

University of Massachusetts- Boston  
Women's Studies  
WOST 100: Women & Society  
Spring 2007

Instructor: Chris Bobel, Ph.D.

Office: W-5-009

Phone: 617.287.6781 (with private voice mail—not checked every day)

Office Hours: **11:15-12:45 Tuesday and Thursday** and by special arrangement. Please see me before or after class or email me to schedule a meeting.

Email: [chris.bobel@umb.edu](mailto:chris.bobel@umb.edu)

Teaching Assistants:

SECTION 1: Kelly Kwedor

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Appointments by special arrangement.

SECTION 2: Carina Wine

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Appointments by special arrangement.

\*\*\*\*Please note: (We will respond to your email ONLY Monday-Friday between 9 AM and 5 PM). \*\*\*\*\*

## Course Description:

This course is designed to introduce you to the established and growing field of Women's Studies in the contemporary, mostly US-centered context.

Throughout the semester, we will engage two projects simultaneously. First, we will develop our classroom as a community of learners and resist some of the old conventions of traditional classroom settings. Second, we will draw upon a diverse array of writing, classroom exercises, videos, guest speakers, and discussions to engage what's called an "intersectional analysis" of women's experience. This means that we will not only consider the dynamics of gender in women's lives, but we will also explore how women's experiences of race, class and sexuality and other axes of identity impact women's lives as well. Ultimately, this course will challenge us each to honestly address the complicated and controversial issues we raise as well as relate them to our own lives in meaningful and productive ways.

Because WOST 100 uses primarily a sociological lens to examine how gender interacts with social institutions such as the family, education, the media, law and government and how that interaction shapes human behavior, the course meets the DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENT FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORIAL SCIENCE and US DIVERSITY.

## Course Goals:

1) To instruct and practice verbal reasoning (critical thinking).

This means that we will challenge assumptions about gender, race, class and sexuality and other ascriptive categories in the interest of understanding oppression and the power of social institutions. To this end, we will not only describe women's various experiences but we will ask questions that require you to first, critically address the material we read and second, formulate well-reasoned positions. Questions like: Why are so many girls and women struggling with eating disorders? Why do only 1 out of 10 women report when they have been raped? What is the link between the global economy and women's oppression? are all examples of the kind of inquiry we will engage.

2) To instruct and practice clear writing.

This course will provide you with varied opportunities to hone the craft of reflective and analytical writing including 1) spontaneous (and ungraded) pieces of writing in reaction to in-class experiences, 2) a Fact Sheet for in-class distribution and presentation and 3) a report and critique of a public event related to course content. Specifics of the various assignments follow below.

## Required Reading:

Available at University Bookstore:

1) Kirk, Gwyn & Okazawa-Rey, Margo (Eds). (2006, 4th Ed). *Women's Lives: Multicultural Perspectives*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.

*PLEASE GET THE 4th EDITION!!!!!! There is a difference between the editions. I know it is tempting to get your hands on earlier (and cheaper)*

*editions, but it is imperative that we rely on the most up to date information in this contemporary issues class.*

2) A small number of additional readings will be available on eReserves through Healey Library's website. Go to . <http://docutek.lib.umb.edu/eres/>. Our class-specific password is **WOMEN**.

## **Course Assignments:**

**5 Quizzes -----worth 10% each. I will drop your lowest quiz grade—worth 40% of course grade.**

These quizzes (in various, mostly "objective" formats) will require you to demonstrate that you've done the assigned reading and can adeptly work with the material. Consult the Schedule below for quiz dates.  
**ABSOLUTELY NO MAKE-UP QUIZZES! IF YOU MISS CLASS ON A QUIZ DAY, YOU WAIVED YOUR RIGHT TO TAKE THE QUIZ. LESSON TO THE WISE: PLAN ACCORDINGLY**

### **"Beyond the Classroom" Report and Critique of Public Event**

**Value: 25% of course grade**

*Assignment Specifics and Model Attached to this Syllabus. Hard copies accepted only. I do not accept assignments as email attachments.*

### **"Beyond the Text" Fact Sheet**

**Value: 25% of course grade**

*Assignment Specifics Attached to this Syllabus. Model will be distributed at a later date. Hard copies accepted only. I do not accept assignments as email attachments.*

*\*\*\*\*\*I reserve the right to require an in-person with myself or your TA if you earn a D or lower on an assignment (this includes a series of poor grades on quizzes). If this is necessary, we will contact you by email or in person to arrange a mutually convenient time for conversation\*\*\*\*\**

## **Late Work Policy**

Late Fact Sheets and Report/Critiques will be accepted BUT penalized as follows:

For every day late (including weekend days),, the grade drops one level. For example, a FACT SHEET earning an A but turned in one day late (this includes weekend dates and days that class does not meet) earns an A-. A FACT SHEET earning an A but turned in 2 days late, earns a B+ and so on. .

