RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK
COURSE OUTLINE

Women’s Issues
19:910:564

Semester: 
Day & Time: 
Room: 

Instructor’s name
Office location:
Phone number:
E-mail:

Office Hours:

I. Catalog Course Description

Examines women in different parts of the world; the institutional factors and values of society that impact on personal roles, status, and discrimination of women; and the social and individual problems that affect women because of their gender. Feminist theories and feminist practices that facilitate institutional and individual changes are discussed.

II. Course Overview

This is an elective course focused on gaining an understanding of the condition and status of women in our society and the processes of gender differentiation and gender discrimination. The course will explore the bio-psychosocial aspects of women’s development and analyze the institutional forces and values that impact on both women’s development across the life cycle and women’s roles and status in today’s world. Emphasis will be placed on how these factors relate to the practice of social work on the micro, meso, and macro levels. The course will examine how the traditional stereotypes and psychological theories of women have established norms and values, and frequently, have led to misconceptions and limitations of female capacities. Course content includes consideration of the nature of gender discrimination as it intersects with other biases such as ageism, racism, and homophobia. Various theories of feminism will be discussed, and current issues in the field will be addressed.

III. Place of Course in Program

This course is an elective.

IV. Course Objectives

1. To familiarize the student with the theoretical background and literature on the bio-psychosocial development of the female.

2. To familiarize the student with diverse theories of feminism and to understand their application to current issues of feminist concern.
3. To develop an awareness of women’s issues in specific cultures, nations, and religious settings.

4. To study the traditional roles and relationships of women as well as to explore alternative life styles and options.

5. To identify and analyze the norms, values, and institutions that result in gender discrimination and the power differential of women.

6. To integrate into social work practice an understanding of the issues that confront women today; to learn to identify leadership roles and tasks which will enable women practitioners to institute strategies of change in micro-, meso-, and macro-systems.

V. Required Texts

There is no one textbook that is adequate for our purposes, given the breadth of our work on women’s issues in this class. For this reason, we are going to be reading from a wide range of interdisciplinary books and journals.

To access the readings, go to eCompanion (see section later in syllabus), which can be accessed at http://rutgersonline.net. Readings are listed in alphabetical order by author’s name under the appropriate topic.

VI. Course Requirements

Course Format

While this course is founded upon student participation – a critical aspect of your grade – it will utilize lectures, videos, guest presentations, and group exercises. As professional practitioners and advocates, it is essential for social workers to articulate ideas clearly and persuasively. It is important that everyone feel free to participate in classroom activities, discussion, and assignments. Learning involves dialogue and exchange, taking chances, sharing new ideas with others. Whether you recognize it or not, all of you are experts in some arenas of social work practice. All students are encouraged to participate through discussions in class, both small and large groups, and with the instructor during office hours and via e-mail.

This course requires graduate level reading, writing, and analytical skills. Students are to come to each class prepared to actively participate in discussions about reading assignments and previous lecture materials. The papers will be graded both on substance and on the ability of the student to write succinctly and in terms understandable to a wide audience.

During this course, it may be difficult to disguise references to specific organizations and people, so such information must stay in the classroom. Confidentiality is vital.
Respect for others in the classroom. Social work courses are often messy and ambiguous, with room for multiple and diverse perspectives. We all must attempt to treat each other with respect when opinions are shared. Language should be used which recognizes diversity and is respectful of others. It is also imperative, as we struggle with complex political, personal and social issues, that we not silence others by assuming that there are “politically correct” lines of thought that cannot be challenged. Let us attempt to struggle for intellectual growth and mutual respect as we endeavor in this process!

Attendance. Students are expected to attend class (and be on time), which is essential for learning from lecture and class discussions, and for socialization to the profession of social work. Attendance and participation will affect 10% of the course grade. Students who miss more than a total of 3 classes will not receive a passing grade for the class. Students who leave during the break will be marked as absent for that class. Absences because of religious holidays are allowed with prior permission from the instructor. Consistent lateness to class will also result in being marked absent.

The use of cell phones (including text messaging), blackberries, PDAs, or any similar type of electronic device is not permitted in class. Please turn them off prior to class. If there is an emergency and you need to leave your cell phone on, please turn it to vibrate and attend to the call in the hallway so that you will not disturb your colleagues.

eCompanion. Course syllabus and readings will be available through eCompanion. To find the course, go to http://rutgersonline.net. The Rutgers NetID is the standard login credential for RutgersOnline, however, your initial password will be unique to RutgersOnline and will not necessarily be the same password that you use for a Rutgers email account (e.g. eden, pegasus, clam). Should you have any questions about your netID and password, please email webmaster@ecompanion.rutgers.edu or call 732-932-4702.

Course Assignments:

There are 5 assignments for this course.

