

**WST 201: Foundations in Women's Studies**  
**Fall 2009**  
**M 6-9 pm**

**Instructor:** Janelle Bussert

**Office:** Women's Resource Center, 207A Sverdrup

**Office Hours:** Monday, 4-6 p.m.

**Office Hours by Appointment:** If you are unavailable during my office hours, I am happy to schedule another time to meet with you.

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**This course fulfills a Liberal Arts Foundation requirement in the Humanities.** Augsburg's Humanities departments are Communication Studies, English, History, Modern Languages, Philosophy, and Religion. These six disciplines engage human experience from different perspectives using different modes of discourse, but they share a common goal of rigorous inquiry into the ways written and spoken languages can record, discover, and creatively express the truths of human experience.

In this Humanities Liberal Arts Foundation class, you will explore some of the range and possibilities of that experience. Depending on the course you take, you may investigate our diversity of human nature and culture, our forms of communication and persuasion, our powers of reason, sympathy, and imagination, our needs as individuals and roles as citizens, and our relationship to the beautiful, the transcendent, and the divine. As the philosopher Martha Nussbaum has written, Humanities courses help students *use reason and imagination to enter broader worlds of cultures, groups, and ideas.*

**The objectives for this course are these:**

- to develop a critical lens through which to view gender and other categories of difference, socially-constructed institutions, and the notions of gender, race, etc. in your own disciplines and lives;
- to become familiar with the discipline of Women's Studies and to gain a basic understanding of feminisms and feminist analysis;
- to recognize how categories of difference and power are intertwined and interconnected;
- to realize how we experience these categories of difference through our bodies and through the impact of cultural gender ideals on our body image, sexuality, and physical, mental, and spiritual health;
- to further develop critical thinking and analytical skills

**Required Texts:**

Kirk, Gwyn, and Okazawa-Rey, Margo. *Women's Lives: Multicultural Perspectives*, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition.  
Nafisi, Azar, *Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books*

**Course Requirements:**

**1) Readings and class discussions are the backbone of this course.** You should read the assignments thoroughly and thoughtfully and come to class prepared to ask questions and offer comments. The readings will inform our discussions; we will stray into other areas, but have your books open during class so that we stay focused on the course material. Be prepared with specific examples from the text(s) to back up any assertions that you make, in class or on paper.

**Participation is therefore expected.** YOU share the responsibility for making the class interesting and worthwhile. You should make thoughtful contributions on a regular basis (at least once per class). Attendance (see below) is also part of your participation grade. Beyond this, I will also grade your participation by assessing the level to which you are engaged in, invested in, and serious about your work in this course.

**Attendance is mandatory.** Absences, included repeated lateness and/or early departures, will affect your grade. Missing more than five hours of class will result in your final grade being lowered by one full letter grade. Missing more than six hours of class may result in your withdrawal from or failure in the course. Perfect attendance will be reflected in your participation and attendance grade.

**2) You will have weekly papers due, for a total of 10 papers (8 graded, 2 ungraded).** These must be typed in standard format (12 point font, double-spaced, one-inch margins). Each week, you will need to turn in 3 pages of your thoughts regarding the THEORY section of the readings for that week. You must include at least two examples in your paper from two of the special readings at the end of each chapter, but I'm looking for a thesis statement regarding the opening section, which is generally more theory based. The first two papers you hand in will not be graded, though I will give you feedback; this is so that you will have a sense of what is expected and you will have had some practice meeting these expectations before you are graded. **See handout, "Guidelines for Short Papers." Summaries of the reading(s) are not appropriate for this assignment. I want to see evidence of critical thinking.**

**3) Oral Presentations.** You will have four oral presentations in this course: Two class facilitations (see below for description), and one full-length speech, and final presentation on "Lolita." I expect you to have practiced your speech and to be mindful of your posture, gestures, projection, and eye contact. See additional handout for full-length speech.

