



Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies 1020E (670)
Summer 2026
Introduction to Gender and Women's Studies

Course Information:

Calendar Description: A survey of selected topics in the study of gender structures and the status of women in historical and cross-cultural perspective. These will include consideration of social and psychological processes by which gender identity is established in the individual, its institutional manifestations, and its articulation with class and race structures.

Prerequisite(s):

Anti-requisite(s):

Extra Information: 2 lecture hours, 1 tutorial hour (Main); 3 hours, limited enrolment (King's).

Course Weight: 1.00 **Breadth:** Category B Category A

Subject Code: GSWS

Notice: Unless you have either the requisites for this course (fulfilment of pre-requisites, no anti-requisite conflicts), or special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary pre-requisites.

King's | Western University | London Canada
Summer 2026
GSWS 1020E 670 – Introduction to Gender, Sexuality & Women's Studies

Lecture: Online through BrightSpace
Office hour: Mondays 11am or by appt. on Zoom

Professor: Dr. KBJ
E-mail: kbaltzer@uwo.ca

Course Description

This course is an introductory, interdisciplinary, inclusive, and intersectional survey of gender and sexuality roles in our own society and around the globe. Together we will examine how gender differences (specifically in the constructions of femininity and masculinity) are established through various institutional practices and power structures. Through these examinations, we strive to make connections between our own lives, changing global dynamics, and the existences of international movements fighting for women's and other gender equity-seeking groups. This course includes a herstory of women's movements, where we explore central ideas and figures of a variety of camps and sub-camps, critically assess those frameworks and concepts, while dialoguing together what feminism and activism is and ought to be.

Over these 12-weeks together, we will explore, among other issues, the following: gender stratification; constructed femininity and masculinity; sexuality and the body (particularly in relation to sexual identity, reproduction, eating disorders, and perceptions of beauty); indigenous women's herstory and movements; intersexuality and transgender identities; women and labour; intersections of race, class, sexual orientation, and (dis)ability with gendered experience in the world; and activism for gender equality/equity/freedom across classes, nations, and ethnicities.

Learning Objectives

This course will enable students to:

- gain a perspective on women's movement history, and the issues facing female-identifying folks today, both locally and globally;
- understand how female-identifying folks are represented in disciplines such as sport, literature, science, and in popular culture and media, and how that impacts everyone;
- consider how gender operates as a site of social and political control over both men and women, and non-binary, trans and other gender minorities;
- identify key theoretical debates, differences and similarities in feminist thought;
- recognize how the social construction of gender is related to sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, (dis)ability and age.

In addition, the course will assist students in developing aptitude in:

- analytical/critical thinking;
- oral and written communication skills;
- and research.

Student Evaluation

Zine (12 pages; Due by May 22)	10%
Reflection (1000 – 1200 words; Due by June 5)	20%
Essay Thesis, Outline, and Short Bibliography (Due on June 19)	10%
Research Essay (2000 – 2200 words; Due on July 17)	30%
Consultation with The Write Place for Essay	5%
Final Exam (Online; TBA)	25%

= 100%

*More information about each component will be available on our class BrightSpace.

**Some assignments have flexible due dates, and others have a more fixed deadline. Assignments will be posted with plenty of time for students to complete them.

FRIDAY MAKE-UP EXAMS

Please note that Friday, Make-Up Exams may only be written with the instructor's consent.

Zine

A Zine is a handmade magazine, and everyone is going to make one! You may have seen my Fall/Winter GSWS class zines in the library in early February or during the March research week. They are fun and powerful forms of art activism. Yours will be 12 pages long, and it can consist of collages of images, poetry, word art, or drawings, etc. The theme is of your choosing, but it must strongly and clearly relate to the course in some way. We will not be printing them but rather the digital PDF files will be shared with the entire class to be read. Your zine will be submitted through the Assignment tab in BrightSpace, in PDF format any time between May 8th and May 22nd, 2025.

