Psychology of Women: Gender, Culture, and Ethnicity
Department of Psychology

Course Description

This course is an examination of sociocultural and biological influences on the psychological development of women. Topics will include feminist scholarship and research; gender role socialization; women's health and well-being; sexuality; and close relationships and family dynamics.

Course Objectives:

(1) Develop an understanding of feminist psychological approaches to the study of women's lives.

(2) Develop an understanding of the ways that biology and society (e.g., patriarchy, sexism, violence) intersect to shape women's subjective psychological experiences globally.

(3) Develop an understanding of the complexity of women's subjective psychological experiences; complexity that is informed by dynamic, intersecting social identities including racial, ethnic, cultural, class, sexual, and religious identities.

(4) Develop and understanding of mental distress in the lives of women, and feminist psychological approaches to its treatment.

Required Course Materials


2. Ticket to MICA Performance of Vagina Monologues - $10

3. Boys Don't Cry Film Rental

4. Book for Book Report

5. Computer Headset

Course Requirements

1. Homework – 40%
2. Book Report – 20%
3. Take Home Essay Exam – 20%
4. Participation – 20%
**Attendance** – You are expected to attend all classes on time and to arrive prepared. If you find yourself missing more than two classes (excused or unexcused), you need to seriously consider withdrawing from this course, as staying on pace with the class will likely prove too difficult. Death in the family, participation in religious holidays, involvement in school-sponsored activities, and illnesses requiring medical attention are some examples of excused absences. Absence due to illness must be substantiated in writing by the treating professional in order to be considered excused. No exceptions. Unexcused absences will have a negative impact on your grade. **Work missed due to unexcused absences will not be accepted and will not receive any credit.**

**Homework** – You will be assigned homework on a regular basis as part of this class. Assignments are designed to promote guided discovery learning. Your work outside of the classroom with serve as the foundation for communicative learning within the classroom. Instructions for all assignments are outlined in the “Course Schedule” section at the end of the syllabus. **All written work is to be typed. Late assignments will not be accepted and will not receive any credit.**

**Book Report** – One objective of this course is to facilitate the development of an understanding of mental distress in the lives of women; another is the development of an understanding of the complexity of women’s subjective psychological experiences. These are not mutually exclusive objectives. The book report assignment is designed to have you consider the intersections between culture and mental illness. On the first day of class, you will draw one of the five following book titles from a bag: *When Katie wakes*, *The center cannot hold: My journey through madness*, *Willow weep for me: A Black woman’s journey through depression*, *Wasted: A memoir of Anorexia and Bulimia*, or *Free to fly: A story of manic depression*. These titles were selected because they represent a diversity of syndromes experienced by a culturally diverse set of women. You are required to read your assigned book in its entirety and prepare a book report and PPT presentation for the class. Multiple students will draw the same book title. You will collaborate to create the report and PPT presentation. Questions to be answered for the report are specific to the book, and can be found under the particular book title listed below. These questions represent the minimum of what must be included in your report. **All written work is to be typed. Your report must be submitted electronically and in hard copy. Additionally, you must submit an electronic and hard copy version of your PPT presentation in a handout format. Late work will not be accepted and will not receive credit.**

*When Katie Wakes (PTSD) Book Report Questions*  

1. Domestic violence is about one person using emotionally, physically, sexually and psychologically abusive tactics to gain power and control over another. What forms of abuse did Connie suffer at the hands of her abusive partner? Her mother?

2. There is often a cycle in families that repeats violence from generation to generation. How many generations of violence does Connie reveal from her history and what are the different ways that she expresses her understanding of the cycle? Why is understanding the abuse by her mother so important in understanding the abuse by her partner?)
3. Why does Connie think she wants to kill herself? Considering how hard her life was with her mother, wouldn't you think she would be grateful to have freedom? Why does she say in the book that she doesn't want to live without her mother? What does this tell us about child abuse?

4. The number one question asked about battered women is, "Why don't they just leave?" Why didn't Connie "just leave"? Is this a book about staying or leaving and why?

