

Women's Studies Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

CHIN 130A/C – Chinese Women Writers: Ancient and Modern

4 credits

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 for 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 films will have English subtitles.

CHIN 130A/C – Cutting Sleeve and Sharing Peach: Literature and Film of Homosexuality in China

4 credits

Chan, Shelley

Prerequisites: None. Taught in English.

"Homosexuality" came to China as a scientific and sexual education term in 1925, but homosexual culture has been documented since ancient times. According to scholarly studies, many emperors in pre-modern China had one or more male sex partners. Idioms and expressions signifying homosexuality exist in Chinese language, such as "Cutting Sleeve and Sharing Peach." At the same time, however, opposition to homosexuality has also been strong among Chinese people, especially in the late Qing Dynasty and most of the 20th Century. Homosexual or LGBT activities remain largely underground due to the pressure from family and society. Not until 2001 was homosexuality removed from the official list of mental illness in The People's Republic of China.

This course explores homosexuality in China in the context from Confucianism to the rapidly changing post-Mao society. Course materials include films, fiction and nonfiction from Mainland China, Taiwan and Hong Kong. While similarities and differences of homosexual culture in these three regions will be examined, changes in society and people's attitude toward LGBT will also be discussed. Students will have an opportunity to understand homosexuality from an artistic point of view. A comparison between the Chinese cultural and western culture will sharpen students' cultural sensitivity. Scholarly research on this topic will be studied as a theoretical support to the other course materials. All readings, discussions and lectures will be in English. The films will have English subtitles.

ENGL 190A/C – Native American Literatures

4 credits

Askeland, Lori

Prerequisite: ENGL 101E

In this course we will read American Indian and First Nations literatures from origin stories (which continue to be told today) to contemporary poetry and prose, as well as some artwork, music, and film. As we experience these diverse cultural works, we will address a number of questions: How should Native American literature be taught and read, given its diversity and its roots in the oral tradition? How do these texts challenge what we think of as storytelling, "America," and even ourselves? How is the unique legal relationship between American Indians and the United States and Canadian governments represented in Native writings? How do Native artists and writers contest and revise stereotypes of Indians? Students will be expected to keep up with current events via the Internet and to become more acquainted with issues affecting indigenous people today. (You can start now, if you wish. This news source is great: <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/>). This

writing intensive course will involve 3 short writings (1-2 pp), two longer papers (5-7 pp), one short presentation, a midterm and a final exam. Cross-listed with WMST. CLAC-friendly.

ENGL 290A - American Literary Themes and Traditions: American Gothic

4 credits

Hinson, Scot

Prerequisite: ENGL 180A or ENGL 190A/C or ENGL 270

Through an examination of the American Gothic, its origins and its contemporary manifestations, we will explore the difficult, bloody, and painful birth of American literature as well as its continued fascination with and terror of what Melville called the “power of blackness” and the sublime mixture of terror and beauty. This course is driven by America’s fascination with Gothic literature, and with what can accurately be described as a Gothic revival in American culture. What is it about the shadowy, diseased, the grotesque, and sublime that so attracts us? What scares us and what spectral shapes do those fears inhabit in our literature? This course in the American Gothic is definitely not for the squeamish and requires frequent reading quizzes, one short and one longer researched essay, a midterm and a final, and a group presentation and bibliography.

ENGL 380 – Outlaw Love: American Stories of Love and the Law from Thomas Jefferson to Loving v. Virginia, and Beyond

4 credits

Askeland, Lori

Prerequisite: ENGL 270 and 290A, non-majors by instructor permission

This course was initially inspired by a confluence of Wittenberg Series events this spring: the visits of documentary film-maker Elisabeth Haviland James and of the great Harvard Law professor and historian, Annett Gordon-Reed, along with the Theatre department’s planned February production of *Dry Land*, by Ruby Rae Spiegel, a play about a young woman facing an unwanted pregnancy. Annette Gordon Reed’s groundbreaking work on Thomas Jefferson’s relationship to Sally Hemings, which made an all but definitive case that she bore his children, is a piece of Black history that former slave William Wells Brown included in what is likely the very first novel by a Black American writer, *Clotel*. The concerns about sexual assault and abuse within the slaveholding relationship were also powerfully explored by Harriet Jacobs in her powerful novelistic narrative, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*—and all of them share an interest in illicit love between powerful men and outcast women, with Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter*. Moreover, the foundational reality of intimacy between Black and white people in the US, in the era of Ida B. Wells-Barnett, shaped Mark Twain’s great post-war novel, *Huckleberry Finn*, and laid the groundwork for the laws that were questioned by the marriage of Mildred and Richard Loving, in the state of Virginia, in the 1960s—the subject of Elisabeth Haviland James’ HBO documentary *The Loving Story*, and the feature length film, *Loving*, from last year. James Baldwin’s *Giovanni’s Room* written a decade earlier, explores same-sex desire at a time when it, too, was illegal. Finally, it is the birth of children as a result of these (perceived) “dangerous liaisons” that drives so much of the anxieties around these relationships, and it is an unwanted pregnancy that drives the plot of *Dry Land*, a topic freighted with legal weight. The course will include three short papers, one 12-15 page literary research paper, an annotated bibliography, and two presentations, and will require attendance at relevant campus events. CLAC-friendly. WMST-cross-list.

