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### WGS 2309G-001: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

Marjorie Worthington  
*Eastern Illinois University*

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## WGS2309G – Introduction to Women's & Gender Studies

Professor: Dr. Marjorie Worthington  
Office: Coleman Hall 3321  
Email: mgworthington@eiu.edu

Class: Coleman Hall 3290, MW, 3:00-4:15  
Office Hours: MW 12:00-3:00, F 12:00-1:00 or by appt.  
Pronouns: She/her

### **COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION: WST 2309G - Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies**

What does it mean to be female? To be male? To be gender-nonbinary? How are gender roles created and challenged? How have they varied over time and across cultures? These and other questions will be addressed. In addition, students will look at how gender is reflected in the way we communicate and the experiences we have with various social organizations and institutions.

*(Writing Intensive; Cultural Diversity Requirement)*

### **TEXTBOOKS: Make sure you have all of the following:**

Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*  
Kate Bornstein, *My New Gender Workbook*  
Launius and Hassel, *Threshold Concepts in Women's and Gender Studies*  
Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*  
Arin Andrews, *Some Assembly Required*

**Disability Services:** If you have a *documented* disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible. I will ensure you are accorded all the aid you require.

**The Student Success Center:** Students who are having difficulty achieving their academic goals are encouraged to contact the Student Success Center ([www.eiu.edu/~success](http://www.eiu.edu/~success)) for assistance with time management, text taking, note taking, avoiding procrastination, setting goals, and other skills to support academic achievement. The Student Success Center provides individualized consultations. To make an appointment, call 217-581-6696, or go to 9th Street Hall, Room 1302.

**Tech Support:** If you need assistance with D2L, call D2L Support toll free at 1-877-325-7778. Support is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Email and Chat options are also available on the "My Home" page after logging in to D2L. Other D2L resources including a D2L Orientation course for students are available on the same page. For technical questions regarding other software, hardware, network issues, EIU NetID/password, or Panthermail, contact the ITS Helpdesk at 217-581-4357 during regular business hours or submit a help ticket at <https://techsupport.eiu.edu/>. If you have a question regarding course content, contact your instructor.

**Student Wellbeing:** I will try to bring snacks to class every day. Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact your RA for support. Furthermore, please notify me if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable me to help you access the help you need. There is a small food pantry in the study room on the third floor of Coleman Hall; you are welcome to the food supplied there.

### **POLICIES:**

**Written Assignments:** You must complete ALL written assignments listed below in order to pass; even if you could *mathematically* get a passing grade without turning in a shorter assignment, you must turn it in or you will not pass. For each major writing assignment, you will receive a formal assignment sheet; we

will discuss these assignments in-depth in class before they are due so you will always know what is expected of you.

**Attendance:** Your consistent attendance and participation are necessary to make this class the vibrant exchange of ideas it should be and I take attendance every day (even if you do not see me doing it). You are permitted no more than three unexcused absences. Each unexcused absence after three will lower your final grade by thirty points (3%). Excused absences are accompanied by appropriate legal or medical documentation.

**Office Hours** I encourage you to come see me whenever you like. Come to ask questions, discuss problems or just to chat. The hours listed above are times when I will definitely be in my office ready to meet with students but I am available at other times as well, so you can also make a special appointment to see me if you are unable to come during office hours.

**Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to maintain principles of academic integrity and conduct as defined in EIU's Code of Conduct (<http://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). Violations will be re-reported to the Office of Student Standards.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is defined as appropriating words or ideas that are not your own without giving proper credit. The temptation to plagiarize can be great, particularly in the advent of extensive computer technology and the collaborative nature of our class. However, the consequences of plagiarism are dire and can result in a grade of F for the assignment and even for the course. It will also result in a report to the Judicial Affairs Office.

**COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION:** Examines gender roles and development in a historical context from a variety of theoretical and disciplinary perspectives and within a variety of frameworks: political, economic, cultural, religious, and social." In this section of WST 2309G, we will examine these frameworks through a focus on body politics and reproductive justice.