5. Did Mika save Connie or did Connie save herself? Who is the hero and why?

*The Center Cannot Hold (Schizophrenia) Book Report Questions*

1. What were some of the early signs manifesting during Elyn Saks' childhood that she was not mentally well?

2. In what ways was the study of philosophy a therapeutic process for Saks?

3. What personal, social, economic, and cultural resources were/are at her disposal that likely contributed to her successful recovery/remission?

4. What comparisons does Elyn Saks make between the culture of mental healthcare in the US and the UK?

5. Some believe that mental illness makes people interesting, that it is the fuel that generates some of society’s most creative minds, and that given the opportunity, they would refuse a magic pill that could make mental illness go away. What does Saks have to say about this?


1. In your opinion, was Meri Danquah’s depression caused by social factors or was it constructed socially?

2. How did race, culture, gender, and social class affect Danquah’s self-concept and the reaction of others to her and her illness?

3. By the end of the book was Danquah cured? If so, what factor(s) contributed to her cure? If not, explain what factor(s) indicate that she is still mentally ill.

4. What effect did the mental health system have on Danquah?

5. What (if anything) could have been done to prevent Danquah's illness (or her mental illness labeling if you believe she’s not really mentally ill)?
Wasted (Anorexia and Bulimia) Book Report Questions

1. Hornbacher writes that eating disorders are "a response, albeit a rather twisted one, to a culture, a family, a self." What personal (biological and psychological), familial, and cultural roots of anorexia and bulimia emerge from Hornbacher's history of her eighteen-year battle? What phenomena does she single out as being most significant?

2. What role do secrecy and deceit play in the progression of eating disorders? How and why are bulimic and anorexic children so adept at concealing their behavior?

3. What physical and emotional scars does Hornbacher carry by the end of her account? What do those scars indicate about the nature and severity of her ordeal? What does her attitude toward them indicate about her ability to vanquish her disorder? Do you think that she will succeed in overcoming her "fascination with death"?

4. In what ways does Hornbacher present eating disorders as involving a conflict between "the female body" and "the female mind"? What is the nature of that conflict, and how does it manifest itself in anorexia and/or bulimia?

5. To what extent do you think Hornbacher, at twenty-three, has achieved an understanding of her lifelong problem? Do you think she understands some areas and issues more fully than she does others? Are there any phenomena or implications of her eating disorders that she does not confront or understand?

Free to Fly (Bipolar Disorder) Book Report Questions

1. How does culture play into family and community reactions to Caroline Kwok’s diagnosis?

2. What role, if any does Kwok’s immigration to Canada play in the quality of her mental health and mental health care?

3. What “suffering” has Kwok’s illness caused her?

4. What creative and/or non-traditional steps did Kwok take in service of her recovery?

5. Is Kwok recovered? Why or why not?

Take Home Essay Exam – What is the self-silencing explanation for depression among women? Discuss the research that has tested this theory. How strongly is the theory supported by research? How would a feminist therapeutic approach to the treatment of depression, supported by self-silencing behavior, differ from a traditional, gender-neutral therapeutic approach? Your grade will
be based on the quality of your paper’s organization (e.g., introduction, body, conclusion, use of
transition statements), the quality of the paper’s content, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and
sophistication of writing (2.5 – 3 pages single-spaced). **All written work is to be typed. Essay
should be submitted electronically and in hard copy. Late work will not be accepted and will
not receive credit.**

**Participation** – You are expected to actively participate once here. Active participation includes:
constructive engagement in class discussions and activities, completion of all outside class work as
assigned, pursuit of academic support from the professor and/or ACE as needed, taking
responsibility and being self-accountable for your academic work, and engagement in mutually
respectful relationships with your professor and peers.

At the end of the semester, you will be asked to reflect upon your participation, evaluate it and
justify your evaluation using a guideline provided by me. I, in turn will review your evaluations and
justifications and either agree or disagree with your self-assessment based on my subjective
perceptions of the quality of your participation. My disagreement with your self-evaluation may call
for either a higher or lower rating of your participation. In instances of disagreement, I will provide
you with a written counter-justification. **The participation evaluation form can be found at the
end of the syllabus, and should be submitted electronically.**

**Grading Philosophy** – In my courses, points are earned. Everyone starts with a zero
and earns his/her own grade based on demonstrated mastery of the material. You do
not start with a 100 and lose points based on incompetence. The following article,
published in Forbes, accurately represents my grading philosophy and perceived role as
your professor.

