



WGSS 2350 | Introduction To Women's Studies

Section: 16545 | Asynchronous Online

Cr. 3. (3-0). Prerequisite: ENGL 1302. Gender dynamics and women's experiences, social roles and expressions across western and world societies in the arts, religion, history, literature, science, politics and the family.

Instructor Information

Dr. Andrew Joseph Pegoda

Department: Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program

Email: ajpegoda@central.uh.edu

Office Hours

Zooms by appointment weekdays roughly 11 a.m. – 8 p.m. CST

General Course Information

Course Meeting Time: Asynchronous Online

Course Meeting Location: Canvas + Zoom, Microsoft Office, and UH Email

Due to this being a fully online course, Canvas is the primary means of administering this course. All weekly course materials are posted in preparation for each week. Students must have strong computer skills and access to appropriate technologies (laptop or desktop, webcam, mic/earbuds, etc).

Tentative: All information herein is current to the best of my knowledge. This document remains tentative: Syllabi, calendars, and course descriptions are living, evolving texts,

not all-encompassing. Requirements, topics, and policies may evolve. Consider “Announcements” clarifications of, reiterations of, additions to, and/or modifications to this syllabus.

Note that this a WGSS class. Content may be sensitive and/or offensive to some. Materials are selected with learning in mind. This course approaches material in ways that are relevant to academic discourses. Students are, of course, never required to personally adopt any given fact, position, ideology, theory, or perspective.

Course Objectives and Student Learning Outcomes

This course introduces students to Women’s, Gender, and Sexuality Studies as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry, emphasizing how multiple academic disciplines contribute to the study of women’s lives and gendered social systems. Course objectives include situating feminist thought and activism within broader historical and global contexts, highlighting such topics as social constructions of gender and sexuality, intersectionalities, patriarchy, labor/workforce, family, economics, culture/media, health, etc. Students will form arguments grounded in research and evidence, honing their critical thinking and communication skills. This course fosters an inclusive and respectful environment for discussion of issues that students encounter daily, preparing them for their future professional and civic lives.

CORE Requirements: This class meets the “Language, Philosophy and Culture” CORE requirement. Courses in this category focus on how ideas, values, beliefs, and other aspects of culture express and affect human experience. Courses involve the exploration of ideas that foster aesthetic and intellectual creation in order to understand the human condition across cultures. The following four core objectives must be addressed in each course approved to fulfill this category requirement:

1. Critical Thinking Skills: to include creative thinking, innovation, inquiry, and analysis, evaluation and synthesis of information
2. Communication Skills: to include effective development, interpretation and expression of ideas through written, oral and visual communication
3. Personal Responsibility: to include the ability to connect choices, actions and consequences to ethical decision-making

4. Social Responsibility: to include intercultural competence, knowledge of civic responsibility, and the ability to engage effectively in regional, national, and global communities

Learning Outcomes:

1. Gain an intersectional understanding of women's issues through learning key theories and concepts from the field of Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies
2. Critically examine and analyze diverse experiences related to gender and sexuality across the globe through readings, discussions, and assignments
3. Analyze how women have historically created spaces of social change; establish their own principles of personal and social responsibility; and understand the necessity of making informed statements backed by research and evidence
4. Develop strong reading, writing, interpersonal communication, and critical thinking skills through honing skills in researching, documenting sources correctly, learning to incorporate evidence, and effectively utilizing technology
5. Understand and analyze the relationship between scholarship and activism in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

Course Policies and Procedures

- Students need to embrace curiosity and a willingness to learn.
- Students are expected to behave in ways appropriate for the college classroom.
- As specified, assignments must be composed in the UH OneDrive and saved for the duration of the semester. Assignments must show incremental understandings of course concepts.
- Students are expected to read and follow the instructions on assignments.
- Students are expected to submit work by the deadline, always 11:59:00 p.m. CST on the specified day. All work has an automatic 6-hour emergency grace period. Work must also be submitted to the correct place in Canvas. Extensions might be possible for major assignments only but only when arranged in advanced and only when progress has been made on said assignment.
- Students will use the handout "Dr. Pegoda's Writing Rules" as they complete written work. This document details standard expectations for college writing related to format, structure, citations, etc.
- Students are expected to devote quality time to this course each week. Across the semester, around 180 hours total is standard.
- I might use completed work as an example in this class or a future

- class—anonymity will be maintained.
- Students must use their UH email account when emailing Dr. Pegoda and allow 48 hours for a reply, excluding weekends and holidays. Emails must follow professional standards. (Don't use Canvas Mail.)
- Access to a webcam is required for students participating in this course. Webcams must be turned on during Live Sessions, Office Hours, and for some assignments as specified.

