FGSS Courses- Spring 2018

FGSS 2010  Introduction to Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
TR  1:25-2:40           J. Chang

Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies is an interdisciplinary program focused on understanding the impact of gender and sexuality on the world around us and on the power hierarchies that structure it. This course provides an overview of key concepts, questions, and debates within feminist studies both locally and globally, focusing mainly on the experiences, historical conditions, and concerns of women as they are shaped by gender and sexuality. We will read a variety of texts--personal narratives, historical documents, and cultural criticism--across a range of disciplines, and will consider how larger structural systems of both privilege and oppression affect individuals’ identities, experiences, and options. We will also examine forms of agency and action taken by women in the face of these larger systems.

FGSS 2290  Introduction to LGBT Studies
MWF 1:25-2:15           N. Diabate

Since roughly the middle of the nineteenth century, it has become important for some of us, in some parts of the world, to identify ourselves according to categories such as gender and sexuality, categories further subdivided along some of the lines suggested by the acronym LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender). This course seeks to give students the opportunity to wrestle with what’s at stake in this process of identification, as well as the alternatives to identity (and gender and sexuality) that have arisen in earlier and other cultures. From ancient pedagogical eros, through medieval conceptions of nature and its abuses, to early modern mappings of sexual strangeness onto non-European bodies, we'll examine the prehistory of our modern identities, even as we engage with the limits of those identities here and now.

FGSS 2351  Intro to Africa & Its Diaspora
TR  11:40-12:55          Gaines, Kevin

This course introduces students to the study of Africa and its Diasporas, including the Americas and West Indies, as well as Europe. The course takes a multimedia, interdisciplinary approach to a range of historical, literary, artistic, religious, economic, and political questions crucial to the understanding of the experiences of people of African descent. Using maps, films, the visual arts, music, important historical and contemporary texts, and short stories, the course will focus on four major themes: 1) migration and the middle passage; 2) slavery and resistance; 3) segregation, colonialism and freedom movements; and 4) the arts and global Black consciousness.
FGSS 2468  Medicine, Culture, and Society  
TR  11:40-12:55       S. Langwick

Medicine has become the language and practice through which we address a broad range of both individual and societal complaints. Interest in this "medicalization of life" may be one of the reasons that medical anthropology is currently the fastest-growing subfield in anthropology. This course encourages students to examine concepts of disease, suffering, health, and well-being in their immediate experience and beyond. In the process, students will gain a working knowledge of ecological, critical, phenomenological, and applied approaches used by medical anthropologists. We will investigate what is involved in becoming a doctor, the sociality of medicines, controversies over new medical technologies, and the politics of medical knowledge. The universality of biomedicine (or hospital medicine) will not be taken for granted, but rather we will examine the plurality generated by the various political, economic, social, and ethical demands under which biomedicine has developed in different places and at different times. In addition, biomedical healing and expertise will be viewed in relation to other kinds of healing and expertise. Our readings will address medicine in North America as well as other parts of the world. In class, our discussions will return regularly to consider the broad diversity of kinds of medicine throughout the world, as well as the specific historical and local contexts of biomedicine.

FGSS 2512  Black Women in the 20th Century  
TR  11:40-12:55       M. Washington

This course focuses on African American Women in the 20th century. The experiences of black women will be examined from a social, practical, communal and gendered perspective. Topics include The Club Woman’s movement, suffrage, work, family, black & white women and feminism, black women and radicalism and the feminization of poverty.

FGSS 2620  Performing Death and Desire: Vampires on Stage and Screen  
MW  10:10-12:05       A. Stratford

Why are the undead so long-lived? This course hunts the dangerous and subversive figure of the vampire across a variety of pages, stages and screens. From campy melodramas and raucous stage comedies, to lush cinematic epics and politically savvy television---and all the Draculas that have come and gone in between--we will explore how the vampire changes with medium, period, and genre. Using a variety of critical approaches we will consider why this most persistent cultural metaphor emerges in particular cultural moments, and what social anxieties and desires it articulates. We will interrogate the vampire's relationship to race and gender and analyze how the vampire is constructed, appropriated, adapted, reinvented, and performed in its many contexts, asking what it means for us to consume these texts.
FGSS 2621  Gendering Religion, Science, and Technology  
TR  11:40-12:55  C. Rock-Singer

There are several “just-so stories” about science and religion: the world’s religions are parallel systems of belief in the supernatural; science has a set method that produces universal truths; and religion and science are in perpetual conflict. This course will challenge these understandings by introducing students to the study of religion, science, and technology, as well as to ways to think about their relationships. To bring these categories down to earth and unsettle engrained scholarly and popular narratives, our approach will be to gender the study of religion, science, and technology. To do so, we will not simply “add women and stir,” to borrow a phrase from feminist historians; rather, we will query how gender, sexuality, and embodiment shape the very construction of knowledge itself.

