

WST 6935/Fall 2019

Critical Girlhood Studies



Instructor: Dr. Jillian Hernandez

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10am-12pm and by appointment, Ustler Hall 304

Class meeting times: Mondays, 12:50-3:50pm

Location: Ustler Hall 108

This course enacts a critical mapping of girls' studies, an intellectual formation that coalesced into a sub-field of Women's and Gender Studies in the late 1990s. The course will consist in part of a survey of work in the field, but the bulk of our efforts will place analytic pressure on the question of which girls become legible as the "proper objects" of girls' studies and what questions about girlhood are (im)possible to ask. We will think collectively and creatively to (re)imagine what histories, methods, pedagogies and futures a formation of *critical* girlhood studies could offer as both an intellectual and social justice project. Course material will reflect the instructor's expertise in the areas of sexuality, arts-based community praxis, Black and Latinx studies, and popular cultures. Students will design part of the course syllabus to reflect their own research interests and address blind spots we have identified in the field. We will also engage with organizations working with girls locally.

Required Texts

Lilia Soto. 2018. *Girlhood in the Borderlands: Mexican Teens Caught in the Crossroads of Migration*. New York University Press.

Rita Indiana. 2016. *Papi (a novel)*. University of Chicago Press.

Ruth Nicole Brown, 2013. *Hear Our Truths: The Creative Potential of Black Girlhood*. The University of Illinois Press.

Sarah Projansky. 2013. *Spectacular Girls: Media Fascination and Celebrity Culture*. New York University Press.

Sharon Lamb. 2002. *The Secret Lives of Girls: What Good Girls Really Do—Sex Play, Aggression, and Their Guilt*. The Free Press.

All other texts available as PDFs on Canvas or via online link on syllabus.

Grading and Assignments

I calculate grades in this course using a point system. Participation and assignments have corresponding point values that add up to a maximum of 100. Point values for assignments are listed below. I use this scale in determining your final grade.

100-90 points A / 89-85 B+ / 84-80 points B

Participation (25 points): We learn best when we all show up and prepare ourselves to engage. Facilitating and participating in a 3-hour seminar discussion entails labor, and that labor should be respected and distributed with equity. Not completing the assigned reading and/or failing to participate places a greater burden on others to keep the conversation going. I understand that at times other commitments may keep you from being able to read everything that is assigned. When this occurs I suggested skimming or reading selections from each of the assigned materials so that you can participate in seminar. Mid-way through the semester I will provide you with feedback on your participation in class.

Class Facilitation (10 points): There will be a student co-facilitator of the class every week. Facilitators are our course provocateurs, tasked with helping to generating passionate dialogue about the issues at hand for each week's materials!

Facilitations will provoke dialogue about; 1-the central argument(s) of the scholarship being engaged, 2-the theoretical and methodological approaches utilized and innovated by the scholars, 3-the potential social, cultural, and political stakes of the work, 4-how the work connects to other scholarship we have engaged in the class.

I encourage facilitators to utilize media (such as short video screenings), group activities (such as free writing or creative writing exercises), and other methods to create a dynamic space. However, these are not required, what is most important is that we have a quality exchange in the seminar. Extensive summary of readings is discouraged.

(4) Response Papers (5 points each): You will submit four 2-3 page response papers on Canvas during the course of the seminar on the weeks of your choice. **Response papers are due on Canvas before our class meeting time on the date we are discussing the readings.** Response papers **are not summaries**, they are tools for working through the material and thinking about how the work can expand (or not) your scholarly, artistic, and social justice interests. These thinking papers can be critical, open-ended, and/or personal. What I am looking for is an earnest engagement with the work. Make sure that your papers engage with all of the readings assigned for the week you choose, although more emphasis on one or two within that context is acceptable. This assignment is intended for critical reflection, extensive summary of the main arguments of the texts is not needed and should be avoided.

Meditation on Methods (10 points): You will submit a 3-4 page paper that explores the question of methodology in the girls' studies work we have engaged in the class. You can craft this essay in several ways. You can center on methodological approaches that interested you and discuss why, or discuss approaches that you found problematic. If you choose to write a critique, make it constructive, address what alternative approaches identifying these shortcomings can lead us to. You can also choose a different angle. It is an informal paper to be written in response paper style. It is an opportunity to reflect on the methods we have engaged and how you might want to design the methodology for your own work. **These papers can be turned in any time throughout the semester but must be submitted by November 4th.**

Class Curation Assignment (10 points): To curate means to select, organize, and present materials. Curation is shaped by the curator's particular research interests, specializations, and activist/political orientations. In this curation assignment you can choose to address a blind spot we have identified in the field, address a topic we have not covered in class, or conduct research into an area of girls' studies you are interested in. You will select 2 book chapter or article-length texts for the class to read together during one of the dates listed on the syllabus for student curation.

