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WGSS 463.01: Capstone

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WGSS 463: Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Capstone

Spring 2019  
Wednesday 3:00-4:50  
LA 138

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Course Description:
The WGSS Capstone is an opportunity for you to reflect on what you have learned across your WGSS courses and to share those experiences with others. As such, during our first two meetings you will generate a list of topics which will guide the reading and writing portion of the class.

For the second half of the course, you will share what you’ve learned with those who might not have had the opportunity to learn about feminist and/or queer issues. To facilitate this, you will develop a group presentation or project about a topic of your choice to be delivered/presented to an audience of your choice. For example, you might decide you want to discuss body image issues with junior high and/or high school students; the value of a WGSS degree with first-year honors students; relationship violence among college-aged students; or political issues of contemporary significance (e.g., the potential impact of the newly elected Congress on women’s and/or LGBTIQ+ rights) at an open forum in the UC. Or, you might choose to design and display a photography exhibit about homeless women in Missoula; or write and publish a feminist/queer ‘zine; or produce and screen a documentary based on the Montana abortion project archive; or, write and perform a play about feminist activism in Missoula. Or . . . . . the possibilities are endless.

The topic for your presentation may or may not overlap with one of the topics we discuss earlier in the semester. That’s up to the group. Prior to your public presentation you will conduct a pilot presentation for the course instructor and your classmates.

Student Learning Objectives:
1) Students will expand and deepen their knowledge of WGSS related topics and issues through in-depth readings in WGSS-related topics.
2) Students will gain skills in syllabus and reading list development through the “build-you-own syllabus” sessions.
3) Students will link classroom learning and community service through developing and implementing a group service project.
4) Students will gain additional expertise in reading, analysis, and writing through formal writing submissions.
5) Students will refine their group facilitation and group discussion skills through class meetings and group project processes.
6) Students will gain skills in project development and implementation.
7) Students will give back to the university and community through their group projects.

Readings:
Three or more essays, article, films, podcasts, videos or book chapters on a given topic for each of three themes; topics and readings to be determined.

Grades:
Participation and Attendance: 20%
Journal Entries: 40%
Development and Participation in Group Project:
   Peer Grade 10%
   Presentation Grade 30%

Journals:
Keeping a journal on your readings can be a valuable experience. Journaling allows you to gather your thoughts prior to class, enabling you to be a better participant in class discussions. Journaling also helps you to identify recurring themes and thus to determine what topics are most important to you and which might be a good direction for your final project. Finally, journaling encourages you to link feminist/queer scholarship to lived experience, or, to put it another way, it lets you connect the class reading with your own life. This class encourages you to make connections between the class readings and your own concerns. However, the instructor also needs to assign a grade to your journals, and to do that, she needs to apply academic standards. Thus, I ask you to keep these guidelines in mind as you write your journal:

Entries should be 3-5 typed, double-spaced pages, with one entry per “theme” class meeting, for a total of three entries totaling 9-15 pages. Each entry should do the following:

  - Summarize each reading, including the central argument or main points; what is the reading about?
  - Identify common themes or differing perspectives across the readings; how do the readings speak to one another?
  - Respond to the readings as a whole; what is important or interesting?
  - Connect the readings to your own life and/or contemporary issues; why does the reading matter?
  - Provoke further thought; pose a question for class discussion.

*Journals will be collected in class on February 22, March 1, and March 8.*
Group Projects:
Group projects provide you with the opportunity to gain and share knowledge and insights on issue(s) related to women’s, gender, and sexuality studies. Several class sessions are set aside for you to work with your groups, however, the bulk of the work on the projects will be done outside of class. The expectation is that groups will meet frequently as they develop their projects. Each of you will bring different skills and strengths to your groups. The hope is that you will work together in order to get the most of what each of you has to offer. In order to assess your participation fairly, you will be asked to grade one another on the consistency and quality of your contributions. You will also be graded on the instructor’s assessment of the final project.

Each group will be provided with a project check-list. Groups are responsible for completing all tasks on the checklist in a timely manner. Each student is responsible for submitting the completed checklist in class during the last class meeting, May 10.

Note: The WGSS classroom will be available for group meetings during class hours on March 30, April 20, and April 27. The Director will be available by appointment for consultation throughout the semester.
Schedule:

January 16: Introductions; brainstorm about discussion themes and readings/videos

January 23: Finalize list of discussion themes, suggest readings and videos

January 30: Vote on Suggested Readings

February 6: No class meeting; start your readings. Readings will be uploaded to Moodle by this date.

February 13: Discuss first theme:
   *Journal Entry #1 Due in Class*
   Readings:

February 20: Discuss second theme:
   *Journal Entry #2 Due in Class*
   Readings:

February 27: Discuss third theme:
   *Journal Entry #3 Due in Class*
   Readings:

March 6: Group Project Meeting One
   Form groups and brainstorm about possible presentations/projects. By the end of this meeting each group will submit to the WGSS Office a list of its members and a list of possible topics for presentation. In addition, all group members will exchange contact information and plan for their first out-of-class meeting. A presentation check-list will be provided.

March 13: No class meeting; use this time to make progress on your group projects! (Consult check-list for details.)

March 20: Group Project Meeting Two:
   Meet to discuss projects. By this point students will have met at least twice outside of class, determined the subject and format of their project, and confirmed the audience, date(s), and time for presenting the project. This meeting will provide the opportunity for groups to receive feedback from the instructor and other class members.

SPRING BREAK

April 3: Project Update Meeting

April 10: No class meeting; use this time to complete work on your projects!

April 17: No class meeting; use this time to complete work on your projects!

April 24: Pilot Presentation of Project (NOTE: WE WILL REVISIT THESE DATES TO SEE IF WE NEED TO MEET DURING FINALS WEEK)

May 2: Peer Evaluations; Exit Interviews; Course Evaluations
(final exam time: Thursday, May 2, 3:20-5:20)