

Grande Prairie Regional College  
Department of Arts and Education

**WS 3000 (Women's Studies)**

Lecture 3 (3-0-0) UT to UA\*, UC, UL, AU, CU, AF\*  
Fall 2009

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10 - 11 am, Wednesdays 1 - 2 or by appointment

Required Textbooks: Full Frontal Feminism by Jessica Valenti  
Consciously Female by Tracy Gaudet

Prerequisites: None

Course Description: This course introduces the field of women's studies, with emphasis on the theoretical foundations of feminist analysis and the diversity of debates within feminism. The primary focus surrounds issues of gender as a social, cultural and political construct and how this intersects with, for example, race, class and sexuality. The course is also an opportunity to explore the shared and diverse aspects of women's experiences and show how women's studies as an academic discipline challenges the methods, theories and knowledge of traditional disciplines.

Content Description: Evaluations will be based on the following:

|                                 |     |  |
|---------------------------------|-----|--|
| Women's History Project         | 25% | October 1                                  |
| Activist Project                | 25% | November 3                                 |
| Consciously Female Journal      | 25% | November 26                                |
| Chapter Jump Points             | 12% | 12 due every Tuesday starting September 15 |
| In Class Activities/Discussions | 13% |  |

Please note that the dates listed on this outline are tentative and are subject to change. 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. If you have a disability, please self-identify to the instructor if you require any specialized supports.

It is hoped that 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, to take an active part in our learning activities, and to communicate with the

instructor when you encounter difficulties with the course material. Your questions and comments are welcomed and encouraged at any time during the class. You will be expected to come to each class with the readings completed and be prepared to discuss those readings. Lectures will not consist of the instructor highlighting the main points of the readings and the instructor does not lend out lecture notes. 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.

While I will lecture this course is more like a seminar. If you're not in class then you're not getting the core material. Thus, the number of classes you attend will affect your grade for the Chapter Jump Points and the In-Class Activities/Discussion. However, because of the H1N1 pandemic I encourage you to stay home if you are ill, maintain health practices like frequent hand-washing, and find a study partner (or two) in the class to get missed information from. I do, however, expect you to contact me in advance by phone or email if you need to miss a class and I may ask for evidence (doctor's note) if there are an inordinate number of absences. If you are in the midst of a major crisis just contact me as soon as reasonably possible. You will still be required to hand in that chapter's jump point. You will not get a make-up assignment for the in-class activity/discussion but neither will you be docked marks for noncompliance.

Each Tuesday we will be covering a chapter in Full Frontal Feminism and each Thursday will be a chapter from Consciously Female. You will be sharing your ideas with a partner or group and will be 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 this class. It will be expected that all individuals will maintain confidentiality of the class 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. Also be cognizant of the fact that women's studies is an academic discipline that although draws from women's personal experiences is not meant to be a substitute for personal counseling nor an entertaining or dramatic chat session more suited to daytime talk shows.

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 all 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. Should you be unable to conduct yourself in a professional and respectful manner towards your fellow students and the instructor you will be required to leave the class in the interest of maintaining the learning opportunities of the other students.

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 and have internalized misinformation about others and ourselves. We will also be confronting how we participate in this process ourselves. Thus, be aware of and sensitive to the fact that the issues confronted in this course will affect some of us deeply and personally. Please also be gentle with yourself should issues arise for you and feel free to talk with the instructor at any time about such matters or for a referral for counseling should the need arise.

Chapter Jump points will be handed in for Chapters 2 - 13 (Full Frontal Feminism) each Tuesday beginning September 15. You will need to find some material related to that chapter that will be shared with the class in the interest of facilitating discussion and debate. See the Resources section of Full Frontal Feminism for some ideas of where to find information but I encourage you to consider magazine articles, newspaper articles, website information, other books, movies, tv shows etc. In the case of articles, you must hand into me a copy of the article; or in the case of tv show, movie, book, website a 1 to 2 paragraph description of that medium. Do provide website addresses, book references, full magazine/newspaper references but I won't require a separate bibliographic section. I would also like a 1 page description of how that information fits in to the chapter topic and why you thought it relevant for class discussion. Please type your descriptions, double spaced, and don't forget your names on all pieces of paper. Grading for Chapter Jump Points and In-Class Activities and Discussion will be simple: 0 for not submitted or a complete lack of effort, 1 for adequate but not showing great thought, effort or understanding, and 2 for good effort especially in finding some unique jump point that really stimulates the class, and/or enthusiastic participation. In-Class Activities could include written responses to questions, worksheets, summary of films/chapter material etc. I encourage you to read pages 104 - 110 of *Consciously Female* before next class to give you an idea about the class discussions.

The *Consciously Female Journal* will involve actually doing many of the activities found in the book. I encourage you to do these activities fully and as openly as possible. However, given the personal nature of the material I do allow you to blackout any personal information you would rather I not read when you hand it in. Although I won't be going through it with a fine tooth comb, I just want to be sure you've been doing the assignments on a regular basis. Remember I am governed by ethical principles of nondisclosure. You will need to buy yourself a journal for this project and I encourage you to read pages 101 - 104 of *Consciously Female* before buying/beginning the journal.

