

# WS 2300 CEL

## Introduction to Women's Studies

**WS 2300 Introduction to Women's Studies Spring 2024**

**Tuesday/Thursday 9:00-10:20**

**Old Main Room 211**

Instructor: Naomi Fertman

Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:30-1:00 in person and virtually via TEAMS. I will also be available virtually by apt as much as I am able. Please email me with appointment request for virtual meetings and I will accommodate both of our schedules as quickly as possible.

Office located in Liberal Arts RM 213

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**Course Description:** This CEL course is intended to provide students an overview of the interdisciplinary field of Women's and Gender Studies. It will examine cultural and socio-political aspects of gender in a variety of contemporary settings. This course explores the inequalities that women have experienced, often coinciding with the inequalities of other marginalized groups. Some of the topics that we will address in this course are related to how gendered experiences are understood through education, family, health, employment and politics. Through the course's reading assignments, in class discussion, and community engagement, students will develop the necessary skills to analyze the social changes and evolution of the women's rights movement throughout the years as well as to conceptualize how sex, race, gender and other systems of power intersect to shape social inequalities.

**\*NOTE 1:** The "CEL" designation for this course stands for "Community Engagement & Leadership" and is part of a new certificate program in the College of Liberal Arts (full details to be provided at the start of the course). The purpose of this CEL course is to strengthen students' understanding of their role in society as engaged citizens and to build the knowledge and competencies that will enable them to be socially responsible and participating community leaders. Accordingly, course assignments and assessments are developed in line with the CEL program mission in Liberal Arts, as well as within the broader framework and mission of UTEP's "Edge Advantages" goals. Community engagement is designated as an EDGE experience and is a high impact learning practice.

**Course Goals & Learning Outcomes:** A student completing WS 2300 will be able to complete the following discipline related learning outcomes which are directly connected with the UTEP EDGE learning advantages (EDGE advantagess are included and bolded after each objective in parenthesis): The UTEP Edge enriches student learning and pre-professional achievement through integrative and applied learning experiences, known as Edge Experiences, within and beyond the classroom. The Edge Experiences enhance students' personal and professional skills and equip them

with a competitive advantage when they graduate and enter the workforce or pursue a graduate degree. Students gain that competitive advantage by fine-tuning and articulating their strengths and skills, which we refer to as Edge Advantages. As part of the integration of enriching learning experiences into curricular and co-curricular settings, students must be able to identify and reflect upon their unique strengths and skills in a context that applies to their future aspirations, such as graduate school, careers, and civic responsibility

1. Discuss major topics within Women's and Gender Studies. (**Confidence**)
2. Critically examine institutions and systems of power and oppression (**Critical Thinking, Social Responsibility**)
3. Acquire analytical skills to explore gender, class, race, sexuality, ability, and cultural issues from an intersectional perspective (**Critical Thinking, Social Responsibility, Global Awareness**)
4. Contribute to solutions, activism, and change for the improvement of women's lives through various means of skill-building, including interpersonal teamwork and change-making activities, which lend themselves broadly to community engaged leadership. (**Problem Solving, Social Responsibility, Confidence**)
5. Develop reading, writing, presenting, analysis and critical thinking skills. (**Communication, Confidence, Leadership**)

## Required Learning Resources:

All of your readings for this class can be found in our WS2300 reading guide. A link to the library guide is available on BB.

### Grades:

A (100-90 points), B (89-80 points), C (79-70 points), D (69-60 points), F (50 points or below)

### Assignments:

Attendance and Participation-20 Points  
Reading Reflections-26 points  
Autobiographical Essay- 4 Points  
Community Engagement Attendance Essay- 10 Points  
Community Engagement Project- 20 Points  
Founding Change Makers Presentations- 20 Points  
TOTAL- 100 points

### Attendance and Participation:

This is a discussion and project based course. If you are not in class you will not have the opportunity to participate. A significant portion of your learning will be based on our in class discussions/small group discussions and activities, so I expect you to be present and be prepared to be involved. With that said, life happens and I am always willing to be flexible. You can miss 2 classes without the absences impacting your grade. After that you will lose one point

for each absence that is not excused. Please communicate with me honestly about why you are not in class.

