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WGS 2309G-002: Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies

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Eastern Illinois University

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**Intro to Women's and Gender Studies
Fall, 2021**

Dr. Jeannie Ludlow

WGS 2309G sect. 002, CRN 95653

MWF 1-1:50 pm in CH 3290

Jeannie's Office: 3139 Coleman Hall

Email: via D2L, please

Mailbox: 3155 Coleman Hall

Jeannie's Office Hours: MW 2-4 pm, F 10-10:50 am and by appointment. I am willing to meet with you in person in my office, on D2L using collaborate ultra, on Zoom, Teams, Skype, FaceTime, or via telephone call. Please let me know how you prefer to meet!

The best way to reach me is **D2L email** (expect about 24 hours answer-time). If you need to reach me immediately during the work-day, please call the English Dept. main office (581-2428) and leave a message for me.

Course Description for WGS 2309G:

From Undergraduate Catalog: "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."

WGS 2309G is a Social Sciences General Education course that fulfills the cultural diversity requirement. As such, this course aims to foster "responsible citizens[hip] in a diverse world" through "understanding [of] society and the individual. In these courses, students will have the opportunity to apply various methods of inquiry and analysis, both quantitative and qualitative, to the study of the human condition. These sciences emphasize the importance of understanding the diversity of human cultures, their socio-historical context, and one's personal responsibility for being not only a good citizen, but also a steward of the environment" (Undergraduate Catalog http://catalog.eiu.edu/preview_program.php?catoid=16&poid=1865&bc=1).

Course Format: This course is designated as *In-person Delivery*. This course is an in-person class, and students who do all the homework, attend regularly, and participate fully in class will have the greatest chances of earning high grades. However, the realities of COVID mean that our course format may change more than once throughout the semester. As things change, I will communicate with you as clearly as I can and give you as much fore-warning and as much assistance as possible. Also, I do not want people to come to class sick nor to feel punished for getting sick. Therefore, I will do my best to work with any student who misses class (even multiple classes) because of illness. We will try to work together to ensure that no one has to get behind if you are quarantined or isolated while asymptomatic. I intend to be here every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for scheduled course meetings (unless, of course, I am quarantined or isolated, in which case, we will meet online for two weeks). I fully expect you to be here, too, unless you are sick, quarantined, or isolated. I will not, however, be taking attendance for credit, so absences will not negatively affect your grade.

Course Expectations: It is my educational philosophy that each student is responsible for their own education; the role of the professor is to guide and facilitate learning, not to tell students what (or how) to think. Therefore, it is expected that students will come to class having done all assignments, fully prepared to engage in discussions, activities, etc., that revolve around the assigned materials. We will be discussing ideas and information that make some people uncomfortable (e.g., sexism, racism, cisgenderism). It is absolutely necessary, if we are to learn, to ask questions (especially the difficult ones), to express opinions, and to be respectful of others, especially when we do not agree with them. All opinions and ideas are encouraged in this class; it is never expected that students will agree with everything they read, see or hear. Students will not be evaluated on their opinions but on their ability to analyze and evaluate situations and concepts, clearly and thoughtfully. Critical thinking and articulation of disagreements and difficulties are encouraged. **Note:** if we are moved to online for a short time either because of campus-wide changes or because I am quarantined or isolated, you will **not be evaluated** on the basis of how comfortable you are with online learning.

Please note: Several of the works we are reading this semester include very frank representations of a variety of gendered experiences, from the joyful (including first love, sexual experiences, pregnancy decision-making, activism) to the traumatic (including sexual assault, war, oppression). **I do not issue separate and specific trigger warnings;** please be aware that you will be reading these frank representations and do what you need to do to take good care of yourself both inside and outside of the classroom. If you need to talk, to debrief, to decompress with someone, I am 100% available to you for this. I care about your success and your ability to experience fully the amazing materials and ideas we will explore together.