The Women's History Project will consist of two parts. The first part will be to find three women who have changed women's lives for the better. At least two women must be Canadian, one of these must be currently alive, the other must be deceased. The third woman can be Canadian or not, deceased or not, but I encourage you to look internationally especially to developing countries. I do ask the third woman not be American. Consider finding women in different areas such as health/medicine, science, art, music, religion, literature, government, law, first nations, immigrant women, women with disabilities, education, etc. Please hand in to me 1 to 2 pages telling me about her and her

accomplishments and why you chose her in particular for this assignment. Also be prepared to discuss at least one of your chosen women in class. The second part of the assignment will be to find three events from Canadian history that you felt was instrumental in changing the nature of women's lives for the better. Again, a 1 to 2 page discussion of each event and why you chose it will be handed in. Don't forget proper referencing for all sources, including a bibliographic/reference page. I would also like you to bring those three events to class each on an index card with the date of the event and a brief description for a class activity. You may wish to look ahead to Chapter 9 of *Full Frontal Feminism* before beginning this assignment.

The Activist Project is designed to help us recognize that our lives and our actions can make a positive difference in the life of other women. In this assignment you are asked to identify and choose a particular issue that affects women and perform some action that makes a positive difference in the life of a woman or group of women. I am asking you to consider an action or issue you probably would not have done or recognized before you took this course. Your action could be a form of service, participation in, donation to or help raise awareness for a cause or an issue that relates to gender. You could also choose some issue in which gender interacts with an other 'ism' that affects the life of women such as classism, ableism, heterosexism, racism, etc. The key idea here is that your act must in some way make the life of at least one woman better in some fashion and is enough of a personal stretch for you to allow for some personal growth or risk taking on your part. However, your action must not be harmful to yourself or others and it must be legal. You may choose to do your act alone, with other classmates, or with other people you enlist. If you do work with other class members each of you must contribute to the class presentation and each of you must do an individual paper. I encourage you to see Chapter 14 of *Full Frontal Feminism* to see a range of ideas to get you thinking about your own project.

This assignment has three components: an act, an in-class presentation, and a paper. The act must be some action or activism that you have performed since beginning this course as opposed to something you have done in the past or are planning to do after this course has finished and it should not be something you had to do anyway for another class or educational activity. Later in the term I will have you give a brief presentation as to what you did and why you chose that particular issue. This will only be about five minutes in length and is meant to be informal.

You must also hand in a written explanation of your act further elaborating on the details of what you did, why you chose that issue, how your actions helped other women, and how the performance of the act made you feel. In the written explanation I would like you to particularly focus on the issue you chose to act on. Be sure to give me some larger background and critique of this focal issue. How common is this issue, locally, in Canada, in the world? What are the current statistics? What social structures or historical events helped to create this issue? What other ideas could be pursued in the eradication of this issue? The paper should have a title page, be typed, double-spaced, on white paper with 12 point font, have approximately one inch margins and be stapled rather than in a fancy cover. I would like approximately five pages in length. Be sure to reference where you got information from both within the paper and in a more detailed reference section.

In all projects you must be sure to avoid plagiarism by always being very clear about citing where borrowed wording, ideas and information begin and end in your work. It is not enough to just list the source in your reference/bibliography section. You are encouraged to read the section on plagiarism on page 49 of the current college calendar and ask your instructor if you are at all uncertain about this very serious and often misunderstood form of academic misconduct. The instructor is most familiar with APA format of referencing but you may use any academic referencing format you wish as long as it is consistently and correctly used. If you are not familiar with how to reference please talk to the instructor or see Mark in the library Learning Resource Center. You are also encouraged to familiarize yourself with the information on student rights and responsibilities, codes of conduct and the penalties that can be imposed for infractions on pages 48 - 51 of the college calendar.

Projects are due at the beginning of class on the due date assigned. A late penalty of 5% will be given for each day the project/exam is late including weekend days. 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 redo a project because of a poor grade and there are no extra assignments you can do to make up for a poor grade.

#### Course Schedule:

##### September 3 - October 1

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Readings:        | FFF Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4<br>CF Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4   |
| Assignments:     | Chapter 2, 3, 4 (FFF) Jump points every Tuesday beginning September 15<br>History Project due October 1 |
| Important dates: | Last day to add a class September 10<br>Last day to drop a class September 17                           |

##### October 6 - November 3

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| Readings:    | FFF Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, 9<br>CF Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8                       |
| Assignments: | Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 (FFF) Jump points<br>Activist Project due November 3 |

November 5 - December 3

Readings: FFF Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13, 14  
CF Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12

Assignments: Chapter 10, 11, 12, 13 (FFF) Jump points  
Consciously Female Journal due November 26

Important dates: Last day to withdraw from a class November 6

Grade Schedule:

|    |     |          |
|----|-----|----------|
| A+ | 4.0 | 90 - 100 |
| A  | 4.0 | 85 - 89  |
| A- | 3.7 | 80 - 84  |
| B+ | 3.3 | 77 - 79  |
| B  | 3.0 | 73 - 76  |
| B- | 2.7 | 70 - 72  |
| C+ | 2.3 | 67 - 69  |
| C  | 2.0 | 63 - 66  |
| C- | 1.7 | 60 - 62  |
| D+ | 1.3 | 55 - 59  |
| D  | 1.0 | 50 - 54  |
| F  | 0.0 | 0 - 49   |