

NDL 112 – Women and Science

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I will post announcements, course information and assignments here.

Office hours: I do not plan to have scheduled office hours this January. Instead, I will be in my office most of the day (outside our class times) most days. You can make an appointment if you want to be sure I'll be there, or you are welcome to just drop by.

Course Description: An interdisciplinary, multicultural examination of the past, present, and future of women in science and mathematics with particular emphasis on cultural attitudes that influence women's participation in science. The course addresses the question "Why are there so few women scientists?", with a focus on possible solutions. Topics include: history of participation and status in science by women and people of color; sociological data forecasting the educational and professional climate for women in science and mathematics; social and cultural factors contributing to the under-representation of women in science; implications for education and the professions.

The course will also provide a brief introduction to the scientific method and contemporary feminist critiques of science. In this context we will examine the obverse questions: how have scientists constructed gender difference and how has the existence of gender difference influenced the construction of scientific knowledge?

Course Materials:

Women Scientists in America: Before Affirmative Action, 1940-1972 by Margaret Rossiter.

Failing at Fairness: How Our Schools Cheat Girls by Myra and David Sadker.

Additional materials will also be assigned.

Evaluation: Your final grade will be assigned using the following percentages as a guide:

Class Participation	20%
Journal	10%
Three short papers and interview	40%
Final Project	30%

Class participation includes attendance at class meetings and films, (you are allowed two unexcused absences) and reading of all assigned texts by class time. You must complete all course assignments in order to pass the class.

Class Format: We will use a seminar format. The class will include minimal lecture time. Because class discussion is integral to the class, it is imperative that each student come prepared to discuss the assigned readings. In addition, students will be responsible for preparing questions and leading discussions. We will also have a series of debates towards the end of the term.

Journal: Students are required to keep a journal. The purpose of this journal is to record your thoughts and feelings about the course and the material you are learning. The journal entry should focus on the reading and class discussions, giving your personal reactions to the material. In addition, you can use your journal to make any comments to me you wish about the course. These journal entries should be used to help you think about course material and how it relates to your own personal experience. They can also be used to process your reactions to discussion topics in class and help you to better frame your thoughts on these topics. Individual journal entries will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Credit will be given to those entries that clearly illustrate that you have thought about the issues and can supply a rationale for your thinking. You may rewrite a journal entry one time if you initially receive “no credit.” Journals will be collected on Friday. Entries should be kept in a notebook or folder containing just these assignments and should be numbered and dated.

Course Outline: The course will be divided into four sections:

- History of Women in Science: patterns of participation, case studies, returning women to the narrative
- Experience of Women in Science: the current situation, education, “why so few women scientists?”, the leaky pipeline
- Science and Gender: What is science? What is gender? A feminist critique of science. Is there a feminist science?
- Changing the system: what works?

Academic Integrity: The academic honesty policy can be found on page 31 of the 1998-1999 college catalogue. I call your attention to the following excerpt: “In all academic exercises, examinations, papers, and reports, students shall submit their own work. Footnotes or some other acceptable form of citation must accompany any use of another’s words or ideas.”

Scientific autobiography/My relation to women in science In this paper, I want you to explore how you reached your current relationship to women in science, and what it means to you. If you consider yourself to be a woman in science, describe how and why you became one. If you have a relative who is a woman in science, or have been influenced by a woman in science, describe the effect this has had on you. If you feel you have had little or no relationship to women in science, write about how this has occurred.

Try to remember the first time you were interested in science – whether it was asking questions to your parents/guardians about the world around you or your own explorations of the world e.g. collecting insects in the back yard. From that point of view, trace your science history. Think about your experiences both in and out of a formal classroom setting. Do not just describe what courses you have taken but also how you felt about and experienced science and mathematics. Were there any good or bad memories that stick with you? Was there positive, negative, or no real opinion from your family and friends concerning the sciences?

The assignment should be typed and approximately 2-3 pages long. Due Wednesday, January 5, beginning of class.