GSWS 002: Gender & Society
LPS Program - Summer 2019
University of Pennsylvania
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9:00-12:50 PM
Location: TBA

Instructor: Davy Knittle (he/him or they/them)
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Office hours: by email appointment
Office: Fisher-Bennett Hall Room 235

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course offers an interdisciplinary introduction to Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies. Using an intersectional lens, this course focuses on the material and social constructions of sex and gender, the power structures and dynamics that shape gendered lives, and expressions and representations of lived experiences of gender in the past and present. The course draws both on readings situated in the U.S. context and asks students to reflect on transnational interconnections. The course is grounded in conversations in feminist theory and accounts of lived experience and also includes a substantial introduction to queer and trans analysis and critique as it addresses questions of gender and the social on overlapping scales from the individual to the global. No prior experience with the study of gender is required!

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- To better understand how gender shapes all people’s lived experiences
- To consider a social constructivist and intersectional approach to gender and (some of) its social, political, and economic implications
- To articulate feminism and queer and trans critique as lenses for self-reflection and discussion and as tools for analyzing academic and cultural texts
- To take part in academic conversations across disciplines and to locate key texts, scholars, culture workers, activists and policy makers who have contributed to some of the ideas most central to the study of gender and sexuality

**TEACHING METHODS**

The teaching methods in this course will include in-class discussions, writing exercises, group work, individual and collaborative analysis of critical, literary, and cultural texts, field observations and auto-ethnography, process writing, and other activities. A careful reading of the texts assigned for each session is necessary to an informed discussion in class. Some class activities will ask you to take a position on the reading, to disagree with it, or to debate multiple perspectives. Because this is a course about gender, sexuality, and urban life that is taught in a city in which many of the dynamics and histories we will discuss are readily present, you may also find it helpful to reflect on your field observation, your daily experience of Philadelphia, or on other experiences you have had in Philadelphia or in other cities.
COMMUNITY STATEMENT
A classroom is a space into which each of us enters to expand our perspectives, learn new things, and challenge our assumptions. Our classroom, in particular, may engage critically with material depicting violence, racism, sexism, misogyny, ableism, homophobia, transphobia, classism, and other topics that may elicit intense emotional responses, debate, and disagreement. Throughout the course we will have frank and challenging conversations about social justice, and about personal and institutional responsibility.

While safe spaces are important, it is impossible to guarantee them in a classroom in which we are respectfully challenging ourselves and one another. What I can guarantee, as your instructor, is that I will work to facilitate conversations that are respectful of every student and that are attentive to the sociohistorical conditions that produce uneven degrees of safety in the classroom and other spaces.

I ask each of us to validate each person’s insights, perspectives, and needs as we create a “brave space” in our classroom, and open ourselves to our work in class as a collaborative project for which we need the participation and support of one another in order to succeed.

STATEMENT ON NAMES AND PRONOUNS
In our classroom, it is important that we refer to everyone by the name and pronouns that they prefer. Pronouns can be a way to affirm someone’s gender identity, but they can also be unrelated to a person's identity. They are simply a public way in which people are referred to in place of their name (e.g. "he" or "she" or "they" or "ze" or many others). In this classroom, you are invited but not required to share the pronouns you use, and I ask us all to commit to being attentive to and using each other’s preferred pronouns. That being said, if you accidentally misgender someone or use an incorrect pronoun for them, please simply correct yourself to a pronoun that they prefer. If during the semester you would like me to change the pronoun I am using for you, please let me know.

STUDENT RESOURCES
Office of Student Disability Services: Provides services for students who self-identify as having a disability, including academic accommodations and accommodations for housing.

International Student and Scholar Services: Provides immigration expertise and services to the Penn community, runs programming and outreach partnerships within the university and with agencies like Social Security and Customs and Border Protection.

Counseling and Psychological Services: Provides confidential and free professional mental health services to Penn students, and helps students adjust to university life, manage personal challenges, situational crises and academic stress.

Penn Violence Prevention: Engages the Penn community in the prevention of sexual violence, relationship violence and stalking (a collaborative program of the Penn Women’s Center).

ADDITIONAL ACADEMIC SUPPORT
As this course requires several written assignments, please keep in mind the writing-related resources on campus. Please take advantage of these resources if you desire or need additional assistance with your writing.
The Marks Family Writing Center provides writing support to students across Penn’s schools and departments. Peer and faculty writing specialists offer individual writing guidance, as well as more general writing workshops. For further information, and to schedule an appointment, see: http://writing.upenn.edu/critical/writing_center/.

The Weingarten Learning Resources Center also offers writing support to all students, and includes Penn's Student Disability Services office.

ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT
If you have a medical, physical, psychological or learning disability for which you wish to request accommodation, you may do so here or visit the Weingarten Learning Resources Center at Stouffer Commons on 3702 Spruce Street in Suite 300. All services are confidential. Students with disabilities of any kind are encouraged to approach me as soon as possible, and we can work together to shape course assignments and activities to meet your needs.

Additionally, if there are circumstances that may affect your performance in class, or if those circumstances appear over the course of the semester, whether physical, emotional or organizational, please contact me as soon as you can and we will work together to make sure you are accommodated. For further information on disabilities services at Penn, see http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/ and https://www.vpul.upenn.edu/lrc/sds/

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
All students are responsible for following the policies (in particular those regarding academic integrity, plagiarism, and original work) contained in the Penn Student Handbook. For further info, see: http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/.

LATE WORK
If you encounter circumstances that impede your ability to submit an assignment on time, please contact me at least 24 hours in advance of the assignment deadline. Except in the event of a last-minute emergency, no written work will be accepted late.

ATTENDANCE
More than two absences – excused or unexcused – will be reflected in your final grade in the course. If you must miss class for any reason, please let me know ahead of time so that we can work together to make sure you have access to course material and assignments. After your first two absences, each subsequent absence will lower your final grade for the course by one third of a letter.

GRADING
20% Class participation
15% Keywords assignment
15% Auto-Ethnography
20% Reading questions (10% each)
30% Social gender narrative
FINAL GRADE EQUIVALENTS

94-100 = A
90-94 = A-
87-89 = B+
83-86 = B
80-82 = B-
77-79 = C+
73-76 = C
70-72 = C-
67-69 = D+
63-66 = D
60-62 = D-

READING AND ASSIGNMENT CALENDAR

Week 1 – Studying Gender and Society: Keywords

July 9th, 2019

Sex: Heath Fogg Davis, “Introduction: Sex Stickers” in Beyond Trans: Does Gender Matter?


Gender: Judith Lorber, “The Social Construction of Gender”

Feminism: Combahee River Collective Statement

July 11th, 2019 – Reading Question I Due at 9:00 AM


Intersectionality: Patricia Hill Collins, “Toward a New Vision: Race, Class and Gender as Categories of Analysis and Connection”

Borders: Anjali Arondekar, “Border/Line Sex”: Queer Postcolonialities or How Race Matters Outside the U.S.”

Desire: Judith Butler, Gender Trouble (excerpts)

Week 2 – Doing Gender and Home and at Work

July 16th, 2019 – Keywords Assignment Due at 9:00 AM

Kellie Carter Jackson, “‘She Was a Member of the Family’: Ethel Phillips, Domestic Labor, and Employer Perceptions”

Linda A. Lumayag, “Contesting Disciplinary Power: Transnational Domestic Labour in the Global South”


July 18th, 2019

Natalie Oswin, “The Queer Time of Creative Urbanism: Family, Futurity, and Global City Singapore”
Aren Aizura, “Transnational Transgender Rights and Immigration Law”
LaToya Ruby Frazier, “The Notion of Family” (Photographs)

Week 3 – Access, Desire, and Gendered Bodies

July 23rd, 2019
Robert McRuer, “Compulsory Able-Bodiedness and Queer/Disabled Existence”
Susan Wendall, “The Social Construction of Disability”
Cathy Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?”

July 25th, 2019 – Autoethnography Due at 9:00 AM
Eli Clare, “The Mountain” from Exile and Pride
Alison Kafer, “Introduction” from Feminist, Queer, Crip

Week 4 – Trans Theories of Gender and Society

July 30th, 2019
Julia Serano, “Trans Woman Manifesto” or “Trans Feminism There’s No Conundrum about It”
Susan Stryker, “Transgender Feminism: Queering the Woman Question”
A. Finn Enke, “Note on Terms and Concepts”

August 1st, 2019 – Reading Question II Due at 9:00 AM
C. Riley Snorton, “Preface” from Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity
Anniruddha Dutta and Raina Roy, “Decolonizing Transgender in India: Some Reflections”

Week 6 – Gender and Society at the End of the World

August 6th, 2019
Laura Pulido, “Rethinking Environmental Racism: White Privilege and Urban Development in Southern California.”
Grace Hong, "Existentially Surplus: Women of Color Feminism and the New Crises of Capitalism."

August 8th, 2019 – Social Gender Narrative Due at 9:00 AM

Greta Gaard, “Ecofeminism Revisited: Rejecting Essentialism and Re-Placing Species in a Material Feminist Environmentalism”
Alison Kafer, “Bodies of Nature: The Environmental Politics of Disability”