Student Learning Objectives for WGS 2309G—in this course you will:

1. demonstrate critical thinking about gender;
2. articulate how political, social, economic, and/or religious factors influence gender role expectations;
3. demonstrate awareness of comparative gender differences within and across cultures and subcultures;
4. demonstrate an appreciation of the diverse experiences and perspectives that shape human culture, in service of global citizenship;
5. improve your public speaking skills through course discussions and in-class presentations;
6. improve your writing skills through formal and informal writing assignments;
7. strengthen your technological and electronic skills and use them for effective learning.

Disability Services: If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact EIU's Office of Student Disability Services (217-581-6583; McAfee Gym room 1210) as soon as possible. If you need COVID-specific accommodations, please also contact OSDS. In either case, and/or if you require assistance with any other circumstance that arises, please do contact me as soon as you can, so we can work out a good plan of action together.

Tech Support: Please know that, although I want to support you as much as I can, I am not your best resource for technical difficulties. Certainly, let me know what you are struggling with. In addition to letting me know, try these: a) for problems with **EIU.edu**, including being able to log in to D2L, contact EIU User Services—you can contact them via phone at 217-581-4357, email at support@eiu.edu, or on the web at <https://techsupport.eiu.edu>; b) for problems with **D2L**, contact Brightspace support—you can contact them via phone (1-877-325-7778), email, LiveChat, or the Brightspace Help link, all available in the bottom right-hand corner of your D2L homepage. Of course, if you have questions about the course content or assignments, you should ask me.

EIU Student Support Services: If you struggle with reading (or remembering what you read), notetaking, test-taking, time management/procrastination or other aspects of academic success, check out EIU's **Student Success Center** (www.eiu.edu/~success, McAfee Gym Room 1301). Call for an appointment: 217-581-6696. If writing (or, at least, academic writing) just isn't your superpower, take your assignment and drafts to EIU's **Writing Center**—the folks there can help you shine up your argument and polish your words until your essay is sharp and clear. Go to <https://www.eiu.edu/writing/> to learn more and/or book an appointment (in person or online). If you have to confront academic anxiety, depression, or mental health struggles, please do call EIU's **Counseling Clinic** for an appointment—217-581-3413. Go to <https://www.eiu.edu/counscctr/> for more information. These are all wonderful resources for students who need support—and your student fees have already paid for them, so your appointments will be no charge and, at the Counseling Clinic and Disability Services, completely confidential. If you feel unwell, please call EIU's **Medical Clinic**: 217-581-3013.

RESTROOMS: The closest all-gender restroom to our class is on the 4th floor of Booth library kind of behind the “fishbowl” computer lab. In Coleman Hall, 2nd floor, there is a lockable two-stall restroom marked “faculty women’s restroom.” Anyone who is not safe in gendered restrooms might choose to use that one. If anyone gives you any guff about it, tell them Dr. Ludlow told you to use it; they can air their concerns to me. Gendered restrooms are located just down the hall from our classroom and on every floor in Coleman Hall.

IF YOU TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID, REGARDLESS OF WHERE YOU HAVE YOUR TEST, PLEASE CALL EIU’S MEDICAL CLINIC: 217-581-3013. This is campus policy. Failure to call and report your positive test may result in disciplinary action or removal from campus.

COVID-19 I know you have been told a thousand times already—make this a thousand and one: **wear a CLEAN MASK every day no matter what.** Your mask must cover both your mouth and your nose. If you show up to class without a mask, you will be instructed to leave the room, get a mask, and come back. If you wear a mask incorrectly, you will get one warning about wearing it correctly. The next time it is incorrect, you will be instructed to leave the room. There will be **no exceptions** to this. If you FEEL SICK, you must stay in your private space only (your room, apartment, or home). If you show up to class with a fever (and I’ll know), unable to focus, unable to breathe freely (as much as possible in a mask), you will be instructed to go back to your private space and call Student Medical Clinic (217-581-3013) or your doctor. There will be **no exceptions** to this. When you enter the room, SANITIZE; before you leave the room, SANITIZE. While you are in the room, keep your mask on correctly. This

totally sucks; I know it does. But following these rules is the only way we will get to keep having class in-person this semester.

