

Curriculum Department  
In the Fairfield Public Schools

**FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT

**GENDER PERSPECTIVES**

Board of Education Approved 01/22/2008

## **Gender Perspectives**

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this course is to develop more thoughtful readers and more effective writers as students explore male and female roles in literature and examine their own assumptions about gender that they bring to their reading and writing. This course provides a scholarly experience in reading and writing, which will prepare students for the academic work expected in college.

### **Audience**

Juniors and Seniors

### **Prerequisite**

For Seniors, completion of Junior English course. For Juniors, an addition to full-year English course

### **Design and Description**

Gender Perspectives is an English semester course, focusing on the analysis of the changing portrayal of gender roles in literature and film. Students will explore cultural assumptions about gender and read literary texts from multiple perspectives as they become familiar with literary theories concerning gender. Critical thinking, class discussions, and independent/field research are integral components of this course. Major assessments will consist of analytical and creative writing. In the fall, students will prepare for the college application process by writing a personal essay, which may be used as a college essay. In the spring, students will complete a senior English Independent Study Project.

### **Course Goals**

Students will learn to:

- examine traditional and contemporary male and female constructs.
- explore how gender is portrayed in novels, short stories, poetry, drama, myth, and non-fiction.
- explore gender roles in the culture through films, music, and the media.
- examine how popular culture creates and reinforces messages about gender.
- analyze personal assumptions.
- analyze existent societal power structures and how they operate within gender, class, sexual orientation, and race.
- write in inventive and analytical ways in order to expand and deepen ideas of identity.
- read print and visual texts from critical perspectives.
- explore and evaluate multiple perspectives in order to broaden one's own thinking.

### **Course Objectives**

Students will be able to:

Reading

- make critical distinctions among what gender, sex, sexuality, and gender identity mean and how the terms are often used.
- explore the history of feminism and gender studies.
- begin to recognize cultural and socially-situated assumptions regarding gender.
- explore contemporary debates about gender as a biological versus cultural construct.
- identify archetypal female and male images in film and discuss how such images pervade conscious and unconscious contemporary thought.
- examine how female and male archetypes transcend cultural and historical boundaries and influence contemporary assumptions.
- collect and analyze cultural artifacts (music lyrics, advertisements, clothing, and toys/entertainment) in order to understand the power and pervasiveness of socially constructed ideas about gender.
- evaluate various perspectives in contemporary scholarly thought about race, class, gender, and sexual orientation as they read and discuss nonfiction essays, articles, and other short texts.
- deconstruct how traditional archetypes in literature and image portray gender identity.
- collect and analyze images (media, advertising, photography) to deconstruct how power is enacted on individual identity.
- explore the complexity of identity (race, socioeconomic status, religion, family composition, and sexual orientation), using nonfiction essays and artifacts.
- analyze how language, including syntax and diction, demonstrate gender and assumptions about gender.
- apply contemporary gender to readings in order to understand and be open to multiple perspectives.
- begin to develop their own ideology based on theories explored in the course.

#### Writing

- articulate (through writing and discussion) how their gender identity has been shaped by individual experience.
- conduct field research (interviews, observations) in order to see how identity issues were enacted in their everyday lives.
- use language effectively to convey the personal meaning derived from life events.
- organize thinking for audience.
- use a strong and consistent voice in writing.
- interpret themes and evaluate ideas which the texts offer in writing.
- explore, research, and present analysis of a contemporary icon.
- research literary theory.
- integrate research on literary theory in writing.
- define and/or reconstruct their own identity through a re-definition paper.
- recognize the relationship between their own shifting consciousness regarding gender identity and its cultural implications.
- apply theory to the research and writing process.
- begin to develop their own ideology based on theories explored in the course.

- write in varied styles and structures in order to mirror complex, paradoxical, and original ideas.
- craft, through (re)imagination, a (fairy) tale exploring a deepened sense of self.

#### Collaboration

- articulate (through writing and discussion) how their gender identity has been shaped by individual experience.

#### Senior English Independent Study Project

- brainstorm possible questions to explore.
- determine personal question to explore.
- identify sources for research such as people to interview and texts to read.
- research their question through multiple sources.
- decide format for presentation, utilizing oral, written, visual, and/or technological components for effectiveness.
- determine audience.
- organize research for audience.
- write first draft.
- revise for audience.
- present project.

