

WS 101 Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

Welcome to 2021, these are very interesting times! We're going to work together to make this the best term that we can. I think we can build a lovely community together this term, and I'm excited to get to know you and have you connect with each other. It's going to be important that we stay in touch and support each other as we all deal with unexpected changes. I'll need you to reach out to me if you're having problems, sooner rather than later. If something's going on, we can make a plan together. If you leave it til later, we may have less options.

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What's this course all about?

This course is taught from an intersectional feminist perspective. This means that we'll explore all the different identities that women can take; addressing racism, ageism, ableism, heterosexism, cissexism and many other forms of power inequality and oppression. We'll spend most of the term on understanding similarities and differences between each of these oppressions and how we can work for create social change and social justice. This course surveys and critically analyzes the position of women in society, in terms of present realities and future possibilities. Provides a framework to connect personal experience with contemporary social and political issues. Prerequisites: WR 115, RD 115 and MTH 20 or equivalent placement test scores. Audit available.

Materials

This course is not based on a textbook, we'll be working from various kinds of materials, including online articles, comics, scanned articles, short web videos, documentary sections, and videotaped lectures. I am avoiding using traditional textbooks as part of a social justice perspective. The cost of textbooks can be a significant barrier to education for many students, and I'm adopting an open-platform approach. In addition, my goal is to have the materials that you work with come close to your everyday experience. I'm using a popular-education philosophy that hopes to allow you to apply what you learn in this class to your real life. I've chosen the materials that I think will give you the best chance to do that. Instead of reading 2-3 chapters per week, you'll be investing the same amount of time into reading short articles, cartoons and watching various videos. Sometimes you'll be working with 8-15 different materials in one week, but the D2L platform will help you (and me!) keep track of what you've completed.

By the end of the term you'll be able to:

- Use concepts basic to feminist thought in order to develop new understandings of historical, current, and personally experienced events
- Articulate ways that systems of power, privilege and oppression are created and maintained by socialcultural forces
- Recognize the influences that systems of oppression have on diverse women's lives.
- Identify and analyze social processes that construct gender roles.
- Communicate skillfully by writing, speaking, and collaborating.

Some of our topics:

- empowering women
- patriarchy, sexism, oppression
- social control, socialization, conformity
- social construction of knowledge
- body image
- gender role socialization
- family and intimate relationships
- health and reproductive rights
- sexuality and sexual identity
- women and economics
- essentialism, constructivism
- women in the media
- language and communication
- mental health
- mechanisms of social inequality
- gender stereotyping and socialization
- intersection of oppressed identities
- discrimination, stigma, microaggression
- privilege and structural oppression
- feminism, social change and the role of allies

Come talk to me RIGHT AWAY!!!!

If there is a major life crisis that might keep you from focusing on your schoolwork, let me know right away. It's better if I know sooner because it will give us flexibility about how to handle it. It's always better if you reach out to ME as its happening, don't wait until after.

The magic of conversations.

The way you participate in our class conversations is really important. We'll be talking about issues that can be emotionally difficult and we are likely to have disagreements. Please be careful to be very respectful when you disagree with each other, and please let me know if you are feeling uncomfortable in the classroom. Keep your identities in mind as you're speaking: if the conversation is about one of the oppressions that doesn't hurt you, it's important that you sit back more and leave space for the folks who are hurt by it to speak. In those situations, keep an eye on not getting defensive, and bring yourself back to trusting, believing and curiosity. Sharing

air time is an important part of social justice; powerful groups are given more access to the microphone and are used to having their opinions valued. Pay close attention to how much time you're speaking and try to allow more space for folks with less privilege to speak. If you're one of the folks that has a hard time speaking up, we'll actively be trying to give you a comfortable space in which to share your experience. This is a great space for you to get validation and support as you get used to talking about YOUR oppression, we'll truly welcome your perspective.

How we communicate:

It's going to be really important that you check your PCC email at least every couple of days, and ideally a lot more often during the first week of class as we get everyone sorted into groups.

Content and language warning

We're going to be discussing material that talks about some of the worse parts of humanity: the ways we systematically choose to hurt each other. I'll be working hard to keep this manageable and help you process what you're seeing. It's likely that you will be sad and hurt by some of the topics we discuss, and I'll try to prepare you and help you move forward as we talk about how to interrupt cycles of oppression. Since we'll be discussing many different oppressions, it's very likely that you'll sometimes be understanding the concepts from the oppressed side, and sometimes from the oppressor side. We'll be working with a LOT of popular culture materials, they will be the majority of the at-home "lectures". Most of them will be using everyday language, and some of them may have some words that you may consider to be "strong". If this is difficult for you, please feel ABSOLUTELY comfortable talking to me about it and I'll try to accommodate you.

