

# WMST 200: Introduction to Women's Studies

## Instructor:

Julie Sorge Way [wmst200@gmail.com](mailto:wmst200@gmail.com)

## Office Hours:

MWF 12:15-1:20, 4:30-5:00 and by appt.

## Class Dates/Times:

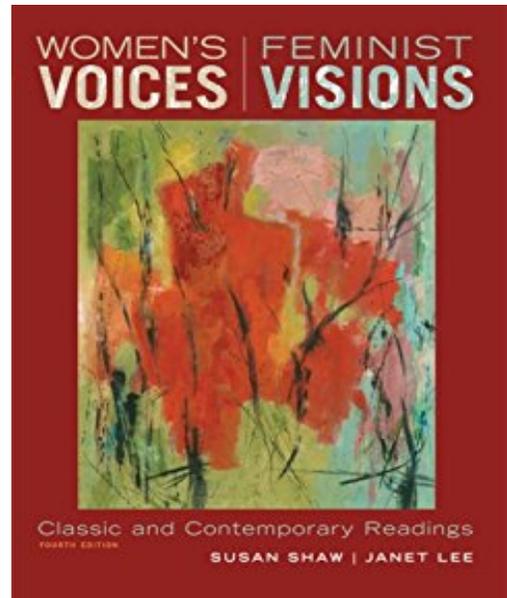
Section 1 MWF 9:05-9:55 Keezell 107

**Required Text:** Shaw, Susan, and Janet Lee. Women's Voices, Feminist Visions, 4th edition.

## Required Online Readings, Films & Links:

See the course website,

<http://sites.google.com/site/sorgewayjmu/Home/wmst200>



## Course Goals & Description:

**Overview:** This course invites students to explore the concept of “gender” as a significant organizing principle of contemporary society. Over the semester we will discuss the social construction of gender and the implications of structural inequalities in various areas of everyday life.

## Goals:

- To explore Women's Studies as an academic discipline, including key concepts, terminology, and questions.
- To study feminist women's history and the myths surrounding feminism.
- To gain familiarity with the concept of “gender” and the implications of the social construction of gender and structural oppression.
- To study the ways gender affects access to opportunity, power and resources.
- To practice the application of gender analysis to “ordinary” life.
- To foster an awareness of social justice issues that impact women's lives.

## Required Text:

Women's Voices, Feminist Visions. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition. Eds. Susan Shaw and Janet Lee. NY: McGraw Hill, 2009.

ISBN: 9780073512280 – individual readings on calendar below

## Assignments and Grading:

40% Papers (“Learning Activities”)

10% Midterm Exam

15% Activism Project and Presentation

15% Participation (In-Class Work, Quizzes, Reaction File and Class Discussion)

20% Final Exam

## Policies:

**Assignment Format:** All written work must be typed, double-spaced, printed legibly in black ink, and follow MLA style. You should have access to a copy of *The MLA Handbook*, available in the JMU library and in all local and online bookstores. Humanities majors should own this book. Unreadable or improperly formatted

papers will receive an F.

**Due Dates:** I do not accept late work. All work is due in class at the start time. See me before the deadline if you do not understand any assignment or run into any other sort of difficulty. If you will be unable to submit your work at the assigned place or time, make arrangements with me **before** the deadline to submit it early. Work is submitted when I receive it in-hand, not when it arrives in my email, mailbox or under my office door.

**The JMU Honor Code** applies to all work completed in this class. Handing in work constitutes your pledge of academic honesty. Plagiarism will result in failing the course and referral for disciplinary action by the Honor Council and the College of Arts and Letters.

**If you have a diagnosed disability**, it is your responsibility to notify the Office of Disability Services and me so that we can work together to meet your learning needs. I encourage all students to access the **academic support services** available on campus.

**Office Hours:** Please feel free to drop by at the hours listed above, or make an appointment to see me. My office is Keezell 412 and I am always happy to discuss ideas for your work and ways to help your learning in this class.

**Inclement Weather:** Class meets if the university is open. If I am unable to get to campus, I will notify the class via email and by having a notice posted outside our classroom door.

## Expectations:

Class attendance and informed participation in class activities is crucial. This class is a learning community, and a key element in fostering community is member responsibility to both the self and the community. Each class member must assume responsibility for his or her learning and support the learning of others. Assuming responsibility means preparing for class, asking for help, responding to classmates, and respecting differences. These expectations also apply to me as your instructor.

It is important that this class maintain an atmosphere that is conducive to open discussion. Please be attentive and considerate to speakers by giving them your attention. Behavior that will not be tolerated includes: coming to class late, leaving early, inappropriately timed bathroom breaks, indiscrete eating, not doing the reading, doing work for another class during our session, wasting time in groups, being disruptive, and being disrespectful to the instructor or to other class members. Turn off your cell phone when class begins, and please refrain from checking it and/or texting during class.

College texts and discussions can challenge your assumptions and ask you to assess your own investment in certain cultural values and beliefs. It is important to keep an open mind during all classroom and electronic discussions and to be respectful of each other. Emotional reasoning, while important in other parts of our lives, is not appropriate in the college classroom; your emotional response to an issue (how it makes you feel) is a starting point for rational inquiry and not an ending point. Please be aware you will not be graded on your opinions in this class; however, you will be graded on your ability to reasonably defend and logically argue a position.

I expect you to arrive on time and stay until each class meeting's conclusion. Arriving late or leaving early disrupts everyone's learning. If you do not attend class, you miss a crucial element of the community learning experience that is a key premise of this course and, conversely, the class misses your unique contributions. Whatever the reason for an absence, the missed learning experience is irreplaceable. **If you miss class**, you are responsible for obtaining notes, handouts, and assignments from classmates and not from me. More than

three recorded absences (one week) will lower your final course grade by one letter (10 points), with each additional absence lowering your grade by one additional letter. More than six recorded absences (two weeks) will lower your final course grade to an F.

The classroom community can best learn if everyone participates. I expect you to attend each class prepared to contribute productively to discussion and other class activities. Preparation is your reflection on the assigned readings. Productive participation includes, but is not limited to: informed responses to discussion questions related to the readings; thoughtfully answering questions posed in class discussions; sharing your unique perspective or knowledge of course material with the class; and posing questions or offering comments that demonstrate your comprehension and reflection on assigned readings.

**15%: Class Participation, Discussion, Quizzes and Reaction File.** Reading quizzes provide the motivation sometimes necessary to keep up with the readings. Quizzes are given at the start of class, are unannounced, more or less daily, and cannot be made up. Here are a few tips on preparing for reading quizzes:

1. Write in your book; as a college student, you should never be caught reading a book without a writing implement in hand! Doing well in this course is worth more than the money you make selling your books back. Noting important pages, ideas, and connections helps you to review for reading quizzes, participate in class discussions, and process a text in preparation for writing a paper. For the same reasons, I do not recommend using highlighters.
2. Know the title of the assigned reading as well as the author's name. Make note of the date of publication and the historical/cultural context.
3. Look up any unfamiliar words—especially if they appear in the work's title.
4. Identify the thesis and supporting points in the text's argument (expository texts) or the characters and plot (creative/fictional texts).
5. If you completed the assigned reading the week before class or even the night before class, take a few moments at the beginning of class to remind yourself of title, author, characters, and events.

To foster reading comprehension and analytical skills via working together as a group, you will keep a reaction file, from which you'll share a written commentary on current course material (film and written texts) at the beginning of our Wednesday class meetings (unless otherwise noted in the schedule). Each commentary must reference at least one current text or film and provide a quotation and proper citation. I will grade commentaries on relevance to the course, clarity of expression, depth of engagement with the material, and adherence to assignment directions. Examples of in-depth engagement with the material are striving for connections across course texts and attempting to answer your own difficult questions. Each week's commentary will count as one class participation grade. You will also be graded on your in-class participation, willingness to speak up constructively in class, and active participation in our discussions and activities.

**40% (4 x 10% each): Learning Activities.** During the semester, you will complete four (of eight possible) learning activities. You choose the four learning activities you wish to complete. Each learning activity is listed on the class schedule and must be completed by the listed due date. You may speak to me or email me for review and feedback up to 48 hours before the final paper is submitted.

**30%: 2 Exams.** Mid-term (10%) and Final (20%)

**15%: Group Activist Project.** During the semester, you will form a group with others to design and carry out an activist project on campus and/or in the surrounding community that demonstrates your in-depth understanding of a theme or issue from the course. Groups will complete the project during the semester. They will then make a **presentation** to the class at the end of the semester which outlines (and, if applicable, displays) the project goals, methodology, outcome, and lessons learned. Projects should above all benefit the community, but projects and presentations must also be well planned, relevant, well researched, creative, and intellectually productive. Your project may originate from any of the approved Ideas for Activism lists on

pages 139, 184, 241, 323, 388, 436, 507, 569, 623, and 712. More risky, but perhaps more rewarding, the group may elect to design and carry out an original project. Original projects must receive my approval to proceed, but I am happy to consult with students on both original and text-derived projects. Groups must meet with me and present a written project proposal and must receive approval before beginning any collaborative work for credit.

