WS 101-3 (B-Soc)*  Introduction to Women’s Issues in Canada

*This is a designated Social Sciences Breadth Course

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Course Description:
Should prostitution be legalized? What is the meaning of pornography? Is Sex and the City a feminist or post-feminist t.v. show? If you are interested in the various ways we live as gendered beings in Canadian society, then Women’s Studies 101 will help you think about and debate some of these questions. This introductory course examines the social and cultural constructions of gender and sexuality, and the way that ideas about femininity and masculinity shape 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 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 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.

Course 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)
Highly Recommended:

Course Evaluation and Assignments:
Essay Proposal and Annotated Bibliography 10%
Research Essay 25%
Mid-term test 15%
Final Exam 25%
Tutorial Participation/Attendance 15%
Tutorial debates: 10%