Reflection

The reflection assignment will be based on the zines. The question you will be asked is one that you will answer after engaging with all the class zines. This is a more informal style of writing assignment that asks you to critically reflect and thoughtfully engage with ideas and themes. The word count is 1000 – 1200 words. The question for the reflection will be available in the Assignment tab in BrightSpace on May 15th. You will have until June 5th to submit your answer.

Research Essay Project

The research essay project has 2 nested parts: Thesis/Outline/Short Bibliography, and the Written Essay. There will be a tab in Brightspace with all the information about these including suggested topics. You are also required at least once in this process to visit The Write Place (in-person or online session) for consultation. The timing of this is up to you (i.e., whether you visit for your thesis/outline, or for the essay itself). The Write Place will track the visits.

The information about the research essay project will be available in mid to late May. The research essay project in total (with The Write Place consultation) is 45% of your course grade.

Lectures

This is an online lecture course, and so everything we do will be available through our BrightSpace platform. Each week has its own lesson sub-tab complete with lecture video, slides in PDF, and any other information you need or might be recommended. The lesson for each week will open Sunday around 8pm.

Office Hours & Email

My office hours will be online Mondays at 11am **on Zoom or by appt**. They will be drop-in style and with a waiting room, to ensure privacy. If you need to meet to talk on a different day, please email me and we can set up a time. BrightSpace will have a link to the office hours.

I am also available by email if you should need anything. I will read and reply to emails as quickly as I can, but I simply ask that you give me at least 48 hours to reply. Please put 'GSWS 1020' in the subject line or make reference to it in your email just so it's clear (I get a lot of student email).

Class Schedule and Readings

There is no textbook to buy for this course. All readings are found on our BrightSpace in the 'course readings' tab, or occasionally there may be a link on the syllabus and/or on the lesson tab for the week.

*I will put a notion of 'TW' to mark a trigger warning. Throughout this course we talk about many sensitive issues that may trigger some individuals – eating disorders, violence, sexual assault, trauma, outdated language that might be offensive, etc. I try to flag what I feel needs a notation, but obviously I am not always aware what may trigger someone. Please take care and do what you need to do.

Additional Notes

1. **Notice of Turnitin Analysis:**

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

2. **Policy on AI Use:** Within this course, use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools (such as ChatGPT, translation tools, and grammar-checking tools) is not permitted for written work submitted for evaluation. Unauthorized use of AI will be subject to academic discipline.

3. Expectations, extensions, accommodations, etc. will be discussed as assignments and exams occur.

King's University College
General Course Policies
2025-2026

1. Academic Accommodations, Consideration for Absences

Academic Accommodation (Accessibility)

Accessibility Services works to ensure that academic programs are accessible to all students, and supports students who may have a condition related to, but not limited to, vision, hearing, mobility, different ways of learning, mental health, chronic illnesses, chronic pain, autism spectrum disorder, ADD/ADHD, and temporary conditions (beyond short-term academic consideration). Accessibility Services provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive assessment. The accommodation policy can be found here [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#). Information on Accessibility Services at King's can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration for Student Absence

If a student is unable to meet a course requirement due to substantial but temporary extenuating circumstances (medical or compassionate), they should follow the procedures below.

In some cases, where instructors have built flexibility into their assessments, this flexibility will already address consideration needs.

Requests for academic consideration should be directed to the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration. Requests must be made as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

As a rule, documentation is required for academic consideration. For academic consideration requests on medical grounds, the Student Medical Certificate is available at [here](#).

Students are permitted one academic consideration request without supporting documentation per term per course. Instructors may designate one assessment per half-course weight as requiring formal supporting documentation. Please refer to the course outline for each course. For further information, please see:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising/academic-consideration-requests-and-student-absence-portal>

Absences from Final Examinations

If you miss the Final Exam, contact the Academic Advising Office of your faculty/college of registration as soon as you are able to do so. They will assess your eligibility to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam).

