

Note: Previous Course Outline

**Introduction to Gender and Women's Studies
GSWS 1020 001 – Tuesdays**

**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:

Tutorial: GSWS 1020E includes a tutorial 6x/term.

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?
- How do principles of feminist thought allow us to navigate controversial issues, including those related to tensions or exclusions in resistance movements?
- What are the possibilities – and responsibilities – of local and international feminist interventions for social justice?

In 2024-2025 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- sexual- and other minorities; colonialism and Indigenous resistances; and activism and protest, including through literature and art. Above all, in this class, we will strive to make connections between our everyday lives, global structures, and agentic work for gender equality/equity/freedom.

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;
- demonstrate how the social construction of gender is related to sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, (dis)ability and age;
- analyze and deconstruct the representation of gender and sexual minorities in disciplines such as history, literature, science, and in popular culture and media;
- 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.

Assignments and Evaluation

Course and Tutorial Engagement	10%
Short Essay (3-4 pages, Oct 31)	15%
Midterm Test	15%
Art and Activism Assignment (Jan 12)	10%
Research Essay (6-7 pages, Mar 6)	20%
Final Exam	30%

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

Course and Tutorial Engagement (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.

Tutorials run 6 weeks per term, dates indicated in the schedule below. All tutorials are required.

Course engagement is demonstrated via the completion of other activities during your ‘off’ tutorial weeks, including Writing Modules ahead of assignments or short reading/practice quizzes on OWL (these are assessed only for completion; they may be done collaboratively with your peers).

Academic Consideration: This course requires weekly participation across 12 weeks each term. You may miss one tutorial without penalty per term if you complete an ‘extra credit activity’, due the end of each term (Dec 6/Apr 4, options listed below). OWL reading quizzes will be open for a minimum of one week at a time, to be completed at your own pace. Since flexibility is already provided, requests for academic consideration for Course and Tutorial Engagement will be denied.

Short Essay – Feminist Action (Oct 31, 15%)

In a short (3-4 page) argumentative essay, identify a local or international organization (or individual) engaging in community work or activism on an issue you think is significant for feminist inquiry and which you will argue is under-represented or ill-addressed. Use 2 course texts to gain increased understanding about the goals, aims, and function of your selected organization.

Academic Consideration: This assignment comes with a no-questions-asked 3-day grace period. This means that you can submit this assignment up to midnight on Sunday, Nov. 3 without penalty. Since flexibility is already provided, requests for academic consideration for this paper will be denied. Papers will still be accepted past the extended deadline with a late penalty of 2% per day.

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; specific format and sample questions will be distributed in advance. 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.

Academic Consideration: If you (need to) miss the Midterm, please contact the Academic Advising office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as you are able to do so via https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup midterm). https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/definitions.pdf. Make-up exams are scheduled in January.

Art and Activism (Jan 12 + Gallery Walk in tutorial Jan 14-16, 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. ‘Gallery Walk’ presentations in tutorial will run the week of Jan 14-16, make-up date for illness Jan 28-30.

Academic Consideration: This assignment comes with a no-questions-asked 2-day grace period. This means that you can submit your art assignment up to noon on Tuesday, Jan 14 without penalty. The Gallery Walk also has a no-questions-asked make-up date for the tutorials running the week of Jan 28-30. Since flexibility is already provided, requests for academic consideration for this assignment will be denied. Art assignments will still be accepted past the extended deadlines with a late penalty of 2% per day.

Final Research Essay (March 6, 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.

Academic Consideration: This assignment comes with a no-questions-asked 3-day grace period. This means that you can submit this assignment up to midnight on Sunday, Mar. 9 without penalty. Since flexibility is already provided, requests for academic consideration for this paper will be denied. Papers will still be accepted past the extended deadline with a late penalty of 2% per day.

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; specific format and sample questions will be distributed in advance. 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.

Academic Consideration: If you (need to) miss the Final Exam, please contact the Academic Advising office of your Faculty of Registration as soon as you are able to do so via https://registrar.uwo.ca/faculty_academic_counselling.html. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup midterm). https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/exam/definitions.pdf. Make-up exams are scheduled in May.