

GCWS Course

Changing Life:

Reading the Intersections of Gender, Race, Biology, and Literature Evaluations Spring 2017

Start with a self-evaluation: Did you achieve your personal goals? How would you have proceeded differently if you were doing this course again? What have been your major personal obstacles to learning more from this course?

- My goal for this class was to gain a greater understanding of social criticism theories and their application to science--beyond what I had already explored in other classes within the UMB program in Critical & Creative Thinking. Before those classes, I had been only passingly familiar with any of this or related material. I certainly achieved this goal. I have been exposed to a great deal more in this area, and feel that I understand enough to at least identify specific areas of interest and continue learning in those areas. A major obstacle for me was simply an unfamiliarity with much of the philosophical thinking on which many of the readings were based. At times, even the method of thinking--analysis, synthesis, assessment of validity--seemed foreign to what I was used to. I think that if I were to repeat this course, I would allow myself to be a bit more free with my analysis and the connections/ideas I explore. I am used to this from literary analysis, but have not practiced that in a very long time. It was a bit frustrating to not have had enough background with prior thought in this area to know whether or not the connections I was making were novel or valid.
- Yes, I feel like I achieved the goals that I set out to with this course. I got to learn about Project Based Learning, gleaned valuable pedagogical insights, formulated things I've been thinking about this year into a plan for future study, gained some theoretical knowledge on the topic matter of the course (Donna Haraway; STS studies; race and gender), had a chance to practice teaching, and even got to write a (short) research paper on a topic in my field of specialization.
- If I were to do the course again, I would begin with more practical ideas about what I wanted to bring with me after the class was over. Because my ideas were very abstract, I ended up spending a lot of time narrowing them down - which I realize is a part of the process, but it did take up time I wished I had back once I became clear about what I wanted to produce.
- I achieved some of my goals. I would have made every Sunday a personal learning journal day, since I really fell behind on those. I also would have asked more EXPLICIT questions regarding each project about what the expectations were and how they would be evaluated.
- I don't feel like I've learned very much over the semester. I do feel like the format of the course made it easy to not learn very much, and often obfuscated key information while creating more work for me.
- I was able to further explore the works of Haraway, Harding, and discovered scholars in my field such as Nancy Krieger and the whole genre of afro-futurism. This course definitely

went beyond my goals, and I was exposed to a lot more material than I expected. With this said, I feel like I wasn't able to go enough into depth with this material but have collected a lot to explore on my own time.

- My personal goals for the class was to further develop my understanding of the philosophy of science. I wanted to find new ways to remain critical of scientific and academic thinking. After only a few weeks in the course I realized these were unrealistic goals given the structure and content of the course. Out of necessity my personal goal become to not allow the course material to continue to cause the level of anxiety it had. I could not be forced to take this class again and therefore cannot comment on how I would proceed differently.

My main personal obstacles were the almost constant confusion and anxiety I felt around interpreting the course assignments and expectations.

- I consider that I have achieved the goals that I had at the starting point; I have to say that my expectations were overpassed in many ways. If I were taking this course again, I would like to be more confident with the uncertain process; because this is not a traditional course, the mechanic of this course is very different and that worried me a lot during the first weeks (probably without reason). On the other hand, the uncertainty of the course has many benefits... we can not assume that we know something before the course, then that pushes us not to be comfortable and to be open to new ideas or reconsider previous ones.

My principal obstacles to learn more could be the lack of full time to dedicate it to this course; now I have four graduate courses also highly demanding. I would prefer had the chance to focus in less courses. About the reduced amount of time, it was reduced due to my personal duties as father of two children (8 and 11); I know that we must divide our self, but sometimes family life demands also to mucho. However, I consider that my dedication was strong, I dedicate many hours per week during this semester to this course. The other personal obstacle is my defective use of English (I am working on it).

- I did not have any goals in this course outside of trying to learn as much as I could and make worthwhile contributions. If I were doing this course again I would make an edited syllabus no more than three pages containing solely what was due and when. The primary obstacles to learning were the number of assignments, lack of clarity in the syllabus, and the anxiety of never really knowing what was due and when. It is impossible to learn when you are panicking.

