

# Syllabus: WMST 30095 – Special Topics – THE ESSENTIAL WORK OF WOMEN/PANDEMIC 2020-21: REVIEWING AND REVALUING SITUATIONS Spring 2021



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Delivery: 100% Online

## Course Information

### Course Introduction

We have a challenge before us: a set of key words that are not as simple as they might, on the face of them, appear. Each of the words is a word that stretches: You could say, *bends before breaking*. And rather remarkably, the each of words suggests something both right smack in front of us in plain sight and something hidden, silent, tucked into the world, time and life itself.

There is no single right way to study our topic; we know this. However, there might very well be a right and necessary attitude. Karen Barad's masterwork, *Meeting the Universe halfway*, exudes that attitude. In her book, she sketches a way of study: daring to engage the unknown, not by demanding that it come to us, but by going to it. We share her sense of possibility: if we answer the invitation to inquire and learn, the Universe might very well meet us halfway. It is, after all, a place of quantum entanglements., meeting halfway. Our subjects of study converge at the intersection of ordinary and extraordinary.

### Course Description

This course is comprised of five modules of study (These are spelled out below) that aim to discover truths laid bare by unprecedented events of our lifetime. Granted there are a few folks like [Angelina Friedman](#) or [Mildred Schappals](#) or sisters [Anna and Helen](#) for whom a pandemic is preceded, but quite possible they've not lived yet through an insurrection, so

there's that 😊. Our course has two vital thrusts: to observe and understand what we can of women's essential work—through several lenses, the first being “here and now”—and to reconsider and re-evaluate working women's situatedness in the real world.

### Course Aims

This course, by design, refuses to hold court on women or their work. Instead, this course has as its first, most needful aim: to see women—and the work of women—clearly in the light granted by worldwide emergency—virus, lockdown, upheaval. Beyond sight lies comprehension: the terms and conditions of what all fits into the category of *women's work*. And has anything been left out of that category? Our culminating aim is to analyze, compare, contrast and critique—according to our fresh observations, our conversations and the application of suitable frames, theories, perspectives.

### Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course. And this course does not presume you have prior knowledge on our subjects.

### Course Objectives

By the end of this course, you should be able to do the following:

- Articulate the situatedness of work, of women and of crises.
- Evaluate what makes ‘the essential work’ of humankind so necessary and how/why it is.
- Contextualize and critique socio-political narratives about women
- Troubleshoot “business as usual” as illuminated by pandemics and other disruptions.
- Reconsider and revalue women, women's work and the ways our culture has personalized and politicized sex, gender and other aspects of identity
- Discuss your perspectives with others, enabling adjustments to all parties' points of view
- Express convictions regarding our subjects

### Learning Materials

**The course runs on Blackboard (learn.kent.edu)**

**Your learning materials can all be found on Blackboard within each module folder.**

Modules will not close, but, as a resource for further consultation, they'll remain open.

### Preview of Course—including sample links

**Module 1** Our Portal: A Pandemic

- 1) Revelations from 2020-21
- 2) Barest Bones: A Stripped-down and Essential Scheme of Things
- 3) The Work that keeps the World Running: Coverage

**Module 2** Women and Work: Backstories

- 1) Sweeps through Time  
<https://www.brookings.edu/essay/the-history-of-womens-work-and-wages-and-how-it-has-created-success-for-us-all/>

- 2) Contexts: Embedded and Situated Working Lives

- 3) Dictates and Counter-Dictates: Legacies of Words

**Module 3** Crucial Cases: Keys to Human Handling of Women, Work, *Women's Work*

- 1) Hardship: Revisiting Sojourner Truth, Mother Jones and NewYorkCity's Immigrant Women Bodies and Servitude, Physicality and Labor: The Strong and the Weak, Family, Factory, Field

<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2001/05/mother-jones-woman/>

Foner, N. (1999). Immigrant Women and Work in New York City, Then and Now. *Journal of American Ethnic History*, 18(3), 95-113. Retrieved January 12, 2021, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/27502451>

- 2) Women and War: Wartime, warzones, the work women do

~Virginia Hall: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BJFQcB781Uo> (Sonia Purcell)

~Striking Women: <https://www.striking-women.org/module/women-and-work/world-war-i-1914-1918> ; <https://www.striking-women.org/module/women-and-work/world-war-ii-1939-1945> ; <https://www.striking-women.org/module/women-and-work/world-war-ii-1939-1945>

