Women’s Studies Spring 2016 Course Descriptions

CHIN 130A/C – Chinese Women Writers: Ancient and Modern
4 semester hours
Chan, Shelley

Prerequisites: None. Taught in English.
Chinese women have been known as the suppressed sex for thousands of years. Nevertheless, women’s writing has always been an important part of Chinese literature. Whereas the long history of pre-modern China produced a rather large number of women writers, the concept of “women’s literature” emerged only in the early twentieth century when enormous changes in Chinese women’s social status occurred after the May Fourth Movement of 1919. Moreover, since 1949 Communist China has witnessed further rapid changes as far as women’s writing is concerned.
This course is a general introduction to Chinese women writers in different historical periods, namely, pre-modern, modern, and contemporary. To help students understand the gender issue, it provides them with a cultural background from the Confucian patriarchy to the Maoist “equality” between the sexes, as well as a background on cultural norms toward Chinese women. It discovers women’s voice in a traditionally male-centered society and literature, examines the feminine/masculine opposition, studies how Chinese women writers have not only formed their own voice, but also often led the way in the literary development of the post-Mao period. The readings, including poetry, prose and fiction, will be buttressed by films. All readings, discussions and lectures will be in English. The movies will have English subtitles.

COMM 324 – Family Communication
4 semester hours
Warber, Katie

Prerequisites: COMM 200 and 270S or permission.
This advanced course examines topics related to 1) family communication and basic family processes, 2) communication in family subsystems, 3) communication during family stress, and 4) family interaction, health and well-being. Research and theories from communication, sociology and psychology will be used to explain issues related to the family. Discussion topics include, for example, marital, parent-child, sibling, and intergenerational interactions in the family. Research pertaining to marital satisfaction, divorce, courtship, and the impact of the family on its children (and vice-versa) will also be examined.

COMM 350 – Feminist Theory of Film and Television
4 semester hours
Cunningham, Sheryl

Prerequisites: COMM 200, 290S, CINE 200 or WMST 100L; or permission of instructor.
This advanced course begins with a brief overview of basic terms from film studies (mise en scene, camera shots, diegesis, etc.) as well as a review of feminist movements, particularly 2nd wave feminism and its link to the development of film criticism in the 1970s and early 80s. The main focus of the course will be reading feminist theory and utilizing concepts and ideas developed by theorists to analyze contemporary films and television. Students will demonstrate their learning through written assignments, exams, and presentations. This course counts toward both WMST and CINE.

ENGL 180A – Jane Goes to the Movies
4 semester hours
Inboden, Robin

Prerequisite: ENGL 101E
Jane Austen would probably be bemused (and amused) were she alive today to see the veritable entertainment empire that has sprung from her novels, which she self-deprecatingly described as “little bit[s] (two Inches wide) of ivory on which I work with so fine a Brush, [producing] little effect after much labour." In her metaphor she is a miniaturist, producing tiny portraits—but for over sixty years, her work has filled the big screen, with no signs of stopping any time soon.
In this course we will read the major novels of Jane Austen and view representative film and television adaptations of them. Not only will we learn basic critical skills for reading fiction and viewing film, but we will find that our discussion of the novels will be illuminated by the choices made (and not made) by filmmakers. We will also explore the continuing popularity of Jane Austen and her novels: what does the current boom in Austen adaptations, sequels, prequels, etc. suggest about our own society’s values, desires, and anxieties? We will also examine Austen’s life in various versions, as well as considering other fictions and films related to her work. The graded work of the course will include several analytical papers, a final exam, quizzes, and a creative/analytical project. Writing Intensive. Cross-listed with Cinema Studies and Women’s Studies.
ENGL 180A – Film Noir
4 semester hours
Hinson, Scot

Prerequisite: ENGL 101E
Film noir, or “black film,” has been variously labeled as a period in film history, a style of film, and as a separate film genre with its own themes and conventions. No matter how you define it, films labeled as film noir are “deeply unromantic” films that “take a sneaking delight in their displays of passion gone wrong and of murderous calculation confounded.” This course will examine the distinctive “noir” visual style and the characteristic “noir” thematicsthe lives ruled by an unkind fate. We will also trace the history of film noir from its origins in German expressionism and postwar nihilism, to its golden period in the 1940’s and 1950’s, and to its persistence through the rest of the 20th century in neo-noir and retro-noir. We will also look at the debt that these films owe to what the French called “serie noir,” the searing crime and detective fiction of the 1930’s, 40’s, and 50’s. We will examine particularly closely the cultural work of these films and the questions film noir raises about the nature of masculinity, femininity, and homosexuality and their representations in film noir. Writing intensive. Cross-listed with Women’s Studies.