What have you learned about making a workshop format, PBL course stimulating and productive? What would your advice be to prospective students about how to get the most from a course like this?

- This is my second course in the program with this format. As with that one, the important thing is to allow yourself to explore widely (very easy for me), but for a limited amount of time. Then you must be able to transition quickly and focus more narrowly (difficult for me). Finally, it's important to realize that the final product for each project can't be as comprehensive as a final paper in a more typical class (of medium difficulty for me).

- I've learned tons of practical tactics; role-play, conceptual and situational mapping, ways to lead discussion. I love that this class involved student-led learning, and I hope to apply similar strategies to my own pedagogy.
- I've learned that getting clear about your own goals is really important. This kind of course asks you to be very self-reflexive and think about big topics as they relate to your field of study. I've also learned that building relationships with other students is more important in a PBL course than it is in other courses because it makes the ambiguity more tolerable and encourages risk-taking.
- I would encourage them to be upfront about any confusion they are feeling and to reach out to classmates and teachers early about any questions they have. I'd recommend creating a personal schedule early in the semester so they don't let assignments pile up near the end.
- If I'm brutally honest, I would probably advise a prospective student to not take a course like this. I'd say that the course became much more stimulating as the students became more comfortable in sharing their own interests, so I'd definitely advise a student to do that.
- In order to make the format productive, everybody (including myself) needs to be wholly engaged. The PBL structure works for some students, but not for others. Some students crave structure and need to be told what to do and what will be expected of them. Other students do not do well with structure and aren't so preoccupied with whether expectations are clear. The latter would do well with such a format.
- I have learned that the lack of clarity associated with a class like this does not outweigh the possible benefit. I felt as if most of my time and intellectual effort was wasted on trying to understand the "nontraditional" aspects of the course, which ended up actually being a more confused version of the traditional.
I would warn prospective students about taking this course and advise them not to. I would be leery of courses that try to adopt a PBL approach. There are more productive ways, I believe, to incorporate the ideology of community, student lead learning without adopting problem based learning.
- I liked so much because I have been many years of my life in courses where professor is mediator between the meaning of the world, objects and art, and we (students), must follow him and arrive together to his same interpretation. Thus, this course's scope is opposite, classroom is the place where is the discussion to construct knowledge, and nothing is established before the course starts. Moreover, PBL allows personal exploration of our interest about some issues; we can interact also with criticism, scholarship and mates's™ experiences and then produce our own path.
I would advise future students that this is not a traditional course but it does not impel that this course is a disorder. It has its own process, order, goals. Then, students should know that students and teachers would construct meaning, not only to "receive" meaning. I would like to master the teaching skills to teach literature and arts with this approach.
- Go through the syllabus and copy everything relating to assignments into a new document. Organize it so every class date lists what is due that day in an orderly column. After that, don't sweat too much about the projects and meeting the objectives in the syllabus. Do the

best you can and fix it in the revision, but don't panic about not being able to synthesize everything. Bother the professors any time you have a question about anything.

General evaluation: How did the course meet or not meet your expectations? How did your attitude to doing the course change through the semester? How do you think the course could be improved? What was special about this course (+positive & -negative)? How does it compare with other courses? What would be your overall recommendation to prospective students?

- The course met my expectations. As I said earlier, I think that I allowed myself to relax my internal rules for validation (by corroborating first with prior publications, and only then allowing myself to make my own connections). I certainly would have liked more time to read a bit more widely in the areas covered to be able to feel more conversive with the ideas. However, I'm not sure at all where this time would come from. It is possible that we could have done three PBL projects instead of four and used the extra time for a more directed exploration of the type of theories and analysis explored in the class. However, this may have been much less useful for other students who may have had more of a background in this area.

The PBL nature of this course combined with the very open-ended nature of the investigations makes this course unique. I felt this is all positive. Perhaps it could be overwhelming, but it wasn't for me. As I said, feeling unfamiliar with theories and type of analysis used was somewhat frustrating for me, but this was a welcome and not unexpected challenge, so I wouldn't consider it a negative.