FGSS 2841  Viruses- Humans- Viral Politics (Social History and Cultural Politics of HIV & AIDS)  
TR  2:55-4:10  C. Roebuck  LGBT, GLO

This course explores what has been termed “the modern plague.” It investigates the social history, cultural politics, biological processes, and global impact of the retrovirus, HIV, and the disease syndrome, AIDS. It engages material from multiple fields: life sciences, social sciences, & humanities as well as media reports, government documents, activist art, and community-based documentaries. It explores various meanings and life-experiences of HIV & AIDS; examines conflicting understandings of health, disease, the body; investigates political struggles over scientific research, biomedical & public health interventions, and cultural representations; and queries how HIV vulnerability is shaped by systems of power and inequality. As well, we come to learn about the practices, the politics, and the ethics of life and care that arise in “the age of epidemic.”

FGSS 3210  Gender and the Brain  
MW  2:55-4:10  S. Dietz  LGBT

Why are boys more likely than girls to suffer from autism, and women more likely than men to be diagnosed with depression? Are there different “gay” and “straight” brains? And how does brain science interact with gender and sexuality in popular debate? Reading and discussing the original scientific papers and related critical texts, we will delve into the neuroscience of gender.
New media remain central to ongoing struggles over the constitution of the public sphere in Asia. In high measure, censorship affects the Internet and visual media (including digital, independent cinema), and government agencies are particularly wary of the viral qualities of new media. Extensive state investment into Internet control is offset by the fact that the Internet remains a primary site of political dissent and organizing. New media and communications technologies further continue to engender novel forms of political expression and notions of collectivity. In the past few years activists and artists as well as mass publics have thus forged distinct modes of expression in and around new media that, while frequently evading state prohibition, nevertheless present incisive political critique. The course will examine features unique to digital media—such as the viral, mimetic, archival, and amplificatory properties of the Internet—and ask how politicized media—especially queer and feminist—make use of these features to intervene into contexts of censorship and occlusion. We will draw on Asian media contexts also to interrogate assumptions about progressive politics. Investigating the logics of contemporary digital media in relation to the field of political expression, the course complicates received notions of non-Western political public spheres as illiberal, or lagging behind a stage of political development posited as normative.

This course will offer an historical overview of responses to bodily and cognitive difference. What was the status of the monster, the freak, the abnormal, the (dis)abled, and how are all of these concepts related? How have we moved from isolation and institutionalization towards universal design and accessibility as the dominant concepts relative to (dis)ability? Why is this shift from focusing on individual differences as a negative attribute to reshaping our architectural and more broadly social constructions important for everyone? What are our ethical responsibilities towards those we label as “disabled”? Authors to be studied include: Ambroise Paré, Emmanuel Levinas, Georges Canguilhem, Michel Foucault, Lennard Davis, Tobin Siebers, Simon Baron-Cohen.

Using written and visual biographies as a starting point, this class follows African and African American women in the fashion industry to explore perceptions of beauty, race, gender and class. Contemporary television, global fashion and rigorous cultural studies will be intertwined as students discuss cultural standards of beauty, and ultimately, compose self-narratives defining their own relationship with fashion, appearance and self-image.
FGSS 3588  Creating Renaissance Man (and Woman)  
TR  10:10-11:25   M. Migiel   GLO

This course is dedicated to studying important works of literature that address what it means, in the Renaissance, to strive for excellence as a man or as a woman, especially in the public sphere and in love.

FGSS 3655  Women in New Media Art  
MW  2:55-4:10   M. Fernandez   ISO

The work of women has been central to the development of new media art. These rich and varied practices include installation, virtual reality environments, net art, digital video, networked performance, tactical media, video games, remix and robotics. This course will begin with an overview of feminist art and early experiments in performance and video art to then investigate multiple currents of digital and new media art, from early interactive installations to biological art. Discussions will focus primarily on works by women artists from Europe, the Americas and Australia.