1. Journal (20%): Students are expected to keep two pages weekly journal for two readings (one page per reading). The journal is a place to reflect upon the readings you selected for that week. It is due every week.

2. Class discussion facilitator (10%): All students are expected to lead class discussions at least once. The student(s) need to facilitate class discussion by preparing discussion questions and issues based on the assigned weekly readings. It is due every week. (At the end of each discussion, the class will be asked to evaluate and grade the performance of the facilitator).

3. Film Reflection Paper (20%): Students are required to provide a reflection paper based on a film that deals with women’s issues. They can choose a film available at the Livingston Media Library or at the Blockbuster. While connecting the topics discussed in the class, students are required to write what the contents of the film indicate for
women’s issues related to social work profession. Requirements of the paper include the following.

1) Connect the contents of the film to the topics discussed in the class and readings.
2) Identify and discuss how women are portrayed in the film & what you think of those portrayals.
3) Identify and discuss how social system (family, neighborhood/community, workplace, government, societies, public policies, etc) treat women & what you think of those treatments.
4) Discuss how particular situation/content/process of the film contents might be re-framed toward a more feminist approach.
5) Discuss broad implications of the film for gender related issues and/or social work practice of the film.

6) Remember the following as well:
   o Provide your full name and the title & year of the film on the front page
   o At least 5 pages long
   o Should be coherent, logical, and well-written, typo-free papers
   o Should use subheadings, organizing your discussions & thoughts
   o Should not contain summary of the film
   o Should be as concrete and specific as possible - referring to particular images, scenes, motifs, etc. in the film
   o The film reflection paper is due on the 8th class

4. Final Research Paper on Women’s Issues (40%): Students will be required to select a topic of their interest that concerns an issue relevant to women. This can be an issue discussed in class, or something else that is pre-approved by the instructor. They need to research the topic in depth and provide information on the scope and impact of the issue on girls/women, as well as potential treatment or programmatic solutions. The requirements are the following.

1) First, choose a topic of your interest that is closely related to women’s social and economic, and political status in our society.
2) Identify and discuss the importance and significance of the topic.
3) State “what is it, exactly, regarding the topic that you want to research in the paper” (e.g. the issue as a social problem, theory that explains the problem, policy responses, effectiveness of policy responses, guidelines for practice, etc).
4) Review the literature thoroughly & systemically.
5) Discuss policy and practice implications of the contents of your research.
6) Conclude your paper by offering brief summary of your paper (in a couple of sentences) and your final thoughts on the topic.
7) Remember the following as well:
   o Normally around 15-18 pages long
   o Should be coherent, logical, and well-written, typo-free papers
   o Should use subheadings, organizing your discussions & thoughts
   o Should have introduction as well as conclusion sections
   o Should cite all others’ work (scholarly publications are preferred) that you used
   o Should follow APA writing style
   o The final research paper is due on the last day of class.
5. Final paper presentation (10%): All students will be asked to present their final papers in the last two class sessions. (At the end of each presentation, the class will be asked to evaluate and grade the performance of the presenter). It is due on the last two days of the class.

Grading:

Grading for this MSW course is as follows:

- 94-100 = A
- 80-86 = B
- 70-74 = C
- 87-93 = B+
- 75-79 = C+
- Below 70 = Failed (F)

A = Exceptional or outstanding work; student demonstrates full understanding of material, displays unusual analytical and/or creative ability; extremely thorough work; must be well organized and conform to accepted standards of writing including correct grammar, accurate spelling, etc. Work is completed by due date.

B+ = Above average work in terms of understanding material and ability to apply material from lectures and readings to own proposed project. Work must be organized and conform to accepted standards of writing. Work is completed by the due date.

B = Good work; demonstrates understanding of material; written materials well organized and conforms to accepted standards of grammar, spelling, punctuation, etc. Work is completed by the due date.

C = Acceptable work, similar to C+ but reveals greater problems in applying the concepts and techniques to own work, fails to cover some important point(s). Some problems in organizing and presenting written materials.

The quality of the writing as well as the content is important, so students should check spelling and grammar as well as sentence and paragraph construction. It is a very good idea to write a draft of your papers and then make an outline of your draft before preparing final versions. This helps assure that your paper is flowing in a coherent manner and that you are effectively making and supporting your main points.

Written work should meet basic standards of writing proficiency, and should conform to accepted standards of citation. The format found in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA) should be used for all papers. If you are unsure of how to cite sources, please see the instructor. Remember that plagiarism is a serious offense and violates the standards for academic integrity. Written assignments are graded based on the following criteria:

- thoroughness and completeness of content;
- clarity and logic of presentation;
- evidence of critical thought;
- quality of writing.
Late Assignments: All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date assigned. Grades will be reduced by 10 points if the assignment is late or incomplete. (Exceptions will be made only in extreme circumstances and must be approved by the instructor PRIOR to the due date.) If a due date conflicts with a religious observance, please consult with the professor prior to the assignment’s due date.