**Extra Credit Option:**

Extra credit is available in two ways. Each point is worth 1% of your grade, so every point helps. You may earn up to 5 extra credit points.

1) Attend an ADDITIONAL pre-approved event beyond the 1 required for the Report & Critique assignment mentioned above. To earn extra credit, you must:

- a) attend the event for its entirety.
- b) Bring me literature from the event as proof of attendance. If no literature is provided, you must write a 1-page summary of the event. (much looser than the write up required of the assignment)

2) Volunteer for 1 hour at one of the UMB Student Campus Centers. For a list of the centers, go to:

[http://www.umb.edu/students/student\\_life/student\\_clubs/index.html](http://www.umb.edu/students/student_life/student_clubs/index.html).

After volunteering, submit a 1 page summary of your experience (what you did) and your impressions of the center and its mission. You must provide the name of a contact person at the center so that if necessary, I can follow up.

**The extra credit deadline is May 8th. No exceptions!**

**Course Point Breakdown**

Quizzes.....	40
Fact Sheet(includes brief in class presentation).....	25
Report/Critique of Public Event.....	25
Attendance.....	10
-----	100 Points

(Remember: You can add up to 5 POINTS to your total by submitting Extra Credit)

**Attendance:**

Because this course is discussion-intensive, your ON TIME attendance and participation is essential. Students will be expected to attend each class and keep up with the weekly reading assignments so they've got something

learned to say. While I surely recognize that our lives beyond the classroom sometimes make it impossible to make it to class, I do expect you to make every possible effort to attend every class. Hopefully, you will find class time worth your trouble.

**Attendance Policy:**

On-time attendance is worth 10% of your overall course grade (10 points). YOU MUST BE ON TIME TO BE COUNTED AS PRESENT. I will keep the classroom door open until 10 minutes after class begins at which time I will close it and keep it closed. If you reach a closed door, you missed your chance to attend class that day and will be marked absent. I regret instituting this harsh policy, but experience has shown me that without strict rules, students will meander into class throughout the 75 minutes. This is much too disruptive, especially in a course that relies heavily on guest speakers, videos, class exercises and intense, honest and sometimes personal discussion.

You are permitted 3 PENALTY FREE absences netting you the full 10 points allotted. That means, everyone starts with 10 points and can be absent 3 times and still keep those 10 points. Beginning with the 4<sup>th</sup> absence, you will lose points per the following breakdown:

- 4 absences- earn 8 points
- 5 absences-earn 6 points
- 6 absences-earn 4 points
- 7 absences-earn 2 points
- 8 absences-earn 0 points

As for classroom participation, I do not REQUIRE you to participate verbally in class because I recognize that a number of factors make it difficult for students to speak up in this setting. And some of these factors, such as speaking English as a second language, having a shy personality or being new to the college setting can be daunting. But, I do believe that we as community of learners can take steps to make the classroom a relatively safe place for EVERYONE to speak up if they want to. And I do expect that EVERYONE will try his or her best to speak up when so moved. More people will speak up if we all avoid a few familiar obstacles to productive classroom dialogue: 1) coming to class unprepared and 2) fear of sounding stupid. But, both obstacles are avoidable: the former if each student keeps up with the

reading, the latter if we collectively agree to a few ground rules for democratic discussion.

The rules are as follows:

- No attacks based on individual or group characteristics such as gender identity, sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, age or English language skills
- No esoteric terms or reference to materials unless they are known to all (or the speaker is equipped to define/explain their relevance).
- No individual or groups of individuals may dominate discussion. If you are talkative and notice that you are taking a lot of "floor time", pause before you speak up and watch to see if someone else might like a chance. It is my job to create balance in classroom discussion, so I will be helping out and encouraging our more quiet classmates to "find their voice."

#### **Disability Accommodations:**

Section 504 and the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 offer guidelines for curriculum modifications and adaptations for students with documented disabilities. Students may obtain adaptation recommendations from the Lillian Semper Ross Center, ph: 617.287.7430. If you have a disability and require appropriate accommodation, please notify me immediately and seek assistance from the Lillian Semper Ross Center.