- My attitude toward the course generally improved over the semester as I found ways to apply what I was learning to my own work and especially as the focus of the course shifted toward pedagogy. I love to teach and am about to start teaching in the fall, but my institution doesn't give any training for graduate instructors at all, so I was so thankful for the opportunity to draft syllabi and lesson plans and have practice classes. I also really loved the interdisciplinarity of this environment: it was so cool to hear about all the different projects people were working on in very different fields. I also think that that interdisciplinarity really enriched the experience of learning the theory (like Haraway) because we got to see it being applied in so many different ways. And, finally, I was thrilled to see how diverse everyone's approaches to the task of teaching were; again, the wide mix of student backgrounds really helped bring variety. I think I learned most this semester from watching my classmates work and think and teach.
- The course was special in that the professors allowed us to ask big questions and specialize those questions to our fields. They were enthusiastic about our unique perspectives and offered a lot of helpful feedback. They also did some of the exercises alongside us in class which felt respectful and supportive and increased the sense that it was an exploration. Overall, though, the lack of clarity in the syllabus and the number of disparate assignments were really anxiety-producing. We spent a lot of time talking as a group about how much we wished the syllabus could be simplified because we were so interested in the topic and appreciated the discussions with the professors who were otherwise supportive and inspiring.

- I thought I would really be able to develop my own path of inquiry and really delve deeply into it, but the four-project structure didn't really allow me to dwell too long on any one thing. I guess I found that a little frustrating, although I can see the benefit of allowing yourself to pursue several different lines of inquiry. I think the course could be improved by separating the syllabus proper from the rest of the booklet for clarity. (So a syllabus with JUST the assignments, including weekly readings, with dates. All other information in the booklet.) I also think that we should either get rid of the weekly focal readings or allow more time in class to really discuss them, instead of just going around the table once. I think that the discussions I was able to have with the other students and the one-on-one talks I had with the professors about my independent research was unique to this course and was a really positive experience. But it's also one of the most confusing classes I've taken (mainly due to the syllabus, I think) so that was negative. I think it helps complement other courses I've taken by encouraging me to be more interdisciplinary in my thinking. I think that as long as the changes regarding the syllabus were made, I'd recommend this course to other students.
- I'm generally disappointed in this course. The subject matter was exciting to me, and I'm unhappy that it didn't really come to any kind of fruition. The course absolutely feels disjointed and chaotic, and I feel like students would get a lot more from something that feels more structured, even if that meant less experimentation.
- The course met my expectations, but in a different way. I thought that I would be digging deeper into the theoretical end of my studies in science, but instead I accumulated a wider breadth of resources in fields beyond my own but overlap with my work. I expected to be stretched and have a place to explore these tangents, which the course allowed me to do.

At first, the syllabus was a bit overwhelming, and it became overwhelming towards the end of the course as well. Somewhere in the middle, I was able to get into the flow of it. I also realized that the structure of this course and attitudes of the instructors fostered a collaborative, non-hierarchical space (for example, the instructors often presented projects of their own) while still encouraging independent work and personal lines of inquiry.

I especially would have liked to incorporate more feminist works and questions surrounding gender into my thinking about science and literature. Given that I was taking a critical race theory class, I found that there was a lot of overlap between these two classes. I was able to mold the content of the course to what I was covering in my other courses, but also venture out beyond other course material as well.

The course syllabus could have been more straight forward in terms of a schedule for day to day expectations. It would have been helpful to have the dates next to the class number, just for ease of reference. The assignments were broad, which I liked, but it would have been helpful to have a bibliography from past classes for each project to help us generate our ideas. I don't think we had a bibliography for projects 3 and 4. However, we created a bibliography through rapid PBL for project 3 which was helpful. The syllabus could have been more clear as to how certain projects or participation items were supposed to fit into the broader projects.

- I expected the course to be more content driven, like my previous GCWS courses. It was not. Instead, it was a constant meta analysis of the course itself with very little actual substance.

I began excited at the prospect of an innovative pedagogy. I quickly realized that the unnecessary confusion and lack of clarity were a hindrance to my learning process. By then it was too late to drop the course given my university's timeline compared to that of GCWS courses. After that, unfortunately, I felt myself withdrawing from the curriculum and doing only what was necessary to complete the class. I disengaged.

