GS 101
Introduction to Gender Studies

University of South Alabama
3 credit hours
No prerequisites
Office Hours: Will vary by instructor—set hours as well as by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION
GS 101 is an interdisciplinary multicultural overview examining the concept of gender and gender roles in patriarchal societies. Though there will be examination of gender in a global context, this course will primarily focus on the United States.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Through an interdisciplinary multicultural overview examining the concept of gender and gender roles in patriarchal societies, this course will examine how gender, race, class, and sexuality intersect and are interconnected. Gender is a social construction that is “assigned” according to sex organs. As such, it is inextricably linked to society, social processes, and social institutions. It carries with it advantages for some, inequalities for others. This course will consider the nature of gender—what is it, how it is taught, and how it affects our relationships with others and the workings of social institutions. Gender is neither essentially natural nor inevitable, but is created and recreated, and eventually institutionalized, through the continual actions and reactions of people. However, even institutionalized gender arrangements can change through accumulation of interactions at individual levels. At the micro level, gender can be understood as a characteristic of individuals, produced through interactions. At the macro level, gender is a fundamental principle of social organization. Though this course will look at how the construction of gender has affected both women and men, particular attention will be paid to the historical effects on women and women’s position within our culture. With regard to this, this course will explore women and men and their relationships to systems of oppression and privilege; social and individual identities; the body; family; motherhood/fatherhood; work; violence; state, law, and social policies; politics; global perspectives; health and reproductive rights, sexuality and intimacy; art, music, and culture. This course will also examine how constructed notions of gender can be challenged, in particular through feminist ideology and practices. By doing so, it can foster social and political change thus creating a more just society.
COURSE GOALS

In this course, you will learn what it means to “do gender” and to “be gendered.” You will also discover how much about gender is institutionalized, taken-for-granted, and accepted as “fact.” After completing this course, you should be able to:
1. Discuss the concept of gender
2. Explain the variation of gender by sex, sexuality, race, ethnicity, age, ability, and geography and the intersection of these factors
3. Understand the importance of gender in interactions
4. Realize the institutional nature of gender
5. Link the affect of social organizations on individual interactions, and the influences of repeated interactions on social organizations
6. Be cognizant of the restrictions and freedoms that gender roles offer those accepting them, and the burdens they place on people that do not fit easily into the masculine/feminine dichotomy
7. Be able to understand how feminism can create a socially, economically, and politically just society with regard to not only gender, but race, class, sexuality, ethnicity, age and ability.
8. Have an intellectual foundation that can be built upon and used in more advanced coursework in gender studies and/or other courses in the humanities, social or natural sciences that touch upon issues of gender

CLASS FORMAT

This course is a combination of lecture and discussion. In other words, there will be days when there will only be lecture, there will be days when there will only be discussion, and on most days, there will be a combination of both with an emphasis on discussion. This class is open to impromptu discussion and questions even during the lecture portions. A give-and-take atmosphere where asking questions (no question is ever dumb), voicing your ideas, helping one another to learn, and fostering critical thinking is one of our goals.

DISCUSSION

Learning takes different shapes and forms. Sometimes it comes through collaborating with one another and working collectively, and sometimes it is an individual effort. The expression of ideas is not exclusively conveyed through the written word. Discussion gives you the opportunity to formulate arguments, voice your own opinions, and engage with your fellow classmates with regard to the concepts and topics covered in lectures, our conversations, and the readings. Each student’s participation and effort will be evaluated every class. Students may also be asked to formulate learning groups and/or do group work.
READINGS

Required texts:

bell hooks, *Feminism Is For Everybody: Passionate Politics* (2001)


Additional readings will be on reserve (R) and can be accessed through the USA Library online course reserves

ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMS, AND GRADING DISTRIBUTION

There are four components that will be evaluated in this course which will determine a student’s grade. Each of these components comprises 25% of a student’s grade:

1) JOURNALS: Journal writing is an important part of this course. Journals are not diaries, but are reflective, personal writing in which you engage the material under discussion by commenting, questioning, or considering previous discussions or personal experience that seems relevant in some way. Journals also provide a place to digest difficult or controversial material. It is often easier to grapple with such ideas if you can take them apart in writing. Your journals should demonstrate familiarity with the readings. The professor will take off points if all entries are only based on class discussion (i.e. you have not shown any evidence of reading). Each entry should be typed, single-spaced, about one page in length. You will turn in one entry each week, from week 1 to week 15.

2) BOOK REVIEWS AND ESSAYS: In addition to the required reading, students will write a critical analysis of a scholarly work in the area of gender. Students may also be required to write short response papers throughout the semester on particular topics and/or readings.
3) FINAL PROJECT: This will consist of a research project that explores the concept of gender and gender roles. Students will produce a final research paper/project that incorporates the student's conclusions, those of the scholarly literature, and one that demonstrates a student's comprehensive thinking about this subject.

4) PARTICIPATION: The key to successful classroom discussion will be engaged and thoughtful participation by members of our class. So that we may have this type of discussion, readings must be completed by the date indicated in the syllabus. Students will be expected to discuss the readings and concepts covered in class and each member of class may be asked to lead part of discussion on certain days. Free speech, communication of ideas (whether popular, unpopular, or controversial), discussion and respectful intellectual engagement is encouraged and expected. This is called Academic Freedom.