## Help:

Office hours and appointments: I am available to meet with you individually during my office hours or at another agreed upon time. Please do not hesitate to speak with me about the course material, assignments, evaluation, classroom atmosphere, and/or strategies for improving.

Contact by phone and email: I have provided you with my office phone number. Please do not contact me at home. I am happy to answer questions and even to look at brief excerpts of writing via email, but please be realistic! Emails received during regular business hours will be responded to within 48 hours. When emailing me (or any other professor), be sure to identify yourself by your full name and by your course. Additionally be aware that I do not accept papers by email.

**Writing Center:** You should be aware that there is a writing center on campus where you can work one-on-one with a tutor for additional assistance on your writing. See <http://www.jmu.edu/uwc/appointments.html>

**Special needs:** Any student who has special needs should speak with me within the first week of class (do not wait until the first exam or the first paper is due) so we can find solutions to help your learning in this class.

**Library Help:** There is excellent library help available to you. The library liaison for Women's Studies is Reba Leiding ([leidinrm@jmu.edu](mailto:leidinrm@jmu.edu)).

## Important Due Dates:

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| Learning Activities (Short Papers)       | You choose 4 from the dates listed on the course website and LA assignment sheet |
| Reaction Files                           | Every Wednesday  |
| Midterm Exam                             | Monday, Oct 24, regular class time & room  |
| Activism Project Proposals               | Wednesday, Sept 28 (earlier is fine) by email                                    |
| Presentations based on Activism Projects | Last week of classes   |
| Final Exam                               | Monday, Dec 12, 1:00pm-3:00pm, same room   |
| Class Participation                      | Every class day  |

## Everything else:

See & Bookmark the course website:

<http://sites.google.com/site/sorgewayjmu/Home/wmst200>

## Reading Calendar:

This schedule is subject to change according to the needs of the class. You are responsible for all schedule changes announced in class and on this blog. Be prepared to discuss readings on the dates listed. Unless noted as “website” below, readings are from *Women’s Voices, Feminist Visions*.

| Week | Day & Date | Assignment to be completed before class:   |
|------|------------|--|
| 1    | M          | Course Introduction.   |
|      | W          | Chapter 1, pp. 1-24.   |
|      | F          | Chapter 1 readings:<br>Adrienne Rich, “Claiming an Education;”<br>Jennifer Baumgartner and Amy Richards, “A Day Without Feminism;”<br>bell hooks, “Feminist Politics: Where We Stand;”   |
| 2    | M          | Chapter 1 readings:<br>Deborah Rhode, “Denials of Inequality;”<br>Anna Quindlen, “Still Needing the F Word.”   |
|      | W          | Chapter 2, pp. 59-75. <b>Due:</b> Commentary.  |
|      | F          | Chapter 2 readings:<br>Patricia Hill Collins, “Toward a New Vision: Race, Class, and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection;”<br>Marilyn Frye, “Oppression;”<br>Lois Keith, “Tomorrow I’m Going to Rewrite the English Language;”<br>Suzanne Pharr, “Homophobia: A Weapon of Sexism;” |
| 3    | M          | Chapter 2 readings:<br>Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege;”<br>Gloria Yamato, “Something About the Subject Makes It Hard to Name;”<br>Donna Langston, “Tired of Playing Monopoly?”  |
|      | W          | Chapter 2 readings:<br>Baba Copper, “Voices: On Becoming Old Women;”<br>Susan Wendell, “The Social Construction of Disability;”<br>June Jordan, “Report from the Bahamas.”<br><b>Due:</b> Commentary.  |
|      | F          | Chapter 3, pp. 124-139.  |
| 4    | M          | Chapter 3 readings:<br>Anne Fausto-Sterling, “Two Sexes Are Not Enough;”<br>Judith Lorber, “The Social Construction of Gender;”<br>Pamela J. Bettis and Natalie Guice Adams, “Short Skirts and Breast Juts: Cheerleading, Eroticism and Schools”   |
|      | W          | Chapter 3 readings:<br>Natalie Wong, “When I Was Growing Up;”<br>Judy Wajcman, “Virtual Gender;”<br>Debra Rosenberg, “(Rethinking) Gender;”<br>R. W. Connell, “Masculinities and Globalization.”<br><b>Due:</b> Commentary.  |