Perhaps this course could be redeemed if it had a clear, manageable syllabus. It also needs to have some common grounding in the form of content for students. In my opinion, it is too ambitious to combine a multi-discipline student base with a PBL style course.

This course was especially challenging because it felt like a constant struggle to decipher the expectations for the course. It was not how I wanted to be challenged and I have learned to stay away from PBL style courses.

The community of similarly frustrated students was a positive aspect of this course. Also, I felt like the instructors do believe PBL is an innovative and positive experience. They genuinely think this is a productive course. Unfortunately, I do not share their conviction.

- My attitude changed because I was little by little less worried about the uncertain process of this course, until the moment of feel comfortable despite the uncertainty.

The positive aspects are these mentioned before, the openness, the constructive process, the incorporation of our own interest, etc.

No, it cannot be compared...

Recommendation: be open to new ways to construct a class, and new approaches to find intersections and read these.

- The course was far more broad in content and practice than I anticipated. My attitude definitely worsened over the semester as I became more and more unclear about what I was supposed to be doing and "where" I was in the course. It was a shame that such great course content and exploration was ruined by anxiety when interacting with the syllabus. There are way too many assignments to keep them all straight. The participation items actively distract from learning by the very nature of their existence outside of project scaffolding and classroom activities. At one point I was working on project content and structure, a project presentation, keeping a journal, creating annotated bibliographic blog entries, working on revising a previous project, evaluating another student's project, and doing a focal reading all while trying to learn more about feminism, social justice and genetic science. I'm going to total up all the assignments intended to be completed outside of class here-

4 major written products

4 presentations built on those products

4 revisions of products

3 product evaluations of other students

8 annotated bibliographies

10 Journal entries

5 (at least) focal readings

1 syllabus quiz

2 instructor meetings
5 pre-class preparation exercises

That's 46 assignments, some huge, some small, intended to be completed outside of class. It's not so much the volume of word students had to generate, but the variety of assignments that makes the class an anxiety inducing experience. All these assignments leave very little space for a student's personal learning narrative.

Re-read the course description (from the syllabus). Comment on how well the goals expressed there were met and make general and specific suggestions about how these could be better met.

- I think the goals were all met! As I said earlier, it's a bit of a dunk in the deep end for someone who has had no previous experience with literary analysis (I've had a little bit). So, perhaps, more guidance in this area? But I'm really not sure about that. Wrestling with the material is not necessarily a bad thing.
- Yeah, I think this class totally fulfilled these goals. However, I think more sample projects from previous years and less confusion about what a PBL product looks like would have really helped early on.
- While I think this text is beautiful, it foreshadows some of the confusion I experienced. There is a lot of ambiguity in there, and it feels like discussing race, gender, science/genetics, climate change, and literature is possibly just too much to cover in one course, perhaps especially a PBL course with students from different disciplines.
- I think these goals were well met. The discussion-based nature of the classes allowed us to think about the problems outlined above and questions the ways in which we wanted to address them in our own work. The projects allowed us to explore ways we could question knowledge-production in a practical way, which was useful. I think some classes could have been more about discussion instead of jumping from activity to activity. Sometimes I felt like we were gaining momentum in our conversation but had to stop to go on to another activity or project. I think maybe certain classes could be designated discussion days, where we mainly just talked, or maybe we could be more flexible with the class schedule.
- I think sometimes the course wanted to throw us in at the deep end (particularly the Haraway project). I personally don't feel that was the best way to attack the "interpretation of the cultural dimensions of science," because it doesn't feel like we really delved into that collectively. The collective bibliography could've used more structure - most of it was response papers in the first few weeks, and panicked posting at the end. Sharing one paper every other week would've had a steady flow, and I would've been inclined to read other people's entries. Really, to feel like any of the above goals were covered adequately, something would need to go. That might be the course format, that might be some of the ways we use our time, that might be the things we talk about, and it might be a reduction in the number of goals. The quick-fire format both assumed a certain level of knowledge, and also stopped us getting to the level of depth that the complex subject really needed.
- These goals were exactly what I took away from the course, and I did feel like each project adequately addressed the concerns. However, I imagined that there would be more co-

construction of personal bibliographies in the class. I really liked the rapid PBL bibliography construction that forced collaborations among my classmates, and I wish that had occurred earlier in the course and we could practice it more frequently. Maybe instead of posting 8 total annotations a semester, there can be one rapid PBL for each project that involves the instructors in which students create their own individualized bibliographies.