FGSS 3691  Race and Gender of Poverty in Literature and Film  
TR  10:10-11:25   E. Cheyfitz

Poverty is an ongoing issue in the United States, and has intensified since the recession of 2008. As such, poverty has disproportionately affected women and underrepresented racial and ethnic communities. This course will analyze this issue through its representation in film and literature, both fiction and non-fiction.

FGSS 3733  Culinary Fictions, Literary Cuisines  
MW  2:55-4:10   K. McCullough

When is a cookbook not a cookbook? When it’s a memoir, of course! Why would a novelist make a chef the protagonist of a story? What’s the pay-off for a poet in choosing a plum as the subject of a poem? This course will explore these and other literary food-related questions. Through a focus on the ways that writers use the language of food to explore issues such as gender, power, race and nation, we will ask what food can tell us about the dynamic of power and its circulation in US culture. We will read novels, poems, memoirs and even a cookbook or two. Writers under consideration may include Diana Abu-Jaber, Margaret Atwood, MFK Fisher, Ruth Ozeki, Monique Truong, Helena María Viramontes, and William Carlos Williams, among others.
FGSS 3820  The Gendered Workplace  
W  2:55-4:10  I. DeVault

This course will examine the range of issues surrounding the experience of gender in the modern workplace. Topics may include the historical role of women in the workplace; sex segregation in the workplace; norms of masculinity; the intersectionality of issues including race, lgbtq, and disability; gendered legal issues; work-family issues; pay equity; gender discrimination; harassment and bullying; union representation; and many others. Students will be exposed to both research and practical applications of various topics. This class will have a different guest speaker each week. Each speaker will assign readings for their topic, to be read before their class meeting.

FGSS 3991  Undergraduate Independent Study  
TBA  TBA  various

Individual study program intended for juniors and seniors working on special topics with selected reading or research projects not covered in regularly scheduled courses. Students select a topic in consultation with a FGSS faculty member who has agreed to supervise the independent study. Prerequisites: FGSS 2010 or FGSS 3000, and one additional 3000-level FGSS course. 1-4 credits.

FGSS 4000  The Complexities of Consent: Senior Seminar in Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies  
M  12:20-2:15  J. Juffer

This class is open to FGSS majors, minors, and others with permission of the instructor. The issue of consent is central to much feminism scholarship, yet its meaning is contested. It figures prominently in relation to sex as well as to other issues, such as informed consent to medical procedures, children’s rights, surrogacy, and (alienated) labor. Consent occurs (or doesn’t) within structures of power; can one consent within conditions that are not, so to speak, of one’s own making? What about subjects, such as children, who do not use the “rational” language of consent? We draw from legal theory, science studies, and philosophy. How does consent differ from agency? Autonomy? Freedom? We consider case studies that speak to how consent is defined differently across cultures. Under what conditions is consent possible? What alternatives might we envision?
FGSS 4020  Reading the Body in Medicine and Fiction
TR  10:10-11:25    Chang, J.

This course examines how modern Spanish writers and doctors represented the human body as they grappled with disease and disability. Reading fiction alongside medical and anthropological texts we will examine notions of the normal/abnormal; beautiful/ugly/ and healthy/infected as they change over time. We also look at these ways in which these concepts are inflected by other identity categories such as gender, race, sexuality, and class.

FGSS 4035  Intersectionality in Disability Studies
W  7:30-10:30    L. Cook and A. Weiner Heinemann

A recognition of the importance of intersectionality, or the understanding of how identities such as disability, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic class, and national origin, among others, multiply overlap and connect, is becoming increasingly key to combat discrimination and oppression. This course will examine how intersectional disability experiences, in particular, impact and are impacted by access to employment, education, and health care. We will explore the efficacy of legal and policy initiatives that are already in place, and in doing so, strongly consider the growing need for, and value of, intersectional approaches to disability discrimination.

FGSS 4114  Science, Medicine, the Body: A Critical Race and Feminist Inquiry
T  2:30-4:25    L. Ramberg

In this course we will consider the production of the human body as an artifact of race, sex and gender through the discourses, practices, and technologies of bio-science and bio-medicine. We will read critical race, feminist, and postcolonial critiques of science and medicine as forms of knowledge complicit with imperial, racist and patriarchal political projects as well as conduits for humanitarianism and emancipation. We will examine case studies in the histories of science and medicine such as the Tuskegee syphilis experiment, commercial surrogacy, plastic surgery, the global trade in organs, and the HeLa cell line. We will also think together about collaborations between patients and doctors, citizens and scientists, that have produced new ways of inhabiting the body, new forms of human relations, and new kinds of justice.
FGSS 4160  Gender and Sexuality in Southeast Asia  
W   2:30-4:25  T. Loos  GLO, ISO, LGBT  

Students consider the relationships among colonialism and gender and sexual identity formation in Southeast Asia. Using material from a wide range of fields including anthropology and literature, the course complicates the simplistic East/West and male/female binary. Each year the course is offered, its emphasis shifts to adapt to changes in the fields of gender, sexuality and Asian Studies. It incorporates theoretical literature and content that is broader than that of Southeast Asia.

