



**OTRP** online

Office of Teaching Resources in Psychology

## **PSYCHOLOGY OF WOMEN**

**PSYCHOLOGY 3101, SECTION 01**

**SPRING SEMESTER 2005**

**Mondays 5:30-8:20 PM**

**ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, ROOM 304**

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**INSTRUCTOR:** Dr. Kimberly Eretzian Smirles  
**OFFICE:** Administration Building/St. James, Room 404  
**OFFICE HOURS:** Monday (2-3pm), Tuesday (3:30-4:30pm), Thursday (11am-12pm),  
or by appointment  
**PHONE:** 735-9733 Office  
**E-MAIL:** smirles@emmanuel.edu

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### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- Primis Custom Reader (McGraw-Hill Publishers) - Published under K. Smirles
- Johnson, A. G. (1997). The Gender Knot: Unraveling Our Patriarchal Legacy. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Orenstein, P. (1994). School Girls: Young Women, Self-Esteem, and the Confidence Gap. New York: Doubleday.

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### **RECOMMENDED RESOURCES:**

- Association for Women in Psychology (AWP) - [www.awp.org](http://www.awp.org)
- National Organization for Women (NOW) - [www.now.org](http://www.now.org)

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### **OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES**

The experiences of women, both as a group and as unique individuals, are an important focus of research by psychologists today. This semester, we will talk about the most current issues in the field (e.g., health, domestic violence) and take an active role in examining some of them. Through lectures, discussions, demonstrations, group activities, and video presentations, several objectives will be met. We will explore and discuss important issues in the field of psychology as it relates to women and gender, apply our discoveries to real world situations, and critically evaluate the research being done in the psychology of women. Your assignments and readings reflect these objectives.



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## CLASS FORMAT

For each class meeting, we will typically follow a similar format. For the first hour, I will lecture on relevant background information. After, we will take a short break. When we return, we will engage in group discussions, activities, and/or presentations for the remainder of the class. This is not etched in stone, but I did want to provide some structure to our seminar meetings.

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## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### READING ASSIGNMENTS:

The required books will supplement lectures and guide class discussions. Therefore, assigned readings are important to your learning and understanding of the course material. You are responsible for all of the assigned material. While you will not be tested on the readings, you need to focus on understanding the material in-depth so that we can have active discussions (and your participation is graded!). I advise that you take notes as you read to assist you in papers, writing assignments, and class discussions.

I will periodically bring in articles that are relevant to the discussion. While we will typically discuss these articles in class, you should still be sure to read through the materials on your own.

**NOTE:** If I find that people are not prepared for discussion, I will start testing on the material.

### READING ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS:

In order to assist you in reading, organizing your thoughts, and preparing for group discussion, you will have weekly questions to go with the reading assignments. I will provide you with questions to answer or a general assignment to write about for the next week's class. **Your answers should be typed.**

Your responses will count for **30% of your final grade**. Your grade will be based upon the thoroughness of your answers (i.e. Did you do answer all of the questions? Are your responses complete?).

### ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:

**Attendance.** You are required to attend all class periods. The issues covered in class will often go beyond the readings. Also, this is a seminar, designed to facilitate substantial interaction and discussion between class members. Missing one class results in your loss of a substantial amount of information and discussion and our loss of your own contributions to the discussions. Unexcused absences will affect your final grade.

**Participation.** We are a learning community, which means that everyone's perspective is respected and valued...whether or not we agree with one another on certain issues. Meaningful knowledge comes from exposure to different perspectives and taking ownership of the ideas and information that are most valid and contribute to your understanding of the world. Therefore, your **active contribution to class discussions is necessary and required**. Your participation in the class meetings will count for **20% of your final grade**.

Note that participation is **not solely about personal opinion**. Certainly, people will periodically share personal experiences and insights. However, our main goal should be to move beyond individual opinions to include the readings and research we will cover in class. Ultimately, we want to critically evaluate the issues using personal experiences AND existing research and/or theories concerning them. **A single perspective is necessary, but not sufficient, for an informed analysis of any social or psychological issue.**

We all benefit when people share their experiences, ideas, and insights with one another. I will not police your presence. It is your responsibility to be an active participant in your own education. However, if you are having difficulties with participating in class, please see me. I cannot be of assistance if I am not aware that there is a problem.

