Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies
FACULTY SELF-EVALUATION
WGS.700.Gender, Race, and the Complexities of Science and Technology

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On the space provided below, please comment your experience proposing and teaching a course with the GCWS.

(You might consider: reflections on team-teaching; whether or how this experience or course has impacted your teaching or research; thoughts on the course development process, classroom and facilities, or GCWS office support; suggestions for future teaching teams; whether or not you would teach with the GCWS again, etc.)

The evaluations are a tool designed to help the GCWS assess areas of strength and areas of improvement so that we can continually improve our course offerings and our process of course development and faculty support. The evaluations are shared with the GCWS Curriculum Committee and in some cases, our Board of Directors.

- Personally I am deeply indebted to GCWS for the repeated opportunity to co-teach Gender, Race and the Complexities of Science and Technology and to the co-teachers for jumping in and trying out the model that I have carried over from one offering to the next.
- Each time I learn so much and, even more so, have many threads exposed for further learning from the unique mix of students, from working with a co-teacher who has a different background and experience from me. I also find myself curious about what doesn't get talked about or delved into as much as I expected with any given cohort. (This time, for example, the questions and theory from Science and Technology Studies wasn't grabbed on to by many students.)
- This time, everything that was generated in the course, including audio recordings, have been posted to a private wordpress blog, to which all participants can continue to have access. The blog is not without its problems (e.g., signifying sometimes, despite our instructions, that casual writing is OK, that work can be submitted online when the student is ready—aka late), but is something worth pursuing and grappling with if the course is approved to be offered again.
- Two technical routines that we used seem worth continuing (and worth considering by other courses): Turning on audacity to audio record the session and make it available to students who missed the class or some of it; Having a fixed URL for a google hangout, which we turned on when students were home sick or otherwise unable to be present in person.
- From the perspective of offering the course again, what follows are some notes about what worked well (and thus would be continued) and some notes on what needs further development before one could say it is working well.

Notes on items to continue

* The same course structure would be retained; the approach has worked well each time.
* An initial class that makes explicit the pedagogy that runs through the whole course and begins the process of students making connections with each other.
* Invite "alums" of the course back for the first session or two to help ease students into the unusual dynamics of the course.
* Foster explicit discussion and reflection on the unusual learning dynamics of the course.
* Combining all materials into one online place-the blog-with a menu of shortcuts to specific items when helpful.
* Carry over annotated bibliography entries and, with permission, projects from previous years to serve as resources and models for current year.
* Assigning a default common reading for each week (but with the option of students choosing substitution), with annotations to be posted on the blog and 1-minute check-in at the start of class; selected from the required and recommended texts and ordered so that a scaffold or framework is built up in parallel with the cases.
* Establish a routine of reflection/synthesis/feedback in the last 10 minutes of every class.

Notes on items to develop or continue to develop
* Cases will be revised to match the background of the two instructors (especially to foster students undertaking historical projects).
* In-class and video tutorials on blogging to make it a valuable guide and resource for all students (not only the tech-comfortable ones) and to counter undesired effects of using a blog (e.g., inconcise writing).
* Turn requirement of office hour sessions to discuss PBL projects into a routine for all students.
* Guidelines for each assignment summarized in the flow of the syllabus, albeit with reminder that the aim is for the student to pull each assignment in a direction that connects with their interests.
* Provide a set of issues to be noted for each of the common readings, with the expectation that each student could speak to any of the items during the check-in.
* Shorter presentations, esp. final presentations, allowing more time for discussion and not going over the end-of-class.
* More word-of-mouth publicity to recruit additional students with the expectation that a fraction will withdraw once they appreciate that the course requires an equal commitment to their required courses, thesis preparation, etc. Employ "alums" from the natural sciences and from historical fields to try to recruit more students from those realms.
* Require group work in one of the instructor-designed cases (so as to fill out the students' experience of the range of approaches to teaching using PBL cases).
* Bring visitors from afar into presentation sessions via google hangout.
* Additional items that emerge after digesting the experience of the course and evaluations from this spring (http://grst.wikispaces.umb.edu/Evaluations).