**GRADING**

Journals = 25 points  
Book Reviews/Essays = 25 points  
Final Paper/Project = 25 points  
Participation = 25 points

Final Grades and Grading Scale:  
90-100 = A  
80-89 = B  
70-79 = C  
60-69 = D  
59 or below will earn a failing grade

**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY**

**ATTENDANCE**  
Attendance is important. It is your responsibility to get any assignments or notes during an absence. Because unforeseen circumstances may require changes in the assigned readings, the course outline, and the examination and assignment due dates, students are responsible not only for the requirements as outlined on the syllabus, but also for announcements made in class. Please notify the professor of any excused absences (such as medical or university related business) immediately. For more details regarding attendance, see the USA Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletin under the section "Academic Policies and Procedures."

**MEETING COURSE REQUIREMENTS**  
Please consult the professor during the semester about any problems you may encounter with the content of this course. **If you have a disability that will affect your performance in this class, please register with special student services and inform the professor as soon as possible:**  
*In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, students with bona fide disabilities will be afforded reasonable*
accommodation. The Office of Special Student Services will certify
disability and advise faculty members of reasonable
accommodations. If you have a specific disability that qualifies you
for academic accommodations, please notify me and provide
certification from Disability Services (Office of Special Student
Services). The Office of Special Student Services is located in the
Student Center, Room 270, 460-7212. (Statement of University
policy)

MISSING EXAMS, LATE AND/OR MISSING ASSIGNMENTS
Missing an exam or failing to turn in an assignment without submitting a
university or medical excuse may result in a grade of zero. Excuses must be
submitted the first day back after an absence. Late and/or missed work due to
medical issues or university related business can be turned-in late without
penalty if the student provides evidence that can be verified. Late and/or missed
work without an excuse will be penalized one-third of a grade (or respective # of
points) per day.

STATEMENT ON PLAGARISM AND ACADEMIC HONESTY
The University of South Alabama is committed to the fundamental value of
academic honesty. The student handbook, The Lowdown, defines
plagiarism as one form of academic misconduct which is "subject to
investigation and disciplinary action through appropriate university
procedures." Plagiarism is using somebody else's ideas and/or words in
your writing without correctly identifying the sources. As one resource for
helping you avoid plagiarism, your written work in this class may be
submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar detection method, for an
evaluation of the originality of your ideas and proper use and attribution of
sources. Assignments submitted to Turnitin.com will be included as source
documents in a restricted access database solely for the purpose of
detecting possible plagiarism of such documents. As part of this process,
you may be required to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your
writing. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may be
subject to some form of originality review. A paper not submitted
according to procedures and format set by the instructor may be penalized
or may not be accepted at all. Any student whose work is determined to
be plagiarized may be subject to penalties including, but not limited to
failing a course.

SYLLABUS CHANGES
The instructor reserves the right to change the class schedule and
assignments over the course of the semester. This syllabus can change
with 24 hours written notice to students who are enrolled.
Week 1  What is Gender? Introduction to Gender Studies
Readings: Shaw & Lee, Chapter 1
         Bornstein, pp. 1-25
         Estelle Disch, ed. “Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame, and Silence in the Constitution of Gender Identity” (R)

Weeks 2-3 What Difference Does Difference Make?
         Maxine Baca Zinn, “Gender Through the Prism of Difference” (R)
         Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex” (R)
         Bornstein, 25-35
         Begin bell hooks, Feminism is for Everybody

Week 4  Learning Gender in a Diverse Society
Readings: Shaw & Lee, Chapter 3
         Finish hooks

Week 5  Systems of Power, Privilege, and Inequality
Readings: Shaw & Lee, Chapter 2
         Peggy McIntosh, “Invisible Knapsack”
         Bornstein, pp. 35-73
         Jason Schultz, “Getting Off on Feminism” (R)
         June Jordan, “Can I Get A Witness?” (R)

Week 6-7  Sex, Power, and Intimacy
Readings: Shaw & Lee, Chapter 4
         Bornstein, 73-109
         Amber Hollibaugh, “Sexuality, Labor, and the New Trade Unionsim” (R)
         Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality” (R)
         Pepper Schwartz & Virginia Rutter, “Gender of Sexuality” (R)

Week 8  Gender and the Body
Readings: Shaw & Lee, Chapter 5
    Robert Connell, “Biological behavior? Hormones, psychology, and sex” (R)

Week 9 Health and Reproductive Rights

Readings: Shaw & Lee, Chapter 6
    Estelle Disch, ed., “Pills and Power Tools” and “Coming to Terms: Masculinity and Disability” (R)
    Excerpt from Rosalind Petchesky, Abortion and Women’s Choice (R)

Week 10 Family Systems, Family Lives

Readings: Shaw & Lee, Chapter 7
    Bonnie Thornton Dill, “Our Mother’s Greif: Racial-Ethnic Women And the Maintenance of Family” (R)

Week 11 Women’s Work: Paid and Unpaid

Readings: Shaw & Lee, Chapter 8
    Alice Kessler Harris, “Women’s History Goes on Trial: EEOC v. Sears Roebuck,” (R)
    Teresa Arnott & Julie Mattaei, “Race, Class, Gender, and Women’s Works” (R)

Week 12 Violence

Readings: Shaw & Lee, Chapter 10
    Estelle Disch, ed., “Gender, Class, and Terrorism” (R)

Week 13 The State and Social Policy

Readings: Shaw & Lee, Chapter 11
    Linda Burnham, “Welfare Reform, Family Hardship, and Women Of Color” (R)

Week 14 Gender and Culture

Readings: Shaw & Lee, Chapter 12
    Bornstein, excerpts pp. 109-173

Week 15-16 The Future: Feminism, Activism, and Change
Readings:  Shaw & Lee, Chapter 13  
hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody*  
Ien Ang "I'm a Feminist but... 'Other' Women and Postcolonial Feminism" (R)  
Excerpt from *Time Magazine*, "Is Feminism Dead?" (R)  
Bornstein, pp. 255-279