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## **STUDENT GROUPS:**

Collaboration is the key to learning about different perspectives and creating products which are broadly informed by those perspectives. Indeed, others can see an issue differently than yourself, and that is an invaluable opportunity for growth and learning. Therefore, a significant part of your work for this class will be conducted in a group.

During the second class meeting, you will form into small groups of 2 or 3. You will be allowed to select your own groups based upon whatever priorities you see fit (e.g., scheduling, academic interests). Once these groups are formed, they cannot be changed. You will be working together on numerous aspects of this class over the semester (and graded together on most of them), so be sure to take that into consideration when forming your groups. Below is a description of your general group responsibilities. Following that, you will find more detailed descriptions of each requirement.

### **Group Responsibilities:**

**1. Leading Class Discussions:** Each group will have the following responsibilities for 2 different class meetings:

- Presenting at least one relevant article to the class beyond the assigned readings
- Leading class discussion
- NOTE: You will sign up for the specific topics/dates once your groups are formed

**2. Semester Project:** As a group, you will also work on a community research project together. Your responsibilities will include:

- Keeping a group journal of your progress.
- Conducting a literature review on a topic of your choice in women's issues.
- Assessing the Boston area's resources for dealing with the issue.
- Interviewing people involved in the issue.
- Making a proposal for how the issue could be better addressed in the Boston area.
- Making a group presentation of your project to the class at the end of the semester.
- Turning in a final paper at the end of the semester.

## **1. LEADING CLASS DISCUSSIONS:**

For 2 classes this semester, your group will be responsible for leading class discussion. This will entail asking questions for the class to answer, relating lecture material to the discussion topic, conducting class activities, and keeping the class focused on the week's topic, for example.

For the weeks your are leading the class, you will also read and present to the class one research or theory-based article that is relevant to the week's topic. The article does not have to be long, but it does need to be from a peer-reviewed source. In other words, an article from Cosmo will not cut it. I would be happy to assist you in selecting your articles. For example, journals such as *Psychology of Women Quarterly* and *Sex Roles* are excellent resources for relevant articles.

You should have copies of your selected articles made for the entire class, including myself. If you get the article to me by the Wednesday before the class meeting, I can have copies made for you.

Most likely, the class will actively participate without much guidance, but you are responsible for the flow of the class. Before the class period, your group should meet and decide how you want to divide responsibilities for that period. Your ability to effectively lead discussion and your selection of appropriate reading material will count for 15% of your final grade. You will be graded as a group.

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## **2. SEMESTER GROUP PROJECT:**

Each group will conduct a semester-long project concerning a current issue affecting women. As a group, you will select a topic (e.g., day care, battered women, teenage pregnancy) and do significant research on it. You may want to start general (e.g., eating disorders, domestic violence), because you can always refine a topic as you go. If your topic is too narrow, you may have difficulty expanding it later.

Here are a few ideas for topics:

- eating disorders (e.g., anorexia nervosa, bulimia)
- domestic violence (e.g., spousal abuse, child abuse)
- sexual assault/rape (e.g., date rape, marital rape)
- poverty (e.g., mothers with children)
- teenage pregnancy
- academic performance in the sciences
- STDs and AIDS transmission
- transgenderism
- sexual harassment
- breast cancer (e.g., treatment, coping)

You do not have to choose from this list. However, every group must have my approval of their topic so that I can ensure you have selected a topic which is reasonable for the semester project. I want to challenge you, but I do not want you taking on more than you can handle.

The Group Semester Project, as a whole, will count toward **35% of your final grade**. You will be grading each other for a part of the final grade. However, for the majority of the project, you will be graded as a group.