How are we going to figure out the grade?

Individual Writing assignments 45%

Group conversation reports 45%

Joint evaluation 10%

Tips for success:

Since the grade for this class is not based on traditional exams, quizzes or essays, you may need to use a different strategy than in other classes. To be successful in this class, make sure to set a bit of time aside each week to do your individual work. There are no big deadlines, which means there's a lot of little ones (always 24 hours before your group meets). You might set up an alarm on your phone if you're having trouble remembering to stay up-to date on the work. I've found that students don't realize that missing a couple of individual assignments has a big impact on their grades! I'm hoping to help you really succeed in this class, the secret is to make steady progress with each of the little assignments. I won't be able to give you credit for unanswered questions, so don't leave them blank! Keep an eye on the guidelines for writing each of the questions. Each prompt gives you an idea of how many sentences to write, make sure to keep an eye on that guideline!

Late assignments:

If you ever have trouble submitting something to D2L, email me your work so there is a record of your work being completed on time. Your individual work is always due at least 24 hours before your group's conversation. If you turn it in within 24 hours of your group meeting, you'll lose 20%. If you don't turn in your individual work before your group meets, you won't be able to join the conversation. You can still turn in your written work up to 24 hours after your group meets, and you'll lose 50% of your grade. I won't count work submitted 24 hours after the meeting time.

Individual writing assignments 45%

Each week you'll complete a writing assignment that will help you clarify concepts and make connections between the materials, our discussions and your everyday life. This work is always due 24 hours before your group's conversation.

These writing assignments will take you around 60-90 minutes to complete, but they will not be timed. You'll submit them into the discussion section, so other students will benefit from your reflections, and you'll grow from theirs. **You don't need to reply to each other's posts.** but you can, if you want to.

I will give you a different set of writing prompts each week, and they'll often include defining some of the terms that were present in the readings or videos. I'll also be asking you to make connections between the different materials, and I'll give you some guided reflection questions. It should be straightforward if you take the time to review the materials. It's important that you answer each of the questions in the writing guide and make sure that you're meeting the sentence requirements.

Grading and feedback

I will usually be grading your assignments about a week after they are due. For example, the assignment for week 4 is due at the END of week 4, that means that I will take a week to get them back to you, probably by the end of week 5. You won't be getting feedback from me on your individual responses because you'll have 2 more chances to deepen your understanding of each concept: Once while you discuss it with your group, and again with a review video that I will post covering the concepts for each week. You'll only hear from me about your individual work when something is going wrong and I need you to change your approach. It's important that you check your grades weekly so that you can quickly adjust your strategy if something is not working. I am very happy to meet with you to give you ideas on how to improve your individual work so you can get the most out of the class.

Group conversations 45%

The class is structured around weekly group conversations in which you'll meet up with 2-3 other students to talk about some scenarios or solve some specific problems that relate to our class concepts. You'll prepare individually each week by reviewing the materials by yourself and writing responses to questions about the materials. After you've completed your preparation, you'll meet IN REAL TIME over video or audio (not text) for an hour with your group to do some

problem-solving. One member from each group will post a brief report about your conversation for the week within 48 hours after your meeting. I know that the logistics of finding a time to meet can be difficult in an online class, so we'll be organizing the groups based on scheduling availability within the first few days of class (please stay close to your email the first 5 days of class!).

You cannot participate in your group's conversation if you have not completed your individual work before the meeting. If you attend your group meeting unprepared (without doing your individual work) you will NOT get credit for being present at the conversation. If you miss 4 conversations in the term, you will not pass the class.

Once you're assigned to a group (for example the Thursday evening group), you are committed to work at that set time throughout the term. If one of the group members can't make it at the same time, it's not a big deal. It's easy to make up the lost points through the extra credit assignment; feel free to email me if you have questions. If it IS happening often, you do need to worry (you can miss up to 3 conversations and still pass the class).

Don't change your meeting time

Changing your meeting time is not a small deal. It's ok to try to be helpful in accommodating each other's needs, but readjusting schedules constantly creates a BIG drain for folks, and that is not what you agreed to when signing up for this class.

