AMY GOODLOE’S SPRING 2011 SYLLABUS FOR:
WRTG 3020-098: Rhetoric of Gender and Sexuality

My Syllabus is a web text that is not easily transformed into a linear print document. I’m including screen shots of the Course Description page, below. To see the full Syllabus, go to:

http://gendersex.net/wrtg3020/syllabus

---

WRTG 3020: GENDER & SEXUALITY

Spring 2011 – Campus

---

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will use the principles of rhetorical analysis to explore this central theme: how do we know what we know about gender and sexuality? We will ask questions such as who creates the knowledge we have about gender identity and sexual orientation, what purposes does the knowledge serve, how do different types of knowledge influence audiences in different ways, and so on. We will also investigate how different modalities of communication, such as print texts, web texts, still images, audio, video, and animation, influence the ways we understand, create, and share knowledge.

As a result of your participation in the course, you will develop a greater critical awareness of the messages we receive about gender and sexuality from a variety of sources, which will allow you to then accept, resist, or challenge those messages. You will also become proficient at using a range of rhetorical strategies and modalities to communicate your ideas in a persuasive manner. The strategies, skills, and concepts you learn in this course will help prepare you for rhetorical situations and comprising tasks you might face in other courses, in the workplace, and in your personal life. See the course Learning Goals for more information.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Please note: The following grade distributions and project titles are subject to further revision.

- 20% Pop Culture Research Project
- 25% Academic Research Project
- 20% Personal Narrative Project
- 20% Civic Engagement Project
- 15% Group Blog and Class Engagement
- Final Self-Evaluation (required but not graded)

We will develop these projects in stages, with planning activities that lead up to early drafts, peer reviews, and several phases of revisions. You will do some of these planning and drafting activities on your own outside of class, and others you will do in class. The final versions of the pop culture and academic research projects are tentatively due at mid-term. The final versions of the personal narrative and civic engagement projects, along with a final course self-evaluation, will be due a few days after classes end.

POP CULTURE RESEARCH: DAYS 1-4

We will start by exploring one of the most common and influential sources of knowledge about gender and sexuality: popular culture. In particular, we will take a look at the messages most commonly conveyed in magazines, children’s toys and games, commercials, print ads, music, movies, and TV shows. We will use systematic primary research methods to gather representative samples of cultural artifacts, and we will analyze...
your artifacts to our growing collection on the Gender in Pop Culture wiki, and you will also publish a report and analysis of your findings on this wiki.

ACADEMIC RESEARCH: DAYS 4-12

Next, we will explore another influential source of knowledge: academic research. We will read and critique a variety of academic articles, evaluate different methods for researching and supporting claims about gender and sexuality, and engage in secondary research to study the conversation on particular topics of interest. You will prepare a rhetorical analysis and annotated bibliography on a specific issue, which you will publish on the Readings Library wiki, and you will also develop a substantial slide presentation based on one or several academic articles. The class will vote on the presentations that most effectively meet the standards of the gender studies discourse community, and the winners will be published on the main Rhetoric of Gender and Sexuality site.

PERSONAL NARRATIVE: DAYS 15-25

For our third unit, we will explore the most common source of knowledge: personal experience. We will read about the experiences of those who’ve transgressed the gender boundaries and investigate some of our own experiences with learning gender norms, and we will analyze those experiences in light of principles drawn from gender theory, queer theory, and narrative criticism. You will write a personal essay that investigates what you know about gender norms and/or sexual orientation and how you came to know it, and you will deliver this essay in the form of an audio essay or audiovisual essay (photo slideshow with essay delivered via audio recording). The audio/audiovisual essays that most effectively fulfill their rhetorical purpose will be published in the Rhetoric of Gender and Sexuality site, although given the personal nature of the topic, you have the option to remain anonymous or decline.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT: DAYS 26-30

For the last unit, you will use what you’ve learned about rhetoric, persuasion, digital composition, and gender and sexuality to create a multimodal video project that is designed to persuade members of a specific target audience outside of an academic context to rethink their views on a specific issue relating to gender norms, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation. You will publish your multimodal video project on YouTube or Vimeo, and you will use social media tools to spread the word about your project and attract viewers. The most rhetorically effective projects will also be published on the main Rhetoric of Gender and Sexuality site.

STUDENT BLOG

Throughout the semester, you will use the Conversations on the Rhetoric of G&L student blog to practice participating in a peer-based discourse community using the customs of the blogging genre. Most of your posts will be in the form of linear, paragraph-based text, but some may be multimodal, making use of hypertext, images, photos, audio, and/or video. You will also read and comment on your classmates’ entries.

You will post assigned homework and class activities, such as reading responses, brainstorming activities, rhetorical analyses of various texts and artifacts, and reflections on the writing process. You will also use the blog to post your observations about anything relevant to our investigation of the rhetoric of gender and sexuality. That might include pop culture artifacts that attempt to persuade viewers to see gender or sexual orientation in a particular light, reflections on your own experiences of being persuaded to think a certain way about gender or sexuality, material you’re learning in other classes, and so on. In other words, the class blog will serve as an evolving chronicle of what you and your classmates notice about the ongoing cultural conversations about gender and sexuality.

CLASS ENGAGEMENT

Class Engagement includes your participation in all the activities leading up to each paper. These activities include drafts, revisions, and peer reviews submitted to our class folder on Google Docs or wherever else is appropriate, peer reviews conducted in class, and other small group or whole class activities. Class Engagement also includes your participation in small group and whole class discussions as well as your comments on classmates’ blogs. Your Engagement grade will be based on several factors that carry varying degrees of weight, none of which are absolute. See the Grading Criteria page for more detail.

INTEREST IN GENDER STUDIES?