Academic Integrity and Artificial Intelligence

Students are always expected to do their own work. The University of Houston Academic Policies define and prohibit academic dishonesty as follows: “Academic dishonesty” means employing a method or technique or engaging in conduct in an academic endeavor that the student knows or should know is not permitted by the university or a course instructor to fulfill academic requirements.” The primary concern in this course is plagiarism, again defined in the Academic Honesty Policy: “Representing as one’s own work the work of another without acknowledging the source.” Plagiarism will be dealt with according to its type and severity: faulty citation of sources will be treated as a matter for teaching and revision; willful and knowing academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to University policy and can result in failure of the assignment or the course, and/or suspension from or expulsion from the University.

In addition, don’t manipulate fonts/margins, don’t adjust the speed of a video to be faster or slower, don’t submit papers used in another class, don’t buy papers, don’t pay someone to do your work, don’t get unauthorized help, and don’t use any resources outside of those specifically assigned or recommended (unless you have prior approval). Don’t upload, sell, or share your work or my materials to Chegg, Course Hero, or similar websites or to any AI or LLM.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) or Large Language Model (LLM) or similar is absolutely and strictly prohibited. Don’t use any AI or LLM for brainstorming, consulting, thinking, reading, researching, writing, summarizing, translating, paraphrasing, revising, etc. Don’t use CoPilot, Gemini, ChatGPT, Claude, Grammarly, Quill, or other tools/websites to help with anything, including any rewrite or edit suggestions from Word. Work completed with AI earns a zero.

****Only submit your own ideas in your own words.**** Should you learn of policy

violations, you have an obligation to notify me—this helps protect the reputation of your degree.

Grading Rubrics and Weights

- 6 Live Sessions (12 points): six “Live Sessions,” live active attendance during scheduled Zooms (or if you cannot attend live, watching the recording and writing a short paper), 2 points each
- 4 Assessments (43 points): three timed objective exams, 10 points each; one metacognitive reflection, 13 points
- 2 Writing Assignments (45 points): Current Event Analysis, 20 points; Ren Analysis, 25 points
- Bonus Opportunities: recover missed points or earn bonus points, 1 point each

Note that grades are earned. In general, A work is Excellent; B work is Good; C work is Satisfactory; D work is Unsatisfactory; and F work is Unacceptable.

Grades on small assignments (live sessions) are on a full credit/no credit basis. Grades on major essays and on open-ended questions are based on a holistic assessment according to what we have covered in class and general expectations for college writing.

Term grades are based on the following breakdown: 94.0 or more = A; 90.0-93.9 = A-; 87.0-89.9 = B+; 83.0-86.9 = B; 80.0-82.9 = B-; 77.0-79.9 = C+; 73.0-76.9 = C; 70.0-72.9 = C-; 67.0-69.9 = D+; 63.0-66.9 = D; 60.0-62.9 = D-; 59.9-0 = F

Students may receive a higher grade than their final point total, if they have shown substantial improvement or outstanding participation. I always look for ways to round up! Students should not ask for a higher grade; doing so will result in any rounding being revoked.

Discussion and Lecture Topics

1. Women’s Studies for Everybody
2. Intersectionalities and Positionalities
3. Social Constructions of Sex and Gender
4. Transgender: Myth vs Reality
5. Gender and Literature, Part I
6. The Problem That Has No Name
7. Feminism and Race

8. Capitalism and Labor
 9. Children and Childhood
 10. Countering Compulsory Heterosexuality
 11. Psychological and Sexual Violence
 12. Healthcare: Abortion and Body Image
 13. Aging and Growing Old
 14. Gender and Literature, Part II
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Introduction to Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

