Introduction to WGS: Graduate Proseminar

WGS 2000, Spring 2014
Thursdays 1-3pm, Sever Hall 204
Harvard University
Course iSite: http://isites.harvard.edu/k99573

Prof. Robin Bernstein
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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-3pm, Boylston 031

This course is required for, and limited to,
Graduate Certificate Students
in the Program of Studies in Women, Gender, and Sexuality

This proseminar introduces diverse graduate students to the field of Women, Gender, and Sexuality (WGS) Studies. Our approach is multidisciplinary rather than interdisciplinary: the course guides each student through a process by which she or he builds a detailed map of the intersection between her or his (inter)discipline and the field of WGS Studies. The course’s first goal is to enable each student to understand that terrain—and to traverse it. As a second goal, each student will produce a series of documents of direct practical value. These documents include a scholarly book review (ideally one the student will publish in a journal), a syllabus, and a comprehensive exam list, all in WGS Studies. Third and finally, the course helps each student develop sustainable scholarly practices that will enable her or him to succeed not only in graduate school but over a lifetime. In this proseminar, students hand in written assignments almost every week, and there is no final paper or project. The course’s structure therefore precludes an end-of-semester frenzy and instead requires students to work at a steady, constant beat. This course trains students in that rhythm, and that training is key to the course’s pedagogy.

Grading:
Engaged and productive participation 25%
Attendance at GCWS Feminist Pedagogies Workshop, April 12
(graded full credit/no credit) 9%
Book Review 10%
8 weeks’ assignments at 7% each (graded full credit/no credit) 56%

Required Course Texts (all on reserve at Lamont and available at the Harvard Coop):
Afsaneh Najmabadi, Professing Selves: Transsexuality and Same-Sex Desire in Contemporary Iran (Duke University Press, 2013)
Sarah S. Richardson, Sex Itself: The Search for Male and Female in the Human Genome
(University of Chicago Press, 2013)

Recommended Course Texts (all on reserve at Lamont and available at the Harvard Coop):
Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume I*

**Useful Information:**

The Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies is offering a day-long workshop in Feminist Pedagogies on **Saturday, April 12, 2014. Your participation in this event is required.** If you know in advance that you will be unable to attend the event, you must make alternative arrangements with the professor by the fourth week of class. Please note that the workshop requires you to draft a syllabus and submit it by **March 20, 2014**, which falls during Harvard’s spring break.

Professor Bernstein holds office hours from 1-3pm every Tuesday, and frequently schedules additional office hours as well. You are welcome to drop in, but students with appointments receive priority. You may reserve time online at [http://wgs.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k53419&pageid=icb.page449095](http://wgs.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k53419&pageid=icb.page449095). If you have class during office hours, please email Professor Bernstein at <rbernst@fas> to make alternative arrangements.

With a student’s consent, meetings during office hours will be “walking meetings.” The professor and student will talk while strolling around campus. **Any student may opt for a traditional, “sitting meeting” instead.** If you opt for a sitting meeting, you need not offer any explanation, and no questions will be asked. We will of course stay inside during inclement weather. For more information about the intellectual and health benefits of walking meetings, see Nilofer Merchant, “Sitting is the Smoking of our Generation,” *Harvard Business Review* 14 January 2013 <http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2013/01/sitting_is_the_smoking_of_our_generation.html>.

Lateness and unexcused absence detract from our conversation and therefore figure negatively toward your participation grade. Needless to say, practices that disrespect your colleagues (for example, interrupting, hogging the floor, launching personal attacks, texting, or answering cell phones) obstruct rather than advance conversation; such practices are therefore unacceptable. Computers are allowed only with prior permission of the professor.

All written assignments except the Book Review are graded full credit/no credit. Late assignments will be penalized one third of a letter grade for each day or partial day overdue. Please note that failure to complete any assignment can lower your final grade in excess of the stated percentage.

All citations in your written work must conform precisely to the preferred style in your (inter)discipline. Assignments with incorrect citations will be returned to the student for revision. Credit will be given only for work with correct citations.

Collaboration on written assignments is permitted only with prior written consent of the professor.

Any student needing academic adjustments or accommodations should present a letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by February 8. All discussions will remain confidential, although AEO may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation.
SCHEDULE

January 30. Charting Your Career in Studies in Women, Gender, and Sexuality
Reading: None
Due: N/A
In Class: Introductions plus four mini-lectures: why you should read the Chronicle of Higher Education, how to find current books in your field, why you should be check out the Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies, how to read a scholarly article.
Distributed in class: journal article worksheet, secondary field plan of study

Saturday, February 1, 8pm: RECOMMENDED EVENT: E. Patrick Johnson’s one-man show, Sweet Tea, Adams House Pool Theatre. This event is free and open to the public