3) Underlings, Outliers, and Sentimentalized she-ros: Invisible workloads, cultural hypocrisies  
Studies in HOUSEKEEPING, ChildCare, SexWork, Nurture and Support

**Module 4** Feminism and Women's Work Models: "Children, Kitchen, Church" and such—Helpers and Helping Professions vs. Women in Charge

- 1) The Issue of Names and TAGS: 'Women's Professions'—and the tension between empowerment and oppression
- 2) Math Trouble—STATS: Numbers Don't Tell Why: What Women Choose
- 3) Fighting Windmills? SYSTEMS and OPERATIONS: TopDown, BottomUp, Majority/Minority, Manmade, Womanmade, Joint

Durham, Christine M. (1985) "Women and the Helping Professions: A Judicial View," Issues in Religion and Psychotherapy: Vol. 11 : No. 1 , Article 6. Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/irp/vol11/iss1/6>

**Module 5** Reconsidering and Reevaluating

An Inductive Approach: Amy Acton, Gretchen Whitmer, Stacey Abrams

A Conversational Approach: All the President's Women; Gender & press, media, internet influence

A Critically Analytical Approach: Comparative Studies—Women's Work juxtaposed

Because we use Blackboard to deliver Materials and Assignments, you'll need the following.

## Technology Requirements and Skills

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### Computer Hardware and Software

Students new to Kent State University should review Information Service's Technology Viewbook (link available in the Preparing your computer section of the Getting Started in Your Online Course link within the Start Here folder). A personal computer with consistent, reliable Internet access is required:

1. A DSL or cable connection to the Internet; dial-up is not sufficient.
2. Laptop or desktop computer with a minimum of a 2 GHz processor and 2 GB of RAM

You should have one of the following computer operating systems and additional software applications installed on your computer:

1. Windows 7 system operating software or newer for PC computers OR Mac OS X 10.6 or newer for Apple Mac computers.
2. Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint) discounts available at The Microsoft Store, link available in the Preparing your computer section of the Getting Started in Your Online Course link within the Start Here folder.
3. A free version of Microsoft Office is available for students. Instructions and information can be found on [support.kent.edu](http://support.kent.edu).
4. Antivirus for Windows OS, [Microsoft Security Essentials](#) OR Antivirus for Mac OS, [Sophos](#)
5. A Blackboard Learn compatible browser, such as the latest version of Mozilla Firefox. Blackboard also supports Chrome and Safari. **Internet Explorer is NOT a supported browser and should not be used.**

### Technology Skills

The following fundamental technological skills are necessary for your success in this course: navigating a computer operating system, launching and quitting applications, connecting to the Internet, using a web browser to search the World Wide Web, downloading, saving, and uploading files, and sending and replying to email. You will also need to be proficient in using MS Word and working with files in various formats.

### Blackboard (Bb) Learn

This class will use Blackboard (Bb) Learn, the official learning management system (LMS) used by Kent State University to deliver course materials to university students. ALL course materials and activities will take place in Bb Learn.

In order to login to the online Bb Learn LMS, students will need a Kent State FlashLine User Name ID and password. Students can login to Bb Learn either through a student FlashLine account or via a direct link to the login page: <https://learn.kent.edu>

For help using the Blackboard (Bb) Learn system use the "Bb Learn Tutorials for Students" link in the main navigation of your course. In general, Bb Learn works best using the latest version of most major web browsers, including Firefox, Chrome, and Safari.

### Technology Help Guidelines

- A. **30-Minute Rule:** When you encounter struggles with technology, give yourself 30 minutes to 'figure it out.' If you cannot, then post a message to the discussion board; your peers may have suggestions to assist you. You are also directed to contact the KSU Helpdesk 24/7.

As a last resort, contact me. However, do not expect an immediate reply, and I cannot guarantee that I will be able to help with any and all technology issues.

- B. When posting or sending email requesting help with technology issues, whether to the Helpdesk or me, use the following guidelines:
1. Include a descriptive title for the subject field that includes 1) the name of course 2) the issue. Do NOT just simply type "Help" into the subject field or leave it blank.
  2. List the steps or describe the circumstance that preceded the technical issue or error. Include the exact wording of the error message.
  3. When possible, always include a screenshot(s) demonstrating the technical issue or error message.
  4. Also include what you have already tried to do to remedy the issue (rebooting, trying a different browser, etc.).

