Course Syllabus
Psychology 231/Women’s Studies 271
Psychology of Women
Spring 2005
Mondays and Wednesdays 3:35-4:50 P.M.
212 John Dewey Hall

Instructor: Alison C. McLeish
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Email: amcleish@uvm.edu (Email is the best way to reach me)
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1:00-2:30 PM (in room 120)
Wednesdays 11:00-12:30 PM (in room 224)
Or by appointment


Additional readings as announced in class.

*This syllabus is subject to change.

Course Description
This course examines the diverse experiences of women from a psychological perspective. We will study attitudes about gender, theories of gender development, and research about similarities and differences between men and women. Some of the topics will include the intersection of sex, gender, and sexuality, theories of gender polarization, gender issues across development, gender differences, sexual stereotyping and discrimination, women and interpersonal relationships, women and work, women and physical health, women and mental health, gender and violence, empowerment and activism.

Course Objectives
The goals of this course are to: 1) increase your awareness of hidden and obvious gender biases in the study of human behavior; 2) clarify the nature and development of gender differences and gender roles; 3) identify significant issues in the development of girls and women; 4) develop a critical perspective for evaluating well-known psychological theories

Because I am a woman, I must make unusual efforts to succeed. If I fail, no one will say, "She doesn’t have what it takes." They will say, "Women don’t have what it takes." ~Clare Boothe Luce
and principles of behavior; 5) develop an awareness of the ways in which ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation affect women's experience; 6) gain in-depth knowledge about one topic related to the course and be able to teach this topic to the class; and 7) gain a better understanding of the historical role women have played in psychology.

Course Requirements

Attendance (5%; 30 points)
In order to truly learn in this class, you need to come to class. You are expected to come to every class prepared and on time. That being said, I realize that there will be those times where you can't make it to class for some reason. Therefore, you will be allowed 3 absences throughout the semester. If you miss more than 2 classes, I will begin to deduct points from your final grade, specifically 2.5 points per missed class. If you do miss class, I encourage you to contact a classmate to get a copy of the material covered that day.

Class Participation (5%; 30 points)
This course will be based primarily on interactive discussions; in order for this class to succeed, each of us needs to be prepared to engage the readings and topics each class period. I expect you to participate (e.g. respond to a question or pose a question) at least once per class. Since it will be hard for me to keep track of this, I will ask you at the end of the semester what letter grade you think you deserve for your participation. I trust that you will be honest with your ratings.

Reading Logs (10%; 60 points)
You will be required to keep a journal throughout the semester. This will allow you to develop/formulate your thoughts about the readings prior to coming to class. The journals will not be graded for content, so you can be free to enjoy your writing without the constraints of a particular format. The major purpose is for you to record the development of your thinking about the psychology of women as the course progresses. I will collect the Reading Logs each Monday beginning January 31. The entries will be for the reading due that week (e.g. Reading Logs turned in on 1/31 are for the readings due 1/31 & 2/2). You need to turn in 10 logs during the 13 remaining weeks of the semester. Your log should be typed or word-processed and be no longer than one single-spaced page (unless you just can't help yourself). You should print two copies of the log. I will collect one copy and you will use the second copy to help with class discussion.
At the top of the reading log put your name and the date. Use whatever format you feel comfortable with the logs. Some students, for example, have used a letter to their mother or sister as the format. Others use it as a dialogue with me or a friend. Others prefer the following format:

1. What question would you like to ask? Indicate something from the reading assignment that was confusing or unclear.

Women are the only oppressed group in our society that lives in intimate association with their oppressors.
~Evelyn Cunningham
2. **Positive Comments.** Discuss a passage that you really liked from the readings. It could be something you strongly agree with or something that contributed to a positive emotional reaction. Speaking from your own experience, intellectually and personally, why did you like this passage?

3. **Negative comments.** Discuss a passage that you really disliked from the readings. It could be something you strongly disagree with or something that contributed to a negative emotional reaction. Speaking from your own experience, intellectually and personally, why did you dislike this passage so much?

