Feminist Lives in Social Contexts
GWS 640—Senior Capstone
Fall 2017
TuTh 1:00-2:15 in STERLING 1335

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Office hours (F2017): Tuesday 2:30-4:30 or by appointment.

Seminar Description
The goal of this seminar is to provide Gender and Women’s Studies majors with a “capstone” experience in the last year—an opportunity to synthesize and deepen understandings of gender-related issues through intensive reading, writing and discussion. The first aim is to lead you to reflect on your major, how the different parts of your major relate to each other, and where your major may lead you and your thinking in the future. The second aim is to provide you with the opportunity to design a research project suited to your particular interests and knowledge, one that will allow you to draw on content and methodology that you have encountered in GWS, as well as in your other major or area of concentration, and your interests and goals as you conclude your college education and get ready for the next chapters of your life.

This fall our thematic topic is a broad focus on feminist life-writing and the question of how we might place individual feminist lives and identities in social contexts. After a couple of weeks beginning a conversation about the field and major questions of GWS, we will spend the larger section of the semester focusing our work in seminar on feminist auto/biography and memoirs. We will compare genres and broach questions about what makes a life or life-writing feminist. What is a feminist life? How and why do we tell a life? Which larger stories are reflected in individual life-narratives? How can and do feminists use personal and individual experiences to express and develop a critique and a deeper analysis of the social worlds—communities and societies—they live in and shape.

Simultaneously with this work, you will design your own research projects in consultation with your peers and me. It should have some connection to questions about feminism and how individuals or collectives live their lives in social contexts and how these contexts shape and/or are shaped by feminist lives. By “some connection” I mean a very broad and loose relation, link or association. What is most important is that you get to work on questions that are relevant to you. That said, your projects could benefit more directly from the seminar, if it engages directly with texts and discussions that we work on together during the semester. Methodologically, the seminar will focus on how we can use life-writing and personal experience in feminist analysis of gender, race, class and other social hierarchies of difference. Regular assignments throughout the semester will help you start writing and keeping your project on track. Much more about this to follow!

Work Required
Participation: Attendance and active participation is mandatory. All students must speak in seminar, frequently. If you do not feel comfortable speaking in seminars, please let me know a.s.a.p. so we can work together on ways to make it easier for you. You may miss
seminar twice without it directly affecting your grade (save your absences for illness or emergency).

**Weekly discussion-posts**: are always due on learn@UW in the appropriate folder on Monday evening at 10PM. You may miss two of the weekly discussion-posts without it directly affecting your grade (again: save it for illness or emergency).

**Two short papers** (3-5 pages) in week 6 and 7
1) Own graphic memoir or analysis of Bechdel and Satrapi
2) Feminist biographical interview

**Research Project** about 15 pages that include (deadlines on weeks below)

First draft (2 pages)
Second draft (8-15 pages)
Peer-review due
Oral presentation of project
Final revised paper (Exam time): M 12/18/2017 @ 2:25PM

**Required texts**

- **Course packet** (CP) at College of Letters and Science Copy center. 6120 Social Science Building, 1180 Observatory Drive, ph. 262-5396.
- **Books** at Room of One’s Own Bookstore, 315 W. Gorham St.
  + two more that we pick together at the beginning of the semester.

**Course Schedule**

Wk 1 (Sep 7) Introductions and syllabus

Wk 2 (Sep 12 & 14) Brief history of the field of GWS. Questions to broach: is GWS a new discipline? What is the relationship between Gender Studies and Women’s Studies? Key topics and questions in GWS.


Wk 3 (Sep 19 & 21) Feminist lives in social contexts. Feminist auto/biography and life-writing. Questions to broach: What is a feminist life? What is feminist life-writing? How are larger social contexts reflected in individual life-narratives?

Wk 4 (Sep 26 & 28) Audre Lorde in different life-narrative genres. Questions: How do auto/biographical genres lend themselves to convey and narrate feminist lives, politics and practices?

Readings: Tuesday: Lorde. Zami Thursday: De Veaux. Warrior Poet (both in CP); Documentary: Audre Lorde: A Litany for Survival (on learn@UW)

Wk 5 (Oct 3 & 5) Graphic memoir 1

Wk 6 (Oct 10 & 12) Graphic memoir 2
Readings: Tuesday: Satrapi. Persepolis 2 (2004); Thursday: Interview with Satrapi (CP)
* Due date Friday> first short paper.

Wk 7 (Oct 17 & 19) Biographical interview with a feminist
“Feminists We Love” (CP) + other reading TBA
* Due date Friday> second short paper.

Wk 8 (Oct 24 & 26) Individual meetings about research projects and overall work in seminar.

Wk 9 (Oct 31/Nov 2) Memoir 1
Readings: Claire. Exile and Pride (1999), cap. 1, 2 and 8; Enke. Transfeminist Perspectives. Introduction (All in CP).
* Due date Friday> First draft (2 pages).

Wk 10 (Nov 7 & 9) Memoir 2
Reading: TBD

Wk 11 (Nov 14 & 16) Memoir 3
Reading: TBD
* Due date Tuesday> second drafts.

Wk 12 (Nov 21 & 23) Peer-review workshop and thanksgiving.
* Due date Tuesday> peer-reviews

Wk 13 (Nov 28 & 30) Feminist lives in social contexts reconsidered. What have we learned about relationships between individual lives and identities and their social worlds? How does/can this thinking relate to your own research projects and to the fields and conversations you are going to be part of after graduation?
Wk 14 (Dec 5 & 7)  Oral Presentations & discussion

Wk 15 (Dec 12)  Oral Presentations? Evaluation and party

* Due date> final project due M 12/18/2017 @ 2:25PM (exam time)

Grade breakdown
- Attendance: 15%
- Participation: 20%
- Discussion leading: 5%
- Two smaller papers/products: 10%
- Weekly 1-paragraph responses: 20%
- Final product (drafts, peer-review, presentation, and final product): 30%

Accomodations: The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

I will gladly honor your request to address you by a preferred name and/or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

Grade disagreements: If you have questions about a grade, speak to me first. If the question is not resolved, speak with the Chair, Judith Houck or Associate Chair, Christina Ewig. They will attempt to resolve the issue and inform you of the appeals procedure if no resolution is reached informally.

Academic misconduct (plagiarism and cheating)

This class will strictly follow and enforce the rules defined in UWS 14 through our own "Student Academic Misconduct Campus Procedures." (UWS 14.03)

Examples include but are not limited to: cutting and pasting text from the web without quotation marks or proper citation; paraphrasing from the web without crediting the source; using another person's ideas, words, or research and presenting it as one's own by not properly crediting the originator; signing another person's name to an attendance sheet; hiding a book knowing that another student needs it to prepare an assignment.

Plagiarism and other misconduct are NOT WORTH IT. It will create a lot of unnecessary work for both you and me and may cause you to be expelled from this class or college in general!