### **Group Project Paper Requirements:**

Your group project paper is meant to be a summary of your semester's work of exploring research and community response to a specific women's issue. The paper will include the following:

1. **A literature review of the research.** You will examine research journals and news magazines for reviews and studies of your topic. You are required to have a minimum of 6 sources for your paper. No more than 1 source can be off the internet, due to the potential problems with legitimacy of sources. Peer-reviewed journals and research-based books should be your primary resources (minimum 4 of your sources). I advise using PsychInfo, a database that contains listings of journal articles, chapters, and books in psychology. Some journals that may be of value to you include the Journal of Social Issues, Psychology of Women Quarterly, Journal of Applied Social Psychology, and Sex Roles. This is not an exhaustive list, but these are journals I've found to frequently cover women's issues and contain research of high quality.

Your literature review should be clear and concise. You will summarize the research without restating the entire article. The order of presentation should be logical. For example, first deal with articles that assess the nature of the problem or issue, moving to articles that conduct research on how to deal with the issue or problem. For samples of literature reviews, you can look at the introduction of most any psychological journal. If you need further guidance, please feel free to consult me.

Your literature reviews should be approximately 5-7 pages long. However, quality is far more important to me than quantity. I would advise turning in a rough draft to me well in advance, especially for those of you who have not had a lot of experience writing literature reviews.

NOTE: Proper APA style referencing is expected for ALL sources. The library has copies of the APA Publication Manual. Note that there is a fourth and fifth edition. Select ONE of the two formats to follow. There are many differences between the two editions.

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## Group Project Paper Requirements Continued.....

2. **An assessment of the problem as it is dealt with in the Boston area.** You will examine the current status of attempts to deal with the issue in the area. Your approach to this part of the assignment may vary greatly from group to group. I would suggest finding well-established organizations dealing with the issue, and they could guide you to the other Boston resources. You could start by, for example, contacting the local chapter of the National Organization for Women, going to a counseling or resource center, or even looking through the phone book. You will provide a full documentation of your findings in the final project paper.

Questions to consider in your Boston area resource search:

- What form do the resources take (e.g., informational websites, hotlines, physical locations to visit, specialized counseling, financial assistance)?
- How easy or difficult is it for a woman in need of these resources to track them down?
- Are the resources adequate to fit the demand in Boston?
- Based upon your literature review, do the types of resources address the issue properly?
- Are individual needs addressed at central locations, or do women have to visit various sites?
- How many people utilize these resources on a monthly or annual basis?

This part of your paper will probably run roughly 6-8 pages long. The length may vary based upon how many resources you find and the depth of your analysis of them, but being clear and thorough is paramount. Any pamphlets or materials you collect should be referenced in this section and included as appendices at the end of the paper.

3. **Interviews.** In order to get a personalized perspective on the issue you are investigating, your group will interview two people involved at different levels. You will interview both an adult who is personally dealing with the issue (e.g., a pregnant teenager) and an adult who is working towards helping that individual (e.g., a doctor or therapist). This may be the trickiest part of your study, because access to certain facilities (e.g., a battered women's shelter) is highly limited and information is often confidential. I can meet with your groups to discuss any problems that arise, including finding people to interview.

Once you have people to interview, you will need to develop a specific list of questions your group wants to ask. **These interview questions will need to be approved by me in advance.** The types of questions that you ask someone could have a significant impact on them. For example, asking a woman in a shelter about her experiences with abuse could trigger further trauma for her. You need to be very careful about how you approach the interviewee and always treat that person with sensitivity and empathy.

For the paper, you will include a summary of the interview, as well as your own thoughts about what was said. You can include an actual transcript of the interview as an appendix. A **minimum of 5 pages** will most likely be required to summarize your interviews and analysis.

4. **Proposal for changes.** Based upon your research on the issue and your assessments of local attempts to solve the problem, what else can be done? Here you will make informed proposals. They should be based on your previous work, but can be as creative as you like. Your analysis may provide insights that other "experts" have not thought about. While I do not expect your proposals to be flawless, I do expect you to take them very seriously. I am happy to consult with individual groups on your ideas. Your proposals should be about **4-5 pages in length**, but remember I am looking for quality, rather than quantity.

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## Semester Project Continued....