4. **Social action ideas.** Did the text give you any ideas about social action or some way of changing society to make it better? If so, what do you think we should do?

*When referring to a specific passage in the readings, please cite page number(s).*

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**Psychologist of the Day (5%; 30 points)**

The purpose of this assignment is to celebrate the work of female scholars who have contributed, or are contributing, to the psychology of women and gender. In class on Jan. 24th, you will be assigned a psychologist and a date. Prepare a brief (2-3 paragraph) biography about that psychologist and the contributions s/he made to psychology. You should include the following information: birth/death dates, where educated, any relevant personal information, work/professional life, and how her work fits into our class materials. On the assigned due date, you will give a 5 minute presentation to the class on your psychologist and hand in your report.

Here are some websites to get you started:

- [http://www.psych.yorku.ca/femhop/](http://www.psych.yorku.ca/femhop/)
- [http://elvers.stjoe.udayton.edu/history/welcome.htm](http://elvers.stjoe.udayton.edu/history/welcome.htm)
- [http://www.webrenovators.com/psych/WomenInPsychology.htm](http://www.webrenovators.com/psych/WomenInPsychology.htm)
- [http://www.webster.edu/~woolflm/women.html](http://www.webster.edu/~woolflm/women.html)

**Class Presentation (25%, 150 points)**

I believe the best way to learn is through teaching. Therefore, each person will be responsible for facilitating part of a class. Students will sign up for presentations on the first day of class based on their interest in the topic area being covered that day. The class presentations will be 30 minutes in length, including both lecture and activity. Students will need to draw on outside resources (e.g. research articles) for the presentation. These presentations can be formatted in any way you see best fit to introduce and discuss the topic (e.g. powerpoint, overheads, handouts, video clips, etc.). You may also assign a reading, in addition to the chapters I have assigned, to facilitate discussion about your particular topic area. If you choose to do this, please check with me first to determine the appropriateness of the article. You will need to make the article available (either electronically or by the copiers outside the Psych 1 office) at least 1 week prior to your presentation date.

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I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat. ~Rebecca West, 1913
It is not your responsibility to summarize the readings or to teach others about them. Instead, you should come up with a plan to guide the discussion for that day: What are the important contributions of these readings? How do they relate to each other? How do they relate to other topics we have discussed? You may work alone or in groups of 2 or 3. If you choose to work in a group, your presentation will need to last 60-90 minutes. If you are presenting alone, you will need to coordinate with any other people presenting on that topic to make sure that you cover different material. You may use me as a resource to get you started on your project.

For suggestions on articles or class activities, see me or visit the website for the textbook at http://www3.uakron.edu/psychology/faculty/yoder/

Research Paper (25%, 150 points)
One of my goals for this course is for you to become an “expert” in a particular area related to the psychology of women. You will be required to write a research paper that is 8-10 pages in length, based on your class presentation. For example if you presented on women and mental health, you might choose to focus on the feminist perspective on eating disorders. The paper should consist of:

1) **An Introduction**- Why did you choose this topic? Why is this topic important to women and the psychology of women? Approximately 1 page in length.

2) **Literature Review**- Review the relevant literature, including your evaluation and comments. You must use at least five peer-reviewed journal articles for the paper. Three of these should be recent (i.e. within the past 5 years). Additional references (in addition to the required 5) from other sources are acceptable. Approximately 3-4 pages in length.

3) **Conclusion**- You will need to integrate the literature you reviewed, provide suggestions for future research, and state your opinions about the area as it relates to women in society.

4) **Reference Page**- You need to list all of the references cited in the paper in APA format.

The paper should be written in APA format, typed, 12-point font, double spaced, with 1 inch margins. The paper must also be sensitive to diversity; you cannot focus only on white, heterosexual, able-bodied, young women. Papers are due 2 weeks after your presentation date. Late papers will be penalized 5 points for every day that they are late (including weekends). If you have any questions about APA format, consult the APA Publication Manual (in the reference section at Bailey-Howe Library), the following website: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/apa/index.html. You can use me as a last resort if you get stuck.

Feminism is the radical notion that women are people. ~Cheris Kramarae & Paula Treichler
Activities (25%, 150 points)
There will be five out of class activities to be completed throughout the semester. For each one, please complete the assigned activity and write a 2-3 page response paper answering the questions associated with the activity. The paper should be typed, 12-point font with 1 inch margins. Please put your name and a title for your paper at the top of the first page. Due dates will be assigned once the presentation schedule has been finalized.

Activity #1: How do children learn about gender roles? (35 points)
Toys R Us Take a trip to any store that has a well-stocked toy section. Examine the placement and packaging of the toys. Do certain colors dominate sections of the store? Is there a girls' section and a boys' section to the store? Does it vary with age? What toys are stocked in each section? Are there sections that invite both girls and boys (and how do they do that)?

OR
Gendered TV? Watch two hours of children's TV programming (e.g., Saturday cartoons, Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network). What proportion of characters are female? Keep a record of what activities characters engage in and how these fit with gender roles. Who narrates both the program and commercials? Who appears in commercials and for what products? What are themes of the commercials and programs (e.g., caring, adventure)? What is their pace (e.g., fast-action; slow and pretty)?

OR
Boy or girl--doesn't matter as long as it's healthy Locate 10 cards congratulating parents on the birth of their child. How many are specifically for girls and boys? Take a closer look at this sex-specified subset: color, images of toys, clothing decorations (e.g., ribbons and lace), infants' attributes (e.g., sweet and tough), and the sentiment expressed in the written text (e.g., joy, pride). Are there any neutral ones?

Activity #2: Research on Gender Differences (40 points)
Viva la Difference Find 3 recent articles published in the popular press (e.g. Time, Newsweek, etc.) describing differences between women and men. Identify the cause of these differences: biology, socialization, and social context (e.g. stereotypes and power). What do the headlines emphasize? Is the text balanced or does it lean toward a single view.

OR
Explore the literature in psychology Randomly sample 3 articles in PsycINFO. To find these, search for the term "human sex differences". For what topics are comparisons being made? When differences are found, how are they interpreted in the discussion section? Do any patterns emerge across articles?

You don't have to be anti-man to be pro-woman. ~Jane Galvin Lewis
Activity #3: Sex and Violence in Videos (30 points)
Watch one hour of music videos (and try to watch when they air videos rather than reality shows) on channels such as MTV, VH-1 or BET. For each video, determine who is the main actor and who is a recipient, and record the sex of each. For each of these targets, code the number of dominant acts, implicit and explicit aggression, aggression with sexuality, objectification, and implicit and explicit sexuality in which they engage.

Activity #4: Everyday Rebellion (35 points)
Do something to violate a gender stereotype (nothing illegal or unsafe- please check with me first). For example, a woman might drive on a date or a male might wear nail polish. How did you feel? What did others do? Why did your behavior cause a fuss? What are some everyday rebellions you can engage in that would challenge gender stereotypes and sexism on a day-to-day basis?

Activity #5: Positive & Negative Images of Women in the Media (10 points)
For this exercise you will explore images of women portrayed in the print media. Find one negative image that depicts women in degrading or questionable ways. Look for discrepancies between what we talk about in class and how the "real world" portrays women. Then find one positive image where women are not depicted in stereotypical ways, where there is a parallel between what we talk about in class and what is portrayed in print. What are your reactions to these images? Have we really come a long way, baby? Did you notice any patterns to the types of ads that contained positive vs. negative images? You will probably want to keep your eyes open for possible ads throughout the semester so you don’t have to scramble at the last minute.

Event Attendance- Extra Credit
There will be a number of events throughout the semester that are relevant to this course. March is Women’s History(Herstory) Month (including International Women’s Day on March 7) and April is Sexual Violence Awareness month. I will announce these events in class as I hear about them (please let me know if you hear of any). To get the extra credit you must write a 2 page reaction paper to the event (e.g. How did this relate to what we have covered in class? What were your reactions to the event?). You will receive 5 points per event and a maximum of 20 points (or 4 events) are allowed.

One event that I know of right now is:
Searching for Angela Shelton, April 13 at 7:00 PM in Ira Allen Chapel

It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union.... Men, their rights and nothing more; women, their rights and nothing less. ~Susan B. Anthony
Grading

Your final grade will be based on the total number of points you obtain out of a possible 600 points. The following table shows you the points needed to obtain each grade level:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Point Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Point Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>586-600</td>
<td>98-100%</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>435-458</td>
<td>73-76%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>555-585</td>
<td>93-97%</td>
<td>C-</td>
<td>417-434</td>
<td>70-72%</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
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<td>90-92%</td>
<td>D+</td>
<td>399-416</td>
<td>67-69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>519-536</td>
<td>87-89%</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>375-398</td>
<td>63-66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>495-518</td>
<td>83-86%</td>
<td>D-</td>
<td>357-374</td>
<td>60-62%</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
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<td>77-79%</td>
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If you want to keep track of your grades, you may do so below:

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<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points Earned</th>
<th>Maximum Points</th>
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<td>Attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>_____</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>_____</td>
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<tr>
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<td>_____</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Log #9</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Log #10</td>
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<td>Psychologist of the Day</td>
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<td>30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Presentation</td>
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<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Paper</td>
<td>_____</td>
<td>150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Activity #1</td>
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Total: _____ 600

We’ve begun to raise daughters more like sons... but few have the courage to raise our sons more like our daughters. ~Gloria Steinem
**Course Topics**

Below you will find a list of topics to be covered this semester in the order that we will cover them. The exact dates will be determined by class interest. Each student will rank their top 5 choices for presentation/research paper topics as well as their preference for working individually or in a group. Based on these rankings, I will develop a detailed schedule by January 31.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignment Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed 1/19</td>
<td>No Class</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 1/24</td>
<td>Introduction to Course &amp; Syllabus</td>
<td>Yoder, Ch. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 1/26</td>
<td>History of Gender and Psychology</td>
<td>AAUP Report</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Furumoto &amp; Scarborough, 1986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 1/31</td>
<td>Sex&amp;Gender&amp;Sexuality</td>
<td>Yoder Ch. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 2/2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Growing up in a gendered world (Ch. 3)
Women's development across the lifespan (Ch. 4)
*Gender Comparisons* (Ch. 5; *Tavris: Intro*, Ch. 1-3)
Sexism (Ch. 6, *Tavris* Ch. 7)
Women's multiple roles- Close Relationships (Ch. 7, *Tavris* Ch. 6)
Women's multiple roles- Work (Ch. 8)
Women's Physical Health (Ch. 9, *Tavris* Ch. 4)
Women's Mental Health (Ch. 10, *Tavris* Ch. 5)
Violence against women (Ch. 11, *Tavris* Ch. 8)

Because women's work is never done and is underpaid or unpaid or boring or repetitious and we're the first to get fired and what we look like is more important than what we do and if we get raped it's our fault and if we get beaten we must have provoked it and if we raise our voices we're nagging bitches and if we enjoy sex we're nymphos and if we don't we're frigid and if we love women it's because we can't get a "real" man and if we ask our doctor too many questions we're neurotic and/or pushy and if we expect childcare we're selfish and if we stand up for our rights we're aggressive and "unfeminine" and if we don't we're typical weak females and if we want to get married we're out to trap a man and if we don't we're unnatural and because we still can't get an adequate safe contraceptive but men can walk on the moon and if we can't cope or don't want a pregnancy we're made to feel guilty about abortion and...for lots of other reasons we are part of the women's liberation movement.

~Author unknown, quoted in *The Torch*, 14 September 1987