#### Skill Objectives

Students will:

- revise for redundancy and wordiness.
- recognize and avoid exaggeration.
- avoid sentence sprawl.
- revise for sentence variety.
- consider stylistic choices, such as beginning a sentence with a conjunction and the use of sentence fragments for emphasis.
- recognize and use gerunds and participles.
- avoid misplaced modifiers.
- avoid misplaced modifiers.
- use adverbial connectives for emphasis and transition.
- punctuate adverbial connectives, using a semi-colon and a comma with transitions such as therefore and however.
- use dash and ellipses.
- punctuate quotations within quotations, using single quotation marks.

#### State of Connecticut English Language Arts Standards

*Reading and Responding - Students read, comprehend and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts in both print and multimedia formats.*

**Students select and apply strategies to facilitate word recognition and develop vocabulary in order to comprehend text.**

Students will analyze the meaning of words and phrases in context.

*Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.*

**Students recognize and appreciate that contemporary and classical literature has shaped human thought.**

Students will discuss, analyze and evaluate how characters deal with the diversity of human experience and conflict.

Students will compare/contrast and evaluate ideas, themes and/or issues across classical and contemporary texts.

Students will create responses to texts and examine each work's contributions to an understanding of human experience across cultures.

**Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural and historical contexts.**

Students will analyze and evaluate the basic beliefs, perspectives and assumptions underlying an author's work.

Students will discuss how the experiences of a reader influence the interpretation of a text.

Students will interpret, analyze and evaluate the influence of culture, history and ethnicity on themes and issues in literature.

*Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

**Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.**

Students will use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

Students will write to delight in the imagination.

**Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.**

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

Students will research information from multiple sources for a specific purpose.

Students will publish and/or present final products in a myriad of ways, including the use of the arts and technology.

***Applying English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.***

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### **Information and Technology Standards (to be added)**

#### **Essential Questions**

- How do we understand what we read?
- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

#### **Focus Questions**

- How are terms such as gender, sex, sexuality, gender identity, and feminism used and misused in today's society?
- What is the value of engaging in gender studies?
- What forces have been instrumental in shaping my own gender identity?
- How do historical iconic figures reveal, establish, and perpetuate ideas about what it means to be male or female?
- In what ways do historically embedded stereotypes of men and women replicate themselves in popular culture?
- What is the nature of identity?
- What effect does social/historical context and personal experience (race, socioeconomic status, religion, family, and sexual orientation) have on individual perception and enactment of gender roles?
- How have stereotypes about maleness and femaleness come to exist, and what is their effect today?
- What role do perceptions about gender play in the construction of power hierarchies (social institutions, business, politics, religion, personal relationships, and family dynamics) in today's society?
- How do messages about gender identity legitimize power and privilege?
- To what extent are we, as individuals, complicit in reinforcing the messages that maintain existent power structures?
- To what extent are we, as individuals, manipulated by the messages that maintain existent power structures?
- How does literature replicate, create, and reinforce images about maleness and femaleness?

- How do contemporary theories help us to read in more critical and complex ways?
- How can language and genre perpetuate notions about gender?
- How is the nature of identity not only individual and complex but also in flux?
- How do imagination and writing allow one to envision and shape one's selfhood?
- To what extent are we free to shape ourselves within cultural paradigms?
- To what extent are society and the individual defined, challenged, and inspired by each other?
- How do portrayals of maleness and femaleness inspire new insights?
- What are the potential benefits of scholarly research and writing in analyzing texts, images, and/or contemporary issues?
- How can playing with language and genre allow us to explore and realize new and different ideas?

## UNITS of STUDY

### Unit 1: Introduction to Language, History, and Purpose of Gender Studies

#### English Language Arts Standards

*Reading and Responding - Students read, comprehend and respond in individual, literal, critical and evaluative ways to literary, informational and persuasive texts in both print and multimedia formats.*

**Students select and apply strategies to facilitate word recognition and develop vocabulary in order to comprehend text.**

Students will analyze the meaning of words and phrases in context.

*Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.*

**Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural and historical contexts.**

Students will interpret, analyze and evaluate the influence of culture, history and ethnicity on themes and issues in literature.

#### Essential Questions

- How do we understand what we read?
- How does literature enrich our lives?

#### Focus Questions

- How are terms such as gender, sex, sexuality, gender identity, and feminism used and misused in today's society?
- What is the value of engaging in gender studies?
- What forces have been instrumental in shaping my own gender identity?

#### Core Topic

- Cultural Assumptions about Gender

#### Unit Objectives

Students will be able to:

- make critical distinctions among what gender, sex, sexuality, and gender identity mean and how the terms are often used.
- explore the history of feminism and gender studies.
- begin to recognize cultural and socially-situated assumptions regarding gender.
- articulate (through writing and discussion) how their gender identity has been shaped by individual experience.
- explore contemporary debates about gender as a biological versus cultural construct.