### **Group Journals:**

Over the entire semester, your group will keep a detailed journal of the work you are doing on the project. This can include information such as who is assigned to certain responsibilities and when they are completed, the organizations or people you are contacting for information or interviews, and the dates and content of any group meetings. The purpose of the journal is to assist you in documenting and organizing the work you have done. It will also serve as a check to make sure individual members are contributing to the project equally. I will be collecting your journals at least once during the semester and at the end of the course. Make sure it is detailed and clear.

### **Group Presentations:**

On the final day of class, each group will be presenting a summary of their semester projects. Each group will have approximately 20 minutes to make their presentation and field questions from the rest of the class. This will provide everyone with the opportunity to see what others have been working on this semester, and it will give you all some experience with public presentations. I will provide you with further guidance as we approach the end of the semester.

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## GRADING SUMMARY

Your final grade will be based on the following value assignments:

Reading Assignment Questions:	30%
Class Participation:	20%
Leading Class Discussion (group):	15%
Semester Group Project:	<u>35%</u> (includes group journal, presentation, paper)
	100%

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## BASIC GRADING SCALE

A = 93-100	B+ = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 65-69	F = below 60
A- = 90-92	B = 83-86	C = 73-76	D = 60-64	
	B- = 80-82	C- = 70-72		

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## CLASS POLICIES

### CLASS ENVIRONMENT:

The classroom is meant to be a learning environment, both from the instructor and from one another. However, learning is inhibited when there is a lack of respect for one another's individuality as well as for the class as a whole. Therefore, I have decided to set a few ground rules for the classroom environment.

- **Privacy and confidentiality.** Most likely there will be times when class members share very personal experiences and beliefs. Since we all benefit from hearing each other's perspectives, we must be respectful of those who feel comfortable in sharing this personal information. Therefore, we will have an understood policy that nothing shared in class can be divulged outside of the class. While you may discuss general issues with others, you cannot share any information that may identify another member of the class.

- **Risk taking.** To learn from each other we are going to ask each other to "step out of their comfort zones." We may be expressing ideas that others do not agree with, or listening to ideas that challenge our own beliefs or preconceptions. Be willing to listen to one another and be prepared to be respectfully challenged when controversial issues arise.

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## CLASS ENVIRONMENT CONTINUED...

- **Support.** If we are asking each other to step out of their comfort zones, we need to be there to support one another. This does not mean you have to agree with someone. It means that you have to allow her/him the space and freedom to express her/himself. It is difficult to take risks if you are concerned that people will attack your ideas.

- **Respect.** Every individual's perspective is valued and considered legitimate for that person. Respect that someone's ideas may be different from your own and try to understand where that person is coming from. Being open to other perspectives is important to academic and personal growth.

- **No "put downs."** All comments should be made with the desire to educate, not hurt. You can express disagreement with an issue or idea, but be aware of HOW you express yourself. Also, express WHY you disagree...this continues the learning process for all of us.

## CLASS ETIQUETTE:

- **Be on time.** People coming in late disrupts the flow of the class and places them behind in the material covered in class. Our class time is precious and limited, and no one would like to spend that time repeating material for late-comers. Occasionally, being late cannot be helped, and that is fine. But routine tardiness shows a lack of respect for the entire class, and it will not be tolerated.

- **Raise your hand when you wish to speak.** There are times when several people want to speak, so some just blurt out their responses. This behavior, especially when repeatedly perpetrated, takes away people's equal access to the classroom forum. If you speak out of turn, you will be ignored.

- **No talking.** Making comments to your neighbor while someone is speaking is disrespectful. If you missed something that was said, let us know and the speaker will repeat it.

- **Any beepers or phones will be turned off or otherwise silenced during class time.**

- **Food is not allowed in the multi-media rooms. You can bring clear liquids.**

## LATE ASSIGNMENTS:

You will be allowed to hand in ONE assignment late without penalty. However, the assignment is to be no later than 3 days, and I must be notified of this when the assignment is due.

All other late assignments will be penalized. For each day an assignment is late, 5 points will be deducted from the final grade of that assignment.

