

Introduction to Women's Studies

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Introduction to Women's Studies: A Personal Journey Through Film

This course, although looking specifically at the experiences of women, is not for girls only. If you are student interested in exploring the world through film and open minded enough to be interested in social change, this course is for you.

COURSE METHODOLOGY

- This is an inquiry-based course. Students will generate knowledge through online readings, synchronous chats, asynchronous discussions with students and their instructor, interactions with online tutorials, and online and hands-on simulations.
- A semester project developed by each student will be used to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the material in the course.
- The instructor will act as a guide, a facilitator, an events planner, and a resource advisor. He/she will always be available through e-mail.
- The student must actively construct and acquire knowledge by being intrinsically motivated to succeed. To succeed, students must participate and complete all readings and activities. This course requires the student's active participation.
- Both formal and informal assessment methods will be used in the course. Informal assessment will include an evaluation of the quality and timeliness of participation in class activities. Formal assessment may include multiple-choice quizzes, tests, discussion board participation, and written assignments. A final exam will be given at the end of the course.

COURSE PARTICIPATION OBJECTIVES

This course for which you are registered is a college preparatory, academically rigorous course that covers an entire semester's worth of material. As such, it is important that you adhere to the following guidelines as you manage your time and commit to successfully completing all required coursework:

1. The requirements for this course are equivalent to completion of minimum of 90+ hours of class instruction at a traditional on-site high school
2. Assignments must be submitted for each unit as they are completed so that the teacher may review and assess your performance. Do not hold your work, you must submit each unit's homework as it is completed, demonstrating weekly assignment completions

3. You must log in regularly to your course to demonstrate continued participation, and completion of all course requirements, including assignments, assessments and discussion forums
4. You must complete your individual work and any incident of suspected cheating, plagiarism or collaboration on assignments violates the academic integrity expectations outlined at the time of your enrollment and can result in failure of the course or further action as deemed appropriate

Citizenship

Students are expected to conduct themselves in a responsible manner that reflects sound ethics, honor, and good citizenship. It is the student's responsibility to maintain academic honesty and integrity and to manifest their commitment to the goals of NUVHS through their conduct and behavior. Students are expected to abide by all NUVHS policies and regulations. Any form of academic dishonesty, or inappropriate conduct by students or applicants may result in penalties ranging from warning to dismissal, as deemed appropriate by NUVHS.

Communication

Throughout this course students will need to be in close contact with their instructor and fellow students. Students are expected to communicate via email and electronic discussion boards. Therefore, students should plan on checking email at least three times a week and participate in the discussion boards during the weeks they are live.

Instructors strongly encourage and welcome open communication. Clear, consistent, and proactive communication will ensure a successful experience in this course. It is the student's responsibility to notify the instructor immediately if and when a personal situation occurs that affects his/her performance in this class. Being proactive with communication will result in a quick solution to any problems that may occur.

COURSE OUTLINE

Unit 1: Using Films as a Vehicle for Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is a way to approach understanding the world around you, whether in everyday life or for academic purposes. To think critically, it is important to analyze, interpret, evaluate, and explain information in a thoughtful and intelligent manner. A critical thinker has a sense of curiosity and a willingness to examine her perceptions, assumptions, and beliefs. It's important in critical thinking to raise questions and come to considered and thoughtful answers. This course is structured around both written content and film for the purpose of exploring content and fostering critical thinking skills. To approach the films intelligently and with academic purpose, it will be important to use literary terms and apply them meaningfully throughout the various units. In this initial unit, we explore the necessary literary terms.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the process of developing critical thinking skills.
- Understand the personal and academic purposes of thinking critically.
- Apply literary terminology in the analysis of film.
- Connect your personal experiences to the content of this unit in order to further develop understanding.
- View the film *Mona Lisa Smile* while critically applying content of the unit.