#### **GRADE BREAKDOWN**

Short essays (4 at 10% each)	40%
Online activities (15 at 3% each)	45%
Final Exam	15%

### **WGS2309G READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**NOTE: Half of you will attend the F2F class on Monday, the other half on Wednesday. Have the F2F reading done on the day you will attend class. The online reading and activity must be done by FRIDAY of each week.**

#### **WEEK 1: August 24-26**

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- F2F: INTRODUCTION/SYLLABUS

- ONLINE: Bornstein, Chap. 1 & Johnson (D2L)

**ONLINE ACTIVITY:** Take the two quizzes in Bornstein, pp. 14-16 and 29-32. Post your scores to the WEEK 1 Discussion Board. You may keep your answers to yourself unless you wish to share them. Also in that post, discuss the **three quiz questions** that were most interesting to you—the ones which made you

consider gender in a new way. Write brief paragraph about each of them and post that along with your quiz scores. **Don't worry – the score doesn't matter for your grade; however, the quality of your writing DOES**

### WEEK 2-August 31-September 2

- F2F: Launius, Chap. 1; Lorber (D2L)
- ONLINE: Bornstein, Chap. 2, Fausto-Sterling (D2L)

ONLINE ACTIVITY: 1) Take the quiz on Bornstein pg. 44 and then write a paragraph about the ways in which your gender affects your behavior.  
2) Write a paragraph that connects Fausto-Sterling's idea of 5 genders to the ideas in Bornstein Chapter 2. How do these two readings relate to one another?  
Post both paragraphs to the WEEK 2 Discussion Board and then respond to some of your classmates' answers.

### WEEK 3 – September 7-9

- F2F: **Labor Day – since there is no class on Monday, we will not have class on Wednesday either and will just do the online activity.**
- ONLINE: Bornstein, Chapter 3-4

ONLINE ACTIVITY: Consider ALL the societal and personal elements that contribute to making you who you are (explained in Bornstein Chapter 3): Gender, Race, Sexuality, Religion, Socioeconomic Class, Age, Family Arrangement, Employment, Geographical origin. Think about what role ALL of these elements plays in your life, how they intersect, how they are part of who are you. Then construct a diagram, a chart, image, drawing or collage of images that demonstrates ALL the aspects listed above, including the ones you came up with yourself, their prominence (or lack of prominence) in your life, and how those elements relate to one another. Write a long paragraph that explains the significance of the image you designed.

### WEEK 4 – September 14-16

- F2F: Launius, Chap. 2: Social Constructionism
- ONLINE: Valenti "Blame & Shame" & (D2L)

ONLINE ACTIVITY: Explain what Valenti means by a "rape schedule." Do you live by one? If so, how- what are the things you do to protect yourself from sexual assault? If you do not have such a schedule, why not? Are there other kinds of schedule you live by? Post your answers to the WEEK 4 Discussion board. Read and respond to your classmates' answers.

### WEEK 5 – September 21-23

- F2F: Launius, Chap. 3: Privilege, Alexander, *The New Jim Crow* (D2L)
- ONLINE: Oluo "So You Want to Talk About Race?"

ONLINE ACTIVITY: Write a paragraph that explains what Oluo means when she says “It is about race if a person of color thinks it’s about race.” Then write a paragraph about YOUR response to that statement. Post these to the WEEK 5 Discussion board.

### WEEK 6 – September 28-30

- F2F: Atwood, Chapters 1-17
- ONLINE: Atwood, Chapters 17-23

ONLINE ACTIVITY: Atwood has stated that nothing in her books is made up: everything she depicts has been the reality somewhere at some point. Choose one aspect of the world of this novel and find its real-world counterpart. Do some research online to help you. It could be a law, a tradition, an article of clothing, etc. Write a paragraph that makes that connection your example from the novel and how it is reflected in the real world. Post it to WEEK 6 and read and respond to your peers.

### WEEK 7 – October 5-7

- F2F: Atwood, Chapters 24-38
- ONLINE: Atwood, Chapters 39- end (including “Historical Notes”)

ONLINE ACTIVITY: This novel essentially has two endings: the one with Offred and the one with the academic conference. Why do you think that is? What difference does it make to the novel that it ends with that odd conference? Write a paragraph that answers these questions and post it to WEEK 7.

