

Women's Studies 597: Gender and Democracy in the Contemporary World
GEC Request for Course Approval Summary Sheet Attachment

How this course meets the principles of the GEC Model Curriculum and the specific goals of the categories for which it is being proposed:

The course fulfills the following principles of the GEC Model Curriculum in several ways. It aims to provide students with both substantive knowledge and an appreciation of different methodological approaches to a contemporary issue. The course will also work toward developing students' sensitivity to social concerns and, in particular, for fostering sensitivity to race, ethnocentric, and gender biases; it should enhance a student's awareness of, and respect and appreciation for, the physical and cultural diversity of individuals within society and of societies within the larger world community. Finally the course will give students an opportunity to explore the world community beyond Europe and the United States.

The course specifically fulfills the GEC requirement for Issues of the Contemporary World. As such, it will aim to fulfill the following specific objectives:

1. To synthesize and apply knowledge from diverse disciplines to contemporary issues.
2. To demonstrate an understanding of the relationships between information derived from different disciplines by interacting with students from different majors.
3. To write about and conduct research on the contemporary world.

The contemporary issue that the course will focus on is the relationship between gender and democracy. Although the notion of equality is critical to democracy as an ideal, gendered subordination and marginalization often mark contemporary democratic polities. In democracies across the world, for example, women are often under-represented and marginalized in legislatures and other decision-making bodies, face processes of social, legal, and economic subordination, and have differential access to the rights and privileges of citizenship. This course will examine this issue from several different disciplinary perspectives, including women's studies, political science, geography, philosophy, legal studies, and sociology. In the course, students will write about and conduct their own research on the issue.

How will course goals achieve the expected learning outcomes?

The course will incorporate these learning outcomes into the syllabus as course goals as follows:

1. to understand central debates pertaining to questions of gender and democracy
2. to enhance awareness of, and respect and appreciation for, the diversity of individuals within society and of societies within the larger world community.

3. To synthesize and apply knowledge from diverse disciplines to understand the relationship between gender and democracy in the contemporary world.
4. To demonstrate an understanding of the relationships between information derived from different disciplines by interacting with students from different majors through discussion and analysis
5. To write about and conduct research on the issues pertaining to gender and democracy in contemporary world.

How will assigned readings achieve the expected learning outcomes?

The assigned readings will achieve the expected learning outcomes above by incorporating accounts from disciplinary perspectives of philosophy, political science, women's studies, geography, sociology, and legal studies to help understand the relationship between gender and democracy in the contemporary world. These readings will expose students to diverse disciplinary perspectives on topics such as democratic citizenship, representation, and participation, with the aim of fostering an appreciation of different methodological approaches towards these topics. The readings are also chosen from different political contexts, including South Asian, Middle Eastern, and African as well as U.S. and European contexts. As such the readings are geared to enhancing student's awareness of, and respect and appreciation for, the cultural diversity of individuals within society and of societies within the larger world community and will give students an opportunity to explore approaches to questions of gender and democracy beyond Europe and the United States.

How will course topics achieve the expected learning outcomes?

The course is divided into three thematic sections: democracy and domination, towards gender-just democracies, and global and transnational democracy. Within the first section, democracy and domination, we will focus on critiques of gendered and racialized marginalization and domination within democratic polities in the contemporary world. The next thematic section, towards gender-just democracies, will explore ways that theorists and activists have both envisioned and worked towards more inclusive models of democracy in various political settings around the world. The final section of the course will explore models of transnational and global democracy, examining the possibilities and potential challenges of such models in the contemporary world.

How will writing assignments achieve the expected learning outcomes?

In the course, the students will be required to write two essays as well as an exam which will include essay questions. The first essay will ask the students to compare and contrast the critiques, alternative visions, and strategies of three of the feminist analyses of democracy that we have studied together, thus highlighting different approaches to a particular topic, and giving the students the opportunity to demonstrate their skills in analysis and synthesis. The second essay asks students to focus on a particular democratic setting in the contemporary world, and examine ways that groups are working to address

issues of gendered marginalization and domination. This essay will require students to conduct independent research on issues pertaining to gender and democracy in the contemporary world. The students will be required to present their findings to the class; this will enable students to sharpen their communication skills and also will further foster an integrative learning environment in which the students can interact across their academic specializations and interests. The exam will be cumulative and cover the course as a whole, but the essay question will focus particularly on the question of transnational or global democracy and will ask the students to weigh the potential advantages and disadvantages of such an approach to governance. This essay will enable students to demonstrate their ability to synthesize and analyze particular arguments, and also to articulate their own approach to the question of transnational democracy.

How will students sharpen communication skills through the preparation of essay exams and papers and through participation in discussions?

The course will be run in discussion format, giving the students ample opportunity to sharpen their communication skills. As mentioned above, students will also be required to give presentations of their research to class.

Course assessment plan:

As developed by the department's Undergraduate Studies Committee, course review and assessment will take place through a survey which is attached to the syllabus (reprinted below); systematic evaluations of student participation, essays, presentations, and final exams; discursive and computer-generated evaluations of teaching by enrolled students; and class observations by faculty.

Gender and Democracy in the Contemporary World

GEC Assessment Survey, to be filled in and turned in on the final day of class.

Please help your instructor know how well the course met its GEC goals. Mark each question according to the following key:

Strongly disagree	1
Somewhat disagree	1
Neutral (neither agree or disagree)	1
Somewhat agree	1
Strongly agree	1

This course helped me to understand central debates pertaining to questions of gender and democracy

1 2 3 4 5

The course enhanced my awareness of, and respect and appreciation for, the diversity of individuals within society and of societies within the larger world community.

1 2 3 4 5

This course helped me to synthesize and apply knowledge from diverse disciplines to questions of gender and democracy.

1 2 3 4 5

This course helped me to understand of the relationships between information derived from different disciplines by interacting with students from different majors

1 2 3 4 5

This course developed my ability to write about and conduct research on the contemporary world.

1 2 3 4 5