**Art Carden**, Contributor

**Dear Student: I Don't Lie Awake At Night Thinking of Ways to Ruin Your Life**

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child:
but when I became a man, I put away childish things." 1 Corinthians 13:11 (KJV)

One of the popular myths of higher education is that professors are sadists who live
to inflict psychological trauma on undergraduates. Perhaps you believe that we pick
students at random and then schedule all our assignments in such a way as to make
those students’ lives as difficult as possible. The older I get and the longer I do this,
the more I recognize that we (the professors) need to be more transparent about our
philosophies of evaluation. How does this work? Let’s clarify a few things.

First, I do not “take off” points. You earn them. The difference is not merely
rhetorical, nor is it trivial. In other words, you start with zero points and earn your
way to a grade. You earn a grade in (say) Econ 100 for demonstrating that you have
gained a degree of competence in economics ranging from being able to articulate
the basic principles (enough to earn a C) to mastery and the ability to apply these
principles to day-to-day affairs (which will earn an A). I’ve hurt my own grades
before by confusing my own incompetence with competence and my own (bare)
competence with mastery, so trust me: I’ve been there, and I understand.
Second, this means that the burden of proof is on you to demonstrate that you have mastered the material. It is not on me to demonstrate that you have not. My assumption at the beginning of each class is that you know somewhere between nothing and very little about basic economics unless you were lucky enough to have an exceptional high school economics course. Otherwise, why are you here? You might say that the course is a prerequisite for other things you want to do, but if that it is the case and you know the material, you’re more than welcome to simply show up for the exams, ace them, and be on your way.

In this light, consider this: the fact that you “don’t understand” why you didn’t earn full points for a particular question might itself help explain why you didn’t earn full points. Don’t take this personally or interpret it as a sneer. See it as a learning opportunity. If you understood the material—and do note that there is a large difference between really understanding the material and being able to reproduce a graph or definition you might remember from class—you would have answered the question flawlessly. I recommend (as I have recommended to many others) that you go back, take another crack at it, and see if you can find where you have gone wrong. Then bring it by my office, and we will talk.

Finally, I’m here to be a mentor and instructor. This means that our relationship differs from the relationships that you have with your friends and family. Please don’t infer from this that I don’t care about you, because I do. A lot. I want to see you make good choices. I want to see you understand basic economics because I hope it will rock your world as it continues to rock mine and because the human consequences of lousy economic policy are enormous. That said, you should never take grades personally. I don’t think you’re stupid because you tank an exam, an assignment, or even an entire course. Economics is hard. A D or an F on an economics exam does not diminish your value in God’s eyes (or in mine) or indicate that economics just isn’t for you. It probably means you need to work smarter, and I’m here to help you with that.

Dear student, I once thought as you do. I once carried about the same misconceptions, the same litany of cognitive biases, and the same adolescent desire to blame others for my errors. I was (and remain) very poorly served by my immaturity. As shocking as it may seem, I still cling to a lot of it, even after four years of college, five years of graduate school, and now five-and-a-half years as a professor. Economics is hard, but becoming a responsible member of a free society is very, very, very hard. I’m still learning to put aside childish things. I hope you will do the same. Start now. The effort is daunting, but the rewards are substantial.

This article was inspired by periodic discussions of evaluation in the academy that crop up on the website of the Chronicle of Higher Education and on InsideHigherEd.com. A former colleague used to quote the verse above at the top of his Economics 101 syllabus. I thank Rachel Smith for comments and suggestions.