When someone asks to change the time, another person might need to rearrange a LOT of stuff to accommodate the shift. People might feel pressured to say yes when it's really not right for them. It's hard to do once, but when it keeps happening it might create too much of a drain for folks, and folks end up dropping the course or asking to leave the group. If you're one of the people who can't make your set time, message ME about it, and we'll see what options we may have. Don't make your groupmate be the bad guy, that's not fair to them.

It's important that you set a specific meeting time and stick to it. If you (once in a while) decide to change the meeting time, the decision has to be unanimous and UN-PRESSURED!! If even ONE of you is hesitant, you have to drop the request and keep the meeting at the set time. If you do end up changing the time, **whoever requested the time change needs to email me, explain the situation, tell me about the new plan, and copy the whole group in the email.**

If you have questions or concerns about this, please get in touch with me, I'm happy to help you brainstorm.

Academic dishonesty:

You'll be responsible for meeting in real-time over an audio or video (not text) format each week. If someone cannot make it to your meeting time **you CANNOT "cover up" for the missing person** by including them in your report as if they had been present during the conversation. If you include someone in the report who was NOT present at the audio/video conversation, that will be considered academic dishonesty and will have the same consequences as plagiarism or cheating on an exam. If someone is pressuring you to include them in a report for a conversation that they were not present for, please email me and I will handle the situation anonymously.

Please don't risk your academic standing to cover for a classmate. I can work with them directly on finding a solution to the problem.

Joint evaluation 10%

At the end of the term you'll carry out a guided self-evaluation that will address issues like participation, written work, and effort. I will likely use the grade you report, but if I find it artificially high or low, I may discuss it with you and change the grade. Even though you won't be completing your self-evaluation until the end of the term, you can see the rubric that you'll use to evaluate yourself right on the Quizzes section of the D2L site. This rubric gives you ALL the tips on how to get an A in this class!

College information:

We want you to be ok:

PCC wants you to be successful and have resources that may help. If you face challenges affording food or housing, or if you need access to technology, this will naturally affect your classwork. Check out these resources: Student COVID-19 Resources (<https://www.pcc.edu/coronavirus/information-for-students/resources/>) and Emergency Funds (www.pcc.edu/enroll/paying-for-college/emergency-funds.html). You can also contact a campus Student Conduct and Retention Coordinator at conductandcare@pcc.edu.

PCC Grading

Guidelines [<http://www.pcc.edu/resources/academic/standards-practices/AcademicStandardsandPractices-GradingGuidelines.html>]

Add/drop/withdraw deadlines for the term: [<http://www.pcc.edu/registration/dropping.html>]

Instructional ADA statement: Students who experience disability-related barriers should contact Disability Services. If students elect to use approved academic adjustments, they must provide in advance formal notification from Disability Services to the instructor.

Student Rights and Responsibilities: Students are required to comply with the policies contained in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook [<http://www.pcc.edu/about/policy/student-rights/>]. The Handbook includes the Code of Student Conduct and the Academic Integrity Policy.

Flexibility: The instructor reserves the right to modify course content and/or substitute assignments and learning activities in response to institutional, weather, or class situations.

Title IX/Non-Discrimination statement: Portland Community College is committed to creating and fostering a learning and working environment based on open communication and mutual respect. If you believe you have encountered sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, sexual assault, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, age, national origin, veteran status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability please contact the Office of Equity and Inclusion at (971) 722-5840 or equity.inclusion@pcc.edu.

PCC is a sanctuary college. For more information and resources, see www.pcc.edu/resources/undocumented-students/. "Demonstrating the College's support for and commitment to our DACA, DREAMers, and undocumented students is of paramount importance at this time. To reiterate, our Sanctuary status means: protection of student

information, according to FERPA; a commitment to not allow our Public Safety personnel to be used for immigration enforcement purposes; not to allow Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) on our campuses or properties—unless they carry a subpoena or arrest warrant.

Women's Studies Focus award: PCC offers a focus award in Women's Studies. You can list the focus award in a resume, which might get you noticed when you apply for jobs. This kind of recognition can show that you've dedicated time and effort into a field that is becoming more desirable, as employers seek applicants with cultural literacy and a good understanding of diversity. You need to complete WS101 and 2 other courses, view the full list here: <https://catalog.pcc.edu/focusawards/womensstudiesfocusaward/> The award does not show up directly in your transcript, and it is not given out automatically; you have to request it so be sure to fill in the form!