Activities

Unit 1 Active Movie Viewing Assignment	Homework	25 points
Unit 1 Text Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 1 Discussion Part 1	Discussion	5 points
Unit 1 Discussion Part 2	Discussion	5 points
Unit 1 Quiz	Quiz	15 points

Unit 2: Defining and Exploring the Concept of Feminism

Today’s women have a radically different sense of opportunity and possibility than women had before the feminist movement. A women’s studies course could not exist without the intellectual and emotional convictions of feminism, which is the belief in equality between the sexes. It’s important to explore the history of feminism and to consider different forms of global feminist thinking and action. In consideration of that history, you will have the opportunity to reflect personally on fundamental beliefs and values behind the theory of political, economic, and social equality of the sexes as well as the organized activity behind women’s rights and interests. Through the use of film, the applications of feminist thinking will be explored, connecting the situations in the text to personal understanding and experiences. This unit will ultimately serve as the theoretical foundation for the remaining units in the course.

Learning Objectives

- Define the concept of feminism.
- Discuss several significant feminist moments and activists.
- Detail the organized activity on behalf of women’s rights and interests.
- Connect your personal understanding and experiences with the knowledge gained in this unit.

Activities

Unit 2 Active Movie Viewing Assignment	Homework	20 points
Unit 2 Text Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 2 Discussion Part 1	Discussion	5 points
Unit 2 Discussion Part 2	Discussion	5 points
Unit 2 Quiz	Quiz	15 points

Unit 3: What is Women’s Studies?

The need for women’s studies courses in academic settings is a result of the feminist belief in raising social consciousness. As second wave feminists responded to the oppression of women in society and became increasingly organized and socially active by taking part in protests and informative gatherings, the public became more receptive to the need for feminism. It’s important to consider both the general curriculum and the interdisciplinary approach to women’s studies and to see how it’s evolving (in some cases) in relation to gender studies. Crucial to the work of feminists and the curriculum of women’s studies courses are empathy and personal reflection. Empathy will be considered through the exploration of the film Fried Green Tomatoes and when considering the implications of empathy on raising social consciousness and engaging social activism.

Learning Objectives

- Explain the catalyst for women’s studies courses being offered.
- Understand the curriculum and approach in a women’s studies course.
- Understand the importance and apply empathy to life and to examining film.
- Connect your personal experiences to further develop the understanding of the content of this unit.
- View the film Fried Green Tomatoes while critically applying the content of this and previous units.

Activities

Unit 3 Active Movie Viewing Assignment	Homework	25 points
Unit 3 Text Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 3 Discussion Part 1	Discussion	5 points
Unit 3 Discussion Part 2	Discussion	5 points
Unit 3 Quiz	Quiz	15 points

Unit 4: Interlocked Forms of Oppression

Feminism is the response to discrimination against women, but the attitude and practice of oppression is not limited to gender discrimination. To understand the relevance of other forms of discrimination and social action in regard to the women’s movement, it’s important to consider the Civil Rights movement. Beyond racism and sexism are numerous types of discrimination that stem from narrow-mindedness, social and cultural stereotypes, and an imbalance of power that results in prejudice because of a person’s age, social class, abilities, religious beliefs, and sexual orientation. As society grows frustrated by the abuse of power and becomes aware of the importance of treating all of humanity with empathy, equality, and mutual respect, the world grows increasingly inclusive, celebrating differences rather than segregating or oppressing because them.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the significance of the Civil Rights movement regarding feminism.
- Recognize the connectedness among forms of discrimination.
- Explain various forms of diversity and the exclusion and prejudice that can result socially.
- Consider your own personal perspective in response to the content of the unit and apply it to promote greater awareness and understanding.
- View the film *Far From Heaven* while critically applying the content of the unit to your analysis of the film’s significance.

Activities

Unit 4 Active Movie Viewing Assignment	Homework	25 points
Unit 4 Text Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 4 Discussion Part 1	Discussion	5 points
Unit 4 Discussion Part 2	Discussion	5 points
Unit 4 Quiz	Quiz	15 points

Midterm Exam Objectives

- Review information acquired and mastered from this course up to this point.
- Take a course exam based on material from the first four units in this course (Note: You will be able to open this exam only one time.)