### WEEK 8 – October 12-14

- F2F: Chemaly, “Rape” & “Gentleman’s Guide to Rape Culture” Chemaly
- ONLINE: Bonilla-Silva (D2L) & Bornstein, Chap. 5-6 **Essay 1 due on Atwood**

ONLINE ACTIVITY: Write a paragraph that explains what Bonilla-Silva means by “Color-Blind Racism” and give an example. Post this paragraph to WEEK 8, read and respond to your classmates’ posts.

### **FALL BREAK**

### WEEK 9 – October 19-21

- F2F: Launius, Chapter 4: Intersectionality
- ONLINE: Watch *Killing Us Softly Video* (link on the D2L homepage)

ONLINE ACTIVITY: Describe an example from popular culture that illustrates rape culture. This could be a scene from a film, an advertisement, a television show, song or music video, etc. Such examples are everywhere, unfortunately. Write a paragraph that describes your example of rape culture and that explains HOW it is an example of rape culture. Post it to the WEEK 9 Discussion board and comment on your peers’ examples. Use the comments to improve your paragraph and turn it into the Essay 2 due next week

### WEEK 10 – October 26-28

- F2F: Morrison, pp. 1-93 (Autumn & Winter sections) **Essay 2 due – Pop Culture/Rape Culture**

- ONLINE: Watch the *Tough Guise* video (link on the D2L homepage).

ONLINE ACTIVITY: Write a paragraph about the ways in which the cultural expectations of masculinity discussed in the film have had an effect on your life (for they HAVE had an effect on your life, regardless of your gender). In other words, I want you to consider the effects that expectations of masculinity have on you, whether you identify as male or not. Post that paragraph to WEEK 10 and respond to the paragraphs your peers wrote.

### WEEK 11 – November 2-4

- F2F: Morrison, pp. 93-163

- ONLINE: Morrison, pp. 132-end

ONLINE ACTIVITY: Cultural standards of feminine beauty clearly had a devastating effect on Pecola, but we can also see how they affected Pauline and Claudia as well. What effect have cultural standards of feminine beauty had on YOU (for these standards have affected you, regardless of your gender). In other words, I want you to consider how expectations of femininity have affected you, whether you identify as female or not. Write a long paragraph that answers these questions and post it to WEEK 11. Then read and respond to your peers.

### WEEK 12 – November 9-11

- F2F: Bornstein, Chap. 7-8, Kimmel “Took My Job”, Kimmel “Masculinity” (D2L)

- ONLINE: Metzl, *Dying of Whiteness* (D2L), **Essay 3 due – Morrison**

ONLINE ACTIVITY: Connect Metzl’s argument to this country’s response to the COVID-19. What might Metzl say about that response and how it reflects whiteness? Post this paragraph to WEEK 12 and read and respond to your peers.

### WEEK 13 – November 16-18

- F2F: Launius, Chapter 5: Feminist Praxis, Bornstein Chaps. 9-10;

- ONLINE: Giridharadas, *Winners Take All* (D2L)

ONLINE ACTIVITY: Write a paragraph that restates Giridharadas’s main argument in depth. Then provide your opinion about that argument, based on your own experience and perspective. Post that paragraph to WEEK 13. Read and respond to your peers.

### THANKSGIVING BREAK

### WEEK 14 – November 30-December 2

- F2F: Ross, “Reproductive Justice” (D2L); “Racism and Health” (D2L)

- ONLINE: Loofbourow, “Male Pleasure” & Wright “Incels” **Essay 4 due - Praxis**

ONLINE ACTIVITY: Go on YouTube and watch the “red pill” scene from *The Matrix* movie. Incels like to use that scene as a symbol, but what for? Explain the connection that incels make to this scene. Write a paragraph that explains this connection and give your opinion about it. Post that paragraph to WEEK 14; read and respond to your peers.

### **WEEK 15 – December 7-9**

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- F2F: Andrews, pp. 1-170

- ONLINE: Andrews, pp. 171-end

ONLINE ACTIVITY: Write a paragraph describing what aspect of Andrews’s story was most striking to you. What moved you or surprised you about his narrative?

### **FINAL EXAM**

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Thursday, December 17, 2:45pm-4:45pm - Final Exam – will be taken ONLINE