February 6. The Journal Article: A Foundational Building Block
Reading:
Recommended: Peruse links at “For Grad Students and Other Academics”<http://scholar.harvard.edu/robinbernstein/pages/grad-students>
In Class: Discussion of Meadow’s article; mini-lecture and workshop: the terrain of scholarly journals in studies of women, gender, and sexuality
Due: a) journal article worksheet for each article, b) identification of the preferred style of citation in your field (e.g., Chicago, MLA, APA, etc.), c) full bibliographic citation for monograph you will review later in the semester, and d) WGS secondary field plan of study (if not already submitted). NOTE: If your (inter)discipline’s preferred style is anything other than Chicago or MLA, you must provide a Xerox or print-out from your style manual that shows the standard citational form for a book and a journal article.
Distributed in class: journal worksheets

February 13. Scholarly Journals: Understanding the Terrain in Women, Gender, and Sexuality
Reading: Survey a) the top journal in your (inter)discipline, b) EITHER Signs, differences, Feminist Frontiers, or GLQ, and c) one journal in the field of your doctoral program that publishes work on gender and sexuality (must be different from a and b). For EACH journal, you will skim the first issue of the journal (that is, Volume 1, No. 1), skim the tables of contents for the past ten years of the journal, and then read the current issue cover-to-cover, including all front and back matter, articles, book reviews, advertisements, etc.
Due: Worksheets on a, b, and c. Please bring copies of all three worksheets for your colleagues.
In Class: Discussion of journals; mini-lecture: How to Write a Scholarly Book Review (including How to Read a Monograph)
Distributed in class: monograph worksheet
February 20. From Dissertation to Monograph in Gender Studies
Reading: Sarah S. Richardson, *Sex Itself: The Search for Male and Female in the Human Genome* (University of Chicago Press, 2013)
In Class: Discussion with Professor Sarah S. Richardson
Due: a) monograph worksheet; b) guidelines for orals lists in your department

February 27. The Scholarly Book Review
Reading: Individually-chosen monographs
Due: FOUR COPIES of your book review (please append book review guidelines for a journal that would be an appropriate venue for you to publish your review)
In Class: Read and critique each other’s reviews; mini-lecture: the oral exam process

March 6. Senior-Level Scholarship in Gender and Sexuality Studies
In Class: Discussion with Professor Afsaneh Najmabadi
Due: Nothing! Relax!

March 13. Feminist Pedagogies
Reading:
Peruse Derek Bok Center’s resources on syllabus design:
<http://bokcenter.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k1985&tabgroupid=icb.tabgroup146434>
Highly Recommended:
In Class: Discussion of feminist pedagogies; mini-lecture: Why you should read Robert Boice’s *Advice for New Faculty Members*
Due: Nothing! Work on your syllabus, which is due next week.
March 20: NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK!

Due: Syllabus draft for Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies Feminist Pedagogies Workshop. You will email your syllabus to the Consortium; details TBA.

RECOMMENDED EVENT: March 27, 11:30am-12:30pm: brown bag lunchtime discussion of Michel Foucault, The History of Sexuality Volume I, Dudley House Cafeteria.

March 27. Wrestling with Women’s Studies

Reading:
Joan Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” American Historical Review 91.5 (December 1986): 1053-1075. Access online through JSTOR.

Highly Recommended:

In Class: Discussion of reading.
Due: First draft of orals list. Your orals list must conform to your department’s requirements. Please include full citations for every text in strict accordance to the preferred style of your field.

April 3. Sexuality Studies I: Gayle Rubin, F. O. Matthiessen Visiting Professor


In Class: Discussion of reading.
Due: Nothing! Work on your orals list, which is due in two weeks.

Friday, April 4: RECOMMENDED EVENT: “The Maternal Imprint,” day-long Gender & Sexuality Symposium organized by Sarah Richardson at the Mahindra Humanities Center, Harvard University. Scientists, humanists, and social scientists address the
history and future prospects of the science of the maternal-fetal interface. Thompson Room, Barker Center 110.

April 10. Conducting Research in Women, Gender, and Sexuality
Reading: No reading assignment.
Recommended Reading: Read Robert Boice, Advice for New Faculty Members (Pearson, 2000)
In Class: Library Workshop
Due: Nothing! Work on your orals list, which is due next week.
Recommended Self-Assignment: Create or revise your OpenScholar website. Get started at <http://scholar.harvard.edu/>

SATURDAY, April 12. Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies Feminist Pedagogies Event!
Please note that participation in this event is required.

April 17. Sexuality Studies II: Queer Theory
In Class: Discussion of the reading
Due: Orals List. Please bring copies for all your colleagues.

April 24. Higher Education Today
Reading: Full text, cover to cover, of the current issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education, including the Chronicle Review. You may skip the advertisements for jobs that are not relevant to you, but you should read everything else.
In Class: Discussion of the reading
Due: Revised syllabus

Enjoy your summer!
Wait—have you noticed that summer is twelve weeks long?
Why not use that time to write and publish one article?