

Women's Studies 3000 – Section A2  
Grande Prairie Regional College  
Lecture 3 (3-0-0)  
UT to all Alberta Universities  
Fall 2002

SEP. 19 2002

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**Office Hours:** Monday and Wednesday 1 to 2:20 p.m. or by appointment
- Required Texts:** Gender Basics: Feminist Perspectives on Women and Men (2<sup>nd</sup> edition) by Anne Minas  
WS 3000 Coursepack (2002 edition)
- Prerequisites:** None
- Course Description:** Feminism and how it engages questions of identity, difference, sexuality, agency, and community will be explored. The focus of the course will be on practical discussion of how feminist theorizing can inform day-to-day challenges of living with what postmodernism calls 'the current crisis of representation'.
- Course Objectives:** The course will introduce students to the basic concepts, theories and major debates within feminism. Through class lectures, projects and discussion, students will have an opportunity to explore the shared and diverse aspects of women's experiences. The primary focus of the course surrounds issues of gender as a social, cultural and political construct and how this intersects with race, class, sexuality and other social constructs that influence women's lives. Students will also see how Women's Studies as an academic discipline challenges the methods, theories and knowledge of traditional disciplines.

It is hoped you will find this course interesting, challenging and fun. As we explore current issues in Women's Studies we will also be developing our reflection and communication skills so that we can better express and defend our views on issues we care about. Discussion will play a central role in our learning together and the course therefore requires your active commitment and participation. You will be expected to attend class regularly and to take an active part in our learning together. You will also be expected to come to each class with the readings completed and be prepared to discuss those readings. Lectures will not consist of me highlighting the main points of the readings. If you do not attend class you will miss material that will not be presented elsewhere and will probably have a more difficult time with the assignments and the exams.

Because the issues we will be discussing are complex and controversial, there are bound to be many different opinions about them. An important ground rule for the course, then, is a commitment from all participants to help build a respectful learning environment where we are comfortable expressing our views and can learn from one another. You are encouraged to keep an open mind, allow for the exchange of views, and respect opposing viewpoints. Such an attitude is critical to maintaining a conducive learning environment.

One of the difficult aspects of this course is that we will be acknowledging that one of the mechanisms of structural inequality (whether it is sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism or ableism) is that we are all systematically taught misinformation about others and ourselves. We will also be confronting how we participate in this process ourselves. Thus, be aware that the issues confronted in the course will affect some of us deeply and personally.

### Evaluation:

Evaluation for this class will be based on two assignments and two exams as follows:

Quilt Project and Presentation	25%	October 3
Midterm Exam	25%	October 24
Outrageous Act and Presentation	25%	December 5
Final Exam	25%	TBA

Exams will consist of a take home project pertaining to the topics and discussion items from class. Detailed instructions about the take home exam will be given to you later in the term but exams and all projects must be typed and usually double-spaced unless indicated otherwise. In the exam and in all projects you must be sure to avoid plagiarism by always referencing where you got information. I am most familiar with APA format but you may use any format you wish as long as it is consistently used. If you are not familiar with how to reference please come and see me. In the exam and in the projects you may use and are encouraged to use sources other than the textbook for this course. The library does have an excellent journal called *Canadian Woman Studies* as well as a really nice collection of books on Women's Studies. There are also many fine academic and nonacademic resources through the NEOS system in the library. The exams and projects are meant to be both scholarly and personal in the sense that it should contain your own viewpoint as well as indicate an understanding of course concepts and theories. All materials covered in class, readings, videos and guest lectures are subject to examination.

Detailed information on the projects will also be given to you later in the term. Exams and projects are due at the beginning of class on the assigned due date. A penalty of 5% of the grade will be removed for each day (not class) it is late. Academic misconduct and plagiarism are taken very seriously and are punishable in a variety of ways. For more information on student rights, responsibilities, codes of conduct and the penalties that can be imposed please see pages 36 to 40 of the current college calendar. Please be advised that a lack of planning on your part will not constitute an emergency on the instructor's part. For example, leaving all work on a project to the last minute and having a crisis arise will not get you an extension. Be aware that you may be asked to provide evidence of prior work before an extension is granted although extensions will rarely be granted in lieu of the late penalty. Bear in mind that marks are final. This means you cannot rewrite an exam or redo an assignment because of a poor grade and there are no extra assignments you can do to make up for a poor grade.

As a significant part of this course will revolve around discussion you will be expected to read the assigned readings in preparation for the class. Some questions you may want to consider in your preparations for class are:

- What are the key issues and concepts in the readings?
- What do you know that you didn't know before you read?
- What aspects of the readings did you find challenging or didn't understand?
- What did you react positively/negatively to? Why do you think you reacted this way?
- Can you relate personally to the material?
- Has your thinking or belief system changed or been challenged by what you read?
- How could you use the information in your own life to better understand yourself or improve your life or make another woman's life better?
- Are there any current events (from newspapers, cinema, magazines, television) that strike you as relevant or interesting to the topic? (Feel free to bring clippings to class for discussion).
- Are there any questions, comments, criticisms, poems, personal experiences or reactions you had to the material?

Each week you will be sharing your ideas with a partner/group and discussing commonalities, differences, and challenging aspects of the material. Also keep in mind that some of the issues we will address will be highly personal so consider the types of responses you are willing to share with other people in the class. It will be expected that individuals will maintain confidentiality of discussions but you do not have to share experiences you would rather not disclose. Don't be afraid, however, of carefully examining what you believe and why you believe it.

#### Course Schedule:

September 5	Introduction
September 12	Oppression/language/theory
September 19	Looks/Aging
September 26	Work
October 3	Education/Science
	*Assignment: Quilt Project and Presentation
October 10	Relationship Violence
	*Note: Guest lecture
October 17	Bonds/Sexuality/Lesbianism/Queer Theory
October 24	Rape/Sexual Harassment
	*Midterm exam due
October 31	Prostitution/Pornography
November 7	Art, literature, music
	*Note: Guest lecture

November 14 Fertility/Reproduction/Health

November 21 Families

November 28 War/Resistance/Peace

December 5 Review and wrap-up

*\*Assignment: Outrageous Act Project and Presentations*

**Grade Schedule:**

9	90-100
8	80-89
7	72-79
6	65-71
5	57-64
4	50-56
3	45-49
2	26-44
1	0-25

Note: Any changes to the course outline will be made in consultation with the students during class time. Should you not be present in class when such a consultation is made it is your responsibility to acquire the changed information. Also be advised that being unable to meet the expectations of reliability, respect for and cooperation with the class will mean you will be asked to leave the classroom in the interest of preserving the learning opportunities of other students.