ENGL 290A – American Literary Traditions: Money, Debt and American Dreaming
4 semester hours
Askeland, Lori

Prerequisite: ENGL 270A, 180A or 190A/C
The average college student leaves four years of college with more than $25,250 in debt. The average new car purchase, on the other hand, is done today with a slightly larger $30,738 loan—and that on a consumer item that loses value the minute we drive it off the lot. Those educations and cars are both supposed to do the same thing, in a way: move us to where we want to go. We beg them: “Take us to freedom and happiness. Take us away from a nightmare vision of poverty, repetitive work and drudgery to a life of middle management success, 2.5 kids and a picket fence!” Car commercials and college brochures promise us open roads and smiling futures; they are a great, open space for American dreaming. And the dream and the debt seem to go hand in hand: the dream makes the taking on of debt feel easy and smart. It’s often only when it’s time to pay that the shine can come off—and sometimes a nightmare begins. America has been a land of false advertisements, or at least wildly exaggerated claims, from the start. And it has been a place where, in the pursuit of dreams, debts have piled high. From John Smith’s portrait of the US as a place flowing with opportunity and ease, and Mary Rowlandson’s negotiations with her native captors, to Thomas Jefferson’s debt-funded Monticello dreams and Ben Franklin’s ironic frugality, from Thoreau’s cry of “enough!” at Walden Pond and Mark Twain’s con men to John Steinbeck’s Okies watching their farms plowed over at the behest of faceless banking conglomerates, Americans have been buying and selling the American dream—or being sold by it, as we’ll hear from Frederick Douglass, Harriet Jacobs, Edgar Allan Poe, Lorraine Hansberry, and more. Writing Intensive. CLAC opportunities available. Cross-listed with Women’s Studies.

ENGL 371 – Lost in the Funhouse Mirror: Negotiating Identity in Anglophone Women’s Writing
4 semester hours
Polak, Kate

Prerequisite: ENGL 270A and either ENGL 280A or ENGL 290A
A woman looks in the mirror and silently criticizes what she sees, perceiving flaws and imperfections that make her turn away from her own image and hate her own body. When she does this, she is scolded for being “too hard on herself,” and cautioned against internalizing messages from the media. A woman turns the camera to herself in a moment of delight and joy, snapping a picture of a beaming smile. When she does this, she is exoriated for her narcissism and vanity. Self-doubt and self-assurance are not mutually exclusive; they are overlapping conditions that signify the competing demands placed not only on women’s presentations of self, but also on their very perceptions of self. Existing somewhere in the grey space between insecurity and grace, women struggle to define their own identities, to embody their principles, and to resist demands to level themselves off both physically and mentally. In this course, we will explore how women writers negotiate identity and place. To this end, we will examine the works of a broad range of authors from the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, Africa, and Asia to trace the ways in which different places situate women in the competing demands surrounding the elaboration of an authentic self.
ENGL 380 – “Flames of Fierce Desire”: Rethinking Passion in Britain’s Romantic Era
4 semester hours
Incorvati, Rick

Prerequisite: ENGL 270A and either ENGL 280A or ENGL 290A
No question about it: sexual desire and our passions more generally are great motivators. But there’s also little question that passions unleashed have the capacity for great harm. The same fire that warms our hearths and lights our paths can also leave little beyond charred ruins in its wake. The trick must be striking just the right balance of restraint and indulgence—sense and sensibility, to borrow Jane Austen’s expression—to optimize life’s pleasures while limiting its abuses. This class addresses questions of passion and desire through Romantic era writers, writers who were often inspired by the flames of political revolution to imagine revolutions of more emotional sorts. We’ll consider what people like Jane Austen, William Blake, Charlotte Bronte, and the wicked Lord Byron have to say on such matters as you prepare for your own literary analysis on the topic. There will be three exams and two papers in this writing-intensive class.