This article is available online at: http://www.forbes.com/sites/artcarden/2012/01/12/dear-student-i-dont-lie-awake-at-night-thinking-of-ways-to-ruin-your-life/

Grading Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>95 – 100 (A)</th>
<th>86 – 89 (B+)</th>
<th>76 – 79 (C+)</th>
<th>66 – 69 (D+)</th>
<th>≤59 (F)</th>
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<td>90 – 94</td>
<td>83 – 85 (B)</td>
<td>73 – 75 (C)</td>
<td>63 – 65 (D)</td>
<td>60 – 62 (D-)</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Homework</td>
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<td>Class 1</td>
<td>Introductions</td>
<td>A. Watch “The Changing Face of Feminist Psychology” [2]</td>
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<td>Pre 1st Class Assignment Discussion</td>
<td><a href="http://www.feministvoices.com/video">http://www.feministvoices.com/video</a></td>
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<td>(Lips, p. 120 Question 1) “What exactly is a woman?</td>
<td>B. Read Ch. 1 (Lips)</td>
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<td>What biological/social qualities define a person as</td>
<td>C. Answer Question (p. 35) – 1. What does it mean to take a feminist</td>
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<td>man or woman?”</td>
<td>approach to the psychology of women?</td>
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<td>2. What does such an approach entail?</td>
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<td>3. Do you consider yourself a feminist?</td>
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<td>Why or why not?</td>
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<td>D. Interview someone, gathering the following information: 1. What does</td>
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<td>it mean to be feminist?</td>
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<td>2. Why do you think that some are hesitant to label themselves feminist?</td>
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<td>3. Can men be feminist?</td>
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<td>4. Do you consider yourself to be feminist?</td>
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<td>Course Overview</td>
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<td>Wellesley Center for Research on Women Report</td>
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<td>Talk: “When Goucher Was a Women’s College,” Professor</td>
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<td>Rick Pringle, Psychology Department, and Professor</td>
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<td>LaJerne Cornish, Education Department and Goucher</td>
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<td>Women’s College Alumna</td>
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<td>Draw Book Report Assignment</td>
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<td>Class 2</td>
<td>Feminism and Feminist Psychology</td>
<td>A. Read Ch. 2 (Lips)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discussion of Homework Part C</td>
<td>B. Select 1 of the 17 articles from the Psychology of Women Special</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete Short Form of Feminist Perspectives Scale</td>
<td>Issue on Innovations in Feminist Research. Read and record your</td>
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<td>Discussion of Homework Part D</td>
<td>agreement/disagreement with the points made. Then read a commentary</td>
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<td>of that article. What points were raised in the commentary that you</td>
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<td>had and had not considered?</td>
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<td>Class 3</td>
<td>Feminist Research in Psychology</td>
<td>A. Read Ch. 13 (Lips)</td>
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<td>Discussion of Homework Part B</td>
<td>B. Answer Questions 2 and 3 (p.482) - 2. How does violence against</td>
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<td>women in North America compare in scope and seriousness to violence</td>
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<td>against women in other parts of the world? Can you see any underlying</td>
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<td>causes of anti-female violence that are similar in North America and</td>
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<td>other countries? 3. What are the potential psychological effects on</td>
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<td>women of anti-female violence, even when they are not directly</td>
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<td>victimized themselves?</td>
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<td>Class 4</td>
<td>Violence Against Women: A Worldwide Problem</td>
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<td>Discussion of Homework Part B</td>
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<td>Introduction to V-Day</td>
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<td>Money Due for Ticket to MICA</td>
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| Performance of Vagina Monologues  
Friday February 10th @ 8:00 PM in the  
BBox Theater - $10 |
|---|
| **Class 5**  
**Violence Against Women: A Worldwide Problem**  
Vagina Monologues Performance at MICA  
7:00 PM Departure from Dorsey Center  
(No Daytime Class Meeting)  
A. Read V-Men Stories  
[http://www.vday.org/v-men](http://www.vday.org/v-men)  
1. What common themes emerge from the stories?  
2. Who’s story caused the strongest reaction in you and why? [8] |
| **Class 6**  
**Violence Against Women: A Worldwide Problem**  
Vagina Monologues Discussion  
V-Men Stories Discussion  
Break Into Three Groups for Sexual Harassment Assignment  
A. Read Ch. 8 (Lips)  
B. Group 1 - Obtain a copy of Goucher College’s official policy on sexual harassment and rape. Outline the steps involved in reporting rape or sexual harassment on campus.  
Group 2 – Gather statistics on reported incidents of rape and sexual harassment from Goucher’s Public Safety.  
Group 3 – Gather statistics on anti-lesbian/gay harassment on campus, and investigate Goucher College’s policy for handling such reports. [9] |
| **Class 7**  
**Sexual Harassment**  
How could Goucher College policies relating to sexual harassment, the handling of rape, and the handling of anti-lesbian/gay conduct be improved?  
If you were interested in working toward the improvement of these policies on campus, with whom would it make most sense to share your thoughts?  
How were the reported incidences of sexual harassment, rape, and anti-lesbian/gay violence similar? How were they different?  
A. Complete Goucher College’s Sexual Harassment at Work online Training  
[http://training.newmedialearning.com/pwh/goucher/index.htm](http://training.newmedialearning.com/pwh/goucher/index.htm)  
B. Read summaries of AAUW supported cases of sexual harassment on college campuses [11]  
[http://www.aauw.org/act/laf/cases/casesuppmf](http://www.aauw.org/act/laf/cases/casesuppmf)  
1. Brzonkala vs. Virginia Polytech Institute (Virginia Tech),  
2. Doe vs. Berry College et al,  
3. Doe vs. Notre Dame University and St. Mary’s College,  
4. Howard vs. Bishop State Community College,  
5. Hunt vs. Regents of University of California,  
6. Jennings vs. UNC Chapel Hill,  
7. Lisa Simpson et al vs. University of Colorado,  
8. Nelson vs. Temple University,  
9. Wilson vs. Goddard College,  
10. Zimmerman vs. UC Berkley School of Business, |
11. Zylbert vs. Stanford University School of Medicine.