#### **Written Assignment Support:**

If you are struggling with either your Fact Sheet or Report/Critique assignments, I urge you to submit a FULL draft to your TA for her review and comment. The TAs are VERY eager to help in this way, but you must respect their own time constraints. **Thus, you must submit your FULL draft no later than 1 week before the assignment's due date.** This gives the TA time to get her feedback back to you so that you can make the necessary changes and get your assignment in on time.

There is also a great resource on campus.. It is:

#### **The Reading, Writing, and Study Strategies Center (RWSSC):**

Academic Support Programs  
Campus Center 1-1300  
617-287-6550

The Reading, Writing, and Study Strategies Center offers tutorial support in analytical language development, with special attention paid to the reading, writing and thinking strategies needed to succeed in General Education courses. The Center is staffed by professional tutors/faculty and by graduate students, primarily from the Education, English, and Applied Linguistics MA programs. The tutors are specially trained for work in critical analysis and language use, the intellectual functions engaged by the General Education Curriculum and upper division course research writing. RWSSC tutors are certified by the CRLA International Tutor Certification Program. In contrast to tutoring in the subject areas, which is restricted to lower division courses, the Center serves students enrolled in undergraduate courses at all levels.

Tutors meet with students for one hour on a weekly basis. Students are encouraged to view the Center not as a one-shot quick fix for their academic problems, but rather as a place to have their difficulties carefully diagnosed and addressed in tutorial sessions over an extended period of time.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:**

Below is the University Policy on Academic Standards and Cheating from UMB Undergraduate University Catalog. For further details, refer to the section on plagiarism. I adhere to this policy, so please take note.

"The first obligation of students is to pursue conscientiously the academic objective which they have determined for themselves. Students are expected to conform to all regulations of the University, of the College in which they are enrolled, and of the classes in which they are registered. It is further expected that all examinations, texts, written papers or other assignments completed as a part of academic programs are the product of the student's own work and effort.

This means that students may not solicit or use unauthorized material or assistance for their own benefit and may not offer or give such assistance to another student. Every written report or similar class assignment must

indicate fully the sources from which the information used is obtained, and any verbatim quotations or paraphrases must be clearly indicated as such and properly credited to the source from which they were extracted or adapted."

**Policy on Incompletes (per UMB's Office of Undergraduate Education):**

The Incomplete (INC) grade may be given by the instructor only when a small portion of the required class work or the final examination has not been completed because of serious illness or extreme personal circumstances. **If the student's record is such that s/he would fail the course regardless of the missing work, s/he fails; an Incomplete is not appropriate in these circumstances.**

Any student who receives an incomplete grade may have a time limit as stipulated within the contract to make up unfinished work **to a maximum of one year**. The triplicate Incomplete Contract Form must be completed and signed by both the instructor and student, who each get a copy along with the Department Chair. These forms can be obtained from the appropriate Departmental Offices.

**(Tentative) Course Schedule:**

**Why Women's Studies? What's Women's Studies? What's Not?**

January 30	Course Overview and Introductions
February 1	CLASS CANCELLED
February 6	pp. 2-9 in Women's Lives (WL) Video: "What a Girl Wants" (Media Education Foundation) 33 mins.

**Histories and Theories of the Women's Movement**

February 8	A Turbo History of the Women's Movement
February 13	Chapter 1 INTRO (pp. 11-22(WL) Lightening Overview of (some) Feminist Theory
February 15	"Patriarchy, the System" (WL) (p. 28-37)



"The Social Construction of Gender" (WL) (pp. 24-27)

Exercise: "Woman, Which Includes Man, of Course"

## **Identities and Social Locations**

February 20

Ch.2 INTRO (WL) (pp. 61-72) (WL)

"The Invisible Knapsack of Privilege" by Peggy McIntosh ON eReserve. Go to .

<http://docutek.lib.umb.edu/eres/>. Our class-specific password is **WOMEN**.