Not COVID-related Please do not come to class stoned or high. I'll know (I grew up in the '70s). If I can tell that you are high, I will ask you to leave class for the day. I pass no judgment on your leisure activities, but class is a professional space, and stoned/high people disrupt others' learning.

Materials:

PLEASE NOTE: You are required to do all assigned reading for this course. The three texts listed below were ordered for this course from Textbook Rental. Some required readings will also be available only online or via D2L.

TRS TEXTS—in order of use

Launius, Christie, and Holly Hassel. *Threshold Concepts in Women's and Gender Studies*.
Cooper, Brittney. *Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers her Superpower*.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

Readings on D2L or online, as required.

You will need regular access to a computer and the ability to use D2L. If you need help with this, let me know. Please note: "My computer wouldn't access this reading" or "my printer is out of ink" are not excuses for incomplete homework. If your computer isn't cooperating, go to the library lab and download, read, or print there.

GRADES will be earned through the following components, each of which will be assigned points:

- 90 pts. Participation, to be earned by participating in class activities and/or posting to discussion fora (up to 2 points per day)
- 100 pts. Five unit tests (20 points each, take-home)
- 70 pts. One group presentation project (may be completed remotely; shared with the whole class)
- 150 pts. Five blogs, to be posted to the course blog site (30 pts. ea.)
- 40 pts. Final reflective essay

This is a total possible 450 points. The course final grades will be figured on a 420-point scale:

- 378 points and above = A
- 336-377.9 = B
- 294-335.9 = C
- 252-293.9 = D
- 251.9 and below = F

I understand that this is unusual. The idea is that you can skip or slack on one assignment (or two) with little penalty, if you should get overwhelmed or sick. In other words, there is about a 7% cushion built into the grade.

LATE POLICY: Late work is strongly discouraged. If you are sick or have an emergency, please email me right away, so we can make a different plan for your assignments.

Tests: Late tests will only be accepted with absence and documentation of illness or emergency.

Blogs: Late grade penalty for blogs: 1-2 days late = -2 points; 3-4 days late = -3 points; 5-6 days late = -4 points; 7 or more days late = -5 points. **The late penalty will not happen if you contact me at least 24 hours before the blog due date and time and ask for an extension.**

Group presentation: Please plan carefully; do not turn it in late. Your group **must be prepared** to present to the class on 12/08/21. If you are not ready in class on that date, your project grade will go down 10%.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: Please do not attend class if you feel unwell or are afraid you may have been exposed to COVID. **There is no grade penalty for missing class.**

Email guidelines: (NOTE: this is good advice for emailing all your instructors) Communication with your instructors, whether by email, by phone, or in person, is a professional exchange. Please be sure to reflect this professionalism in your communication. All emails must have: an appropriate salutation (“Dear Jeannie,” “Hello, Dr. Ludlow,” etc.); the course info in the subject line (e.g. WGS 2309G); and your name. Your emails should be written with complete words and in complete sentences (“May I schedule an appointment with you?” not “Can I C U?”), not in textspeak; this is true even if you are sending the emails on your phone. Also, please note that I only check my email two or three times each school day. It often takes me one full school day (24 hours, M – F) to answer any email message—I typically do not check email on weekends. ALL COURSE-RELATED EMAILS SHOULD BE SENT TO ME ON D2L.

CLASSROOM BILL OF RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES—the following constitutes an agreement between the students and professor for this course.

Everyone in this class (students, instructors, and guests) has the right to work in a harassment-free, hostility-free environment; harassment of others and explicit or deliberate hostility are not tolerated.

Everyone in this class (students, instructors, and guests) has the right to be treated with respect and dignity at all times, even in the midst of heated disagreement.

Everyone in this class (students, instructors, and guests) has the right to feel as safe as possible from viral transmission.

Everyone in this class (students, instructors, and guests) has the responsibility to behave as a competent adult and to be open and polite to one another.

Everyone in this class (students, instructors, and academic guests) has the responsibility to come to every class fully prepared to listen, to participate, to learn and to teach.