#### **Tips for Oral Presentations**

- 1) Talk to your audience. Don't read to us. Make an outline of what you want to say, using index cards or a large font on regular paper, and work from the outline rather than reading a complete paper.
- 2) Practice your talk. Do a full presentation alone in your room or to the cat, and then, when you feel comfortable, do a practice run for your family/friends/roommate.
- 3) We will do peer assessment of the oral presentations. These assessments will be positive and will focus on two questions:
  - a. What did the speaker do well?
  - b. What could the speaker do to improve?

**Class Facilitation:** You will each be responsible for two turns leading the class discussion. This is an opportunity for you to have direct input into the way that the class operates, and it's your chance to address the issues you care about and to have the kinds of conversations in class that you want to have. On your day, you can decide whether to prepare discussion questions for the class (for large or small groups), whether to design a role play activity, whether to do a think-pair-share exercise, whether to share a video, whether to have a debate...there are many possibilities. You will be responsible for 10 to 15 minutes of class time and you will be working with one reading which you will have selected (and signed up) ahead of time. You should offer at least two facts from the reading, and then at least two questions for the class (or activity). You will be graded on the discussion questions (or activity) you prepare for the class.

**4) A general note on late assignments:** In the absence of a really, really good excuse (feel free to try me – it never hurts to ask), I generally do not accept late work. **Late work without an extension, if accepted at all, will be given lowered grades. In other words, if you turn in a weekly paper after the class in which it is due, it is an unfair advantage, since after the discussion is much easier to write the paper. Thus, if it is not turned in before class begins, it will given half credit (half of the score of the grade it receives).**

**Grading Breakdown:**

- Participation and Attendance (and 2 ungraded papers): 50 points
- Eight Reflection Papers: 600 points (75 points each)
- Full-length Speech: 180 points
- Two Class Facilitations: 100 points (50 pts each)
- Final Group Presentation on “Lolita” 70 pts

4.0	3.5	3.0	2.5	2.0
950-1000	870-949	800-869	750-799	700-749
1.5	1.0	.5	0	
650-699	600-649	550-599	549 and below	

**Class Schedule: WEC Course**

- Week 1**  
**M 9/14**      **Introduction and Overview**  
**Film**
  
- Week 2**  
**M 9/21**      Ch. 1 in *Women’s Lives* (Ungraded paper due)  
**Women’s Rights, Women’s Liberation, Women’s Studies**
  
- Week 3**  
**M 9/28**      Ch. 2 in *Women’s Lives* (Ungraded paper due)  
**Theories and Theorizing: Integrative Frameworks for Understanding**

- Week 4**  
**M 10/5** Ch. 3 in *Women's Lives*\*  
**Identities and Social Locations: Who Am I? Who are My People?**
- Week 5**  
**M 10/12** Ch. 4 in *Women's Lives*\*  
**Women's Sexuality**
- Week 6**  
**M 10/19** **“Reading Lolita in Tehran”**  
**Read first half of book**
- Week 7**  
**M 10/26** Ch. 6 in *Women's Lives*\*  
**Violence Against Women\***
- Week 8**  
**M 11/2** Ch. 7 in *Women's Lives*\*  
**Making a Home, Making a Living**
- Week 9**  
**M 11/3** Ch. 8 in *Women's Lives*\*  
**Living in a Globalized World**
- Week 10**  
**M 11/9** Ch. 9 in *Women's Lives*\*  
**Women, Crime and Criminalization**  
**OR**  
**Women and the Military, War, and Peace**  
Ch. 10 in *Women's Lives*
- Week 11**  
**M 11/16** Ch. 5 in *Women's Lives*\*  
**Women's Bodies, Women's Health**
- Week 12**  
**M 11/23** Ch. 11 in *Women's Lives*\*  
**Women and the Environment**
- Week 13**  
**M 11/30** Ch. 13 in *Women's Lives*\*  
**Creating Change: Theory, Vision, and Action**
- Week 14**  
**M 12/07** **Extra Day if we get behind in discussion of readings**  
**Finish Reading “Lolita in Tehran”\* (Paper Mandatory on novel)**
- Final Exam: Final Presentations on “Lolita”**