HIST 111H – Medieval Europe

4 credits

Livingstone, Amy

Prerequisite: None

Knights in shining armor, peasants toiling in the fields, damsels in distress, castles, cathedrals, crusades....these are some of the enduring images of the medieval world. This course will explore the social, cultural, and economic changes that made up the dynamic period we call the middle ages. Through lectures, discussion, films, debates and readings, the important developments, accomplishments and failings of the medieval centuries will be brought to life. Students will be evaluated through three essay exams, quizzes, and class participation. This course counts toward the PAST and WMST minor.

MUSI 187 – Wittenberg Singers

0 – 1 credits

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 T & TH - 6:05 - 7:15 pm, Krieg 300. Conductor Dr. Erik Zinter. To join, contact the conductor via e-mail.

POLI 216R – Family Values: Politics of Virtue, Care, and Equality

4 credits

Wright, Heather

Prerequisite: None.

This course examines the theoretical underpinnings of the contemporary debate over family values. We will “begin at the beginning,” studying the ancient and modern political philosophers and their profoundly influential conceptions of the proper relationship between the family and public life. Once we grasp the philosophical foundation, we will move into the contemporary “house.” We will encounter thoughtful and profound analyses of the conflict of rights involved in these debates over the family. What is the proper relationship between biology and society? Should the family be regulated, or is it beyond the reach of public political scrutiny? How does emerging reproductive technology enter into the mix? Whose side should the state take when the conflict over abortion is represented as a contest between the rights of the fetus and the rights of the mother? Should we allow genetic manipulation of embryos? How have adoption, surrogate motherhood, and stepparenting redefined the traditional family? Is that redefinition reflected in contemporary family law? How will we care for our children and for our parents in an age in which most everyone, male and female, works outside the home? Do we need a new family politics? Having completed our consideration of the American debate, we will turn to an illuminating comparative case study: Poland. The addition of perspectives grounded in a radically different political history, and cultural and religious traditions, will throw the American political landscape into sharp relief.

PSYC 280 – Topic: Psychology of Gender

4 credits

Anes, Michael

Prerequisite: None.

A major – even fundamental – aspect of the human experience is that we are gendered. Your biological sex and the cultural construction of your gender powerfully influence your mental life and behavior. This is a course where we address in a detailed way the influence of gender on psychological functioning. We are reminded of the tools of the scientific method and use these tools to understand the influence of gender in all phases of development and in many different contexts such as the family, the workplace and social groups. The philosophical and political implications of gender research are discussed throughout the course and students learn about gender differences in privilege and gender-based inequalities. Specific areas of coverage include different conceptions of sex and gender, the possible existence of sex differences, cross-cultural differences in ideas about gender, gender roles and attitudes, gender role attitudes in western societies, achievement and communication differences, the role of gender in physical health, mental health, and in various kinds of relationships.

SOCI 245S/C – Gender and Society

4 credits

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 of 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; and other topics. Writing intensive.

SOCI 301 – Feminist Theory

2 credits

Wagner, Brooke

Prerequisite: None

The focus of this course is to introduce students to feminist theories and cultivate the art of critical thinking about gender relations and inequalities. We cover the foundation of feminist theory and the application of theories into empirical research. Key issues for discussion include the public/private divide, the sex/gender debate, feminist political economy and queer theory. This is a social theory course that stresses the social, historical, cultural, and political moment in which theoretical discussions take arise. We will practice theory through writing exercises that seek to extend one's engagement with feminist topics. This class requires intense and thoughtful reading (estimated 30 pages per class) and class discussion.

THDN 313H – Dance in the 20th Century

4 credits

Li-Chang, Shih-Ming

Prerequisite: None.

This course studies the significant developments in dance during the 20th century with an emphasis on ballet and modern dance. Writing intensive.

WMST 100L – Women, Culture, Politics, and Society: An Introduction to Women's Studies

4 credits

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 credits

Wright, Heather

WMST 491 – Internship

2 – 4 credits

Wright, Heather