FGSS 4501  African Women Writers Critique the Post-Colonial State  
TR   2:55-4:10  C. Boyce Davies and M. Ngugi  ISO  

This course is framed within the larger discourses of migration and diaspora and will consider these larger global phenomena through the works of women writers of the African diaspora. It begins by examining the variety of definitions, meanings and practices of African Diaspora and relatedly the ongoing contributions of black women's writing to the intersecting issues of sexuality, race and gender along with their contestation of various forms of oppression and exploitation. But we also examine the creation of subjectivities that make for transcendence. Our focus this semester is on the writings of Edwidge Danticat a Haitian-American writer whose body of literature in many ways defines the African diaspora and engages some of the key concerns as it covers a variety of genres: essays, autobiography, the novel, short stories. Expected modes of participation and evaluation will include class discussion, short informal response papers and a final essay research paper.

FGSS 4504  The City: Asia  
T   10:10-12:05  A. Fuhrmann  GLO  

This course uses the lens of temporality to track transformations in notions of urban personhood and collective life engendered by recent trans-Asia economic shifts. We will develop tools that help unpack the spatial and cultural forms of density and the layered histories that define the contemporary urban fabric of cities such as Hanoi, Bangkok, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. The course combines the investigation of the cinemas and literatures of the region with the study of recent writing on cities from Asian studies, film studies, queer theory, urban studies, political theory, religious studies, cultural geography, literary theory, and anthropology.
Toni Morrison was an editor at Random House, has produced work in several literary genres, and is a gifted essayist. However, she is best known for her body of novels that began with publication of The Bluest Eye in 1970. We will focus on reading novels by Morrison, including The Bluest Eye, Sula (1973), Song of Solomon (1977), Beloved (1987), Jazz (1992), Paradise (1998), Love (2003) and A Mercy (2008). The presentation of her novels in trilogy form and her contributions to the genre of historical writing will be given some consideration. We will explore the author’s stylistic innovation and expansion of this genre. We will consider topics such as how to read novels critically. We will pursue our study with some attention to major public work of Morrison, from her art projects as a curator at the Lover to the Toni Morrison Society; “Bench by the Road” project and it 2008 conference in Charleston, South Carolina, and upcoming Paris meeting in summer 2010. In an era in which the literary tastes and standards of valuation in popular contexts and academic ones can be quite contrary, Morrison is among the writers who have sustained audiences at both levels, which is evident. For instance, in the selection of her novels for Oprah’s book club several times and in their consistent appeal within reading groups and book clubs. In this course, we will examine some of the distinctions between how novels are discussed and written about in popular and academic contexts.

In this seminar we will sustain a particular reading of post-1984 Mexico-US border cultural production as “undocumentation.” Specifically, we will focus on performance, conceptual, and cinematic practices that corrupt the spreadsheet and the exposé; that reflect their makers’ commitments to portraying extreme labor situations in a period of greater Mexican neoliberal transition now synonymous with NAFTA, culture and drug wars, and border militarization and maquilization. Assigned texts will include artwork by the Border Art Workshop and Elizabeth Sisco, Louis Hock, and David Avalos; writing by Gloria Anzaldúa, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Sara Uribe, and Sergio González Rodríguez; contributions to the Tijuana-San Diego installation festival inSITE; and “undocumentaries” like Alex Rivera’s Borders Trilogy, Sergio De La Torre and Vicki Funari’s Maquilapolis, and Natalia Almada’s El Velador.
Bodies and Diseases in the Middle East (1500-2000) will explore the history of medicine and science in the Middle East from the early modern period to the present. It covers the main topics and questions regarding bodies, diseases, and medical institutions within the framework of major historical developments. The course investigates how medicine and knowledge about diseases and bodies changed political and social conditions as well as how the latter defined and transformed the ways in which people imagined health, life, and environment. Scholars have often analyzed the history of medicine in the Middle Eastern societies either in relation to Islamic culture in the early modern period or in relation to more recent Westernization. This course seeks to challenge these fixed paradigms and shed light on questions and research agendas that will unearth the encounters, connections and mobility of bacteria, bodies, and medical methods among various communities. It will highlight that the history of medicine in the colonial world itself is varied and wide ranging, investigating how medical missions intersected with civilizing missions, how colonial discourses were used to explain disease prevalence, and the relationship between the metropole and colony in propagating certain medical theories and practices. The course seeks to facilitate student engagement with various primary and secondary sources and new technologies to teach both historiographical methods and the content of the history of medicine in the Middle East.

