

# Introduction to WGS: Graduate Proseminar

WGS 2000  
Spring 2016, Mondays 1-3pm  
Harvard University  
Canvas site: <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/8771>

## Prof. Robin Bernstein

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Office Hours vary; see online schedule at <http://wgs.fas.harvard.edu/hours>

*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 a cornerstone of the course's pedagogy.

### Grading

Engaged and productive participation (30% of total grade)  
10 weeks' assignments at 7% each (graded full credit/no credit)

### Required Course Texts (all on reserve at Lamont and available at the Harvard Coop)

Kimberly Juanita Brown, *The Repeating Body: Slavery's Visual Resonance in the Contemporary* (Duke, 2015)  
bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (Routledge, 1994)  
Mark Jordan, *Convulsing Bodies: Religion and Resistance in Foucault* (Stanford University Press, 2014)  
Karen Kelsky, *The Professor Is In: The Essential Guide to Turning Your PhD into a Job* (Three Rivers Press, 2015)

### Recommended Course Texts (on reserve at Lamont and available at the Harvard Coop)

Wendy Laura Belcher, *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success* (SAGE, 2009)  
Robert Boice, *Advice for New Faculty Members* (Pearson, 2000)

### **Additional Recommended Books**

*It is important for you to be aware of recent publications by faculty in your department. Here is a sampling of recent work by Harvard's WGS faculty (not including the professors who will visit our class this semester).*

Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York University Press, 2011)

Michael Bronski, *A Queer History of the United States* (Beacon Press, 2011)

Alice Jardine, Shannon Lundeen, and Kelly Oliver, eds. *Living Attention: On Teresa Brennan* (State University of New York Press, 2007)

Caroline Light, *That Pride of Race and Character: The Roots of Jewish Benevolence in the Jim Crow South* (New York University Press, 2014)

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)

Linda Schlossberg, *Life in Miniature* (Kensington Books, 2010)

### **Useful Information**

Office hours vary week to week. Please sign up at <<http://wgs.fas.harvard.edu/hours>>.

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](http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2013/01/sitting_is_the_smoking_of_our_generation.html)>. On the intellectual benefits of walking (not necessarily during meetings), see Ferris Jabr's "Why Walking Helps Us Think," *The New Yorker*, 3 September 2014 <<http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/walking-helps-us-think>>.

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 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 25. Launching Your Graduate 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 check out the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies, introduction to scholarly journals in WGS studies. Students sign up to review ONE of the following journals (journals in bold must be assigned): *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies*; ***differences***; ***Feminist Studies***; *Feminist Teacher: A Journal of the Practices, Theories, and Scholarship of Feminist Teaching*; ***Frontiers***; ***Gender and Society*** (official publication of Sociologists for Women in Society); ***GLQ***; *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*; *Journal of the History of Sexuality*; *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*; *Journal of Women's Health*; *Journal of Women's History*; *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers*; *Meridians: Feminism, Race, Transnationalism*; *Palimpsest: A Journal on Women, Gender, and the Black International*; *Psychology of Women Quarterly*; *Radical Teacher: A Socialist, Feminist, and Anti-Racist Journal on the Theory and Practice of Teaching*; ***Signs***; *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*; *Women and Performance*; *Women's Studies Quarterly*

**Distributed in class:** journal worksheet, secondary field plan of study

## February 1. Scholarly Journals: Understanding the Terrain in Women, Gender, and Sexuality

**Reading:** Survey a) the top journal in your (inter)discipline and b) the journal you signed up for last week. 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 and b. Please bring copies of both worksheets for your colleagues.

**In Class:** Discussion of journals; mini lecture: how to read a scholarly article.

**Distributed in class:** journal article worksheets

## February 8. The Journal Article: A Fundamental Building Block

**Reading:**

Tey Meadow, "'A Rose is a Rose': On the Production of Legal Gender Classifications." *Gender & Society*, 24.6 (2010): 814-837. <[http://www.teymeadowphd.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Meadow\\_GandS.pdf](http://www.teymeadowphd.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/Meadow_GandS.pdf)>

Tey Meadow, chapter in progress TBD.