The Live Course Calendar

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
Please go through materials in the order they are listed. Links may require your CougarNet username and password. If a link stops working, let me know!		
GETTING STARTED	• The Syllabus (revisit when necessary) • Read Me First (revisit when necessary) • Course Reader • The Live Sessions • Writing Center Bonus • Succeeding Asynchronously	
-W1- 8/24-8/30	<u>Women's Studies for Everybody</u> "Everyone wants to save the Muslim woman. Some want to put the hijab on me and save me; some want to take the hijab off me and save me; some want to bomb us to same me. Just give me a break man! I can save myself! I don't need Western imperialism to save me or Western feminism riding on the coattails of Western imperialism to save me. I can save myself." • Reader Chapter 1 • "Sorry Babe, You're a Feminist" • "How Microfeminism Can Uplift Women" • "Why Does Privilege Make People So Angry" • "There Is No Hierarchy Of Oppression" • "I Want a Dyke for President" • "Why Take Gender Studies Courses?" • Wadjda (UH Streaming) **Mark your calendar: Zoom Meet and Greet, Wednesday August 26, 7-8 PM CST	• First Day Quiz (8/29, 100% required to earn grades) • Course Folder (8/29, full credit required to earn grades) • Introductions (8/30, 1 bonus point)
-W2- 8/31-9/6	<u>Intersectionalities and Positionalities</u> "'Slut' is attacking women for their right to say yes. 'Friend zone' is attacking women for their right to say no. And 'bitch' is attacking women for their right to call you on it." • Reader Chapter 2 • "The Expectations of Men" • "Letter from Xem" • "Terms and (Starting) Definitions"	• The Live Sessions (Dr Pegoda)--response required unless attended live (9/5, 2 points)

	• "Intersectionality and Positionality Playlist" (optional) **Mark your calendar: Zoom Live Session, Monday, August 31, 7-8 PM CST	
-W3- 9/7-9/13	<u>Social Constructions of Sex and Gender</u> <i>"Fixing their hair, tanning, wearing perfume, and applying particular kinds and shades of makeup not only symbolize doing heterosexuality and femininity—practices that reproduce and naturalize the dominant cultural norms of heterosexuality—they symbolizing doing class as well, as the performers distance themselves from women who are 'ghetto looking.' By using their appearances to simultaneously do gender, heterosexuality, and class, these women increase their financial gains while at the same time conforming to, legitimating, and perpetuating dominant cultural ideals."</i> • Reader Chapter 3 • "Social Learning Theory" • "Baby X" • "What are TERFs?" • "Berkeley Professor Explains Gender Theory" • "Why I Couldn't Take Off My Hat" • "People Don't Talk About"	**Start Current Event Paper
-W4- 9/14-9/20	<u>Transgender: Myth vs Reality</u> <i>"What the hell does a woman's body possess that makes it a woman's body? What does it need to have to be female? Did you immediately think of breasts, ovaries, vaginas? Gross. Think about that for more than two minutes, and you'll see why it's gross. Still don't get it? Well, then go down to the nearest breast cancer walk and tell every single woman with a double mastectomy she's not a woman. When you're done with that, go down to your local hospital, ask the nurse where the OR is, and wait outside until you can find a woman fresh out of her hysterectomy and tell her the news. Yeah, that sounds evil, doesn't it? Well, it's basically what you're doing when you're policing trans women's bodies. You're telling all women, cis and trans, what they have to have on/in their bodies to be a woman. Which, obviously, is totally gross."</i> • Reader Chapter 4 • "A Letter to the Girl I Used to Be" • "Why Some Use She/They & He/They Pronouns" • "My Gender is Like an Empty Lot" **Mark your calendar: Zoom Live Session, Wednesday, September 16, 7-8 PM CST	• The Live Sessions (Gender and Dance Panel)--response required unless attended live (9/19, 2 points)
-W5- 9/21-9/27	<u>Gender and Literature, Part I</u> <i>"But somehow most people tend to make deeply personal decisions that magically align with thousands of years of forced traditions."</i> • Starting Points: Reading Film as Literature • Real Women Have Curves (UH Streaming) • "Marianismo"	• Test #1 (9/27, 10 points)
-W6- 9/28-10/4	<u>The Problem That Has No Name</u> <i>"Heteronormativity – the Histories and institutions and processes and performativities that normalize, privilege, 'naturalize,' perpetuate, and legitimize said normativity."</i>	**Suggestion: Schedule a visit with the Writing Center to discuss your Current

