

# GRADUATE CONSORTIUM IN WOMEN'S STUDIES

## MID-TERM STUDENT COURSE EVALUATION

Spring 2011

Course: Gender, Race, and the Complexities of Science and Technology

Instructors: Peter Taylor & Sally Haslanger

Please take about 7 minutes to respond anonymously to each of the questions. Keep one copy for yourself and put the other by the door as you leave. GCWS will digest the responses, report back to us next week, and the instructors will try to make changes in response.

### 1. What concrete incidents/comments/reactions in the course have caught your attention?

- Struck by Sally's finding holes/oversights in our Werskey presentations – it's both true that those oversights were there and to be expected -- not sure how to take it.
- The two readings have actually stuck with me more because they didn't get lost in a long reading list as in most courses. Spending time to work from a text helps it sink in.
- Feeling of inclusion. Hearing voices that obviously do not usually speak in class.
- ?
- I like how the instruction is self-directed and I can still see connections to other students' work.
- Comments that have caught my attention have been around the social construction of science and redefining what science means.
- Both readings have been very interesting and not something I would have read outside of this class.
- Independence, but also the great resources from professors; reflection and action
- KAQ's have caught my attention.
- I'm still amazed by the work that Meghan is doing.
- N/A
- Observation/reflective – intentionality to conservation; Kyle's presentation – case 2
- In general, the feedback and re. writing practices have been extremely helpful and significant.

### 2a. What has excited you?

- Open-endedness; chance to be creative; experiment
- The topics covered. Learning about STS in general has opened new options in my own academic career.
- PBL practice and methodology; learning from a diverse group
- All the inspiring "activist" work and the critical thinking of all the participants and the flat hierarchy (!) and cooperation and support of the instructors.
- Learning more about societal influences

- That we have the ability to develop our own projects from our own interests.
- The interdisciplinary focus put on the research and the comments from classmates.
- The action!
- Listening to everyone's presentations/my final products of my own presentations.
- Meghan's work!
- The opportunity to work on my own projects through this class.
- The process in how I'm learning – the variety of ideas that come from all my classmates.
- The PBL form. It is most unique.

**b. What has frustrated you?**

- Difficult bind: reflect on process while making claims while emphasizing race/gender and at the same time not necessarily being given space and context to learn STS, to think about science, etc. – how to do this without always feeling you're leaving huge aspects of questions out?
- The syllabus. Even with the treasure hunt, it's difficult to know what we need week-to-week.
- My lack of knowledge in other disciplines (which was also exciting)
- Nothing so far really... only that I was so much more confused at the beginning, but I was confident that it would change because you told us.
- The fact that I still get nervous presenting.
- Sometimes developing a project is difficult.
- Not knowing "exactly" what I should make for the guide, though now I feel great about it.
- It can be overwhelming to dive right in right away and have so much information, but that's also exciting and you get used to it.
- Coming up with topics for my presentations/the process.
- The feeling of being so untethered at the beginning of each case.
- Starting off figuring out what the goals of the assignments were and what criteria for success were.
- Feelings of being overwhelmed.
- I would like to discuss articles read as a class in the class.

**3a. What trends do you see emerging in the classes?**

- I see a challenge in how to make substantive claims about these themes – I see a moment away from STS – can we return?
- Approaches to science from all directions (access, history, future, etc.)
- Unique ideas/projects grounded in frame of course adoption of PBL.
- "access" seems to be an important issue we all have in common and the nearest to being explicit/transparent about background assumptions
- I'm starting to see how we are co-creating knowledge as a group.

- Detailed research on social aspects of social construction of science.
- How to “access” things, how to investigate questions.
- Activism (maybe not in the “al out” sense, but a sense of activism nonetheless)
- Everyone keeps getting more comfortable and confident with each class.
- Technology and access (and access to technology)
- Raising questions and more questions and thinking about actions.
- Race, Access, Design/CS
- Academic empowerment.

**b. What are the implications of these for your learning and thinking?**

- Great for future teaching – great chance to try out new ideas; lovely professors/fellow students
- Some of the approaches to evaluating science can be used in other areas of study.
- Further learning about PBL and spreading consideration of race, class, gender, etc.
- It is not just meaningless non-sense I’m thinking about, but I share similar interests with all people across different disciplines.
- I like that we are experiencing different perspectives in a respectful manner.
- I’m learning how to be a more critical thinker.
- I feel like I’m such a better critical thinker! I think this course has challenged me to re-evaluate how I think/research.
- Not to be insecure about whether or not others will be interested in my interests – I can “own it”
- I need to continue working on new ways to form ideas.
- What role does philosophy play in this world where thinking is getting faster and more widely accessed?
- I think I spend half of my research time sifting through possible questions to consider.
- I don’t know yet.
- Enables a sense of voice and ownership; confidence.