Which case elicited the greatest reaction in you and why? [12]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class 8</th>
<th>Sexual Harassment</th>
<th>A. Read Ch. 3 (Lips)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Discussion of Homework Part B</td>
<td>B. Answer Questions 5 and 3 (p. 120) – 5. What parallels are there across cultures in the ways that have been or are used to control women by controlling their bodies? 3. How would you compare the practices of female genital mutilation as practiced in some times and places to control women's sexuality and the practices of clitoroplasty currently used to make an individual look more like a woman? [13]</td>
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<th>Class 9</th>
<th>The Female Body: Its Meaning</th>
<th>A. Read Ch. 4 (Lips)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Discussion of Homework Part B</td>
<td>B. Answer Question 2 (p. 120) – 2. What do you think the research on intersexuels tells us about femininity and masculinity? [14]</td>
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<td>Fusion of Horizons With The Other Culture Exercise (Fowlers &amp; Richardson, 1996)</td>
<td>C. Watch film, Boys Don't Cry [15]</td>
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<td>D. Complete Gender Transgressions in the Movies Learning Activity (p.10) [16]</td>
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<th>Class 10</th>
<th>The Female Body: Images and Expectations</th>
<th>A. Read Ch. 5 (Lips)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Discussion of Homework Part D</td>
<td>C. Media Portrayals of Women Learning Activity (p.141) – For a week, take a careful look at your five favorite prime time shows. What percentage of the time are women the main characters? How often are the women portrayed as strong and smart? How much ethnic and racial diversity is there among the female characters? How are poor women portrayed? Are men and women receiving equal attention on the shows? To what extent do portrayals reinforce gender stereotypes? To what extent do portrayals promote diversity among women? Were you enlightened by any</td>
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<td>A. Read Ch. 6 (Lips)</td>
<td>A. Read Ch. 7 (Lips)</td>
<td>A. Read Ch. 9 (Lips)</td>
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<td>C. Answer question 5 (p. 222) – How easy is it to form and maintain friendships across ethnic, class, racial, or cultural boundaries? What are some of the things that enhance the likelihood of such friendships? [21]</td>
<td>3. What are the arguments for and against legalizing a heterosexual couple relationship as marriage? Are these arguments the same or different with respect to lesbian couples? [23] 4. Can you imagine yourself living out your life without having children? Why or why not? What are the sources of encouragement or pressure on women in your own cultural group to have children? [24]</td>
<td>C. Answer Questions 2 and 3 (p. 333) – 2. Why do some diseases that afflict women, such as breast cancer, receive so much attention from the press and the medical research community, whereas, others that kill more women (heart disease, lung cancer) are often thought of as men’s diseases? 3. Are gender stereotypes dangerous to women’s health? If so, in what ways is this true? [26]</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Discussion Homework Part B</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class 16</td>
<td>Community Elders</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intergenerational Interview Presentations</td>
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| Begin Reading Ch. 11 (Lips) | Great Grandmothers Teach a Lesson in Women’s Changing Roles” (Supplement) [28]  
C. Conduct intergenerational interview following “We Dream, You Do…” format [29] |