	• Reader Chapter 6 • "Shrinking Women" • "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun" • "Nina Simone - Mississippi Goddam"	Event Paper, see "Writing Center Bonus"
-W7- 10/5-10/11	<u>Feminism and Race</u> <i>"So many of the hot topics today, from socialism to cryptocurrencies to gender identity to polyamory, could simply be described as humanity waking up to the reality that our rules were written by dead people long before we got here, and that we are free to re-write them."</i> • Reader Chapter 7 • "I Married a Maasai and Moved to His Boma" • "Wrap My Hijab" • "Girl on Fire" • "Double Agent" • "Black Like Me" **Mark your calendar: Zoom Live Session, Tuesday, October 6, 7-8 PM CST	• The Live Sessions (Dr Munro)--response required unless attended live (10/10, 2 points) • Current Event Paper (10/11, 20 points)
-W8- 10/12-10/18	<u>Capitalism and Labor</u> <i>"When someone works for less pay than she can live on — when, for example, she goes hungry so that you can eat more cheaply and conveniently — then she has made a great sacrifice for you, she has made you a gift of some part of her abilities, her health, and her life. The 'working poor,' as they are approvingly termed, are in fact the major philanthropists of our society. They neglect their own children so that the children of others will be cared for; they live in substandard housing so that other homes will be shiny and perfect; they endure privation so that inflation will be low and stock prices high. To be a member of the working poor is to be an anonymous donor, a nameless benefactor, to everyone else."</i> • Reader Chapter 8 • "Third Place" (read first two sections) • "Opting Out?" • Capitalism and Labor Terms • Why Maternity Care Is Underpaid • "How Many Slaves Work For You?" • "At The Purchaser's Option"	
-W9- 10/19-10/25	<u>Children and Childhood</u> <i>"I woke myself up / Because we ain't got an alarm clock / Dug in the dirty clothes basket, / Cause ain't nobody washed my uniform / Brushed my hair and teeth in the dark, / Cause the lights ain't on / Even got my baby sister ready, / Cause my mama wasn't home. / Got us both to school on time, / To eat us a good breakfast. / Then when I got to class the teacher fussed / Cause I ain't got no pencil"</i> • Reader Chapter 9 • "Gay Moms Underground" • "Everywhere in the World They Hurt Little Black Girls" • "A Letter To My Ten Year-old Self" • "Boys in the Street" • "The Tale of Jenny & Screech (& Violet)" • "Hi Ren"	**Start the Ren Paper

	• "Why Mammals Suck" (optional)	
-W10- 10/26-11/1	<u>Countering Compulsory Heterosexuality</u> "Not 'queer' like 'gay.' 'Queer' like escaping definition. 'Queer' like escaping definition. 'Queer' like some sort of fluidity and limitlessness at once. 'Queer' like a freedom too strange to be conquered. 'Queer' like the fearlessness to imagine what love can look like...and pursue it." • Reader Chapter 10 • "Where Living With Friends Is Still Technically Illegal" • "Compulsory Gender Explained" • "I'm Queer, Not Gay. It Matters>" • "Another Beautiful Day" • "Money Game Part 3" **Mark your calendar: Zoom Live Session, Wednesday, October 28, 7-8 PM CST	• The Live Sessions (Karen Waxler)-- response required unless attended live (10/31, 2 points) • Test #2 (11/1, 10 points)
-W11- 11/2-11/8	<u>Psychological and Sexual Violence</u> "Stanford researchers surveyed 649 women incarcerated in California prisons for murder or manslaughter; 134 of them were convicted in the deaths of their partners. Of the women convicted in the deaths of their partners, 110 experienced domestic abuse in the year leading up to their offenses. In all, 80 of 110 were in extreme or severe danger in the year before their crimes." • Reader Chapter 13 (note, we're skipping around some) • "Powerful Transgender Poem" • "Carry That Weight" • "Birmingham" • "Rainbows in Gasoline" • "Turn On the Radio" • "People You May Know" • "Poem About My Rights" • "How Gisele Pelicot Pieced Together What Happened to Her" • "Gisèle Pelicot Gives Emotional Statement" **Mark your calendar: Zoom Live Session, Wednesday, November 4, 7-8 PM CST	• The Live Sessions (Prof. Fernandes)-- response required unless attended live (11/7, 2 points)
-W12- 11/9-11/15	<u>Healthcare: Abortion and Body Image</u> "It's wild to me that I can marry a random man today and give him health insurance but I can't provide my sister health insurance or my grandmother." • Reader Chapter 12 • "Do You Have An Eating Disorder?" • "Elephant" • "Not Your Barbie. Girl"	**Suggestion: Schedule a visit with the Writing Center to discuss your Ren Paper, see "Writing Center Bonus"
-W13- 11/16-11/22	<u>Aging and Growing Old</u> "At some point after you die, someone will think about you for the very last time, after which you will be forgotten forever." • Reader Chapter 14 • "Growing Up It Was Always Expected" • "20 Portraits of Trans Elders"	• Ren Paper (11/22, worth 25 points)