**Assessments**

Begin memoir/memoirs, exploring their own experience developing gender identity

**Pacing**

2 weeks

## **Unit 2: Influences on Gender: Icons, Archetypes, and Historical Contexts**

### **English Language Arts Standards**

*Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.*

**Students recognize and appreciate that contemporary and classical literature has shaped human thought.**

Students will compare/ contrast and evaluate ideas, themes and/or issues across classical and contemporary texts.

**Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural and historical contexts.**

Students will analyze and evaluate the basic beliefs, perspectives and assumptions underlying an author's work.

Students will discuss how the experiences of a reader influence the interpretation of a text.

Students will interpret, analyze and evaluate the influence of culture, history and ethnicity on themes and issues in literature.

*Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

**Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.**

Students will use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

**Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.**

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

*Applying English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.*

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### **Essential Questions**

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

### **Focus Questions**

- How do historical iconic figures reveal, establish, and perpetuate ideas about what it means to be male or female?
- In what ways do historically embedded stereotypes of men and women replicate themselves in popular culture?
- What is the nature of identity?
- What effect does social/historical context and personal experience (race, socioeconomic status, religion, family, and sexual orientation) have on individual perception and enactment of gender roles?

### **Core Topics**

- Female and Male Archetypes
- Memoir (college essay)
- Exploratory Essay

### **Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- identify archetypal female and male images in film and discuss how such images pervade conscious and unconscious contemporary thought.
- examine how female and male archetypes transcend cultural and historical boundaries and influence contemporary assumptions.
- collect and analyze cultural artifacts (music lyrics, advertisements, clothing, and toys/entertainment) in order to understand the power and pervasiveness of socially constructed ideas about gender.
- evaluate various perspectives in contemporary scholarly thought about race, class, gender, and sexual orientation as they read and discuss nonfiction essays, articles, and other short texts.
- conduct field research (interviews, observations) in order to see how identity issues were enacted in their everyday lives.
- use language effectively to convey the personal meaning derived from life events.
- organize thinking for audience.
- use a strong and consistent voice in writing.
- interpret themes and evaluate ideas which the texts offer in writing.

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- revise for redundancy and wordiness.
- recognize and avoid exaggeration.
- avoid sentence sprawl.
- revise for sentence variety.

### **Assessments**

- Memoir/memoirs/College Essay
- Collection of creative works (poetry, creative nonfiction, fiction) that challenge and play with individual assumptions about gender and identity
- Exploratory Essay

### **Pacing**

6 weeks

### **Unit 3: Deconstructing Images that Replicate, Create, and Reinforce**

#### **English Language Arts Standards**

*Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.*

**Students recognize and appreciate that contemporary and classical literature has shaped human thought.**

Students will discuss, analyze and evaluate how characters deal with the diversity of human experience and conflict.

Students will compare/ contrast and evaluate ideas, themes and/or issues across classical and contemporary texts.

**Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural and historical contexts.**

Students will analyze and evaluate the basic beliefs, perspectives and assumptions underlying an author's work.

Students will discuss how the experiences of a reader influence the interpretation of a text.

Students will interpret, analyze and evaluate the influence of culture, history and ethnicity on themes and issues in literature.

*Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

**Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.**

Students will use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

**Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.**

Students will research information from multiple sources for a specific purpose.

*Applying English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.*

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### **Essential Questions**

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

### **Focus Questions**

- How have stereotypes about maleness and femaleness come to exist, and what is their effect today?
- What role do perceptions about gender play in the construction of power hierarchies (social institutions, business, politics, religion, personal relationships, and family dynamics) in today's society?
- How do messages about gender identity legitimize power and privilege?
- To what extent are we, as individuals, complicit in reinforcing the messages that maintain existent power structures?
- To what extent are we, as individuals, manipulated by the messages that maintain existent power structures?
- How does literature replicate, create, and reinforce images about maleness and femaleness?
- How do contemporary theories help us to read in more critical and complex ways?
- How can language and genre perpetuate notions about gender?

### **Core Topics**

- Gender Theory
- Research Paper

### **Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- deconstruct how traditional archetypes in literature and image portray gender identity.
- collect and analyze images (media, advertising, photography) to deconstruct how power is enacted on individual identity.
- explore, research, and present analysis of a contemporary icon.
- explore the complexity of identity (race, socioeconomic status, religion, family composition, and sexual orientation), using nonfiction essays and artifacts.
- research literary theory about gender.
- integrate research on literary theory about gender in their writing.
- analyze how language, including syntax and diction, demonstrate gender and assumptions about gender.
- apply contemporary gender theory to readings in order to understand and be open to multiple perspectives.

