

**Introduction to Gender and Women's Studies  
GSWS 1020**

**The University of Western Ontario (Western University)  
London Canada  
Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies**

The department would like to recognize that we are located on the traditional land of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lenape and Attawandaron peoples.

Lecture: 2hrs

Tutorial: GSWS 1020E includes a tutorial every other week.

Instructor: Professor Cayen

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**Calendar Description:**

A survey of selected topics in the study of gender structures and the status of women in historical and cross-cultural perspective. These will include consideration of social and psychological processes by which gender identity is established in the individual, its institutional manifestations, and its articulation with class and race structures.

**No prerequisites**

**Longer Description:**

This course is an introductory and interdisciplinary survey of the diverse and changing roles of gender, sex, and sexuality in contemporary society. Together we will tackle several questions over the course of the year, including:

- How does gender and women's studies contribute to our thinking of particular issues, institutional practices, and changing global dynamics?
- What are the possibilities and our responsibilities for change and social justice in both local and international feminist movements? And,
- How do principles of feminist thought allow us to navigate controversial issues, including those related to tensions or exclusions in resistance movements?

In 2022-2023 we will explore, among other topics, the following: challenges to the sex- and gender-binary, including transgender, non-binary, and intersex identities; intersectionality and solidarity across gender, race, class, and ability; constructions of masculinities and femininities; the operation of state power on gender and sexual minorities; colonialism and Indigenous resistances; activism and protest, including through literature and art.

**Learning Objectives**

This course will enable students to:

- Investigate the history of gender and feminism, and the issues facing gender and sexual minorities today, both locally and globally;
- explain how gender operates as a site of social and political control;
- analyze and deconstruct the representation of gender and sexual minorities in disciplines such as history, literature, science, and in popular culture and media;
- demonstrate how the social construction of gender is related to sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, (dis)ability and age;
- assess and evaluate key theoretical debates, differences and similarities in feminist thought and in the pursuit of social change.

In addition, the course will assist students in developing aptitude in:

- analytical/critical thinking;
- oral and written communication skills; and
- research.

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### *Assignments and Evaluation*

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Tutorial Contributions	10%
Short Essay (3-4 pages)	15%
Midterm Test	15%
Art and Activism Assignment	10%
Research Essay (6-7 pages)	20%
Final Exam	30%

More details for assignments will be given in class and posted to the course website on OWL.

#### **Tutorial Contributions (On-going, 10% (5% per term))**

Tutorial is a space for you to meet in smaller groups and discuss course concepts, practice skills ahead of assignment due dates, and connect with your peers about issues that matter to you. You should come each week with a question from readings or lecture to spark discussion. You will have the opportunity to contribute orally and in writing to earn your grade. We reward effort and thoughtfulness over perfection: it's ok (ideal, even!) to ask questions about things you aren't sure about.

#### **Short Essay – Global Feminisms (15%)**

In a short (3-4 page) argumentative essay, supported by academic research, examine how feminism is practiced by activists around the world. Choose one specific region, country,

religion, or identity and offer an analysis of the issues and methods of resistance, informed by our course texts.

### **Midterm (December Exam Period, 15%)**

The midterm exam will be scheduled by the Office of the Registrar: date to be announced. The midterm may consist of multiple choice-style questions, short answer questions, and an essay. The mid-term will run in-person. If the University/Covid/other compels our move to online delivery, the exam will be delivered via OWL *without* the use of ProctorTrack or similar software. 2hrs.

### **Art and Activism (10%)**

Alone or with a partner and taking a course reading as a point of reference, create a piece of art that ‘responds’ to a particular issue you care about or an experience you have had moving through the world as a gendered being (keeping in mind the ways in which sexuality, race, class, dis/ability, age, religion, nationality, or.... intersect with gender). The format for this assignment is flexible and could include an infographic, a comic, a piece of art (e.g., painting, dance, poetry, music, etc), or another method of your choosing in consultation with your TA or the prof.

### **Final Research Essay (20%)**

Write a research essay (5-6 pages) on a question of interest to you and the course (e.g., a topic with relevance to an intersectional approach of the field (broadly defined) of gender, sexuality, and women’s studies). Then, conduct academic research that can help you explore or answer that question through an argumentative thesis.

### **Final Exam (April Exam Period, 30%)**

The final exam will be scheduled by the Office of the Registrar: date to be announced. The final exam may consist of multiple choice-style questions, short answer questions, and an essay. The final exam will run in-person. If the University/Covid/other compels our move to online delivery, the exam will be delivered via OWL *without* the use of ProctorTrack or similar software. 3 hrs.