Exercise: The Level Playing Field

**PLEASE NOTE:CHANGE OF LOCATION FOR THIS CLASS  
TODAY WE MEET ON THE 11<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR OF HEALEY LIBRARY.**

February 22

Video: What's Race Got to Do With It? (Cheng) (49 mins)

February 27

"Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only?"(WL)(pp. 113-119)

"A Word about the Great Terminology Question" (WL ) (pp. 110-112)

Exercise: Bags and Beads

QUIZ 1

March 1

Naming Privilege

"A Question of Class" (WL) (pp. 81-88)

**NOTE: MARCH 1-3: UMB Women's Center presents:**

**"The Vagina Monologues", 7pm, Snowden Auditorium (Wheatley)**

## **Women's Bodies**

March 6

Ch. 3 INTRO (WL) (pp. 121-132)

Video excerpts "Barbie Nation" (Susan Stern)

*Class taught by TA Carina Wine*

March 8 Guest Speaker: Dr. Lisa Machoian, Psychologist and Author of *The Disappearing Girl: Learning the Language of Teenage Depression*  
Reading TBA on eReserve. Go to .  
<http://docutek.lib.umb.edu/eres/>. Our class-specific password is **WOMEN**.

March 13 "Cutting Girls Down to Size" (WL) (pp. 132-140)  
Video: "Killing Us Softly" (with Jean Kilbourne ) 34 mins.

March 15 Video: "Dreaworlds 3" (Jhally) (57 mins)

March 20 SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS

March 22 SPRING BREAK-NO CLASS

March 27 What's A Leg Got to Do With It?" (WL)  
"The Story of My Body" (WL)(pp. 149-154)  
Exercise: Product Critique Exercise  
QUIZ 2

### **Representations of Women's Sexuality**

March 29 Ch. 4 INTRO (WL) (pp.165-175)  
"Radical Heterosexuality" (WL) (pp. 178-181)  
Exercise: "A Visit from the Queer Fairy Godmother"

### **MIDTERM COURSE EVALUATIONS**

April 3 Video: "Tying the Knot" (DeSeve) (83 mins)  
"Popular Culture and Queer Representation" (WL)  
(pp. 183-191)  
Distribute In Class Questionnaire

### **Violence Against Women**

April 5 Ch. 6 INTRO (WL) (pp. 249-264)  
Excerpt from *The Female Fear: The Social Cost of Rape* by Gordon and Riger on eReserve. Go to .

<http://docutek.lib.umb.edu/eres/>. Our class-specific password is **WOMEN**.

April 10 "I Am Not a Rapist" (WL) (pp. 267-273)  
Exercise: "You be the Judge"

April 12 Guest Speaker: Nikki Vailia, Victim Witness  
Advocate, Suffolk Superior Court  
QUIZ 3

### **COURSE WITHDRAWAL AND PASS/FAIL DEADLINE.**

#### **The Global Economy**

April 17 Ch. 9 INTRO ( WL) (pp. 387-406)  
"Maquiladoras" (WL) (pp. 407-416)  
"The World Bank, WTO and Corporate Control  
Over Water (WL) (pp. 429-437)

April 19 Video: "Made in Thailand" (Moros & Emery) (33  
mins)

April 24 Now what?  
QUIZ 4  
*Class taught by TA Kelly Kwedor*

#### **Women's Health**

April 26 Ch. 5 INTRO (WL) (pp. 203-207)  
Video: "Period. The End of Menstruation" (Chesler)  
(54 mins)  
Bobel (2006). "Resistance with a Wink: Young  
Women, Feminism and the Radical Menstruating  
Body" on eReserve. Go to .  
<http://docutek.lib.umb.edu/eres/>. Our class-  
specific password is **WOMEN**.

May 1 The American Way of Birth  
Video Clips from: "Midwives: A Living Tradition"  
Excerpt from *Misconceptions* by Naomi Wolf on  
eReserve. Go to .

<http://docutek.lib.umb.edu/eres/>. Our class-specific password is **WOMEN**.

May 3 "Three Generations of Native American Women's Birth Experience" (WL) (pp. 218-225)  
Guest Speaker: Jennifer McSweeney, Certified Nurse Midwife  
QUIZ 5

**Looking Ahead, Looking Back**

May 8 "Public Eyes" (WL) (pp. 203-207)  
Guest Speaker Deborah Sheilds, Executive Director of Mass Breast Cancer Coalition\

May 10 "Making What Will Become" (WL) (pp 592-596).  
Student Feminist Panel  
**Deadline to turn in Report/Critique assignment**  
**Extra Credit Deadline**

May 15 Closure and Reflection Exercise  
Course Evaluations  
Breakfast Potluck and Party!

**“Beyond the Classroom”:  
Report and Critique of Public Event  
Value: 25% of course grade**

Throughout the term, we (Chris, Kelly and Carina (the TAs) will inform you (typically via email, so check your account often), of on and off campus events related (VERY GENEROUSLY) to course content.