-W14- 11/23-11/29	<u>Gender and Literature, Part II, continued.</u> <i>"Here's to the people who's trauma did not give them thick skin. The ones who became more sensitive and insecure, who cry more easily, who get overwhelmed at small things. I'm so tired of the narrative that trauma makes you tough and untouchable. We're survivors, not superheroes."</i> • <i>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</i> (start - get this book on your own) Thanksgiving Break, 11/25-11/29	
-W15- 11/30-12/5	<u>Gender and Literature, Part II, continued.</u> • <i>I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter</i> (finish) **Mark your calendar: Zoom Live Session, Tuesday, December 1, 7-8 PM CST	• Test #3 (12/4, 10 points) • The Live Sessions (Matt Nightingale)-- response required unless attended live (12/5, 2 points) • Course Reflection (12/5, 13 points)

Dear class,

Welcome! Welcome! I'm Dr. Pegoda, and I'm glad you are here. I look forward to our time together.

To get started in this course, please complete the following in the order listed:

- Read the [Syllabus](#).
- Read the "First Day Addendum for Dr. Pegoda's Classes." (below)
- Take the [First Day Quiz](#) until you earn a 100%. If you haven't earned a full credit by the due date, you will be unable to advance in the class until doing so.
- Complete the [Course Folder](#) assignment. If you haven't earned a full credit by the due date, you will be unable to advance in the class until doing so. You'll get another opportunity if you miss a step the first time. I have to manually process submissions for the Course Folder, so please be patient after submitting. I'll be watching submissions closely.
- Read and study the [Live Course Calendar \(LCC\)](#) linked on the Canvas homepage. This setup is likely different from most college classes, but students say it's very effective. The LCC is extremely important. It lists all readings and assignments. This is the only place you should access readings and assignments. Everything in the class aside from my announcements and your grades is available through the LCC.

Whenever you have general questions or need to contact me, send me an email from your UH email account. Be sure to follow the guidelines of professionalism. My address is ajpegoda@central.uh.edu. I'm always glad to schedule a Zoom.

Note that we will have a Zoom meet and greet session on Wednesday, August 26, 7-8 p.m. CST. Please come in you have any questions or just want to say hi! Link forthcoming.

Sincerely,

Dr. Pegoda (and the Support Team!)

First Day Addendum for Dr. Pegoda's Classes

****The information herein is the kind of information we'd discuss together if we were together live**

discussing “first day” information and going over my expectations. It’s a bit long, but I want to be sure you have the necessary information to thrive.

Welcome to our *brave space*.

Students call me “Dr. Pegoda.” “Professor Pegoda” or “Professor” are also acceptable. I have been teaching since May 2007 and at the University of Houston since 2008. You can learn about my background by visiting <https://andrewpegoda.com>.

I’m glad you’re here. I know times are stressful and uncertain for many. My mission is to help facilitate your learning—and unlearning—and to provide opportunities for growth. I hope that we can all 1) appreciate “the learning worth crying about” (Dr. Michael Wesch); 2) understand the role of failure in learning (Professor Clint Tuttle); 3) own decisions and “become an active owner of [our] education” (Dr. Gabriela Diaz de Sabates); and 4) embrace “the emotional demands of college” (Dr. Andrew Joseph Pegoda). In sum, learn all that you can because they can never take that away. We’re going to nurture actual intelligence, not artificial intelligence. Thus, this AI is absolutely forbidden in this class.