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|   | F | <b>Film – in class</b>   |
| 5 | M | <p><b>Constructing “Beauty.”</b><br/> Chapter 5, pp. 223-243, 244-285:<br/> Amy Bloom, “Hermaphrodites with Attitude;”<br/> Joan Brumberg, “Breast Buds and the ‘Training’ Bra;”<br/> Gloria Steinem, “If Men Could Menstruate;”<br/> Lisa R. Rubin et al., “Body Ethics and Aesthetics Among African American and Latina Women;”<br/> Rose Weitz, “What We Do for Love;”<br/> Lisa Miya-Jervis, “Hold That Nose;”<br/> Courtney E. Martin, “Love Your Fat Self;”<br/> Maya Angelou, “Phenomenal Woman.”<br/> <b>Due:</b> Learning Activity: Thank a Feminist final paper.</p> |
|   | W | <p>Film: <i>Killing Us Softly 3</i>. Chapter 5 readings continued.<br/> <b>Due:</b> Commentary.</p>  |
|   | F | <p>Heteronormativity, Race, and Class.<br/> Chapter 4, pp. 170-185.<br/> <b>Due:</b> Learning Activity (p. 125): Tomboys and Sissies optional draft.</p>   |
| 6 | M | <p>Chapter 4, pp. 186-203, 204-208, 211-212:<br/> Pepper Schwartz and Virginia Rutter, “Sexual Desire and Gender;”<br/> bell hooks, “Romance: Sweet Love;”<br/> Jennifer Baumgartner, “What Is Bisexuality?”<br/> Cherrie Moraga, “La Guerra;”<br/> Paula Gunn Allen, “Some Like Indians Endure.”</p>  |
|   | W | Chapter 4 readings continued.  |
|   | F | <p>Chapter 4 readings continued.<br/> <b>Due:</b> Learning Activity: Examining Privilege final paper.</p>  |
| 7 | M | <p>Chapter 4 readings continued.<br/> <b>Due:</b> Commentary.<br/> <b>Due:</b> Group Activism Project proposal.</p>  |
|   | W | Mid-term Exam  |
|   | F | <p><b>Family Systems, Family Lives</b><br/> Film: <i>Florence &amp; Robin</i>.<br/> <b>Due:</b> Learning Activity: Tomboys and Sissies final paper.</p>  |
| 8 | M | <p>What Makes a “Family”?<br/> Chapter 7, pp. 378-395.<br/> <b>Due:</b> Commentary.<br/> <b>Due:</b> Learning Activity (handout): Read a Romance Novel optional draft.</p>   |
|   | W | <p>Chapter 7, pp. 396-404, 408-418:<br/> Emma Goldman, “Marriage and Love;”<br/> Miranda Kennedy, “Cheaper than a Cow;”<br/> Lisa Miya-Jervis, “Who Wants to Marry a Feminist?”<br/> Charlene Gomes, “Partners as Parents: Challenges Faced by Gays Denied Marriage;”</p>  |

