

Feminist Studies Graduate Certificate

Fall 2022: Course Offerings

WOMEN'S, GENDER & SEXUALITY STUDIES

<https://wgss.uconn.edu/graduate-certificate/>

SOCI 5895: Investigating Special Topics: Gender and Human Rights

Monday 3:35pm-6:35pm

Manisha Desai

Women's Rights are Human Rights and Human Rights are Women's Rights," entered the global human rights discourse at the Second UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 as a critique of the gendered nature of Human Rights discourse and practice. In this seminar we will study the history of women's mobilizing around the world that led to this articulation; how it has or has not influenced human rights theories and practices; how the gendered critique might perpetuate other inequalities even as it challenges gendered ones; and what it has meant for global gender justice specifically and social justice more generally.

HDFS 5277: Human Sexuality

Thursday 11:00am-1:30pm

Ryan Watson

Human sexual behavior and attitudes. Instructor permission needed if student is not enrolled in HDFS.

POLS International Women's Rights

Tuesday 4:00pm-6:30pm

Zehra Arat

This course is a survey of some major theories of human rights, both those that justify human rights and those that question their existence or desirability. Historical and theoretical arguments are linked to the contemporary developments in our "Age of Human Rights," as well as the international human rights declarations and treaties produced since the mid-twentieth century. The discussions emphasize selective treatment and application of international human rights and include ongoing debates on universalism, group rights, positive versus negative rights, and generations of human rights.

WGSS 5365 001 Feminist Epistemologies and Methodologies

TuTh 11:00am-12:15pm

Nancy Naples

This course is designed to explore the theoretical underpinnings of diverse feminist methodologies and interdisciplinary scholarship. We will discuss contemporary debates in the field and ethical

dilemmas faced by researchers using feminist, interdisciplinary and intersectional epistemologies. We will also consider feminist engagement with critical race, indigenous, postcolonial, critical disabilities, queer, and trans scholarship. The course includes guided experience in designing and producing feminist scholarship through experiential assignments and guest presentations with the goal of advancing your MA or Ph.D. proposal or research paper.

ENGL 6750: The Politics and Poetics of Passing (Seminar in Language and Literature)

Thursday 1:00am-3:30pm

Erika Williams

In her novel *Passing*, Nella Larsen observes that "passing," traditionally defined as the act of claiming an identity that was neither assigned at birth nor ordained by convention, is a "hazardous business," since it often requires leaving family, tradition, and in some cases, even oneself, behind. In this course, we will unpack the depth of Larsen's claim and complicate the notion of "passing" by examining racial, gendered, sexual, and other forms of identity shifting in a variety of fictional and non-fictional narratives that span the genres of novel, film, and memoir essay.

Some theorists of passing believe that it is a phantom idea, since the concept of passing relies on both an essentialist identity politics that may reduce a subject to their perceived ethnicity, gender, or nationality, and an outmoded belief in a coherent self. Yet other critics working within the fields of critical race studies and gender and sexuality studies define passing as an opportunity to reimagine the social locations of one's identity, constituting a kind of "code-switching" that also amounts to a "misapplication" of the socio-political and already established criteria for various cultural identities.

Taking for granted that passing is a contested term subject to political adjudication and philosophic interpretation and that passing literature is a dynamic product transformed by the eras, histories, and cultural beliefs that shape it, we will explore some key examples of passing literature and discourse from the modernist era of the Harlem Renaissance to the contemporary, postmodern moment in order to theorize the elements, interpretations, and implications of identity passing.

Texts and figures to be studied will likely include Nella Larsen's *Passing*, James Weldon Johnson's *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, Danzy Senna's *Caucasia*, Mat Johnson's *Loving Day*, Helen Oyeyemi's *Boy, Snow, Bird*, Brit Bennett's *The Vanishing Half*, and the lives and public interpretations of Pauli Murray, Anatole Broyard and Rachel Dolezal. We will also engage some texts that fall outside the parameters of African American literature and (strictly) racial passing by exploring other cultural representations of identity transformation such as Gish Jen's *Mona in the Promised Land*, Akwaeke Emezi's *Dear Senthuran: A Black Spirit Memoir*, Kenji Yoshino's *Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights*, and Jennifer Finney Boylan's *She's Not There: A Life in Two Genders*.

Our methodological practice will be drawn from interdisciplinary literary study consisting of critical race studies, gender studies, queer studies, philosophy, genre studies, and multicultural American studies. Requirements will include 1 shorter paper, 1 oral, researched presentation, and a longer seminar paper of 12-15 pages.