

# Sex, Power, and Politics Section 01

## WGSS 101

Spring 2025 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/23/2025 to 05/12/2025 Modified 01/23/2025

### Contact Information

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**Instructor:** Angela Castillo

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**Office Hours:** M/W, 12 -1pm, and by appointment

**Class Days/Time:** M/W, 10:30 – 11:45am

**Classroom:** CL 234

### Course Information

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This course offers an exploration of the historical and contemporary dynamics of gender, sex, power, and politics. It focuses on the experiences, identities, and activism of women and LGBTQIA+ communities across diverse cultural, racial, and socioeconomic contexts. *Sex, Power, and Politics* critically examines the social, economic, and political factors that shape the politics of bodies, labor, sexuality, and resistance.

Key topics include challenging binary systems, intersectional feminist movements, trans and disability justice, and global care and labor politics. Through readings, discussions, and multimedia, students will critically analyze structures of oppression and activism while connecting theory to lived experiences to inspire social change.

## Course Format

This is an in-person course that meets twice a week. Some course materials and assignments will be accessed on the “Modules” section of Canvas, the college’s Learning Management System.

## Faculty/Class Web Page and Canvas

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](#). You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through Canvas to learn of any updates. For help with using Canvas see [Canvas Student Resources page](#).

# Course Description and Requisites

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Multidisciplinary introduction to traditional and new images, roles, experiences, ethnic similarities and differences, and contemporary problems of American women. GE Area: S

Prerequisite(s): Completion of Core General Education and upper division standing are prerequisites to all SJSU studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended.

Letter Graded

## Classroom Protocols

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1. You are expected to do all of the assigned readings for the week before class meets on Monday. You are expected to bring that day's reading to class, arrive on time, stay the entire class period, and participate in class activities by asking and answering questions. Anticipate a reading load of about 50-100 pages per class. Success in this course is based on the expectation that you will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course-related activities.
2. Please turn off and store cell phones during class. Laptops are allowed, provided they are used exclusively for course-related activities. Minimize distractions as much as possible.
3. You are responsible for all assignments and announcements presented in class. If you are late or absent, it is your responsibility to contact another student. I'm unable to respond to emails asking what you missed. Please come see me in my office hours if you have further questions after contacting another student.
4. You are expected to turn in work on time. Please reach out to me if you are struggling or having problems. You can send me an email on Canvas or come by my office hours. Maintaining timely communication is key to success in this course.

### Late Policy

Please notify me as soon as possible if an emergency interferes with your class performance and ability to turn in an assignment on time. I will accept assignments turned within two weeks past the due date. If you turn in the assignment within two weeks, you will receive up to one half of the full credit for the assignment.

### AI Generative Tools Policy

You may use generative AI programs, e.g. ChatGPT, to help generate ideas and brainstorm. You should note, however, that the material generated by these programs may be inaccurate, incomplete, biased or otherwise problematic. Beware that use may also stifle your own independent thinking and creativity.

Generative AI also derives its output from previously created texts from other sources that the models were trained on, yet doesn't cite sources. **You may not submit any work generated by an AI program as your own. This is a form of plagiarism.** If you include material generated by an AI program, it should be cited like any other reference material (with due consideration for the quality of the reference, which may be poor). When/if you use Artificial Intelligence (AI) platforms in your assignments, please write a note to clarify

where in your process you used AI and which platform(s) you used. **Failure to do so constitutes an academic integrity violation, and I will follow the institution's policy and report those instances.** See this article for proper APA formatting of such citations: [How to cite ChatGPT.](#)

### A Note about Women's Studies Classes

This class will be a challenge because:

**The Workload-** Officially, a three-unit course entails six hours of work outside the classroom. Each week you will be expected to read between 30-60 pages and class assignments will require a substantial amount of work outside of class.

**Topic Matter-** There will be frequent instances throughout the semester in which sensitive and difficult issues will be discussed. Many of these issues will require an open mind. Feminist readings of topics may go against moral or religious teachings with which you have grown up. Frequently, students in this course find that they begin to see almost everything in a new light. This experience can be both exciting and disturbing.

**R-rating-** As you will come to find, we may be using several texts that involve "profane" language. Some of the films that we will use in class also contain nudity and/or violence. Please be forewarned.

## Program Information

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Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

**Goal 1:** To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.

**Goal 2:** To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.

**Goal 3:** To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the [GE website \(https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php\)](https://sjsu.edu/general-education/ge-requirements/overview/learning-outcomes.php).

## Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

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GE Area S: Self, Society, and Equality in the U.S.

SJSU Studies courses -- Areas R, S, and V -- help students integrate knowledge between and among disciplines. In Area S courses, students study the interrelationships of individuals, racial groups, and cultural groups to understand and appreciate issues of diversity, inclusion, inequalities, and justice in the United States.

### GE Area S Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of an Area S course, students should be able to:

1. describe how identities are shaped by cultural and societal influences within contexts of equality and inequality. Examples include, but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion, disability status, age, generation, regional origin, national identity, language, and intersectionalities;
2. analyze historical, economic, political, or social processes that shape diversity, equality, and structured inequalities in the U.S. and reflect on one's own identities and positions within these structures;
3. evaluate social actions which have or have not led to greater equality and social justice in the U.S.; and
4. engage in constructive interactions about social issues in the U.S. within the framework of equality and inequalities.

**Writing Practice:** Students will write a minimum of 3000 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

## Course Materials

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### Required Textbook/Readings

1. Hooks, B. (2014). *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*. SECOND EDITION. New York: South End Press. **(E-book available at zero cost via SJSU library)**
2. Kang, Lessard, Heston, & Nordmarken (2017). *Introduction to Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies*. UMass Amherst. **(E-book available at zero cost at <https://openbooks.library.umass.edu/introwgss/>)**

\*Additional required readings will be available on Canvas

## Course Requirements and Assignments

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1. In-Class Activities (10x10 points = 100): Throughout the course, you will complete ten in-class writing responses or participate in group activities based on the week's readings, a film shown in class, or a guest speaker. These assignments are designed to assess your engagement with the readings and your attendance. Please note that these responses cannot be made up. If you are absent when a response is assigned, you will forfeit those points.
2. Class Facilitation (1x200 points = 200): All students will be responsible for leading at least one class session with a couple of your classmates. This will require you to: synthesize the readings, present the material for the week, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the readings, and lead a discussion. More details on class presentations will follow.

3. Reading Journals (7x50 points = 350): Students will complete seven reading journals throughout the course, each reflecting on the module's readings. Journals should be one page, double-spaced, and written in a narrative style. Share your thoughts, questions, critiques, or ideas sparked by the readings –whatever feels meaningful to you. This is an informal assignment, so you won't be graded on grammar, punctuation, or formality. The goal is to understand what you're taking away from the readings.
4. Final Paper/Project (350 points): Students will submit a short reflection paper on the final day of class. Additionally, you will create a creative project to present to your peers. Detailed instructions and guidelines will be provided later in the course.

## ✓ Grading Information

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I grade using a point system. Your final grade is an accumulation of points you have earned throughout the semester. The grading scale is as follows:

A+ = 970-1000	A = 940-969	A- = 900-939
B+ = 870-899	B = 840-869	B- = 800-839
C+ = 770-799	C = 740-769	C- = 700-739
D+ = 660-669	D = 630-659	D- = 600-629

## University Policies

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Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

## Course Schedule

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*This schedule is subject to change with fair notice.*

When	Topic	Notes
Week 1 Jan 27/29	MODULE 1: INTRODUCING FEMINIST FRAMEWORKS AND FOUNDATIONS	<p><b>Introduction to the Course</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hooks, "Feminism is for Everybody" pgs. 1-60</li> </ul>