**Reading Reflection:**

Students will submit a one paragraph critical reflection or question and thought for discussion for 2 of the weekly readings (found in the library guide) each week. Students must come to class prepared to share their reflections/questions with their peers. This assignment must be submitted via BB for credit (no hard copies will be accepted).

**Autobiographical Essay:**

This is a two to three page reflective essay about your own experience with feminism and gendered identity. This is a chance for you to introduce yourself to me and to critically think about your own life lens. Please answer these questions: How were you raised to think about women, the LGBTQIA community and gender roles? How did your family talk about feminism and feminists? If this wasn't a topic that was covered in your house, how and where did you first hear and learn about these terms. Please feel free to share anything else that you think is relevant from your personal history. This assignment will be submitted via BB on the date indicated on the course calendar.

**Founding Change Makers Presentation:**

Our arrival in 2024 has been supported and guided by founding change makers throughout history. These changemakers shaped the ways that we exist in the world. In small groups, students will research the lives and legacies of these changemakers and share their learnings with the class through oral presentations.

Detailed information about this assignment is available on BB.

**Community Engagement (CEL):**

Women and Gender Studies is present in many parts of our society. We often times overlook this involvement or the ways that work, religion, academics, the news cycle, education, etc. impact women and the LGBTQ community. To better understand these connections each student will participate in the following 2 community engagement activities through the course of the semester.

**Attend an event:**

For the first assignment students will engage through listening and attending an out of class lecture, research presentation, academic conference, etc. This event can be on or off campus and can be academic or non academic in nature. As the professor I will provide ample information about what events are available in our community. This provides an opportunity for students to learn how what is discussed in class is relevant beyond the classroom. In addition to attending the event students will earn credit for this assignment by submitting a selfie of themselves at the event and an essay connecting what they attended to what we are learning in class. The prompt for this reflection is available on Blackboard.

**Community Engaged Project:**

All students will take part in a semester long community engaged project focused on Period Poverty with families in our community. This is a multi stage project and students will be graded for their work throughout the project. Students will complete the majority of the work either in class or within small groups as best fits their schedule, so as to accommodate all student needs. More information about this project can be found on BB and will be explained in class during the second week of the semester.

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*This is a community engaged class. Students must participate in community engaged events throughout the semester to pass the course.*

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**POLICIES AND RESOURCES****A note on learning and being uncomfortable (adapted from Whitman College)**

The topics that we're covering in this class are often difficult, not just intellectually but emotionally. While I expect there to be rigorous discussion and even disagreement in the course of our class discussions, I ask that you engage in discussion with care and empathy for other members in the classroom. Aim to disagree without becoming disagreeable. In this class, we will not shy away from the uncomfortable. Critically examining and assessing our most basic assumptions and values is not just one of the tasks of Women and Gender Studies but is an activity vital to living an authentic life. I urge you to have the courage to the uncomfortable in this class. In exchange for your courage, I will work to ensure a classroom environment that supports your taking these intellectual and emotional risks.

Furthermore, I would like to create a learning environment for my students that supports your thoughts, perspectives and experiences, and honors your identities. To help accomplish this:

- If you have a name and/or set of pronouns that differ from those that appear in your official UTEP records, please let me know.
- I (like many people) am still in the process of learning about diverse perspectives and identities. If something was said in class (by anyone) that made you feel uncomfortable, please talk to me about it.

**Late Work:**

As a general policy I will not accept late work. I do commit to being flexible with any deadline. If you know that you are struggling to make a deadline, reach out to me. I will work with you to create deadlines that will work with your schedule. It is my goal to help everyone do well in this course and to help everyone complete all of the work. I know that all of you are balancing a lot of different things. To help you grow as students I am asking you to be accountable for your

schedules and to be honest with me when you need more time. I will always accommodate your time line needs (with in reason).