This course explores nightlife as a temporality that fosters countercultural performances of the self and that serves as a site for the emergence of alternative kinship networks. Focusing on queer communities of color, course participants will be asked to interrogate the ways in which nightlife demonstrates the queer world-making potential that exists beyond the normative 9-5 capitalist model of production. Performances of the everyday, alongside films, texts, and performance art, will be analyzed through a performance studies methodological lens. Through close readings and sustained cultural analysis, students will acquire a critical understanding of the potentiality of spaces, places, and geographies codified as "after hours" in the development of subcultures, alternative sexualities, and emerging performance practices.
FGSS 4711  Late Theory
W  2:30-4:25       N. Salvato       ISO, LGBT

This seminar explores theoretical work in which lateness figures as the signal condition, gesture, problem, or method. We begin with two topics prominent in twentieth-century criticism: late style and late capitalism. We then pivot to contemporary theory “after” theory—or what Amy Holzapfel calls “subprime critique”: works marked variously by senses or intimations of belatedness, loss, exhaustion, and decay. Throughout, theoretical readings are paired with an eclectic set of art objects, ranging from literary fictions (James, Baldwin) to more and less popular television series (The Sopranos, Roseanne’s Nuts) to avant-garde performances (The Lily’s Revenge, Discotropic). Authors may include Adorno, Agamben, Berlant, Jameson, Mbembe, Moten, Said, and Sedgwick. Issues of ability, age, class, gender, race, and sexuality are foregrounded. (HTC)

FGSS 4841  What is (an) Epidemic? (Infectious Diseases in Historical, Social, and Political Perspective)
R  12:20-2:15       C. Roebuck

The term “epidemic” travels widely and wildly in contemporary worlds. But, what, when and where is “the epidemic”? How and why does epidemic unfold? This senior seminar offers an interdisciplinary exploration of infectious diseases. Our investigations take us from medieval Europe’s “Black Plague,” to Tuberculosis in early twentieth century United States and its global resurgence at the turn of the twenty-first, to Ebola and its ongoing, periodic outbreaks today. We consider the consequences epidemics have for how we live and imagine shared ecological futures. Examining work from the life sciences, social sciences, and arts & humanities, we explore the ways in which life and death, disease and survivability, health and thriving are shaped by infectious microbes, embodied eco-social forces, and contingent regimes of knowledge-power.

FGSS 4945  Body Politics in African Literature and Cinema
W  2:30-4:25       N. Diabate       GLO, ISO

The course examines how postcolonial African writers and filmmakers engage with and revise controversial images of bodies and sexuality—genital cursing, same-sex desire, HIV/AIDS, genital surgeries, etc. Our inquiry also surveys African theorists’ troubling of problematic tropes and practices such as the conception in 19th-century racist writings of the colonized as embodiment, the pathologization and hypersexualization of colonized bodies, and the precarious and yet empowering nature of the body and sexuality in the postcolonial African experience. As we focus on African artists and theorists, we also read American and European theorists, including but not certainly limited to Giorgio Agamben, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes, and Joseph Slaughter, detecting the ways in which discourses around bodies in the African context may shape contemporary theories and vice versa.
FGSS 4991  Senior Honors Thesis II
TBA  TBA  Staff

Students must submit a completed Honors Thesis Application within the first week of classes before they will be allowed to enroll in the course. To graduate with honors a major must complete a senior thesis under the supervision of a faculty member in Feminist, Gender, & Sexuality Studies, and defend that thesis orally before an honors committee. Students must have a cumulative GPA of at least 3.3 in all course work and a 3.5 average in all courses applying to the FGSS major. Interested students should consult the DUS in the spring semester of their junior year or very early in the fall semester of their senior year. Prerequisite: successful completion of FGSS 4990.

FGSS 6504  The City: Asia
T  10:10-12:05  A. Furhmann

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FGSS 6513  Toni Morrison’s Novels
M  12:20-2:15  R. Richardson

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