Curiosity and a willingness to learn is vital. You will likely encounter views you find morally wrong and encounter persons and identities that are new, confusing, or uncomfortable. Please avoid agreeing or disagreeing. There are more sophisticated forms of engagement. For our purposes, we want to consider many different, different perspectives and think about how and why those exist. If we give respect to the thoughts that others offer (and consider intersectionalities and positionalities) we can learn and be more appreciative of our complex, nuanced world. Related, an important skill to learn in college is sometimes moving away from centering or referencing personal experience.

Note that I select content with education in mind. Materials might be excellent, terrible, new, or different. There should be no implied or assumed agreement between course content and myself. Covering every perspective on a given topic is not only impossible but irresponsible; thus, we cover a range I deem appropriate.

Further disclaimers especially for my WGSS classes.

Topics may include but are not limited to ableism, ageism, classism, colonialism, ethnocentrism, racism, and/or sexism, as well as death, murder, rape, and/or suicide and other forms of illness, trauma, and/or violence. Explicit, offensive, sensitive content, including language and nudity, may

appear. This list is not all-inclusive. Additional or specific warnings cannot be provided, as they make assumptions about what may harm (for example, Khan in *My Name is Khan* is greatly distressed by the color yellow) and as I cannot control what others may share. For some, such content may temporarily recall uncomfortable memories, and in more severe cases, content may trigger individuals. Students who are triggered may experience an extended flood of emotions that are difficult to regulate and that may make thinking rationally difficult. Being triggered/flooded could activate a flight, fright, or freeze reaction and can have physical manifestations. I am not a therapist and encourage you to consult with one, if needed. UH has on-call therapists available 24/7 at 713.743.5454. While studying, always feel free to take a break when/if needed. If you're interested in further details about nuances related to being a bit uncomfortable and then being triggered (by its correct, clinical, technical) definitions, see Dr. Melinda Wenner Moyer's piece "Are You 'Triggered' or Just Upset?" in the *New York Times*.

Some notes about college in general are in order, too.

Some think that since this isn't a STEM class, it won't be, can't be, or shouldn't be just as challenging. Remember that being a student is a job. Some also think that online classes will have less work than face-to-face classes. By law, all course formats are required to have equivalent workloads and to provide equivalent opportunities. You're paying the same price and earning the same credits, so it's only fair to have the similar responsibilities. If anything, online classes have *more* work because you are learning more independently.

There's also an alarming trend of students taking too many credits per semester. The traditional pathway was to take four or five classes in a regular semester (and one or two during the summer), while not doing any paid work or doing such on a very part-time basis. Now, students frequently attempt to take six classes in a regular semester (and three or four during the summer), while also holding down one or two jobs that demand 40-60 hours weekly. All before family responsibilities. This doesn't work well. If you're working full time, don't take an overload. To be successful in college, college must be a top priority. College is an investment in your future, your intellectual future most importantly. Sometimes investments require short-term sacrifices. For example, during the semester you might have to forgo some leisure activities to be successful.

College sometimes gets extra challenging for students. Note that anything shared concerning illness, safety, or wellness may be relayed to the appropriate office. I am a mandatory reporter if I learn about sexual violence that occurs by/to an enrolled student.

Some basic reminders and notes about the class.

This class is “Asynchronous Online.” Such, per the University, “do not meet face-to-face, and they do not have a regularly scheduled meeting time. Most of the class materials are available online at any time. Some asynchronous online classes may include virtual class meetings, which will be arranged on a class-by-class basis by the instructor.” In addition to weekly readings and assignments, this asynchronous class *does* include such virtual meetings in the form of Live Sessions and may also include a requirement to Zoom with me to discuss academic matters related to class. Dates for the live sessions are detailed on the Live Course Calendar (LCC). Please make every effort to attend these live, but if you cannot make it, there will be a recording and a short assignment to do

To succeed in online classes, you need a regular Windows or Apple computer. An iPad or iPhone (or similar) will not work. The Canvas App does not work correctly. A Chromebook will also not have the necessary power and functions to do everything. University policy [requires](#) that you have a regular laptop (or desktop) computer. Always contact UIT (University Information Technology) for help with anything computer related, not me. Cameras must be on during any virtual meetings and possibly during some assignments.