You may also be eligible to write the Special Exam if you are in a “Multiple Exam Situation” (e.g., more than 2 exams in 23-hour period, or more than 3 exams in a 47-hour period). If a student fails to write a scheduled Special Examination, the date of the next Special Examination (if granted) normally will be the scheduled date for the final exam the next time this course is offered. The maximum course load for that term will be reduced by the credit of the course(s) for which the final examination has been deferred. See the Academic Calendar for details https://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/exams/index.html.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give notice in writing to the instructor and Academic Advising Office if a course requirement will be affected by a religious holiday/observance. Notice must be given as early as possible, and no later than two weeks prior to an examination, and one week prior to a midterm test date. It is the responsibility of such students to inform themselves concerning the work done in classes from which they are absent and to take appropriate action.

2. Support Services

Accessibility, Counselling and Student Development at King's University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services>

Students experiencing emotional or mental health distress can access services at King's University College: <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/personal-counselling>

Good2talk is a good online and phone 24/7 resource for students and is available in English, Mandarin, and French: <https://good2talk.ca>, 1-866-925-5454

MentalHealth@Western provides a complete list of options about how to obtain help:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/psych/index.html>

Academic Support Services at King's University College:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/academics/academic-advising>

GBSV Support:

King's is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced sexual or gender-based violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at:

<https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/campus-safety-and-reporting/gender-and-sexual-violence>

You can reach someone supports at Kings by emailing Care@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by email or by calling 519-661-3568.

See also https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html
University Students' Council offers many valuable support services for students, including the health insurance plan: <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

3. Statement on Use of Electronic Devices

Use of Electronic Devices: Unless explicitly stated otherwise, you are not allowed to have a cell phone, or any other electronic device, with you during tests or examinations. Unauthorized possession of such a device during a test or examination constitutes an academic offence.

Use of Laptops, Tablets, and Smartphones in the Classroom: King's University College at Western University acknowledges the integration of new technologies and learning methods into the curriculum. The use of electronic devices such as laptop computers, tablets, or smartphones can contribute to student engagement and effective learning. At the same time, King's recognizes that instructors and students share jointly the responsibility to establish and maintain a respectful classroom environment conducive to learning.

The use of electronic devices by students during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., shall be for matters related to the course at hand only. Students found to be using electronic devices for purposes not directly related to the class may be subject to sanctions under the Student Code of Conduct; see <https://mykings.ca/intranet/app/#/student-supports-and-services/campus-safety-and-reporting/student-code-of-conduct>

Inappropriate use of electronics (e.g., laptops, tablets, smartphones) during lectures, seminars, labs, etc., creates a significant disruption. As a consequence, instructors may choose to limit the use of electronic devices in these settings. In addition, in order to provide a safe classroom environment, students attending in-person class sessions are strongly advised to operate laptops with batteries rather than power cords.

4. Statement on Academic Offences

King's is committed to academic integrity. Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, is posted at [here](#).

It is expected that students will submit work that is truly their own, completed without external assistance (human or artificial) except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. Check with your instructor on what tools, including generative AI (ChatGPT, translation tools, grammar-checking tools) are permitted in the course. Because a tool is permitted in one course, that does not mean it is permitted in other courses.

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system; see <https://elearningtoolkit.uwo.ca/tools/Originality Reports - TurnItIn.html>.

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

5. Copyright of Course Material

Lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials are protected by copyright. Faculty members are the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials they create. Students may take notes and make copies for their own use. Students may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly (whether or not a fee is charged) without the express written consent of a faculty member.

Unauthorized sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

Similarly, students own copyright in their own original papers and exam essays. If a faculty member wishes to post a student's answers or papers on the course website, they should ask for the student's written permission.

6. Use of Recordings

Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation and/or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. Unauthorized recording and/or sharing of class content is subject to academic discipline.

7. Policy on Attendance

Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course, after due warning has been given. On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course.

GENDER-BASED SEXUAL VIOLENCE

King's at Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

[Mental Health and Wellness at King's – King's University College](#)

You can reach some supports at King's by emailing CARE@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a social worker who can offer help.

You can reach some supports at King's by emailing CARE@kings.uwo.ca or calling 519-930-4640 to reach a Case Manager/Social worker who can offer help.

You can also reach Western's Gender-Based Violence & Survivor Support Case Manager by [email](#) or by calling 519-661-3568.