**Recommended:** Peruse links at "Links for Academics"

<<http://scholar.harvard.edu/robinbernstein/pages/grad-students>>

**In Class:** Conversation with Professor Meadow

**Due:** a) journal article worksheet for "A Rose is a Rose," b) identification of the preferred style of citation in your field (e.g., Chicago, MLA, ASA, 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 and approved). **NOTE:** If your (inter)discipline's preferred style is anything other than Chicago, MLA, ASA, or Bluebook, you must provide e) 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:** conference worksheet; comprehensive exam information sheet

**Wednesday, February 10, 5:30-7:30pm, RECOMMENDED EVENT: "New Terms in Feminist Studies," sponsored by the Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies.** The Moore Room, Building 6 Room 321, MIT Campus. This panel will feature three feminist scholars who are conceptualizing new and evolving terminologies for the discourse of race, gender, and sexuality studies. The panelists, each

trained interdisciplinarily, will consider the expansiveness of emerging language in the field along with the fraught limitations of contemporary keywords within feminism. Participants: Moya Bailey, Pooja Rangan, Jasmine Elizabeth Johnson, Kimberly Juanita Brown. For more information, see <http://web.mit.edu/gcws/news+events/15-16FeminismsUnbound.html>.

## February 15. PRESIDENTS' DAY—NO CLASS.

**Thursday, February 18, 5pm: RECOMMENDED EVENT:** Kristin Nicole Dukes, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Simmons College, presents “#SayHerName: Examining Perceptions and Representations of Black Women” as part of the Mahindra Humanities Center’s Gender and Sexuality Seminar, “Arresting Violence, Reconceptualizing Justice.” Room 133, Barker Center. For more information, see <http://mahindrahumanities.fas.harvard.edu/content/gender-and-sexuality-arresting-violence-reconceptualizing-justice>. Free and open to all.

## February 22. Conferences: Understanding the Terrain in Women, Gender, and Sexuality

**Reading:** Survey a) the most important conference in your (inter)discipline and b) the conference of EITHER the National Women’s Studies Association OR a different ongoing conference in women’s, gender, or sexuality studies. Non-repeating, one-time conferences are not eligible for this assignment. For EACH conference, peruse the available web resources.

**In Class:** Discussion of conferences; mini-lecture: How to Write a Scholarly Book Review (including How to Read a Monograph)

**Due:** a) Worksheet on a conference in your field and b) worksheet on a conference in WGS studies. Please bring copies of both worksheets for your colleagues.

**Distributed in Class:** monograph worksheet

## February 29. From Dissertation to Monograph in Gender Studies

**Reading:** Kimberly Juanita Brown, *The Repeating Body: Slavery’s Visual Resonance in the Contemporary*

**In Class:** Conversation with Professor Brown

**Due:** a) monograph worksheet; b) guidelines for orals lists in your department

## March 7. 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 14. SPRING BREAK—NO CLASS.

## March 21. The Professor Is In: A Conversation with Karen Kelsky

**Reading:** *The Professor Is In: The Essential Guide to Turning Your PhD into a Job*

**In Class:** Conversation with Dr. Kelsky

**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.

## March 28. Senior-Level Scholarship in Gender and Sexuality Studies

**Reading:** Mark Jordan, *Convulsing Bodies: Religion and Resistance in Foucault*

**In Class:** Conversation with Professor Jordan

**Due:** Nothing! Relax!

**Friday, April 1, 9am-5pm, RECOMMENDED EVENT:** Symposium: “Arresting Violence, Reconceptualizing Justice.” Room 133, Barker Center. Keynote: Reina Gossett. Speakers: Kristin Nicole Dukes, Joy James, Andrea Ritchie, Chase Strangio. For more information, see <<http://mahindrahumanities.fas.harvard.edu/content/gender-and-sexuality-arresting-violence-reconceptualizing-justice>>. Free and open to all.

#### **April 4. Feminist Pedagogies**

##### **Reading:**

bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1994)  
Amber Dean, “Teaching Feminist Activism: Reflections on an Activism Assignment in Introductory Women’s Studies,” *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 29.4 (2007): 351-369. Access online through Hollis.