Speaking of the LCC from above. The LCC is the most important part of our Canvas shell, along with the Grades and Announcements tabs. This LCC is the only place you should access readings and assignments. You will encounter errors otherwise and will not have the necessary information to do well. If links ever stop working or become paywalled, let me know, and I'll fix it. When reading or watching the assigned material, take notes. These notes will help you with assignments. Take note of vocabulary, names, places, dates, stats, and the like. Chronology, significance, cause/effect are important, too. Songs are meant to be heard--so don't just look for the lyrics and read them. Songs and videos are meant to be watch on regular speed.

Test questions, essays, and other assignments must always show knowledge of course materials and be approached from such perspectives, so reading the material is absolutely essential.

Some notes about me and accommodations.

I am 40. I am a queer, crip (i.e., disabled), feminist scholar. I have neurofibromatosis and dozens of related conditions. I have had seven surgeries, so far(!); most recently a second brain surgery in January 2026. I take two dozen medications. I am dyslexic and neurodivergent. I have basically been in lockdown since March 2020, as SARS-CoV-2 continues its destruction, something I have written articles about. I was told by medical professionals long ago that my health posed too many obstacles to ever be a professor or even attend college. Yet, I have five college degrees, have countless publications, and am a professor.

Thus, I am committed to supporting equitable opportunities. You are encouraged to communicate access needs; please schedule a Zoom with me to do so. I know that the Medical Model of Disability doesn't always make healthcare accessible, safe, or comfortable. If you are registered with the Disability Center, let me know. As needed, you are charged with coordinating communication with the Disability Center. Every effort is made to follow these accommodations or appropriate and reasonable alternatives.

Some notes about communicating me with.

When you have a question or want to share something with me, please email. (Remember: I do not use Canvas Mail or Teams.) Depending on the message, I will reply directly to you, or I will address it in the next daily announcement. I will respond promptly (i.e., within 48 hours, excluding weekends/holidays), if the message is professional. Practice professionalism by sending messages from your UH email account and by including a subject, greeting (and addressing me by name) and sign-off with your full name, concise paragraphs, appropriate content, your student ID, and your class name. Emails should be written by you without any outsourcing to AI. When requesting an appointment, include all of the times you are available to expedite the process. Don't resend messages within minutes or hours or ask that I answer as soon as possible. Emails are triaged and answered according to relative importance (and according to the spoons I have available). Make sure to check your UH email regularly, and if you receive a direct email from me, please reply promptly.

Some notes recapping essential core requirements.

Commitment – Study every week. Three-credit college classes require around 180 hours across the semester, per UH and state/federal policies. If you work hard, you'll do well. If you make good-faith efforts to finish the class, you'll likely pass.

Writing – No AI. Written work must be in English and use appropriate capitalization, complete sentences, and paragraphs to earn credit. Give punctuation, grammar, and spelling due attention. Follow "Dr. Pegoda's Writing Rules." You are always expected to fully answer prompts with examples, analysis, and/or synthesis that explores who, what, when, where, how, and why. Further, except as otherwise noted, remember it's required to use the online version of Word provided in AccessUH for the entirety of written assignments—simply give files appropriate names and save them to your OneDrive Course Folder. This allows me to access a document's version history, as needed.

Instructions – Please read and follow them carefully. Not following instructions is the biggest thing

that frequently holds students back.

Materials – Most materials are provided. For this class, you need to buy or otherwise have access to *I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter*. It's college, so always allow for the possibility that you will need to spend small amounts on other supplies or materials.

Integrity – No cheating. No AI. No plagiarism. No shenanigans. Do your own work, and you'll be fine. Do note that unless otherwise noted, outside materials (i.e., that is materials not assigned to the entire class) are prohibited. You can and should always use course materials for assignments.

In addition, don't mass message the class, and don't make/join a group chat, such as GroupMe. This is because such spaces often foster cheating, bullying, and other behaviors that are not productive. You can use the Introductions activity and the UH Student Directory to contact one or two others in the class, if so desired. (As of Summer 2026, UH also specifically prohibits use of GroupMe and other means of communication outside the UH networks.)