Incomplete grades: Incompletes will only be granted at the discretion of the instructor under special circumstances. It is the student’s responsibility to request an Incomplete from the instructor before the end of the semester. A request signed by the student and the faculty member must be on file when grades are submitted.

VII. Library Resources

The Rutgers University library system contains a very impressive collection of resources and materials that will be of great assistance to you as you complete assignments for this class and your other graduate courses. Many of these materials can be accessed on-line. The university librarians offer free tutorials on using the in-library services and on-line search tools; understanding how to navigate these tools is vital for ensuring timely, thorough, and proficient completion of the assignments for this course.

Some library tools that may be of particular relevance to this course:
Under the main library website, check out the following:
http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/index.shtml

a. The Electronic Reference Sources under the Reference link. You can find on-line links for the APA Style Manual, assistance with grammar and writing, and many other useful connections under (see Style Manuals).
b. Subject Research Guides under the Research Resources link. The Social Work category contains links to Government Resources (state and federal websites relevant to policy research) and numerous other resource sites and reference collections.
c. RefWorks, a web-based bibliography and citation manager.

VIII. Course Evaluation

Rutgers University issues a survey that evaluates both the course and the instructor. This survey is completed by students toward the end of the semester; all answers are confidential and anonymous. An additional mid semester evaluation may be distributed.

You are also encouraged to provide me with feedback on the course content and format during each class session, as well as during my office hours: Are the material and concepts presented in a clear manner? Is adequate time being given to individual topics? Are different learning styles being accommodated?

IX. Academic Integrity Policy
All work submitted must be your own. It is unethical and a violation of the University’s Integrity Policy to present the ideas or words of another without clearly and fully identifying the source. Inadequate citations will be construed as an attempt to misrepresent the cited material as your own. It is important that you refer to the APA Style Manual for the correct procedures in citing material.

Effective September 2, 2008, a revised Policy on Academic Integrity will go into effect. The new policy is posted at http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/integrity.shtml. Please Note: Violations of academic integrity by graduate and professional students will normally be penalized more severely than violations by first-year undergraduate students. Since all violations of academic integrity by a graduate or professional student are potentially separable under the Academic Integrity Policy, faculty members should not adjudicate alleged academic integrity violations by graduate and professional students, but should refer such allegations to the appropriate Academic Integrity Facilitator (AIF) or to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. The AIF that you should contact is Antoinette Y. Farmer, 732.932.2621. The student shall be notified in writing, by email or hand delivery, of the alleged violation and of the fact that the matter has been referred to the AIF for adjudication. This notification shall be done within 10 days of identifying the alleged violation. Once the student has been notified of the allegation, the student may not drop the course or withdraw from the school until the adjudication process is complete. A TZ or incomplete grade, shall be assigned until the case is resolved.

Definition of Plagiarism
Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source is stored in print, electronic, or other medium and is paraphrased or summarized in whole or part in one’s own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: to paraphrase Plato’s comment...and conclude with a footnote identifying the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information which is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc., need not to be footnoted; however, all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one’s general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some case, be a subtle issue. Any question about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.

X. Disability Accommodation

Please Note: Any student who believes that s/he may need an accommodation in this class due to a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services, Kreeger Learning Center, 151
XI. Inclement Weather Policy

In the event of inclement weather, students should call the University to see if classes have been cancelled. If the University is operating, the instructor will attend class. Students should contact the instructor if weather or driving conditions make it impossible for them to get to class so that accommodations can be made as necessary.

XII. Course Content and Reading Assignments

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<th>Session One</th>
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<td>Topic: Introduction to course</td>
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Session Three

**Topic:** Feminist Theory

**Readings:**


Session Four

**Topic:** Intersection of Gender, Race, and Class

**Readings:**


Session Five

**Topic:** Gender Roles and Socialization

**Readings:**


### Social Institutions

#### Session Six

**Topic:** Media

**Readings:**


Graff, E. J. (2007). The opt-out myth: Most moms have to work to make ends meet. So why does the press write only about the elite few who don't? *Columbia Journalism Review, 45* (6), 51-54.


#### Session Seven

**Topic:** Family

**Readings:**


**Session Eight**

**Topic:** Education  
**Readings:**


**Session Nine**

**Topic:** Work  
**Readings:**


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**Session Ten**

**Topic:** Health

**Readings:**


### Session Eleven

**Topic:** Criminal Justice

**Readings:**


Session Twelve

**Topic:** Politics  
**Readings:**


Session Thirteen

**Topic:** Religion  
**Readings:**


Session Fourteen

**Topic:** Global and Transnational Views on Gender & Students’ Presentations  
**Readings:**


Session Fifteen

Topic: Closing and Summary & Students’ Presentations
Readings: