Course Syllabus
By Huai Bao
(revised on December 6 2013)

GRSJ224: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Social Justice in Literature

Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice, UBC

Winter 2014-2015
Start: September 2014  Finish: November 2015

Instructor: Huai Bao  Email: baohuai@mail.ubc.ca
Office: Room 131, Jack Bell Building, 2080 West Mall, UBC
Office Hours: TBA

Course Description:

This is an introductory course that explores the ways in which literature, films and theatre reflects, influences, creates, and reveals cultural beliefs about gender, sexuality, race and social justice. Throughout the semester we will be “traveling” from England, to France, to Russia and Eastern Europe, to America and Canada, to China, East Asia and South Asia, to Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Iran, and to Africa and Latin America. We will watch films, read religious texts as well as a wide range of short stories, novels, poems, and plays from a diversity of eras and national traditions. We will also study seminal works in feminist theory, queer studies, and the history of sexuality, from early thinkers to today’s cutting-edge theorists. Throughout the course, we will explore the ways in which gender intersects with other crucial cultural issues such as race, nationhood, globalization, and class.

As the instructor, my advantages for teaching this course include my bi-cultural background, my on-set film and TV training and work experiences, and my long journey of having lived, worked and traveled in more than 13 countries in five continents. For the course I have designed over 300 PPT slides with tons of film clips and pictures. During the semester I also invite 3-4 guest speakers with unique background to share with us their valuable stories, deepest secrets and most private visions related to certain content of the course. Although the course sounds overwhelming, students find it entertaining, informative, relaxing and inspirational.

This course will use a variety of teaching and learning tools including lectures, discussions, group work, guest speakers and related media. I have also invented new learning techniques to help students digest the lectures. Students will be expected to complete the required readings prior to class and to come to each lecture prepared with questions and comments on the assigned materials.

The geographic regions the course covers include—

- England
- America
- Canada
- France
- USSR/Russia
- China and East Asia
- Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon
- Iran
- Latin America

The scholarly works we read include—
- Gender Trouble by Judith Butler
- The History of Sexuality by Michel Foucault
- On Sexuality by Sigmund Freud
- The Second Sex by Simone De Beauvoir

Other world-renowned scholars we introduce include—

- Magnus Hirschfeld
- Harry Benjamin
- Carl Jung
- Alfred Kinsey

The poetry/novels/films/plays we discuss include—

- Billie Eliot
- The Resurrection by Tolstoy
- David Copperfield by Dickens
- In Search of Lost Time by Proust
- One Hundred Years in Solitude by Marquez
- The Lover by Duras
- Brokeback Mountain, short story by Proulx and film by Ang Lee
- Lust, Caution, short story by Eileen Chang and film by Ang Lee
- Lily in the Snow by Yan Li
- Chinese Botanist’s Daughter by Sijie Dai
- Snow Flower and Secret Fan by Lisa See
- Love poetry to “Sue” by Emily Dickinson
- Farewell my Concubine, directed by Kaige Chen
- Monster starring Charlize Theron
- International Girl (USSR)
- The Dawns Here Are Quiet by Sholokhov
- Air Crew (USSR)
- Office Romance (USSR)
- M. Butterfly, directed by Cronenberg
- Jane Eyre by Bronte
- Wilde starring Stephen Fry
- The Love of Siam, directed by Sakveerakul
- White Haired Girl (Ballet)
- On the Dock (Jingju/Beijing Opera)
- The Azalea Mountain (Jingju/Beijing Opera)
- Arabian Nights, directed by Pasolini

The religious texts we cover are—

- The Bible (Gen, Lev, Rom, Tim, Pauline letters and Mark’s gospel)
- The Quran
- Buddhist sutras

The topics we cover include—

- Victorian female romantic friendship
- Nativity of the Buddha and Jesus
- Religions and sexual misconduct
- The use of cinematic language in expressing a forbidden desire
- Lesbianism and patriarchy
- Socialist feminism, model plays and female masculinity
- Rape-murder and social justice
- Colonialism and identity reconstruction
- Immigrants, women of colour and diasporic literature
- Orientalism and the sexual other
- Female offenders and death penalty
- Two Spirit culture in First Nations tradition
- Rasputin and the Romanov dynasty
- Prostitution and mail order brides in Russia
- Urfi marriage in Egypt

Course Objectives:

1. To develop an understanding and knowledge of the central theoretical debates and differing perspectives within feminist theory and queer theory.

2. To critically analyze the texts relevant to the study of gender and feminism in political science such as the state, patriarchy, privilege and power.

3. To examine processes of gendering and the construction of gender and racial hierarchies and sexuality dynamics as revealed in literature.

4. To explore the activism of women and queer bodies in official and unofficial spaces of politics as revealed in literature.

5. To strengthen the verbal, reading, research and written communication skills of students.

Required Texts:


Course Evaluation and Requirements:

Research Paper: 30%

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Midterm Exam: 30%
Final Exam: 30%
Attendance and Participation: 10%

Research Paper Proposal: due November ___ 2013

A two page proposal (double spaced) outlining the thesis and major arguments of the paper should be submitted two weeks prior to the research paper. Failure to submit the proposal will result in a deduction of 5% from the final mark of the paper. External resources are not required for this assignment; however any materials used must be properly referenced. Students are encouraged to discuss ideas for the paper with the instructor in advance of submitting their proposal during office hours or by appointment.

Research Paper (30%): due December ___ 2013

Students will be required to complete a research paper, which should be between ten and twelve double-spaced pages (2,500-3,000 words). They will be expected to extensively research one of the contemporary issues relating to gender, race, sexuality, and politics addressed in the weekly topics of the course within a specific geographic context. The paper should specifically indicate how gender, race, sexuality and/or social justice are implicated or affected politically within this context.

Students are encouraged to select a topic from the themes provided in the syllabus, but are also welcome to examine other issue-areas with the permission of the instructor. The student will be expected to utilize course materials and a minimum of eight to ten external academic resources.

If you are unclear on what constitutes an academic resource, please consult the instructor. All materials must be properly referenced in your chosen documentation style (APA, MLA or Chicago). Emailed submissions will not be accepted. All submissions should include a title page with the author’s name, student number, date of submission and title along with numbered pages. All electronic submissions must be in Word, HTML or PDF format.

Attendance and Participation (10%):

Attendance

Students are expected to attend class every week. Attendance will be checked in the beginning and/or at the end of the class.

Presentation and Roundtable Discussions

In the end of November students will present their research proposal in class, after the instructor has approved it. Each student has three minutes only.

Within five or six weeks from mid-October through late November, we will hold in-class roundtable discussions on a selected opinion piece. The date of the round-table discussion and the opinion piece will be made available to students at least a week beforehand. Students will be expected to come prepared with discussion questions and commentary.

Commentary will be evaluated on the comprehension of the key issues of the piece, the linkages made to the major themes and theories of the course and communication of individual perspectives. The instructor reserves the right to discredit any unreasonable, offensive, incomplete or plagiarized comments.

Final Exam (30%): due December 18 2013

Students will be required to complete a final exam, which will be scheduled by the Office of the Registrar before or during the official December examination period. The final exam will be cumulative and will consist of both short answer and essay questions. Answers should be written in an essay format and
integrate materials introduced throughout the course.

**General Course Policies and Guidelines**

Submission Requirements

Late assignments will be penalized at rate of 5% per day (including weekends) to a maximum of five days, after which they will no longer be accepted and will receive a mark of 0. Unless arranged with the instructor in advance, extensions will be granted for medical reasons only and must be verified with a doctor’s certificate. Papers submitted after the stated deadline, including those granted extensions will be marked, but will not include comments.

Grading Guidelines

- A+ 96-100
- A 90-95
- A- 85-89
- B+ 80-84
- B 75-79
- B- 70-74
- C+ 65-69
- C 60-64
- C- 55-59
- D 50-54
- F <49

FD Failure with dishonesty (i.e. plagiarism, cheating, texting during exam, using a paper or work for more than one course, etc.)

Grade Petitions

Grade appeals must be provided in writing and must be received no more than five days after the return of the assignment. The appeal must directly refer to the comments provided by the instructor and identify the specific reasons why a change of grade is deserved. Upon reviewing the work, the instructor reserves the right to increase, decrease or maintain the original mark provided.

Exams

Students must be available to write the final exam in the time slot allotted by the Office of the Registrar at the end of the term. In the extreme case that an Exam deferral is required, the student must contact their Faculty Office directly with the appropriate supporting documentation for consideration.

**Etiquette in Class**

Please do not text message, check your voice mail during lectures or debates or use your laptops and/or tablets in class for purposes other than note taking. These activities are both disruptive and distracting to the instructor and your fellow classmates. In cases where this behavior is deemed excessive, you will be asked to leave. This course will grapple with some controversial and sensitive topics regarding women, gender, race, sexuality and politics. You are asked to always be respectful and courteous to your fellow classmates in the classroom environment and to avoid comments that could be deemed inappropriate or offensive. If at any point during the course, you are displeased with the content of the materials or the commentary of the students or the instructor, please see the instructor immediately.

**Lecture Topics and Assigned Readings**

(The dates are subject to change.)

**CONCEPTUALIZING GENDER, SEXUALITY, RACE AND POLITICS**

**Week 1:**

**September 4 2013**

- Self-introduction
- Introduction to the course
- Discussion of course objectives and expectations
- Opinion piece preparation
- Q&A

**September 6 2013**


In-class film viewing:

**Week 2:**

**September 9 2013**

In-class film viewing:

**September 11 and 13 2013**


**Week 3:**

**September 16**


In-class film viewing:

**September 18**

No class.

**September 20**

In-class film viewing:


Valentine, David. 2003. “I went to bed with my own kind once”: the erasure of desire in the name of

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE LITERATURE**

**Week 4:**

**September 23 2013**


**September 25 2013**


**September 27 2013**


In-class film viewing:

**Week 5:**

**September 30 2013**

In-class film viewing:

**October 2 2013**


**October 4 2013**


**EUROPEAN LITERATURE**
Week 6:

October 7 2013


October 9 2013


October 11 2013


CHINESE AND ASIAN LITERATURE, FILM AND THEATRE

Week 7:

October 14 2013

No class.

October 16 2013

IN CLASS MIDTERM EXAM

October 18 and 21 2012

Out of class film viewing:

Week 8:

October 23 2013

Round-table discussions


October 25 2013

Guest speaker: Chinese philosophy on *yin* and *yang* and its impact on gender perception

In-class film viewing:

October 28 2013

In-class film viewing:
Week 9:

October 30 2013

In-class film viewing:


Wichmann-Walczak, Elizabeth. Actor and Role Types, Sex and Gender, and Creativity Interpretation in Jingju. Unpublished.

Round-table discussions

November 1 2013


GENDER AND SEXUALITY IN RELIGIOUS LITERATURES

Week 10:

November 4 2013

In-class film viewing:

November 6 2013


Round-table discussions

November 8 2013


FIRST NATIONS / AMERICAN INDIAN ORAL HISTORY AND LITERATURE; LATIN AMERICA, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

Week 11:

November 11 2013

No class.
November 13 2013


Round-table discussions

November 15 2013


Round-table discussions

TRENDS, SOCIAL JUSTICE AND CONTEMPORARY TRANSGENDER STUDIES

Week 12:

November 18 2013


Round-table discussions


Round-table discussions on urban culture

November 20 2013


November 22 2013


Round-table discussions


Week 13:

November 25 and 27 2013
ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty consists of misrepresentation by deception or by other fraudulent means and can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads: “Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty”) and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one’s own or for which other credit has been obtained.
2. Improper collaboration in-group work.
3. Copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.