them off as your own without giving credit to the original source. Since a key goal of a college education is to develop and express your own ideas, plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offense.

It is dishonest to present oral or written work that is not entirely the student's own, except as may be approved by the instructor. Students must follow the requirements of the instructor regarding when and how much collaboration with other students is permitted.

Attendance

Simply put, you are expected to attend and participate in each class meeting. There is no distinction between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. If you miss a class, you remain responsible for the material covered. Missing more than 1/4 of the class meetings (4 classes in this course) will result in a final grade of F.

Class Cancellation

If troublesome weather threatens to close the campus and thus cancel class, you should refer to Cedar Crest's Inclement Weather Hotline at 610-606-4629 for notification.

College Policy Regarding Learning Disabilities: Students with documented disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with their professors during the first two weeks of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact the Learning Center.

My Policy Regarding Late Assignments

I DO NOT accept late assignments. If you experience extenuating circumstances that prevent you from completing an assignment on time, you will need to have documentation of that circumstance and I reserve the right to make my decision. If it is an extenuating circumstance, you have 24 hours past the due date to hand in the assignment, both through email and a hard copy. Thus, no late assignments will be accepted unless proper documentation of an extenuating circumstance is provided and approved by me, and then only by getting the late assignment to me, both through email and hard copy, within 24 hours of the due date. A penalty for lateness will apply.

Grading

Reading response papers:	25%
Midterm exam:	15%
Final exam:	15%
Research project:	25%
Participation:	20%

- Reading response papers – You will hand in a 2- to 3-page typewritten response paper each week (as listed on the Assignment Schedule). You can respond to any of the readings assigned; you can respond to all of them; or, you can express thoughts that the readings prompted. If you draw from personal experience, reflection, or

observation, make sure you explain the connection you're making between your personal revelations and the readings. Also, be sure to have a main purpose to your response that guides your writing. For some response paper assignments, I may give you a question that your paper must respond to and address in some way.

- Midterm and final exams will be take-home exams, due as specified. These exams will consist of short answer and essay questions that require you to consider the course's themes in relation to each other. Further details will be given.
- Research project – You will work on a research project that you will propose towards the beginning of the semester. I want your project to be focused on an area of gender studies that you find particularly interesting and want to investigate and/or explore. We will be discussing the project and what requirements I have of it, but I want this project to be a creative and thorough endeavor. You will be presenting your project during the last two sessions of class, and then handing in the written work, along with any visual work that you've done for the work. I want you to give your “all” to this project, but I want it to be something you enjoy working on as well. (All projects must be original ideas, so no two students can be working on the same topic. Thus the class will experience a broad spectrum of gender-related topics when they are presented.)
- Participation – Since this class is taught in a discussion format, your engagement with and contributions to the class will determine its successfulness for everyone. Student participation will be graded as follows (each week):

A – makes regular and consistent contribution to discussion that indicate student has done the reading, is following the discussion, is responding thoughtfully to the comments of others, and is willing to pursue a line of inquiry beyond a “first response.” The A-level contributor will work actively to promote conversations about our topics that helps us all to attain greater insights.

B – contributes often to discussion, though not as frequently, nor with the same level of engagement, as the A-level participant.

C – attends class regularly, but contributes to class discussion only infrequently.

D – attends class regularly, but doesn't contribute to class in any noticeable way, visibly lacks interest, or detracts from class discussion.

F – misses class or disrupts class by failing to observe the protocol for class discussions as was described above (see Classroom Protocol).

Assignment Schedule

Have assignments ready for specified day. I reserve the right to change the schedule should I feel it necessary for any reason, including both additions and/or subtractions. Also, further details will be given in class for all assignments listed; this is a general guide.

January 21st: Introductions, syllabus

Why are we here? – Why are you here? – Why am I here?
Why gender studies, or as I prefer to call it, the study of women and men in society?

And, what about that F-word (not the four-letter one but the other one)?

“If Men Could Menstruate” and “Sisterhood” – Gloria Steinem

Readings (handouts) for next week distributed

January 28th: The social construction of (our perception of) gender – And, what is femininity? What is masculinity?

Readings (handouts) –

“The Social Construction of Gender” – Judith Lorber

“Believing is Seeing: Biology as Ideology” – Judith Lorber

“Femininity, Masculinity, and Androgyny” – Janet Shibley Hyde

“The 70-Kilogram Male and the Pregnant Person: Why Women Are Not the Same as Men” – Carol Tavris

RESPONSE #1

February 4th: Growing up female in America

Readings (handouts) –

“The Early Years,” an excerpt from Judy Mann’s *The Difference: Growing Up Female in America*

Excerpt from *Half the Human Experience: The Psychology of Women* – Janet Shibley Hyde

RESPONSE #2

February 11th: Education, “herstory,” and women writers

Readings –

A Room of One’s Own – Virginia Woolf

“Through the Back Door: The History of Women’s Education,” “The Edge of Change” – Myra and David Sadker from *Failing at Fairness* (handout)

“Laugh of the Medusa” – Helene Cixous (handout)

RESPONSE #3

February 18th: The “gendering” of family and workplace

Readings –

The Hours – Cunningham

Excerpt from *Fascinating Womanhood* (Helen Andelin)

Excerpt from *The Feminine Mystique* (Betty Friedan)

RESPONSE #4

February 25th: *Mr. Mom*

Readings –

The Hours

“Modern Marriage: Revising the Cultural Script” – David Popenoe
(handout)

RESPONSE #5

Take-home midterm exam distributed

March 4th: The “ungendering” of family and workplace

Take-home midterm exam due in class

March 11th: Spring Break – Be reading *Where the Girls Are!*

March 18th: Under the media influence: how that influence affects our view of gender –
how it all began, how it continues today

Reading –

Have completed *Where the Girls Are*

RESPONSE #6

March 25th: Body image versus health and wellness

Readings –

The Beauty Myth – Naomi Wolf: Introduction (1-8), The Beauty Myth (9-19),
Culture (58-85), Hunger (179-217)

RESPONSE #7

April 1st: Gender and sexuality

Readings –
The Beauty Myth: Sex (131-78), *Beyond the Beauty Myth* (270-91)
Transforming A Rape Culture – “Unmasking the Pornography Industry” (105-15)
Excerpt from *Getting Off: Pornography and the End of Masculinity* – Robert Jensen (handout)

RESPONSE #8

April 8th: Gender and violence – *Thelma and Louise*

Readings –
Transforming a Rape Culture – will provide the selections you’re to read from this text in class

RESPONSE #9

April 15th: Feminism, “Postfeminism,” and Violence Against Women

Readings –
“Feminism and the Popular: Readings of Rape and Postfeminism in *Thelma and Louise*” – Sarah Projansky, excerpt from *Watching Rape: Film and Television in Postfeminist Culture* (handout)
“Core Mythology of Victim Feminism” and “Case Studies” – excerpts from Naomi Wolf’s *Fire with Fire* (handout)

RESPONSE #10

April 22nd: Research project presentations

April 29th: Research project presentations
All research projects due to me in class – NO EXCEPTIONS!
Take-home final exam distributed

**Take-home final exam due Wednesday, May 6th, at 5:00 p.m.
in my office.**