**Parents/Caretakers/Pregnant students:**

Please let me know how I can support you in your journey as a student and a caretaker. As you are able please share with me your parenting or caretaking status so that we can work together to accommodate your unique needs. You are welcome to bring your kiddos to class if there is a gap in your childcare (please let me know in advance if possible) and we can work together to find a place for them. For those that are breastfeeding, you are always welcome to nurse, pump and store milk in the Women’s and Gender studies office.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

Students are expected to be above reproach in all scholastic activities. Students who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and dismissal from the university. “Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another student, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts” (Regent’s Rules and Regulations, Part One, Chapter VI, Section 3.2, Subdivision 3.22). Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced.

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*Scholastic Dishonesty*

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From the UTEP Dean of Student Affairs

(<http://studentaffairs.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=4386>): It is an official policy of the university that all suspected cases or acts of alleged scholastic dishonesty must be referred to the Dean of Students for investigation and appropriate disposition. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

“Cheating” includes: Copying from the test paper of another student, engaging in written, oral, or any other means of communication with another student during a test, or giving aid to or seeking aid from another student during a test; possession and/or use during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes, books, or specifically designed “crib notes”; using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program; using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters but which will be used again either in whole or in part without permission of the instructor; or accessing a test bank without

instructor permission; collaborating with or seeking aid from another student for an assignment without authority; substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one's self, to take a test; and falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit.

“Plagiarism” means the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of it in one's own academic work offered for credit, or using work in a paper or assignment for which the student had received credit in another course without direct permission of all involved instructors.

NOTE: This includes cutting-and-pasting and photocopying from on-line and other material.

“Collusion” means the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.

### **Plagiarism Detection Software:**

Some of your course work and assessments may be submitted to SafeAssign, a plagiarism detecting software. SafeAssign is used to review assignment submissions for originality and will help you learn how to properly attribute sources rather than paraphrase.

### **Accessibility:**

If you have a disability and need accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at 747-5148, or by email to [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu), or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at [www.sa.utep.edu/cass](http://www.sa.utep.edu/cass). CASS' Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

### **Course Schedule: This is a living document! Please be aware that things may change.**

Week/Theme	Tuesday	Thursday
Week 1 : (Jan 16/16) Welcome	Syllabus Reconnaissance	
Week 2: (Jan 23/25) Women's and Gender Studies: Perspectives and Practices and history	Intro to CE project W Clementina Canava	RR Week 2 Due by midnight.
Week 3 (Jan 20/Feb 1) Systems of Privilege and Inequality	RR Week 3 Due by the start of class.	Autobiographical Essay Due by midnight on BB

Week 4 (Feb 6/8) Systems of Privilege and Inequality	RR Week 4 Due by the start of class.	In class work day for community Engagement Project.
Week 5 (Feb 13/15) Learning Gender	RR Week 5 Due by the start of class.	
Week 6 (Feb 20/22) Learning Gender	RR Week 6 Due by the start of class.	Library Day We will be meeting today in Library Room 204 A
Week 7 (Feb 27/29) Gender, beauty and the Body.	RR Week 7 Due by the start of class. CE Social Media Component Due	
Week 8 (March 5/7) Sex, Power, and Intimacy	RR Week 8 Due by the start of class.	
Week 9 (March 19/21) Health and Reproductive Justice	RR Week 9 Due by the start of class.	
Week 10 (March 26/28) Family Systems, Family Lives	RR Week 10 Due by the start of class.	Community Engagement Event attendance Essay Due by midnight.
Week 11 (April 2/4) Work inside and outside the home.	RR Week 11 Due by the start of class.	
Week 12: (April 9/11) Resisting Gender Violence	RR Week 12 Due by the start of class. Do One Thing Training	Do One Thing Training
Week 13 (April 16/18) State, Law, and Social Policy	RR Week 13 Due by the start of class.	
Week 14 (April 23/25) Activism, Change and Feminist Futures.	In Class Community Engagement Project	Final Presentations In Class
Week 15 (April 30/May 2)	Final Presentations In Class	Final Presentations In Class
Finals Week	No Class this week	No Class This week