

Carleton University
Winter 2019
Pauline Jewett Institute of Women's and Gender Studies

WGST 3810: Activism, Feminism and Social Justice

Thursdays 2:35-4:25pm

Location: *Please confirm location on Carleton Central*

Instructor: Dr. Manjeet Birk

Email: manjeet.birk@cunet.carleton.ca

Office: Dunton Tower, Room 1410

Office Hours: Tuesdays 10-11am or by appointment

TA:

Email:

TA:

Email:

- *This outline is preliminary and subject to change*

Carleton University acknowledges the location of its campus on the traditional, unceded territories of the Algonquin nation.

This course critically examines the various ways feminists have pursued and continue to effect social, political, economic, and cultural change. This course has a heavy 'practice' component whereby students will engage in different aspects of feminist/social justice activism. We will consider activism and its' intersections with a variety of different mediums including art, environment, land and settler colonialism.

Learning Objectives

Within this course, at a minimum students will be able to:

1. Challenge dominant assumptions about social inequality in gender relations and feminism
2. Enhance critical thinking skills and apply theoretical foundations to current day events and situations.
3. Reflect on ones own social location, especially in relation to unceded Indigenous territories.

4. Develop an understanding of how power relations operate in Canadian society.
5. Articulate well reasoned understanding of a wide range of social justice movements in Canada.

Course Evaluation:

Attendance and Participation	20%
Critical Reflections (5% each)	10%
Activist Event of your choosing	
CUAG Exhibit	
Positionality Podcast Reflection	20%
Next Generation of Activist Paper	25%
Final take home exam	25%

Policies for Written Assignments

- **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS SHOULD BE HANDED INTO YOUR TA IN TUTORIAL.**
- All assignments should be in 12 point of a plain style font (ie. Times New Roman, Helvetica) and use a recognizable citation style.
- Please include page numbers and your name/student number on each page.
- All assignments should be submitted by 6pm on their due date. After 6pm an assignment will be considered late.
- Unless prior arrangements have been made, **late assignments will be subject to a late 3% per day penalty.** For example, if your paper is submitted two days after the due date there will be an automatic penalty of 6%. Students are encouraged to access the support of Academic Accommodations should they anticipate not meeting a deadline.

Attendance and Participation- 20% (Ongoing)

Regular attendance is a mandatory part of this course. Students will be expected to attend class and tutorials prepared and ready for engaged and critical reflection. Tutorial attendance will be taken. Lecture attendance may be taken periodically. Participation in class will include active listening, engagement and a respectful dialogue that is supportive to meet all students where they are in their learning. All students, especially those who do not feel comfortable speaking up in class are advised to participate online by posting relevant issues, commenting on others posts/projects and engaging/encouraging respectful dialogue.

On lecture attendance: Despite our size, I consider the lecture as an important opportunity to learn from each other. I work to use this space as a key to engage with individual students as well as the entire group as a thoughtful community. Your absence from class will affect your ability to interpret the theoretical texts we will explore throughout the term. You will also miss out on key examples that will help in understanding how histories of race and racialization continue to structure contemporary life.

Critical Reflections- 10%

CUAG Exhibit Reflection - 5% (Due March 19th)

After the in class tour of the Carleton University Art Gallery on March 12th, student will be asked to write and submit a two page reflection on their experience at the exhibit. This is not a summary of what you saw but rather a thoughtful critique that encourages you to think about the subject matter in relation to the readings we have done this semester.

Activist Event Reflection- 5% (Due April 2nd)

Students are asked to choose an activist event in the city, attend the event of your choosing and write a two page reflection on their experience at this event. In your reflection, you should state what the event was, where it took place, how many people were in attendance, how you found out about the event and what motivated you attend. This is not a summary of the event but rather a thoughtful critique of your experience in conjunction with the readings we have done this semester. Class will be cancelled on April 2nd in lieu of students attending this event.