Things you can do: You are always welcome to use course materials and your personal notes while completing graded work, including exams. Study groups are fine, too, just no more than two or three. You are encouraged to visit the Writing Center (<https://uh.edu/writing-center/>). For tutoring, student success workshops, or an academic coach, contact LAUNCH (<https://www.uh.edu/ussc/launch>). Both the Writing Center and LAUNCH offer services online and face-to-face. It's fine to have a friend or relative proofread work—provided they do not use any kind of AI or LLM and they only point out typos or areas in need of possible clarification. Of course, you can always reach out to me. I am happy to review assignments before you submit them for grading, but I need at least 48 hours (excluding weekends/holidays), and you need time to make any revisions.

Overall, my integrity policy underscores the importance of original, independent thinking and simply being truthful in all interactions with class. As Dr. David Smiley says, “[We] must state unequivocally that if you do not want to be formed in the classroom and be tested by the fires of critical thinking and academic rigor, then the University...is not the place for you.”

Some notes about grades.

Dr. Adam Grant writes, *“There’s a reason we award Olympic medals to the athletes who swim the fastest, not the ones who train the hardest. What counts is not sheer effort but the progress and performance that result. Motivation is only one of multiple variables in the achievement equation. Ability, opportunity, and luck count, too. Yes, you can get better at anything, but you can’t be great at everything. The ideal response to a disappointing grade is not to complain that your diligence wasn’t rewarded. It’s to*

ask how you could have [done better]...The true measure of learning is not the time and energy you put in. It's the knowledge and skills you take out."

Thus, grades are earned. Major writing assignments, projects, and open-ended questions on assessments are graded holistically according to the following general descriptions:

Assignments that earn the highest marks shine in original, creative, critical thinking and show serious engagement. Audiences read these works effortlessly when it comes to format, diction, grammar, mechanics, and spelling. Assignments follow instructions and go beyond minimum expectations. Work is interesting and engages with materials and makes use of examples, synthesis, and analysis, as appropriate. Sources are appropriately cited. Effort is not a factor. **In sum, "A" work is excellent.**

Assignments that earn the grade of "B" sometimes exist in an odd limbo. Generally, these assignments lack degrees of originality, analysis, and/or "correctness." Weaknesses might be present in the analysis and evidence or in the presentation of ideas. Such assignments tend to just do the assignment without anything special. **In sum, "B" work is good.**

Assignments that earn the grade of "C" tend to show disengagement. Analysis, organization, or prose lack sophistication due to generalizations, obvious statements, or already-established ideas. Submission lacks clear, personalized understanding of the topics. Work may appear rushed. Formatting might be on the sloppy side. **In sum, "C" work is satisfactory.**

Assignments scored at the "D" level typically show some very basic knowledge of some of the ideas at hand. Work might contain numerous factual or stylistic mistakes or might not follow the instructions. Work may show significant misunderstandings or partial understandings. Work may be incomplete. **In sum, "D" work is unsatisfactory.**

Assignments earn an "F" when serious gaps exist between submissions and expectations. Such work might be off-topic, show that important concepts have not been grasped, suggest that the student has guessed, have excessive stylistic mistakes, and/or be substantially incomplete. **In sum, "F" work is unacceptable.**

When you have questions about grades or feedback or if a mistake happened: first, take 24 hours to review and reflect upon your submission and class resources; and after this moratorium, second, please email me to schedule a Zoom. Grades will not be discussed by email. I am always glad to discuss improvement or correct a mistake. Don't use the Canvas "Comment" feature to communicate any thoughts or questions.

Once work is graded, focus on the future. DO NOT ask to re-do work. As above, assignments are open for large windows, there are numerous assignments, you can always receive feedback early, and UH offers its students many resources. Grades are always imperfect measurements—not indicators of worth—of your performance in the given contexts and goals of your life and the larger geopolitical realities we find ourselves in. When struggling, reach out early.

Grade bullying, per Professor Bridget Fernandes, is prohibited and is “when students ask for grades that have not been earned and/or place the blame for low grades on the professor.” Such unethical behavior is prohibited and can result in conduct sanctions. Specific examples of “grade bullying” or “grade grubbing” include when someone might fuss and (1) demand a higher grade, (2) suggest the grade earned will prevent graduation, law school, or a scholarship, (3) emphasize the time or effort used, (4) allude to other courses or programs with work considered more important, (5) reference past grades, or (6) say—after the fact—the assignment was confusing or too hard.