**4a. What might be your next steps as a learner-participant in this course?**

- Challenge myself to make substantive claims, to think in the core of STS – feminism/critical race theory
- I’d like to think more about conducting primary research (rather than reviewing literature) for some of the topics.
- Make greater use of time in and out of class with classmates to get feedback, exchange ideas, etc.

- I will look again through the annotated bibliography and do more readings in my own field as well.
- To participate more in discussions.
- To spend more time developing a well thought out research question that is more directed to help limit the scope of the inquiry.
- I certainly want to develop the tools to implement this process in my own classroom, when I have one.
- As Sally mentioned, being aware and “owning” the stance and personal assumptions we might bring to a project.
- I want to push my ideas further. Right now, I’m at a stage where I present facts, but need to think more analytically about them.
- How internet connectedness is changing the content of various fields in academia
- More projects!
- Training myself not to stop in the ideas, but to keep going with them.
- Furthering my investigative thinking and praxis.

**b. What support would you like in taking those steps?**

- Why not each lecture? Teacher – as –learner
- *Left blank*
- Support is adequate from above. It’s more my own initiative maybe instructors could make connections when obvious (but you already do this at times)
- I hope to get farther direction in what to read (esp. philosophy) in order to develop my thoughts further.
- Not sure.
- I feel happy with the support I have received.
- Places/classes that help future teachers to learn more about PBL.
- Proving questions from professors?
- Just feedback on my presentations is useful with this.
- No idea.
- Resources for thinking about science and ability, class, and gender.
- I think I need little lectures after the reading – just to make sure I have understood, or am on the same page. But is that needed? Doesn’t it go against PBL?
- Academic resources/direction.

**5. Other comments (appreciations and suggestions for development/improvement)?**

- Thank you
- *Left blank*

- Appreciate this as the most fruitful and inspiring and intellectually stimulating experience of grad school
- You are amazing instructors. I look forward to this class from week to week.
- *Left blank*
- Maybe a better description of how projects should be produced the first week of class.
- I would love to hear more about both of your backgrounds and thoughts on each of our cases.
- *Left blank*
- I like listening to presentations, but the amount that we've done in such a short time is stressful. (Every other week.)
- I liked that the first case had a product designated for us. I clearly do better with structure, but I'm also enjoying getting out of my comfort zone.
- A place on the wiki where we or the professors can update our grade and whether we've turned in assignments.
- See above (re. lectures after readings)
- To have assigned readings discussed in class.

#### 6. Do you feel the expectations of the instructors are appropriate?

- Yes but let's talk more about what it means/takes to join in the rich dialogues taking place in STS and women, gender, sexuality, and critical race studies
- *Left blank*
- Yes.
- No complaints about that.
- *Left blank*
- Yes.
- I think they tend to be high, though I feel that is necessary with a class such as this.
- Yes. Especially since you are both so available to help us out.
- Yes, the instructors are very encouraging of everyone and their different backgrounds.
- Yes.
- I feel like I often don't know what the expectations of the professors are.
- Yes – Is there a way to find out where I am on the checklist of assignments?
- Yes.

#### 7. What is your opinion of the assigned readings? (Quality, level, amount)

- Given the demands of the cases – hard to assign readings but I think we'd benefit immensely from grounding texts and shared references.
- Werskey wasn't the best jumping-off point for the case. Would have liked something more relevant. I like the amount. Do plenty of additional for the presentations.

- Level difficult for those unfamiliar with literature but do-able with further support provided.
- I should read more.
- *Left blank*
- I've enjoyed both of the readings, especially the Harroway article.
- They are good, though I wish there was more structure which aided in the way we developed our guides.
- Great quality, especially for giving us a jump-off point for questioning.
- The readings are definitely doable in that there isn't too much. But they're also difficult to read just because they're so different from what I've read before.
- Appropriate quality, level, and amount.
- Amount is good to give us time to do our own research. I would enjoy more contemporary readings.
- They are good – hard to get through at times – but worth reading.
- Appropriate.