Midterm Exam Activities

Midterm Discussion	Discussion	5 points
Midterm Exam	Exam	50 points

Unit 5: The Nature or Nurture Debate

The debate as to whether the characteristics of each gender are predetermined or cultivated through life experiences is an important issue to consider in women’s studies. It’s worthwhile to address where notions of what it is to be a girl come from and how those ideas impact the experiences to which girls are introduced and exposed. Children’s literature has an undeniable influence on its audience’s social awareness and understanding of moral issues as well as gender roles in society. Young girls are susceptible to the ideas conveyed through the literature to which they are exposed, so it’s relevant here to consider some of the messages about the expectations of women in society suggested through Disney’s animated films, a well-known and popular creator of content for children worldwide.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the issues in the nature versus nurture debate of gender-role development.
- Consider the influence of gender socialization on a person’s life experiences and choices.
- Critically view film evaluating feminist theory regarding the animated world of female characters in Disney.
- Reflectively connect your personal experiences and understanding to the content of this unit.
- Apply the content of this unit while viewing the films Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs and Beauty and the Beast.

Activities

Unit 5 Active Movie Viewing Assignment	Homework	25 points
Unit 5 Text Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 5 Discussion Part 1	Discussion	5 points
Unit 5 Discussion Part 2	Discussion	5 points
Unit 5 Quiz	Quiz	15 points

Unit 6: Growing Up Girl

The power of socialization is not to be underestimated. It gives strength, affirmation, and control over the stereotypes that often shape our roles and identity in society. Within society, there is an undeniable social hierarchy that promotes a certain status to some and discriminates against others. This system of valuing and empowering certain groups while alienating (isolating) and disempowering others is grounded in stereotypes and labeling that are ultimately restrictive and that limit the experiences and opportunities of individuals. Within this hierarchy, beauty has an indisputable importance. Unattainable standards of beauty are set by society, projected by the media, and internalized by individuals, which inevitably have a negative impact in some very serious and detrimental ways. As is social consciousness, media literacy is an essential component in feminism because it encourages society to look closely at the idealized concepts of what it is to be a girl and how those definitions are damaging and destructive in their impact on gender roles and identity for young girls and women.

Learning Objectives

- Understand and discuss social stratification and the process of social hierarchies.
- Consider the impact of socialization on stereotypes that define and limit individuals.
- Reflect on the standards set for girls and women regarding beauty.
- Connect your personal understanding and experiences, develop media literacy, and apply that knowledge to the content of the course.
- View the film Mean Girls while critically applying the content of the unit to the text.

Activities

Unit 6 Active Movie Viewing Assignment	Homework	25 points
Unit 6 Text Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 6 Discussion Part 1	Discussion	5 points
Unit 6 Discussion Part 2	Discussion	5 points
Unit 6 Quiz	Quiz	15 points

Unit 7: Challenging Stereotypes with Role Models and Mentors

Although stereotypes clearly limit and hinder us socially and individually, there is also a sense of security and comfort that comes from identifying with commonly shared ideas. Eve Ensler looks at the ideas of security in another talk she delivered at TED Talks. This speech will serve as an active viewing exercise for considering the content of the unit and the course thus far and for personal reflection. Eve Ensler is a fitting speaker for this unit, in particular, because of the nature of her feminist social activism, which has placed her in the positions of both role model and mentor. These are two critical components for changing social and cultural stereotypes. Progress in any form requires risk takers—people willing to challenge the expectations and roles with which society has restricted them.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the subconscious and conscious nature of stereotypes.
- Consider the impact of our need for security on the individual and on society.
- Examine the function of role models and mentors in society.
- Connect your personal experiences with the content of the unit to discover relevance and meaningful understanding.
- View the film *The Help* while critically applying the content of the unit.

Activities

Unit 7 Active Movie Viewing Assignment #1	Homework	20 points
Unit 7 Active Movie Viewing Assignment #2	Homework	25 points
Unit 7 Text Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 7 Discussion Part 1	Discussion	5 points
Unit 7 Discussion Part 2	Discussion	5 points
Unit 7 Quiz	Quiz	15 points

Unit 8: Those Who Inspire and Empower Social Change

This course has attempted to inform you of the various forms of adversity apparent in the lives of women and other members of society throughout history and in contemporary culture. The obstacles of stereotypes, labels, prejudice, oppression, and socialization restrict and limit the opportunities of individuals as well as the possibilities for humanity. In this unit, the focus is on those who have faced their own adversities and gone on to be inspirations to others. Reflecting on the contribution of these historical icons is not meant to overwhelm, but rather to inspire. The qualities necessary to make a difference in the world are within each one of us. Individually, it's extremely unlikely that a person would reach the level of fame or even recognition of the individuals included here; however, the desire to influence the world around us, to better humanity and our society in some manner, relies on determination, perseverance, and passionate ideals.