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|    |   | Audre Lorde, "Man Child: A Black Lesbian Feminist's Response."   |
|    | F | <b>Women's Work Inside and Outside the Home</b><br>Gendering "Jobs" and the Risks of Transgression. Chapter 8, pp. 426-447.<br><b>Due:</b> Learning Activity: Read a Romance Novel final paper.  |
| 9  | M | Chapter 8, pp. 451-464, 483-493:<br>Sharlene Hesse-Biber and Gregg Lee Carter, "A Brief History of Working Women;"<br>Martha Burk, "Power Plays: Six Ways the Male Corporate Elite Keeps Women Out;"<br>Carrie N. Baker, "The Women's Movement Against Sexual Harassment."<br>PDF: Arlie Hochschild and Barbara Ehrenreich, Introduction from <u>Global Woman</u> .<br><b>Due:</b> Commentary.                               |
|    | W | Chapter 8 and PDF readings continued.<br><b>Due:</b> Learning Activity (handout): What Makes a Family optional draft.  |
|    | F | Chapter 8 and PDF readings continued.  |
| 10 | M | <b>Resisting Violence Against Women</b><br>Violent Relationships, Date Rape, and Violence Based on Race, Class, and/or Sexual Orientation.<br>Chapter 10, pp. 555-577.<br><b>Due:</b> Learning Activity: What Makes a Family final paper.<br><b>Due:</b> Commentary.   |
|    | W | Chapter 10, pp. 590-606:<br>Debra Anne Davis, "Betrayed by the Angel: What Happens When Violence Knocks and Politeness Answers?"<br>Joetta L. Carr, "Campus Sexual Violence;"<br>Grace Caroline Bridges, "Lisa's Ritual, Age 10;"<br>John Stoltenberg, "Pornography and Freedom;"<br>Helen Clarkson, "War Crimes."<br>PDF: Miriam Tlali, "Fud-u-u-a."  |
|    | F | Chapter 10 and PDF readings continued.<br><b>Due:</b> Learning Activity (p. 427): Housework and Technology optional draft.   |
| 11 | M | Chapter 10 and PDF readings continued.<br><b>Due:</b> Commentary.  |
|    | W | <b>State, Law, and Social Policy</b><br>Government Representation, Affirmative Action Mythology, the Legal System, and Reproductive Rights.<br>Chapter 11, pp. 611-649, 656-658:<br>Susan B. Anthony, "Constitutional Agreement;"<br>Catharine A. MacKinnon, "Law in the Everyday Life of Women;"<br>Ellen Bravo, "What This Nation Really Thinks of Motherhood: Welfare Reform;"<br>Bay Fang, "The Talibanization of Iraq." |
|    | F | Chapter 6, pp. 296-325, 360-376:<br>Jael Silliman, et al., "Women of Color and Their Struggle for Reproductive Justice;"<br>Eleanor Cooney, "The Way It Was."<br><b>Due:</b> Learning Activity: Housework and Technology final paper.  |
| 12 | M | Chapter 11 and Chapter 6 readings continued.   |

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|    |   | <b>Due:</b> Commentary.   |
|    | W | Chapter 11 and Chapter 6 readings continued.<br><b>Due:</b> Learning Activity (handout): Looking Good, Feeling Sexy, Getting a Man optional draft.  |
|    | F | <b>Women Confronting and Creating Culture</b><br>Identifying, Reading, and Resisting Cultural Scripts for “Woman.”<br>Chapter 9, pp. 498-514.   |
| 13 | M | Chapter 9, pp. 515-527, 534, 549-553:<br>Virginia Woolf, “Thinking About Shakespeare’s Sister;”<br>Audre Lorde, “Poetry Is Not a Luxury;”<br>Gloria Anzuldúa, “The Path of the Red and Black Ink;”<br>Ariel Levy, “Female Chauvinist Pigs;”<br>Aya de Leon, “If Women Ran Hip Hop;”<br>Jessica Valenti, “Pop Culture Gone Wild.”<br>Online: Terisa Turner, Foreword to Mau Mau Women (interview with Muthoni Likimani);<br>the abstract for “Feminism in the Mau Mau Resurgence;”<br>comic: “Nakedness and Power.”<br><b>Due:</b> Commentary. |
|    | W | Chapter 9 and online readings continued.<br><b>Due:</b> Learning Activity: Looking Good, Feeling Sexy, Getting a Man final paper.   |
|    | F | Chapter 9 and online readings continued.<br><b>Due:</b> Learning Activity (handout): The League of Women Voters optional draft.   |
| 14 | M | <b>Activism, Change, and Feminist Futures</b><br>Feminist Education, Avenues for Activism. Chapter 13, pp. 707-721.<br><b>Due:</b> Commentary.  |
|    | W | Chapter 13, pp. 722-725, 729-754:<br>Lisa Hogeland, “Fear of Feminism: Why Young Women Get the Willies;”<br>Michael Kimmel, “Real Men Join the Movement;”<br>Dazón Dixon Diallo, “Reflections of a Human Rights Educator;”<br>Alice H. Eagly and Lida L. Carli, “Women and Leadership;”<br>Ruth Rosen, Epilogue: “Beyond Backlash;”<br>Jenny Joseph, “Warning.”<br>PDF: Sojourner Truth, “Ain’t I a Woman?”   |
|    | F | Chapter 13 and PDF readings continued.  |
| 15 | M | Chapter 13 readings and PDF continued.<br><b>Due:</b> Learning Activity: The League of Women Voters final paper.  |
|    | W | Final Exam.   |
|    | F | 8:00-10:00 a.m. Group Activist Project Presentations. Course wrap-up, reflection.   |