When	Topic	Notes
Week 2 Feb 3/5	MODULE 1: INTRODUCING FEMINIST FRAMEWORKS AND FOUNDATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hooks, "Feminism is for Everybody" pgs. 61-End</li> <li>• Kang, Lessard, Heston, and Nordmarken- "Unit I: An Intro to Women, Gender, Sexuality Studies: Grounding Theoretical Frameworks and Concepts"</li> </ul>
Week 3 Feb 10/12	MODULE 2: DECONSTRUCTING BINARY THINKING AND THE MTH OF BIOLOGICAL ESSENTIALISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kang, Lessard, Heston, and Nordmarken, "Unit II: Challenging Binary Systems and Constructions of Difference"</li> <li>• Eliot- "Pink Brain, Blue Brain, Ch. 2 &amp; 3" (Canvas)</li> </ul>
Week 4 Feb 17/19	MODULE 2: DECONSTRUCTING BINARY THINKING AND THE MTH OF BIOLOGICAL ESSENTIALISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Martin- "The Egg and The Sperm" (Canvas)</li> <li>• Anzaldua- "Borderlands, Ch. 1" (Canvas)</li> <li>• Reed- "Teacher Fired for Reading Book That Considers Gender Beyond Binary Georgia" (Canvas)</li> <li>• Fausto-Sterling, "The Five Sexes Why Male and Female Are Not Enough, Revisited" (Canvas)</li> </ul>
Week 5 Feb 24/26	MODULE 3: INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AND TRANS ACTIVISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kang, Lessard, Heston, and Nordmarken, "Unit V: Historical and Contemporary Feminist Social Movements"</li> <li>• Theoharis, "It Was Very Difficult to Keep Going When All Our Work Seemed to Be in Vain" (Canvas)</li> </ul>
Week 6 Mar 3/5	MODULE 3: INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AND TRANS ACTIVISM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "The Combahee Rover Collective Statement: Annotated" (Canvas)</li> <li>• Crenshaw, "The Urgency of Intersectionality" (Canvas)</li> <li>• Koyama, "Transmanifest Manifesto" (Canvas)</li> <li>• Rivera, "Y'all Better Quiet Down, 1973 Speech" (Canvas)</li> <li>• Major and Meronek, "Miss Major Speaks: Conversations with a Black Trans Revolutionary, Ch. 2: Nobody's Token Black Bitch" (Canvas)</li> </ul>
Week 7 Mar 10/12	MODULE 4: GENDER, LABOR, AND THE POLITCS OF CARE IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kang, Lessard, Heston, and Nordmarken, "Unit IV: Gender and Work in the Global Economy"</li> <li>• Nakano Glenn, "Forced to Care: Coercion and Caregiving in America" (Canvas)</li> </ul>
Week 8 Mar 17/19	MODULE 4: GENDER, LABOR, AND THE POLITICS OF CARE IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Francisco-Menchavez, "Multidirectional Care in Transnational Families" (Canvas)</li> <li>• Parrenas, "The Force of Domesticity (Chapter 2. Patriarchy and Neoliberalism in the Globalization of Care)" (Canvas)</li> <li>• Shiva, "Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development" (Canvas)</li> </ul>

When	Topic	Notes
Week 9 Mar 24/26	MODULE 5: REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE, MEDICALIZATION, AND CULTURAL NORMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kang, Lessard, Heston, and Nordmarken, "Unit III: Institutions, Culture, and Structures"</li> <li>• Ross &amp; Solinger, "Reproductive Justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Ch. 2, pgs 58-82) [Canvas]</li> </ul> <p><i>Spring Break is March 31<sup>st</sup> – April 4<sup>th</sup></i></p>
Week 10 Apr 7/9	MODULE 5: REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE, MEDICALIZATION, AND CULTURAL NORMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brubaker and Dillaway, "Medicalization, Natural Childbirth and Birthing Experiences" (Canvas)</li> <li>• Bartky, "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power" (Canvas)</li> </ul>
Week 11 Apr 14/16	MODULE 6: THE POLITICS OF SEXUALITY AND EMBODIMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (Canvas)</li> <li>• Ruben, "Thinking Sex" (Canvas)</li> </ul>
Week 12 Apr 21/23	MODULE 6: THE POLITICS OF SEXUALITY AND EMBODIMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young, "Breasted Experience: The Look and the Feeling" (Canvas)</li> <li>• Tolman, "Daring to Desire: Culture and the Bodies of Adolescent Girls" (Canvas)</li> <li>• Carpenter and Casper, "A Tale of Two Technologies: HPV Vaccination, Male Circumcision, and Sexual Health" (Canvas)</li> </ul>
Week 13 Apr 28/30	MODULE 7: DIS/ABILITY JUSTICE AND FEMINIST THEORY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "10 PRINCIPLES OF DISABILITY JUSTICE" (Canvas)</li> <li>• Wong, "Year of the Tiger" (Canvas)</li> </ul>
Week 14 May 5/7	MODULE 7: DIS/ABILITY JUSTICE AND FEMINIST THEORY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Garland-Thomson, "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory" (Canvas)</li> <li>• Piepzna-Samarashinha &amp; Lakshmi, "Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice" (Canvas)</li> </ul>
Week 15 May 16		<b>FINAL is May 16th from 10:45am - 12pm</b>