You will facilitate the conversation on those texts and submit a 2-4 page paper in which you will describe your motivations for selecting the texts, introduce the authors, explain what issues the texts address, and what you hope they add to our class. **You will need to meet with me by October 7th to discuss the texts you have in mind and provide me with the PDFs to post on Canvas or online links.** The papers will be due on the date of your facilitation. I will try to organize the dates thematically and share the assigned dates shortly after October 7th.

Final Paper and Presentation: Research Paper and Presentation (25 points): You will conduct an original girls' studies research project of your choosing. It can have an academic focus, or explore issues of praxis, activism, or pedagogy. The paper should be between 10-12 double spaced pages (12pt font). I expect for you to utilize some course material in addition to relevant scholarship you find on your own. **You must discuss your research idea with me by October 15th and conduct a 10-minute presentation summarizing your findings during our final class meeting on December 2nd. You will then submit the paper on Canvas by noon on December 12th.** A works cited page in the format you are most familiar with in your field is required.

Course Policies

- **Attendance**

Since we only meet once a week and have a discussion-based class, attendance is extremely important. You may miss 2 class meetings without influencing your grade. Think of these as "personal days" at work. I do not need to be informed of why you are not in class. If you will miss several seminars in a row or will go beyond this limit please do contact me. Every unexcused or undocumented absence thereafter will affect your final grade, 10 points will be deducted for each absence past this limit. In order to be counted as present you must arrive on time and stay until class concludes.

- **Participation and Discussion Guidelines**

You are required to bring course texts to class in either hard copy form, or on your laptop/tablet, as we will often read extensive excerpts of texts together. Failure to come to class with the reading will decrease your participation grade.

You are required to bring a notebook and writing utensil to class, as we will sometimes conduct writing and other creative exercises during lecture and discussion section time.

We will collectively determine additional community guidelines for seminar discussions.

- **Correspondence**

I can answer questions during office hours or via e-mail. Please be aware that I receive a high volume of e-mails, if your query is time sensitive please indicate that in the subject line. Questions that require substantive engagement, such as commentary on an assignment, would be best addressed during office hours. I will expect for you to check your UF e-mail once a day in the event that there is a schedule change or if I need to send you important information. Class alerts will be sent via the Canvas system.

- **Academic Integrity**

Whether intentional or inadvertent, plagiarism is a serious violation. All work submitted in this course must be your own. The use of sources such as ideas, quotations, paraphrases, or anything written by someone else must be properly acknowledged and cited. If you have questions about the proper citation of sources, please ask me. Students who plagiarize, or who cheat on an exam, will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with University policy.

- **Electronic Devices and Laptops**

Cell phones must be turned off or set to silent in the classroom. If you must take an urgent call or send an important message please quietly exit the room. Excessive disruption of class for use of cell phones will negatively impact your participation grade.

Laptops and tablets can be utilized solely for the purpose of taking notes. This privilege is contingent upon responsible use of these devices. If I notice or am informed that students are being distracted by improper use of such technology they will no longer be allowed in class.

- **Late Submission of Assignments**

Please contact me in advance if you foresee an issue with turning an assignment in on time so that we can come up with an alternative arrangement.

Accessibility:

I am committed to making learning in this course accessible to all. Please contact me to discuss any learning needs that you may have. You can also access the resources listed below.

UF Disability Resource Center celebrates disability identity as a valued aspect of diversity. We champion a universally accessible community that supports the holistic advancement of individuals with disabilities.

<https://disability.ufl.edu/>
001 Building 0020 (Reid Hall). For information, call 352-392-8565 or email accessUF@ufsa.ufl.edu

UF Counseling and Wellness Center offers individual counseling, wellness counseling, couples counseling, problem solving help, CERC crisis services, and other assistance:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/>
3190 Radio Road; (352) 392-1575 (8am-5pm, Monday through Friday)

Sexual Harassment:

Sexual Harassment is unacceptable anywhere on UF's campus. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see:

http://www.ufsa.ufl.edu/faculty_staff/fees_resources_policies/sexual_harassment/

Sexual Content Notice:

Some of the required materials in this class include explicit depictions and/or descriptions of nudity and sexual acts. Some materials describe or depict experiences of sexual trauma. I have assigned these works to facilitate learning in girls' studies. If you believe engagement with these materials would likely cause you significant discomfort it may be in your interest to drop the course.

CONSIDER ADDING A CERTIFICATE IN WOMEN'S STUDIES

If you are taking this course, you are likely only 9 credits away from earning a Certificate (12 credits total) that will appear on your transcript and can be listed on your CV. The *Certificate in Women's Studies* (WST) is designed for graduate students from any discipline who wish to focus on interdisciplinary issues related to feminist theory and practice. All graduate students in an MA or PhD program from all colleges at UF are eligible to enroll in this program. You can also do a Certificate in *Gender and Development*. For more information see: <http://wst.ufl.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-certificates/graduate-certificate-in-womens-studies/> And contact Dr. Broad (klbroad@ufl.edu) with any questions.

