WS 101-3  Introduction to Women’s Issues in Canada

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Lecture:  Thursday 12:30 – 2:20  
Office Hours: TBA. AQ 5105

Course Description:

This introductory Women’s Studies course is an interdisciplinary examination of the work, status, and lives of Canadian women, the social and cultural construction of gender and sexuality, and the way that ideas about femininity and masculinity shape systems of knowledge, social institutions, popular culture, and social policy. We will examine the interconnections of gender with race, ethnicity, class and sexuality, address how women’s lives and identities are shaped by the intersection of oppression and privilege, and discuss the history and future of feminist activism.

This course is designed to help students develop critical and analytical skills by investigating popular stereotypes and assumptions about sexual difference and the effects that such assumptions have had within social policy, work, media and the family. We will study such issues as pornography, prostitution, cultural representations of women, sexual violence, and women’s human rights. By the end of the course, students will be able to analyze how the lives of women have been shaped by individual and institutional power relations.

Required Texts:

- Custom courseware package, available at the University bookstore
- Margaret Atwood, The Handmaid’s Tale (available at the bookstore, but you may use any edition)

Course Requirements and Grading Structure:
Essay Proposal and Annotated Bibliography 10%
Research Essay 25%
Mid-term test 15%
Final Exam 25%
Tutorial Participation 10%
Reading Responses: 5%
Participation in tutorial debates: 10%

THE DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN’S STUDIES ENCOURAGES CLARITY OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION AND GOOD WRITING. STUDENTS WILL BE EVALUATED ON THESE SKILLS IN ALL COURSES GIVEN BY THE DEPARTMENT.