- I'm still confused by this.
- I think that all these goals were achieved.
- I'm not going to answer this directly, but rather point to it as an artifact illustrating what's wrong with the syllabus. This is so broad and asking so many questions at once that it is impossible to digest and process in the context of a feedback form. To answer this sufficiently would take several thousand words, but clearly we don't have time for that, so the choice becomes "do your own version of this assignment" or "panic about not being able to answer it sufficiently." Usually both happens. That sums up the class. Imagine you have been given 20 minutes to read this, reflect on your 5-month experience and answer it critically.

Comment on any of the following items you have not already covered above. Size of the class?

- Seemed fine.
- Perfect.
- Great
- I liked the size.
- Size of the class... Fairly big at the start, small at the end. I think the rate of student dropout should be a big indicator that something needs to change if this course is run in future.
- The size of the class was perfect. Sometimes attendance was limited, but that made for more intimate discussions.
- The small class size was excellent. This class would have suffered tremendously had it been any bigger.
- It was appropriated, in fact, it is now more appropriated because some of the classmates quit the course.
- Class size was great. 10-12 is perfect.

Classroom dynamics, discussions, and interactions?

- These were managed very effectively. I was the only (consistently) online participant which created its own technical issues, but these were well mitigated.
- Fantastic and rich intellectual exchange.
- The students were all engaged and supportive of one another.
- Dynamics were great. I really liked everyone, professors included, and I felt everyone brought something interesting to the table that really made me think. I also felt like my contributions were always appreciated. Because the dynamics were good, discussion and interactions were good, too.

- Generally good. Fellow students were knowledgeable and had thoughtful insights. I'm not convinced we used our class time effectively, but I do think we have a strong group of students finishing the course.
- It was such a pleasure to be in a class with students in other fields, from other backgrounds, and with different interests than mine. The class activities and format allowed for us to develop strong cohesion and learn from one another. I think this class was full of really brilliant, like-minded scholars!
- The classroom dynamic was very good. Instructors were open warm and friendly. The other students were also excellent people.
- Classroom and out classroom (blog and email ways) were useful, I was worried about disturb by email, but professor always were able.
- Classroom interactions, discussions and dynamics were my favorite part of this course. Class time was amazing and the only reason I did not drop the course.

Assignments, including presentations: Helpful for your learning? Number? Difficulty?

- They all seemed to be appropriate. They were all helpful for learning the material. The amount and difficulty seemed fine as well.
- Way too many. I appreciated that we could skip 20%, but this was actually stress inducing because I couldn't figure out what combination of things would add up to 20% or not, and I knew I wasn't hitting all the bases, so I had a lot of background stress even after sitting down to the math and thinking that I thought that perhaps I might possibly hopefully be doing just fine.
THEN AGAIN. I have a significant bias. All the other grad classes I have taken have had one major written assignment (and perhaps two shorter ones) that were the entire grade, so maybe it was just my own discomfort with this different way of doing things that made this stressful.
- Too many separate assignments. If the class had perhaps one or two main assignments and spent the semester working toward those, (without all of the annotations, learning journals, drafts and summaries of products, situational mappings, etc.) then I think we could have engaged more enthusiastically and deeply with the topic. The readings were longer most weeks than those I've had to read in other classes, and they didn't really feel like they tied into our work as a group. They were interesting, but as we only had a few minutes to discuss them, it feel like it was not necessarily worth the investment of time.
- I found some assignments more helpful than others. I found the last three more helpful than the first because I felt I had a bit more freedom to tailor them specifically to my research interests while still using skills I'd learned in the class. I was somewhat confused about the fourth project and I think I ended up doing a lot of work that turned out to be unnecessary for the project itself (although I hope it will be useful for me in the future.) Maybe we could do three projects and have the fourth be a further revision of one of the first three? Sometimes I found it difficult to juggle revising my previous project, reading and commenting on someone else's, and beginning the next project in the same week, particularly toward the end of the semester.