Everyone in this class (students, instructors, and guests) has the responsibility to work together to create, in this class, an environment in which active learning, including responsible and respectful questioning, is encouraged.

The professor has the responsibility to treat all students fairly and to evaluate students’ work accurately, in terms of the skills that any student in this course is expected to gain.

The professor has the responsibility to make assignment requirements and evaluation criteria clear.

Students have the right to feel confident that their work is being evaluated on its own merits, not on the basis of the students’ personal opinions.

Students have the responsibility to view their professor as a partner in their education, not as bent on causing students anxiety and frustration.

Students have the responsibility to understand that the professor is not primarily responsible for making students understand; it is students' job to study, ask questions, and learn.

Students have the responsibility to keep an open mind and to try to comprehend what the professor and the texts are trying to get across to them.

Students have the responsibility to read the assignments carefully, noting important ideas and rephrasing information in their own words.

Students have the responsibility to work through examples in the assignments and in class discussions or lectures and to ask questions if they do not understand concepts or examples.

Students have the responsibility to do every bit of assigned homework with proper attention and thought.

Students have the responsibility to ask for help when they need it; help is available from the professor, from other students, from the Writing Center, the Student Success Center, and the Reading Center, and from other resources on campus.

Students have the responsibility to accept that their work will be evaluated in terms of the skills any student in this course is expected to gain.

Students have the responsibility to try to integrate the information from this course into other courses and into other areas of their lives.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: In this course, we will comply with EIU's academic integrity policy (<https://www.eiu.edu/judicial/studentconductcode.php>). I have absolutely no tolerance for plagiarism or cheating. Please note that "plagiarism or cheating" includes (but is not limited to) the following:

1. **quoting** from a source without citing that source and/or without using quotation marks
2. **paraphrasing** from a source without citing that source
3. turning in a paper with an incorrect or incomplete **works cited list**
4. **falsifying** data
5. turning in **someone else's work** as your own—this includes (but is not limited to)
 - a. **copying** another's work from a quiz or assignment
 - b. turning in work that **someone else wrote**
 - c. using online or hard copy **paper mills**
6. turning in **your own work that was written for another course**, without prior permission from both professors.

Violations of EIU's academic integrity policy will result in an **automatic failing grade** in this course and notification of the Office of Student Services. For more information, see www.eiu.edu/judicial. **In this class, you may use either MLA, APA, ASA, or Chicago citation styles. Whichever style you choose, you must use consistently and correctly.**

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

All writing for grade will be completed outside of class and should be typed, double-spaced, in a standard font, with your name and page numbers on every page, and submitted via D2L. **No paper copies; if you are having problems with D2L, tell me, and seek technical help.** When you submit work via D2L, please be sure that all parts of the assignment are in one document, whenever possible; never submit the Works Cited as a separate document. If you use sources,

you must cite them! Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies is an interdisciplinary field of study; therefore, you may use any citation format you like—just use it correctly and consistently. If you do not like any citation format, just go with MLA. It's what we teach in ENG composition classes at EIU and it's pretty easy.

ALTERNATIVE PARTICIPATION GRADE OPPORTUNITY

If you are quiet and not inclined to speak up in class, this is the opportunity for you! Any student who posts their in-class discussion notes in the appropriate discussion board (labeled "Notes <date>") within three days of the date can earn up to 2 participation points for that day (2 points for clear, accurate, readable notes; fewer points for notes that are confused, disorganized, etc. 0 points for notes others cannot read or understand). You may post your notes by: a. typing them up; b. scanning them; or c. taking a photo of them with your phone and posting it, if your handwriting is clear and legible. Remember, if we can't read your notes, you will not earn any participation points for them.

TESTS

You will have five unit tests. These tests will be fairly short, take-home, and completed on D2L, and you may complete them while you are doing the assigned readings for that unit (that is, open-book). You may take each test two times; the higher of your two scores will count for your grade.