Course Schedule, *subject to change*

August 26th (no class meeting, presenting at Universidad del Norte in Colombia)

Read excerpts from my book *Aesthetics of Excess: The Art and Politics of Black and Latina Embodiment* (forthcoming 2020 from Duke University Press)

Introduction

Chapter 2: "Sexual-Aesthetic Excess: Or, How Chongas Make Class Burn"

Chapter 3: "Fine as Hell: The Aesthetic Erotics of Masculinity"

Chapter 5: "Encounters with Excess: Girls Creating Art, Theory, and Sexual Bodies"

Interludes

September 2nd (no class, Labor Day holiday)

Mapping the Field

September 9th

"Coalescing: The Development of Girls' Studies", 2009, Mary Celeste Kearney. *Feminist Formations*, Volume 21 (1): 1-28.

Ruth Nicole Brown, Introduction and Chapter 5 "Our Words, Our Voice" from *Black Girlhood Celebration: Toward a Hip-Hop Feminist Pedagogy* (Peter Lang, 2009)

"Why We Need Girls' Studies blog"

Dr. Ruth Nicole Brown, <https://www.girlmuseum.org/why-we-need-girls-studies-ruth-nicole-brown/>

Dr. Anastasia Todd, <https://www.girlmuseum.org/why-we-need-girl-studies-anastasia-todd/>

Dr. Sarah Godfrey, <https://www.girlmuseum.org/why-we-need-girls-studies-sarah-godfrey/>

The Political (Mis)Uses of Girlhood

September 16th

Mary E. Odem, Chapter 1: "White Slaves" and "Vicious Men": The Age-of-Consent Campaign, from *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Adolescent Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885-1920*

Anne Meis Knupfer. 2001. "To Become Good, Self-Supporting Women": The State Industrial School for Delinquent Girls at Geneva, Illinois, 1900-1935" *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 9 (4): 420-446.

Lauren Berlant. 1995. "Live Sex Acts (Parental Advisory: Explicit Material)". *Feminist Studies* 21 (3): 379-404.

Angharad Valdivia. 2018. "Holding Up Half the Sky: Global Narratives of Girls at Risk and Celebrity Philanthropy." *Girlhood Studies* 11 (3): 84-100.

Sexualization Panics vs. Girls' Pleasures

September 23rd

Report of the American Psychological Association Task Force on the Sexualization of Girls (2007)

Selections from Sharon Lamb. 2002. *The Secret Lives of Girls: What Good Girls Really Do—Sex Play, Aggression, and Their Guilt*. The Free Press.

Christina Carney, Anya Wallace, Jillian Hernandez. 2016. "Sexual Knowledge and Practiced Feminisms: On moral panic, Black girlhoods, and Hip Hop." *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 28: 412-426.

Radical Theory and Creative Praxis, Black Girlhood Studies

September 30th

Ruth Nicole Brown, 2013. *Hear Our Truths: The Creative Potential of Black Girlhood*. The University of Illinois Press.

Introduction

Chapter 3: When Black Girls Look at You: An Anti-Narrative Photo Poem

Chapter 4: Bad Days: "If You Hit Me, I'm Gonna Hit You Back"

Savannah Shange. 2019. "Black Girl Ordinary: Flesh, Carcerality, and the Refusal of Ethnography." *Transforming Anthropology* 27 (1): 3-21.

Selection from Anya Wallace's dissertation "Curving Space-Time: On Performance, Pleasure, and the Imaginary in Black Girlhood Sexual Politics." The Pennsylvania State University, 2019.

Girlhood Popular Cultures

October 7th

Susan Driver, Selections from *Queer Girls and Popular Culture: Reading, Resisting, and Creating Media* (2007, Peter Lang)

Selections from Blair Ebony Smith's Dissertation, "Cruising, Crossings & Care: Sounds of Collective Black Girlhood." 2019. Syracuse University.

October 14th

Selections from Sarah Projansky. 2013. *Spectacular Girls: Media Fascination and Celebrity Culture*. New York University Press.

Ruth Nicole Brown, Blair Ebony Smith, Jessica Robinson and Porshé R. Garner. "Doing Digital Wrongly." 2018. *American Quarterly* 70 (3): 395-416.

Transnational Girlhoods

October 28th

Rita Indiana. 2016. *Papi (a novel)*. University of Chicago Press.

Catherine Vanner. 2019. "Toward a Definition of Transnational Girlhood." *Girlhood Studies* 12 (2): 115-132.

November 4th

Lilia Soto. 2018. *Girlhood in the Borderlands: Mexican Teens Caught in the Crossroads of Migration*. New York University Press.

Introduction

Chapter 1

Chapter 3

Chapter 6

November 11th

Student curated

November 18th

Student curated

November 25th

Student curated

December 2nd, Project Presentations