- Not helpful for my learning. The first and last classes, three classes of presentations, and three classes student-taught, makes eight classes where we either talked about what we already knew or listened to other students do the same, often on subjects that were only tangential to our own study. I think discussing our research is important, but I don't think this is the right format for it.
- I enjoyed the assignments, and they provided me with certain skills such as dialogic note-taking, KQ inquiry, and situational mapping. The presentations were low-pressure but allowed me to transcend boundaries that I usually have for myself. There were a lot of small participation items, and I think that became overwhelming in the end, especially for people who could not make it to class. Nothing posed great difficulty, but I the participation items could have just been transformed into in-class exercises that aided the formulation of the project instead of needing to be tracked.
- I did all the presentations and each was extremely difficult because I was unclear, despite my efforts to understand, what was expected and assigned.
- Yes, because these were challenge, each one of these. Were difficult, of course, but it is part of the challenge.
- Way too many assignments. All assignments lacking the clarity necessary to process and complete them in the short time allowed. Additional, self-directed learning was very difficult with this syllabus.

Instructors:

- Very well done! Everything seemed geared toward making sure we (students) had the support we needed. Open-ended and personalized exploration of the material was strongly encouraged. We were continuously challenged to improve/expand our thinking.
- I loved both of these professors. I thought their teaching and mentorship styles, both very different, complemented each other perfectly. I am so thankful to have had the opportunity to work with each of them.
- The instructors are both obviously brilliant and took an interest in our particular ways of learning, which I really appreciated. I thought their attitude toward collaboration as co-teachers was endearing and inspiring, and I enjoyed that they allowed us to see them grappling with the topic and material as well. At the same time, there seemed to be a contradiction between their obvious desire to create egalitarian dynamics and their actual responses to our feedback. In the end, I ended up feeling like we were being told not to worry too much about the outcomes, but our assignments reflected another mentality.
- My main clarity problem was the syllabus, discussed above. I think maybe more time could have been spent introducing each project, going over the expectations, and maybe even pointing us toward specific examples from past years? I only suggest this because sometimes I would get feedback on my drafts and revisions that surprised me. They were very helpful and generous with their time outside of class.
- Instructors seem very nice. It seemed hard to get a clear answer from them, and it sometimes seemed like they were more interested in the teaching framework than the teaching. This class needs to be better taught, but I think the issue is the format rather than the personnel.

- Although I think the class could have used some more weekly reminder e-mails about what was due the next week, I feel that the instructors were incredibly engaged and motivated throughout the whole class. Nobody's ideas were turned down, and the instructors provided such great insights and nudges in different directions that I had not thought of. I think they had great chemistry working together and were communicative with one another. I was also humbled by the amount of dedication the instructors had to each one of us and our interests. They took time out of their days (and nights) to skype or talk on the phone with us outside of class and develop close relationships with us.
- Instructors are very nice and well intentioned however I never gained clarity on what we were doing in the course.
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- Both instructors were fantastic. Class time was very productive.

What (if anything) did you gain anything in this course that you would not have been able to get at your home institution?

- Uh. One of the profs was the program head at my institution, so the instruction method was obviously familiar. I've only had limited experience w/ UMB, so I can't say for sure, but the focus and material covered seem to be different that what's offered there--at least in the regular CCT program offerings.
- Absolutely. My home department tends to be insular and suspicious of interdisciplinary work. This was a breath of fresh air.
- This class was much more intellectually stimulating than the classes I take in my home institution.
- The interdisciplinary nature of the course is definitely not something I would have gotten at my own school. I really liked that.
- Making new contacts at different institutions.
- I don't think I would have gotten such freedom to explore material, such as fiction, outside of my field. Usually in my home institution, there are very rigid boundaries about who can study what.
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- The multidisciplinary discipline, the PBL approach, the link with science, almost all. Is sad to write it.
- I gained a lot from this course! It's going to take a few weeks for it to all process. I have avenues of inquiry that I would have liked to inform my work during the semester, but there were too many assignments to pursue them. I can pursue them now and that's exciting.