HFS 245H – History of Women in Sport
4 semester hours
Jurewicz, Sarah

Prerequisites: None
This course studies the development of sport from early religious to a modern corporate model in western society. The genesis and development of recreation, sport, and exercise for women has been influenced by religion, medicine, economics, politics and ideology. The intersection of gender, race, and socioeconomic class for women of color is examined, as is the struggle by women for admission in the Olympics. Sport has served as a historical site for feminist transformation and the development of alternative western sport forms. Women have “dared to compete.” The struggle of women to gain entry into sport is both sad and inspirational. Students write a sport autobiography, conduct cross-generation sport interviews, and research Wittenberg women’s sport history.

HIST 301 – Sex Scandals in U.S. History
4 semester hours
Paddison, Josh

Prerequisite: One course in history or permission of Instructor. Junior Standing
Why are Americans consistently fascinated by sex scandals? According to sociologist Ari Adut, scandals are “moral disturbances” in which a “real, apparent, or alleged transgression” generates sustained publicity. Scandals, in other words, are public events and as such reveal a tremendous amount about prevailing notions of morality. Scandals involving sexual transgressions tend to be especially explosive and therefore especially revealing, not just of the public’s attitudes about sex but also conceptions of gender, race, religion, class, and nation. This course explores sex scandals in U.S. history from the Early Republic to the present. Through careful analysis of primary and secondary sources, we will consider how and why scandals start, the role of the media in scandal-making, and what makes certain sexual acts and identities scandalous in different eras. We will also study how sex scandals have changed over time and why they continue to hold the public’s interest today.

MUSI 187 – Wittenberg Singers
0 – 1 semester hours
Zinter, Erik

Prerequisites: None
Wittenberg Singers is an SSAA women’s choir that performs both sacred and secular music representative of a wide spectrum of choral literature. They perform in major university events and present a concert each semester. Rehearsals M & W 5:40–7:10, Krieg 300. Conductor Dr. Erik Zinter. To join, contact the conductor via e-mail.
SOCI 110C/S – Cultural Anthropology
4 semester hours
Rowell, Kathy

Prerequisites: None
This course introduces students to key concepts, methods, and approaches in cultural anthropology. Topics addressed include culture theory, fieldwork, language, ethnicity, tourism, media, popular culture, globalization, gender relations, social change, war, peace, development, and religion, among others. As this list suggests, anthropology is a discipline that draws on many other fields, and our course readings reflect that cross-disciplinarily. A special focus on indigenous peoples of the world and humans rights issues will be explored. Course will include some opportunities to participate in applied anthropology projects and research. Ethnographic setting explored in this class range from the contemporary United States to Africa, Latin America, Asia, and Europe.

SOCI 245 – Gender and Society
4 semester hours
Moskowitz, Nona

Prerequisite: None
So much of our understanding of ourselves is filtered through personal and societal conceptualizations of gender. We begin learning and experiencing social meanings of gender from the moment we are born. Yet, the meanings we learn are not universal. Anthropological studies on gender illustrate that the constructions of sex and gender vary cross-culturally. In this course we will examine how gender plays a role in the making of identities in various parts of the world taking Japan as a case study. Through this case study of Japanese understandings gender, the course will examine the construction of the gendered identities at work and play; sex, gender and the body; relationships and sexualities; public representations of gender; feminism; and other topics. Writing intensive.

WMST 100L – Women, Culture, Politics, and Society: An Introduction to Women's Studies
4 semester hours
Wright, Heather

Prerequisite: None
This course is an introduction to Women's Studies and serves as the foundational course for the Women's Studies minor. Over the course of the semester we will explore how gender and sex have shaped and continue to shape the lived experiences of men and women. Women's Studies as an academic discipline is deeply connected to feminist movements in which issues of power and gender identity were, and are, central. Surveying major issues in women's studies, including feminist theory, literature and history of women, and lived experiences of women in the United States and globally, our work will also highlight several special topics: representation, the “new domesticity,” women's rights as human rights, women in conflict zones, and girlhood and “girl power” media culture.

WMST 490 – Independent Study
1 – 4 semester hours
Wright, Heather

WMST 492 – Internship
2 – 4 semester hours
Wright, Heather