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<tr>
<th>Class 17</th>
<th>Power</th>
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| Discussion of Homework Part B  
Work on Book Report | A. Read Ch. 14 (Lips)  
B. Answer Question 3 (p. 519) – 3. Do you think that women in different parts of the world think about power in similar ways? Why or why not? [30]  
C. Bring book for book report to class |

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<tr>
<th>Class 18</th>
<th>Power, Trauma and Abuse</th>
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| Discussion of Homework Part B | A. Read “Take Back The Night History”[31]  
http://www.takebackthenight.org/history.html  
B. Read first 10 pages of “Shatter the Silence” [32]  
http://takebackthenight.org/shatter-the-silence/  
What common themes emerge from the stories? Who’s story caused the strongest reaction in you and why? [33] |

| Class 19 | Power, Trauma and Abuse  
Feminist Therapeutic Treatment |
| --- | --- |
| Discussion of Homework Part A  
Part I “Working with Women Survivors of Trauma and Abuse" Dr. Laura S. Brown | A. Read APA “Human Trafficking Report”[36]  
B. Watch APA Division 35 Film on Human Trafficking[37]  
C. Read and watch news story about sex trafficking of a 5 year old girl in Baltimore[38]  
http://www.wbaltv.com/r/21647344/detail.html  
D. Read interview with Sidney Ann Ford of Baltimore organization, You Are Never Alone (YANA)[38]  
http://washingtonexaminer.com/local/credo-sidney-ann-ford  
E. Read Prostitution Research and Education’s “Survivor Writings” [39]  
http://www.prostitutionresearch.com/c-
### Class 20

**Power, Trauma, and Abuse: Sex Trafficking**  
**Feminist Therapeutic Treatment**

- Human Trafficking Action Brochure  
- Discussion of Homework Part A  
- Discussion of Homework Part B  
- Discussion of Homework Part C  
- Discussion of Homework Part D  
- Discussion of Homework Part E  
- Part II “Working with Women Survivors of Trauma and Abuse” Dr. Laura S. Brown

What common themes emerge from the stories? Who’s story caused the strongest reaction in you and why?

A. Read Ch. 10 (Lips)  
B. Complete Double Standard of Mental Health Learning Activity (p. 339)[40]  
C. Answer Question 1 (p. 374) – 1. Is there still a double standard of mental health for women and men? Do you think it might be reasonable for clinicians to view different behaviors as normal for women and men?[40]

### Class 21

**Illness in the Lives of Women: Psychological**

- Discussion of Homework Part B  
- Discussion of Homework Part C  
- Part I of “Dialogues with Madwomen”

### Class 22

**Illness in the Lives of Women: Psychological**

- Part II of “Dialogues with Madwomen”

### Class 23

**Culturally Sensitive Feminist Therapeutic Treatment**

- Using the Art of Frida Kahlo to treat Latinas in Group Therapy

### Class 24

**Illness in the Lives of Women: Psychological**

- Meet in the Digital Arts Classroom, Athenaeum  
- Work on Final Book Report

### Class 25

**Illness in the Lives of Women: Psychological**

- Final Class - Book Report Presentations

A. Complete Participation Self-Evaluation  
B. Complete Online Course Evaluation
Class Participation Self-Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Y/N</th>
<th>Justifying Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Did you complete all readings and homework on time as assigned in the syllabus?</td>
<td></td>
<td>(Remember, insufficient justification = 0)</td>
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<td>2. Did you actively participate during class discussions?</td>
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<td>3. Were you a positive, respectful, and constructive member of this class?</td>
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<td>4. If you were struggling academically, did you meet with the professor in a timely manner to discuss your struggles?</td>
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