Positionality podcast assignment- 20% (Due January 30th)

This assignment asks that students to introduce themselves thoughtfully. Using a feminist analysis students are asked to consider who they are, where they come from and what it means to be doing feminisms from your perspective. What assumptions do you bring to the class? What mistakes have you made? How are you hoping to contribute to a culture of interrogation, honesty and integrity in the classroom? This is about getting as personal (as you feel comfortable) because the personal is political. **This assignment requires you to acknowledge the Indigenous territories you were raised on/ have lived on.** This assignment is to be submitted in an oral format (ie. like a podcast.) This is done so we can pay attention to the thoughtful ways in which we engage with oral histories and understandings of self. This oral history can take several forms, ie. an interview, a poem, a song or a combination of a variety of different forms.

The next generation of activism written assignment- 25% (Due March 12th)

This assignment asks students to choose a children's book to analyze how issues of activism and social justice are being conveyed to children. You are asked to choose a children's book, critically analyze its content and critique its use, popularity and the ways in which it has been received by audiences. We will be discussing this assignment in further detail in class as well as tips on how to research will be provided from our library guest speaker. If you are interested in researching children's books before hand here are some sources of great places to start:

<https://diversebooks.org/>

<https://littlefeminist.com/>

<https://www.spl.org/books-and-media/books-and-ebooks/kids-books>

Also consider browsing at local book retailers such as Octopus Books or Indigo.

Final Take Home Exam- 25% (Due April 17th)

The final exam will cover all assigned readings, films and in class discussions. More details will be provided in class. The final exam will be a take home exam administered through CU Learn.

Carleton Grading Policy

90-100	A+	73-76	B	60-63	C-
85-89	A	70-72	B-	57-59	D+
80-84	A-	67-69	C+	53-56	D
77-79	B+	63-66	C	50-52	D-

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#)

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/> for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;

- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence, which cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

Read more about academic integrity here: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

Helpful Resources

The Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS) offers peer-led learning assistance designed to help students achieve their goals and improve their learning both inside and outside the classroom. CSAS services include:

- Writing services: drop-in appointments for students to receive feedback about their written work at any point in the writing process. Students need to bring their written assignment in hardcopy and the assignment instructions.
- Peer assisted study sessions (PASS): weekly workshops, drop-in office hours and mock midterms/exams to help students learn course content and transferable study skills. (tutors do not edit papers; only one appointment per student per day).
- Subject coaching (PASC): drop-in subject coaching for 1000 and 2000-level courses in select subjects to help clarify introductory course content and provide study strategies
- Study skills development: Individual appointments and workshop topics include: Academic Reading, Balancing Work & School, Critical Thinking, Effective Presentations, Time Management, Memory & Concentration, Working in Groups, and more. No registration required, drop-in in person or accessible 24/7 through cuLearn, links and info here <https://carleton.ca/csas/online-support/online-workshop-series/>
- English conversation sessions: a safe place for students to practice conversational English while gaining a better understanding of the skills needed to be a successful student.

Health and Counselling Support Services

The topics in this class by nature can be sensitive and challenging. Carleton offers a variety of support services. Please go to <https://carleton.ca/health/> for more information.

Emails

I am normally very regular about checking and returning my emails. As a general rule I respond to emails Monday to Friday 9am-6pm. If I have not replied within 48 hours, please email me again.

Lectures/Tutorials

Attendance is mandatory. I understand that sometimes life gets in the way. It is student responsibility to make up missed classes. I do not post my lectures anywhere. Please do not email the instructor asking: "I couldn't make it to class. Did I miss something?" The answer is YES. If you are unable to attend a class please contact a classmate to go over what you missed and access notes and videos from class. It is best to make these arrangements as soon as possible.

Respectful Course Environments

The course material will be controversial and at times difficult. Students are expected to remain responsible, support one another and maintain a professionalism during these difficult themes. The instructor and all students are expected to be treated with kindness and respect at all times.

CONTENT WARNING- Gender studies in general and this course more specifically can and will be challenging and often deals with potentially difficult material. The instructor is always available to discuss personal challenges students may have with course material. Some weeks will be more difficult than others and the instructor will do their best to manage difficulties that arise over the course of the term. Students are encouraged to seek out support services in advance if they expect this material will require special attention.