I totally understand that the semester can get rather hectic. However, allowing yourself to fall too far behind will only hurt you at the end of the semester. This policy is designed to help keep you motivated to finish on time while also giving a little room for unforeseen circumstances.

## CHEATING & PLAGIARISM:

Cheating and plagiarism are VERY serious offenses, and I take them VERY seriously. Incidents of cheating and/or plagiarism will result in the following: (a) failure of the assignment or test, (b) notification of your Academic Advisor, and (c) notification of the Academic Dean. If I deem the offense is serious enough, I may also exercise my option to fail you for the entire course. **Do not test me on this one.** Cheating and plagiarism not only hurt your own learning experience, but they are also disrespectful to your fellow classmates who did complete their own work.

People are sometimes unaware that they have plagiarized (e.g., "para-phrasing"). Essentially, a basic rule is to give credit where credit is due; if it is not a theory or idea from your own head, reference the author(s). Not citing the author(s) means you are claiming credit for their words or ideas-- that is plagiarism. Whenever in doubt, feel free to run it by me. You may also refer to your student handbooks for formal definitions of cheating and plagiarism under the Academic Integrity Policy.

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## COURSE CALENDAR

NOTE: Unless otherwise noted, the individual readings are from the Primis reader.

<b>DATE:</b>	<b>TOPIC</b>	<b>ASSIGNMENT/DUE DATE:</b>
1/24	Introduction / History of Women in Psychology	"Psychology of Women" (Unger & Crawford)
1/31	Origins of Gender	<u>Gender Knot</u> (Johnson), "Making of a woman" (deBeauvoir), "Your life as a girl" (Sittenfeld) "Womb envy, testyria,...." (Steinem)
2/7	Sex Differences: Real or Imagined?	"Meanings of difference" (Unger & Crawford) "Does the brain have a sex?" "Gender and cognitive abilities" "Gender differences in social behavior" "Two moral orientations.." (Gilligan & Attanucci)
2/14	Development & Self-Esteem	<u>School Girls</u> (Orenstein)
2/21	<b>PRESIDENTS' DAY - NO CLASSES</b>	
2/28	Body Image & Eating Disorders	"The body politic" (Chernik) "It's a big fat revolution" (Lamm) "Women, weight, and body image" (Smith) "A Way Outa No Way," (Thompson)
3/7	<b>SPRING BREAK - NO CLASSES</b>	
3/14	Sexuality	"Sexuality in social context" "Lesbian and bisexual women" (Unger & Crawford) "Life as a Lesbian" (Garnets) "Adolescent sexuality" (Unger & Crawford) "Asian American women..." (Chan)
3/21	Media & Images of Women	"Images..women and men" (Unger & Crawford) "Sex, lies, and Advertising" (Steinem) "Images of Black women..." (Christian) "Impact of pop culture...." (Goodwin) "Joking matters" (Kramarae) "Dreaming ourselves dark and deep..." (hooks)

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3/28	Women & Health	"Sex-Related Differences in Psychological Disorders" (Unger & Crawford) "Women and medicalization" (Riessman) "PMS as a culture-bound syndrome" (Chrisler) "The Yellow Wallpaper" (Gilman)
4/4	Defining Work and Worth	"Gender dynamics..." (Unger & Crawford) "Society and sex roles" (Friedl) "Women and work" (Unger & Crawford) "Feminization of poverty" (Pearce) "Feminist perspective... budget" (Hartmann) "Life ... assembly line" (Ehrenreich & Fuentes) "Bananas, bases, and patriarchy" (Enloe)
4/11	Violence Against Women	"The rape of Mr. Smith" (Anonymous) "Impact of violence against women" (Unger & Crawford) "Circumcision of girls" (El Saadawi) "Battered women" (Stahly) RESERVE: "Using pornography," (Jensen), "No law in the arena (from Vamps and Tramps)," (Paglia)
4/18	<b>PATRIOTS' DAY - NO CLASSES</b>	
4/25	Women in Relationships	TBA
5/2	<b>GROUP PRESENTATIONS -- GROUP PAPERS AND JOURNALS DUE</b>	