Would you take another consortium seminar? Why or why not?

- Sure! But I think I'd still be mostly interested in something involving the examination of science or environmental issues. However, I complete my program this semester.
- Definitely, if I were not done with classwork already. YIPPEE
- I'm not sure. I felt stressed by the number of assignments.

- I think I would, although I'm not sure I'd take another PBL course. I love the emphasis on self-directed learning, but felt a bit lost sometimes. But I think that a clearer syllabus would help.
- I have in the past, and it was the best course I've ever taken. I feel strongly about the Consortium and think it's a valuable asset. However, if I had taken this class first, I don't think I would've considered taking another Consortium class.
- Yes! This experience has made me want to take more consortium seminars.
- Yes. I have taken other great consortium courses that were very different from this one.
- Yes! But I don't know if my university would allow that.
- Yes I would. I enjoyed the breadth explored, just too many assignments.

Write out neatly a synthetic statement (1 or 2 paragraphs) evaluating this course. (You might build on/build in your comments from the other pages.)

- The PBL nature of this course combined with the very open-ended nature of the investigations makes this course unique. Students are asked to explore widely, but quickly, then focus in on a specific area of interest, and finally create a coherent presentation and written product--four times! There is a focus on science and technology, but by bringing in social criticism and literary analysis, the options for each of the projects are wider than, perhaps any other course. This is exciting and challenging. It is a chance to allow yourself to explore unfamiliar areas and make new connections, but it is also easy to get lost if you are not keeping track of your timeline. Overall, a very worthwhile challenge.
- In the final reading for this course (*Girl with a Brown Crayon*), which is fresh in my mind because I read it yesterday night, I stumbled across this fantastic quote: "I require passion in the classroom. I need the intense preoccupation of a group of children and teachers inventing new worlds as they learn to know each other's dreams. To invent is to come alive. Even more than the unexamined classroom, I resist the uninvented classroom." This, to me, could serve as the epigraph for this entire course: a group of people united by curiosity and interest, taking steps deliberately outside of their institutional context to reinvent the classroom. In that space, I felt like our personal relationships to our work were foregrounded, our frames of reference were questioned, and our objects of study and practice of pedagogy came alive in ways they never have before. At least, this was true for me. I wholeheartedly recommend (as long as you are prepared to plan ahead and invest a lot of time in homework!)
- The questions the course is built around are very intriguing and important, but there are just so many disparate assignments, and the syllabus is unclear.
- tl;dr -- Great discussions, confusing syllabus.
- I have not enjoyed this course, which is unfortunate because I was hoping for much more from it. I'd argue that it's by far the worst course I've taken as a grad student, from feeling disorganized, to the amount of time it used, to the lack of real learning. There's very little room for ideas to breathe. It's unfortunate, but I don't think this course should be run in its current format.
- I accumulated a wider breadth of resources in fields beyond my own but overlap with my work. I expected to be stretched and have a place to explore these tangents, which the

course allowed me to do. At first, the syllabus was a bit overwhelming, and it became overwhelming towards the end of the course as well. Somewhere in the middle, I was able to get into the flow of it. I also realized that the structure of this course and attitudes of the instructors fostered a collaborative, non-hierarchical space (for example, the instructors often presented projects of their own) while still encouraging independent work and personal lines of inquiry.

I enjoyed the assignments, and they provided me with certain skills such as dialogic note-taking, KQ inquiry, and situational mapping. The presentations were low-pressure but allowed me to transcend boundaries that I usually have for myself. The syllabus could have been more clear as to how certain projects or participation items were supposed to fit into the broader projects.

- This course was unnecessarily confusing. I am disappointed with the content provided. The focus on the fact that the course was PBL distracted from engaging the serious topics promised.
- This was a marvelous course; it was an individual and scholar experience. Then, there is no reason to avoid it despite the strange of the connections and approaches that it implies. This course help us to consider that we must move from our academic traditional approach and be able to construct our own knowledge and the social knowledge.
- It was so innovative and fun to explore genetics and feminism through literature and then through social science. Using separate academic fields to explore one or two topics is a really rewarding way to learn.