

# Women's Studies Course Descriptions

## Spring 2015

With over 80 affiliate faculty across campus, there is great range and diversity amongst the WMST courses offered each semester. The course descriptions below highlight the **course offerings from CORE faculty** in the Department of Women's Studies.

### **WMST 263 Introduction to Black Women's Studies – Dr. Michelle Rowley**

This course is an interdisciplinary exploration of Black women, culture and society in the United States. Drawn primarily from the social sciences and history with complementary material from literature and the arts. In this course, we will examine complex constructions and intricate intersections of race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, education, and sexuality, by employing methods of inquiry from Black feminist thought, Womanism, cultural criticism, feminist theory, queer theory, qualitative social science as well as popular culture discourses.

### **WMST 298D Women's Bodies in Contention – Dr. Deborah Rosenfelt**

This course explores how the bodies of women in contemporary society have acted as a site of controversy and as a source of new knowledge and theory in the field of interdisciplinary women's studies. We will examine discussions about the social construction and cultural representation of women's bodies, controversies about women's sexuality and women's health, and contentions over reproductive rights, bodily integrity, and gender-based violence, looking especially at the ways in which these issues have been addressed in feminist thought. Our approach is interdisciplinary, integrating media representations, works of art, policy, and theory

### **WMST 298F Women, Gender, and Finance – Dr. Seung-Kyung Kim**

This course aims to provide students with innovative analytic frameworks to better understand the relationship between gender, finance and power. In collaboration with a team from TD Ameritrade, this course will to help students learn the skills needed to understand and manage personal finance, and to provide an opportunity for students to think about their own career trajectories, financial practices, and leadership potential. Two key questions that will shape the class are: (1) How are women affected by the current economic systems at work in the United States?; (2) What are effective feminist interventions to address power differentials between women and men, and among women in the fields of finance and economics?

### **WMST 314 Black Women in U.S. History – Dr. Elsa Barkley Brown**

This course examines the historical experiences of black women in the U.S. from slavery to the present. In the process students should gain a more complete understanding of African-American, United States, and women's history by reconsidering these from the vantage point of black women's experiences. While we ground our study in the political and economic circumstances of black women's lives, we will also focus on both the cultural representations of African-American women and black women's struggles to represent themselves on film, in art, and in literature. Comparing black women's own self-perceptions and behavior with the social norms and ideals about both African Americans and women, we will examine the racial/sexual politics of black women's lives.

### **WMST 488L (seminar) From Lenin to Pussy Riots – Dr. Catherine Schuler**

Following the Russian revolution (1917-1918), Bol'shevik leaders articulated the organizing principles of the new Soviet socialist state, among them complete gender equality. Not surprisingly, when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991 so too did most of its founding principles-including the fiction of gender equality. In *Gendering (Post) Socialism*, we will use film, literature, visual art, and theatre to explore the politics of gender as they developed under Russian socialism and post-socialism. Questions we will consider include the following: What role did feminism play in Bol'shevik ideology? Why did Stalin declare the 'Woman Question' solved in 1930? Did Soviet socialism emasculate Russian men and does that explain Vladimir Putin's 'muscular masculinity'? What lessons might we draw from Pussy Riot about the fate of post Soviet feminism?

### **WMST 494 Lesbian Communities and Differences – Dr. Katie King**

It's all about networks of community, media, activism, scholarship – today and even across time. This course will take up a range of themes and "pairings," in global networks. We will explore gay marriage and queer heterosexualities, transgender and genderqueer, popular culture and entertainment cultures. The networks we will travel, engage and alter will be those of lesbian feminisms and racialized nationalisms, militarized colonialisms and media glocalizations, sex practices and sex romances. All of these are elements in queering knowledges and wondering about institutional normalizations

### **WMST 4980 Global Sexed Tourism – Dr. A. Lynn Bolles**

What excites a person to venture from home to an unknown locale and return? A part of human history, exploration is now a global industry of its own. This course looks at places women and men yearn to visit, the allure of those location and imagined religious, educational, leisure, recreational and or sexual desires. Modern tourism and commercialized hospitality accelerated movements of transportation, electronic media and information propels the global tourist industry. Focusing on the gendered visitor's perspective, the course will use personal narratives, literature, film, and thematic travel by genre and location and the hosts who they encounter.

### **WMST 498X Doing Social Justice Research – Dr. Elsa Barkley Brown**

(Description not yet available)

### **LGBT 488F (Seminar) Queer Futures – Dr. Alexis Lothian**

The world of LGBTQ cultures and politics is a rapidly changing one. In this course, we'll read scholarship and engage with fiction, art, and media whose focus has been on the meaning and possibility of a queerer future – one that would create transformative change in the structures of gender, sexuality, empire, race, and/or disability. Texts for discussion are likely to include writings by J. Jack Halberstam, Sara Ahmed, Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, Dean Spade, Mel Chen, Samuel R. Delany, and Octavia Butler, and the films *Jubilee* (1978) and *Born in Flames* (1984). These works, which describe diverse possibilities for refusing the status quo and/or imagining a different world, will provide a springboard for students' own research into – and creation of – possible futures for LGBTQ culture, art, and activism.

For more information about these or other WMST courses, please contact Dr. JV Sapinosa, [sapinosa@umd.edu](mailto:sapinosa@umd.edu), 301-405-6827, or go to <http://ter.ps/meetJV> to schedule a meeting.