Learning Objectives

- Understand the Apple Think Different ad campaign.
- Understand the qualities of inspirational thinkers.
- Apply the understanding of the qualities of inspirational thinkers to your own personal reflection.
- Connect previous units of study with the ideas and examples raised to explore the final themes of the course.
- View the film A League of Their Own critically while applying the content of the unit.

Activities

Unit 8 Active Movie Viewing Assignment	Homework	25 points
Unit 8 Text Questions	Homework	10 points
Unit 8 Discussion Part 1	Discussion	5 points
Unit 8 Discussion Part 2	Discussion	5 points
Unit 8 Quiz	Quiz	15 points

Final Exam Objectives

- Review information acquired and mastered from this course up to this point.
- Take a course exam based on material from units five to eight in this course – the last four units. (Note: You will be able to open this exam only one time.)

Final Exam Activities

Class Reflection Discussion	Discussion	10 points
Final Exam	Exam	50 points

HOW YOU WILL BE GRADED

For critical thinking questions, there are no right or wrong answers. For example, a question on your thoughts on why you think people are shy is a pretty open-ended type of question. Grades will be based on the depth of personal insight you present. **Do not simply agree or disagree** with an insight question. We are looking for critical thinking and possibly a related personal experience with the question.

It is important to provide detailed answers for insight/opinion questions.

For review questions, you should produce a more academic answer. For example, "What two categories are norms divided into?" This type of direct question requires a specific answer. Please use full sentences and proper grammar.

When submitting paragraphs, use these guidelines.

1. The first, second or last sentence contains the main idea and key words from the question or assigned topic.
2. Paragraph contains one to three explanatory sentences.
3. Paragraph contains two to four sentences about specific details related to question.
4. Details are colorful, interesting and appropriate.
5. Paragraph ends with a good closing sentence that refers to the main idea without repeating it.
6. Free of spelling and grammatical errors.

GRADE SCALE

The following grading scale will be used to determine your final letter grade.

Letter Grade	Percentage Earned
A	95%+
A-	90% - 94.9%
B+	87% - 89.9%
B	84% - 86.9%
B-	80% - 83.9%
C+	77% - 79.9%
C	74% - 76.9%
C-	70% - 73.9%
D+	67% - 69.9%
D	64% - 66.9%
D -	60% - 63.9%
F	59% and lower

SUPPORT

At NUVHS you will have access to multiple support teams. Who you contact will depend on the questions you have. Always start by contacting your teacher through the Message Center in the course. Your teacher should be able to answer your question, but if they can't, then they will direct you to another support team. If you have questions about any of the course content, your grades, or course policies, you should contact your instructor.

For questions about your enrollment, transcripts, or general school-wide policies, you can contact **NUVHS Student Services** at info@nuvhs.org or by phone at 866.366.8847. For example, if you would like to withdraw from your course, you should contact Student Services. Please note that a refund for your course can only be obtained if you drop within the first seven days of enrolling in the course.

For help with login/password issues, or other technical issues specific to the Blackboard website, you can contact the team at [National University Blackboard Learn](#). They can also be reached by phone at (888) 892-9095.

EXPECTED SCHOOL-WIDE LEARNING RESULTS (ESLRs)

Engaged Learners

- Demonstrate self-directed learning skills such as time management, and personal responsibility through the completion of course requirements
- Develop an understanding of their own preferred learning styles to enhance their overall academic potential
- Incorporate effective and relevant internet and multimedia resources in their learning process to broaden their knowledge base

Critical Thinkers

- Effectively analyze and articulate sound opinions on a variety of complex concepts
- Illustrate a variety of problem-solving strategies that strengthen college preparation and workforce readiness
- Formulate a framework for applying a variety of technology and internet-based research to enhance information literacy and collaborative thinking

Effective Communicators

- Demonstrate awareness and sensitivity to tone and voice in multiple forms of communication
- Express concepts and ideas in a variety of forms
- Enhance communication skills through the use of media rich or other technology resources

Global Citizens

- Appreciate the value of diversity
- Understand the range of local and international issues facing today's global community
- Demonstrate awareness of the importance of cultural sensitivity and social responsibility in the 21st century