Senior English Independent Study Project

- brainstorm possible questions to explore.
- determine personal question to explore.
- identify sources for research such as people to interview and texts to read.
- research their question through multiple sources.

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- avoid misplaced modifiers.
- use adverbial connectives for emphasis and transition.
- punctuate adverbial connectives, using a semi-colon and a comma with transitions such as therefore and however.

### **Assessments**

Research Paper on a contemporary issue

Presentation and analysis of contemporary icons

### **Pacing**

6 weeks

## **Unit 4: Defining, Empowering, and Restructuring Ourselves and Culture through Awareness**

### **English Language Arts Standards**

*Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.*

**Students recognize and appreciate that contemporary and classical literature has shaped human thought.**

Students will compare/ contrast and evaluate ideas, themes and/or issues across classical and contemporary texts.

Students will create responses to texts and examine each work's contributions to an understanding of human experience across cultures.

**Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural and historical contexts.**

Students will analyze and evaluate the basic beliefs, perspectives and assumptions underlying an author's work.

Students will discuss how the experiences of a reader influence the interpretation of a text.

Students will interpret, analyze and evaluate the influence of culture, history and ethnicity on themes and issues in literature.

*Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

**Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.**

Students will write to delight in the imagination.

**Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.**

Students will publish and/or present final products in a myriad of ways, including the use of the arts and technology.

*Applying English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.*

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### **Essential Questions**

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

### **Focus Questions**

- How is the nature of identity not only individual and complex but also in flux?
- How do imagination and writing allow one to envision and shape one's selfhood?
- To what extent are we free to shape ourselves within cultural paradigms?
- To what extent are society and the individual defined, challenged, and inspired by each other?
- How do portrayals of maleness and femaleness inspire new insights?
- What are the potential benefits of scholarly research and writing in analyzing texts, images, and/or contemporary issues?
- How can playing with language and genre allow us to explore and realize new and different ideas?

### **Core Topics**

- Gender Identity
- Fairy Tale

### **Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- define and/or reconstruct their own identity through a re-definition paper.
- recognize the relationship between their own shifting consciousness regarding gender identity and its cultural implications.
- apply theory to the research and writing process.
- begin to develop their own ideology based on theories explored in the course.
- write in varied styles and structures in order to mirror complex, paradoxical, and original ideas.
- craft, through (re)imagination, a (fairy) tale exploring a deepened sense of self.

Senior English Independent Study Project

- decide format for presentation, utilizing oral, written, visual, and/or technological components for effectiveness.
- determine audience.
- organize research for audience.
- write first draft.
- revise for audience.
- present project.

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- use dash and ellipses.
- punctuate quotations within quotations, using single quotation marks.

**Assessments**

Fairytale

**Pacing**

4 weeks

**Texts such as:**

**Unit 1**

Various short texts such as,  
“Hills Like White Elephants” Hemmingway  
“The Chase” Annie Dillard

**Unit 2**

*The Searchers* (John Wayne film)  
*Some Like it Hot* (Marilyn Monroe film)  
*A Streetcar Named Desire*  
*A Doll’s House*  
(or film and literature selections that show historical context and stereotypes)  
Various nonfiction essays, historical documents, and other short texts

**Unit 3**

*Killing Us Softly 3: Advertising’s Image of Women*  
*Tough Guise: Violence, Media, and the Crisis in Masculinity* (abridged version)  
Documentary on a contemporary icon or issue  
Numerous and various nonfiction essays and other short texts and artifacts, such as,  
“Advertising and the Construction of Violent White Masculinity” Katz  
“Madonna: Plantation Mistress or Soul Sister?” bell hooks  
Excerpts from The Rules Fein and Schneider  
“Call Me Ms.” Ann Coulter  
“The Back Page” bell hooks  
“The Myth About Boys” David Von Drehle  
“How to be a Good Wife”  
“A Pop Quiz on Marriage” Stephanie Coontz  
“Correction: It’s a Human Movement” Joan Chittister  
“What’s a Modern Girl to Do?” Maureen Dowd

**Unit 4**

*Their Eyes Were Watching God* or *Eva Luna*  
Short works of fiction and nonfiction, such as,  
Excerpts from *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*  
“Fat Is Not a Fairy Tale” Jane Yolen  
“Some Day My Prince Will Come” Marcia K. Liberman  
“Cinderella” Olga Broumas  
“The Canary Prince” Italo Calvino