BLOGS ASSIGNMENT

Your primary writing grades in this class will be the five blogs and the final reflective essay. Each blog post will address in some way a key concept or idea from our course materials. While you will be graded on your understanding of the concept or idea as it is defined in our course materials (and not in dictionaries), your blog post should mostly aim to analyze one (and only one) concrete example of the key concept or idea that you find through research. Your example can come from anywhere: popular culture, literature, politics, materials you have read in other classes, etc. A good example to look at is Roxane Gay's blog post about the concept of "victim" at <http://the-toast.net/2014/12/10/bad-victims/> or this one on the phrase "like a girl" by Tracy Moore: <http://jezebel.com/always-ad-about-like-a-girl-taunt-will-make-you-cry-lik-1598187426> Notice that both blogs start with the concept and then use specific stories and examples to get us to think a little differently about it. For more information about this assignment, please look for the document titled "Blog Posts" in D2L.

REQUIRED BLOG TOPICS: Blog 1 Feminisms; Blog 2 Social Construction of Gender; Blog 3 Privilege and/or Oppression; Blog 4 Intersectionality; Blog 5 Praxis.

HOW TO START YOUR BLOG: read and learn about the required blog topic. Then find a current event, news story, song, TV program, movie, book, or anything else that provides an example that helps us understand that concept. Now, be engaging and creative as you explain why that thing you found is an example of that vocabulary word. Be sure to define the concept using our course materials and explain it for readers who do not know it.

Blogs will be graded on the following criteria:

- a. how strong and clear your explanation of the vocabulary word is;
- b. how well you explain how your example is an example of the vocabulary word;

- c. how well you use course materials and course concepts to support your claims (i.e., show that you have done your reading and thought about it);
- d. how well you have written (in whatever style you have chosen—academic, casual, creative, conversational);
- e. whether you use active links to cite your materials;
- f. whether you use images.

If you have questions about the blog assignment, please ask them in class, via email, or in my office hours.

GROUP PRESENTATION PROJECT

At the end of week five, you will be assigned to a group and given a topic and a due date. Your task is to work together with the people in your group to create a fun and interactive learning activity to help other people understand the topic you were assigned. You may do this in any way you choose: a website, a video, a learning game (Google “interactive learning games” for good models), a zine, a set of flash cards/learning cards, or anything else you like. Please feel free to get creative with this! Your group presentation will be due for presentation in class on Dec. 8, 2021.

FINAL REFLECTIVE ESSAY

This essay will function as your final exam in the class. It will be due to D2L on Tuesday, Dec. 14, at 12:30 pm. I will give you an essay prompt with full instructions after the November holiday break.

PARTICIPATION BOOST

If you want to boost your participation grade, you may do so by setting up a study group that meets remotely on a regular basis. I will help you set up study groups if you request them. I will meet with individual study groups when I can, if you would like me to. Each group is required to meet at least two times in the first four weeks of class. After that, if your group continues to meet, your participation grade will be boosted.

BRIEF COURSE OUTLINE

Weeks 1-3 Unit 1 introduction to feminism, Women’s Studies, Gender Studies

Test 1 due Wed., 9/1/21 at noon; Blog 1 due Tue., 9/14/21 at noon

Weeks 4-5 Unit 2 The Social Construction of Gender

Test 2 due Fri., 9/17/21 at noon; Blog 2 due Tue., 9/28/21 at noon

Weeks 6-8 Unit 3 Privilege and Oppression

Test 3 due Fri., 10/1/21 at noon; Blog 3 due Thu., 10/14/21 at noon

Weeks 9-11 Unit 4 Intersectionality

Test 4 due Fri., 10/22/21 at noon; Blog 4 due Thu., 11/4/21 at noon

Weeks 12-13 Unit 5 Feminist Praxis

Test 5 due Fri., 11/12/21 at noon; Blog 5 due Thu., 11/18/21 at noon

Week 14 November Holiday Break—please read Cooper, *Eloquent Rage*, over break

Weeks 15-16 Group Presentation Project and discussion of Cooper, *Eloquent Rage*

Week 17 Final exam period is T, 12/14/21, 12:30-2:30 pm **attendance required**