You are required to attend 1 event of your choosing and produce a **2 page** report and critique of the event you attended. **YOU ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND AN EVENT WE DIDN'T INFORM YOU OF PROVIDED WE APPROVE IT IN ADVANCE.** Keep your eyes and ears open. Most any event centered on women, gender, sexuality, race, class, age, disability, ethnicity, and immigration will qualify. My aim is to inspire you to act as the increasingly informed student you are--using your developing feminist lens to assess an event related to what you are learning in class.

After you attend that event, you are required to write a report and critique. On page 1, provide a brief summary of the event--the who, what, when, where and why. Be very clear about WHO organized this event and why. Find out what the organizers hoped to accomplish by holding the program. Now, tell me what you learned. What was the major” take away” information for you?

On page 2, provide a brief critique of the event. Was it useful? Comment on the speaker/s or performer/s, the setting, the support materials (if any). Comment on the audience's reactions as one indicator of the event's impact. Tell me: what was especially effective about this event? What lacked? Did the organizers achieve their aim? Why or why not?

Deadline: Due at any time during the term but absolutely **NO LATER THAN May 3<sup>rd</sup>. NO email attachments. You must submit a HARD COPY by the stated deadline.**

**A model assignment is appended here (prepared by former TA Dana Clark)**

**TAs are willing and able to read and comment on FULL drafts of your papers But, you must submit the draft at least 1 week before it is due.**

## **“Beyond the Text”: Fact Sheet**

**Value: 25% of course grade**

Fact sheets are intended to be useful sources of information for classroom use. The aim of this assignment is to push you to do a small amount of research which supplements the material provided in the text. Your job is to produce a succinct, well-organized and accessible tool to which we all will refer during class discussion.

Early in the term, I will circulate a sign up sheet listing dozens of topics. Each student will select a topic for their fact sheet and set to work. The due date of the fact sheet will be listed with each topic (so choose wisely). This is a firm deadline. Late fact sheets will be penalized.

Your fact sheet must include:

- Current data (tables are helpful, but not required) related to the selected topic. **DO NOT SIMPLY RESTATE INFO CONTAINED IN THE TEXT.** The idea is to locate **ADDITIONAL** information to extend, update, refine and deepen our understanding of the subject matter.
- Sources of information fully cited and clearly presented (a **GUIDE TO AVOIDING PLAGAIRISM** is appended to this syllabus to assist you the proper attribution and citation of source material).
- Sources for further information (if folks want to delve deeper--tell them how)

**MOST OF YOU WILL ELECT TO USE THE INTERNET TO SEARCH FOR YOUR DATA AND THAT’S PERMISSIBLE, BUT PLEASE OH PLEASE BE CAREFUL WHEN DOING SO. CHOOSE INFORMATION FROM LEGITIMATE, CREDIBLE and CURRENT SITES ONLY. MY ASSESSEMENT OF YOUR WORK WILL INCLUDE AN EVALUATION OF YOUR SOURCES.** A **GUIDE TO INTERNET RESEARCH** is appended to this syllabus. Please refer to it.

You may **NOT** use Wikipedia as a source or any website that ends in .com.

(stick with .org, .gov, and .edu)

You may NOT cut and paste from your sources. You may paraphrase the text, but you may NOT simply dump it from the original source. Chances are that I will catch you if you plagiarize, so don't risk it.

**\*\*MAKE 32 COPIES FOR DISTRIBUTION TO EVERYONE IN CLASS\*\***

On the day your Fact Sheet is due, you will be required to speak briefly (**no more than 3 minutes**) in front of the class. You will be timed. *This means that you cannot miss class the day your Fact Sheet is due.*

It is your job to

- 1) Introduce your Fact Sheet (that is, orient us to it so that we can get the most out of it)
- 2) Comment on your research process (Tell us BRIEFLY where you looked and why. What research tips can you offer others? )
- 3) Highlight the MOST ARRESTING FACT you uncovered and EXPLAIN WHY you found it so important/surprising, etc.

Your success in doing the above will be factored into your grade (**5% of the total**) on the Fact Sheet. Thus, don't come to class unprepared.

A model fact sheet (created by former TA Dawn Slack) is appended to this syllabus.

TAs are willing and able to read and comment on FULL drafts of your Fact Sheets **But, you must submit your draft at least 1 week before it is due.**