Peruse Derek Bok Center’s resources on syllabus design:

<<http://bokcenter.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k1985&tabgroupid=icb.tabgroup146434>>

##### **Highly Recommended:**

AnaLouise Keating, *Teaching Transformation: Transcultural Classroom Dialogues* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

M. Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

**In Class:** Discussion of feminist pedagogies; mini-lecture: why you should read Robert Boice’s *Advice for New Faculty Members*

**Due:** revised book review

**Recommended Self-Assignment:** Create or revise your OpenScholar website. Get started at

<<http://scholar.harvard.edu/>>

#### **April 11. Wrestling with Women’s Studies**

##### **Reading:**

Ann duCille, “The Occult of True Black Womanhood: Critical Demeanor and Black Feminist Studies,” *Signs* 19.3 (1994): 591-629. Access online through JSTOR.

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

Afsaneh Najmabadi, Beyond the Americas: Are Gender and Sexuality Useful Categories of Analysis? *Journal of Women’s History* 18.1 (Spring 2006): 11-21. Access through Project Muse.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse,” *Feminist Review* 30 (Autumn 1988): 61-88. Access online through JSTOR.

Alice Jardine, “What Feminism?” *French Politics, Culture & Society* 28.2 (Summer 2010): 66-74. Access online through ProQuest.

##### **Highly Recommended:**

Barbara Christian, “But What Do We Think We’re Doing Anyway: The State of Black Feminist Criticism(s) or My Version of a Little Bit of History,” chap. in Christian, ed. Gloria Bowles, M. Giulia Fabi, and Arlene R. Keizer, *New Black Feminist Criticism, 1985-2000* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007): 5-19.

———. “Diminishing Returns: Can Black Feminism(s) Survive the Academy?,” chap. in Christian, *New Black Feminist Criticism, 1985-2000* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007): 204-15.

**In Class:** Discussion of reading; students sign up to review research resources

**Also in Class:** Ellen Shea, Head of Research Services at the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe, has volunteered to conduct an orientation to the Schlesinger for students in this course. The Schlesinger Library is the world’s premier archive in the history of women in the United States. In class, we will assess student interest in this optional event. Students who wish to schedule an orientation will then contact Ellen Shea at <[eshea@radcliffe.harvard.edu](mailto:eshea@radcliffe.harvard.edu)>.

**Due:** First draft of syllabus.

**Distributed in Class:** Worksheets for research resources

**Wednesday, April 13th: 5:30-7:30 pm, RECOMMENDED EVENT: A Celebration of Books by GCWS Authors.** Location: The Moore Room, Building 6 Room 321, MIT campus. This event will feature over 30 books published since 2013 on topics in Women's Gender, and Sexuality Studies. The evening will include a book table where you can peruse copies of the featured works and very short book talks by our featured authors. For more information, see <<http://web.mit.edu/gcws/news+events/15-16FeminismsUnbound.html>>.

**April 18. Conducting Research in Women, Gender, and Sexuality**

**Reading:** Online research to complete worksheets

**Recommended Reading:** Robert Boice, *Advice for New Faculty Members* (Pearson, 2000)

**In Class:** Presentations on research resources

**Due:** a) Worksheet on a research resource in your field; b) worksheet on a research resource in WGS studies; c) Revised orals list. Please bring copies of a, b, and c for your colleagues.

**April 25. Gender, Sexuality, and 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. Yes, everything.

Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs, Yolanda Flores Niemann, Carmen G. González, Angela P. Harris, eds., *Presumed Incompetent: The Intersection of Race and Class for Women in Academia* (Boulder, CO: University of Colorado Press with Utah State University Press, 2012): excerpts.

**In Class:** Discussion of the reading

**Due:** Revised syllabus. Please bring copies for your colleagues.

## *Enjoy your summer!*

**Wait**—have you noticed that summer is twelve weeks long?

Why not use that time to write and publish one article?

**Recommended:** Wendy Laura Belcher, *Writing Your Journal Article in Twelve Weeks: A Guide to Academic Publishing Success* (SAGE, 2009)