Required Course Materials:

There is one required book for the course:

Shange, N. (1977). *For colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf: A choreopoem*. New York: MacMillan.

It can be purchased from Octopus Books 116 Third Avenue. It is also available as a Kindle Edition or Audiobook.

All readings are available online through the ARES library system.

Course Outline

January 09- Feminist beginnings (NO TUTORIALS)

Grady, C. (2018, March 20). *The waves of feminism, and why people keep fighting over them, explained*. Retrieved from <https://www.vox.com/2018/3/20/16955588/feminism-waves-explained-first-second-third-fourth>

Jan 16- Not off our backs-Women of colour & feminist movements

Combahee River Collective. (1986). *The Combahee River Collective Statement: Black Feminist Organizing in the Seventies and Eighties* (1st ed.). New York, NY: Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press.

Selection from pages xiii-xxvi

Anzaldúa, G., & Moraga, C. (1983). *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (2d ed.). New York: Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press.

Jan 23- Class Off in Lieu of Play Attendance (NO TUTORIALS)

Jan 22- Feb 9, 2020— Kiinalik: These Sharp Tools

Student tickets- 50% off

Last minute rush tickets- \$15

Indigenous community tickets- \$15

(Part of the Indigenous Art Series at the NAC but this performance is at the GCTC at 1233 Wellington St. In Hintonburg/ Wellington West)

Jan 30- Non Profit Industrial Complex

Smith, Andrea. (2006). *Heteropatriarchy and the Three Pillars of White Supremacy: Rethinking Women of Color Organizing*. *Color of Violence: The INCITE! Anthology*. Eds. INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence. (66–73)

Smith, Andrea. (2007). Introduction. *Incite! Women of Color Against Violence*. (Eds). *The Revolution Will Not Be Funded: Beyond the Non-Profit Industrial Complex*. Cambridge, Mass: South End Press.

Feb 06- Play Review & Library Research/ Assignment Preparation

How do sources inform our research and why is that important?

Guest Lecture- Martha

Feb 13- Indigenous Activism

Walia, Harsha. "Decolonizing Together: Moving Beyond a Politics of Solidarity toward a Practice of Decolonization." *Organize!: Building from the Local for Global Justice* (2012): 240. Retrieved from <https://briarpatchmagazine.com/articles/view/decolonizing-together>

MMIGW Report Introduction p.49–89

https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Final_Report_Vol_1a-1.pdf

In class Film- Angry Inuk

Feb 20- No Class/ Tutorials Reading Week

Feb 27- The Next Generation of Activist- Children's Books

Suess, Dr. (1971) *The Lorax*. New York, NY: Random House Publishing.

In Class Film: The Lorax

March 05- Art and Activism

Shange, N. (1977). *For colored girls who have considered suicide / when the rainbow is enuf*: A choreopoem. New York: MacMillan.

March 12- Carleton University Art Gallery (NO TUTORIALS)

Art Gallery Tour

They Forgot That We Were Seeds &

Shannon Finnegan: Lone Proponent of Wall to Wall Carpet

March 19- Queer and Trans Mobilizing

Selected pages from p.15-57

Piepzna-Samarasinha, L. L. (2015). *Dirty river: A queer femme of color dreaming her way home*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press.

In Class Film- Pride Denied: Homonationalism & the Future of Queer Politics (2016)

March 26- International Work and White Saviours

Bandyopadhyay, R., & Patil, V. (2017). 'the white woman's burden' - the racialized, gendered politics of volunteer tourism. *Tourism Geographies*, 19(4), 644-657. doi: 10.1080/14616688.2017.1298150

Biddle, P. (2014). The problem with little white girls (and boys): Why I stopped being a volunteer. Retrieved from <https://pippabiddle.com/2014/02/18/the-problem-with-little-white-girls-and-boys/>

April 02- Class off in lieu of Activist Event (NO TUTORIALS)