## Policies and Expectations

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### Attendance Policy

Regular attendance is expected and required.

Students who anticipate an absence due to technical or medical reasons should consult with the instructor individually. An absence due to illness or injury requires verification from a medical professional and should be presented to the instructor.

### Communication Policy

1. Email course questions and personal concerns, including grading questions, to me privately using your @kent.edu email. Do NOT submit posts of a personal nature to the discussion board.
2. Email will be checked at least twice per day Monday through Friday; Saturday and Sunday, email is checked once per day. During the week, I will respond to all emails within 24 hours; on weekends and holidays, allow up to 48 hours. If there are special circumstances that will delay my response, I will make an announcement to the class.
3. General Course Questions discussion boards will be checked once per day Monday through Friday; Saturday and Sunday, these discussion boards will be checked once per day.
4. For questions related to technology, please contact: 330-672-HELP for 24/7 support.

### Online Student Conduct and (N)etiquette

Communicating appropriately in both LIVE, face-to-face classrooms and in the online classroom can be challenging. In order to minimize this challenge, it is important to remember several points of collegial etiquette as well as "internet etiquette" that will smooth communication for both students and instructors: In the LIVE face-to-face classroom, no phones. No profanity. Please observe start-and finish times (If you need to come late, leave early, please notify me.)

1. **Read first, Write later.** Read the ENTIRE set of posts/comments on a discussion board before posting your reply, in order to prevent repeating commentary or asking questions that have already been answered.
2. **Avoid language that may come across as strong or offensive.** Language can be easily misinterpreted in written electronic communication. Review email and discussion board posts BEFORE submitting. Humor and sarcasm may be easily misinterpreted by your reader(s). Try to be as matter-of-fact and professional as possible.
3. **Follow the language rules of the Internet.** Do not write using all capital letters, because it will appear as shouting. Also, the use of emoticons can be helpful when used to convey nonverbal feelings. ☺
4. **Consider the privacy of others.** Ask permission prior to giving out a classmate's email address or other information.
5. **Keep attachments small.** If it is necessary to send pictures, change the size to an acceptable 250kb or less (there are several programs you can use to do this such as: Photoshop, Paint, GIMP, and picesize.com).
6. **No inappropriate material.** Do not forward virus warnings, chain letters, jokes, etc. to classmates or instructors. The sharing of pornographic material is forbidden.

**NOTE:** *The instructor reserves the right to remove posts that are not collegial in nature and/or do not meet the Online Student Conduct and Etiquette guidelines listed above.*

### University Use of Electronic Email

A university-assigned student e-mail account is the official university means of communication with all students at Kent State University. Students are responsible for all information sent to them via their university-assigned e-mail account. If a student chooses to forward information in their university e-mail account, he or she is responsible for all information, including attachments, sent to any other e-mail account. To stay current with university information,

students are expected to check their official university e-mail account and other electronic communications on a frequent and consistent basis. Recognizing that some communications may be time-critical, the university recommends that electronic communications be checked minimally twice a week.

## Assignments and Grades

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### Attendance and Participation/Discussion.

(Initial Posts and Replies—our virtual conversation—pursuing prompts)

### Notebooks

Each of the 5 modules will contain a notebook that will include a prompt for contemplation and reflection – for your eyes only, as if in a private notebook, diary or journal. Your entry should provide an articulate and pertinent answer to the provided topic. It should be at least two well-developed paragraphs (approximately 6-8 sentences or more per paragraph).

### Final Essay

Your final “project” will be a personal essay.

### Assessment and Grading Feedback

Grades and feedback on notebook entries will generally be available in the Grade Center within 3-4 days upon their completion.

The Final Essay will be graded by the end of our term.

### Late and Make-up Work Policy

Late work will only be accepted with instructor approval. Circumstances that warrant consideration for late work include university recognized absences such as illness and injury, or a death in the immediate family. **DO ASK ME.** Any work submitted late with instructor consultation or under university absence policy will be assigned full or partial credit. I'll use my considerable discretion ☺

### Grading Scale.....

**Work is assessed as follows: Online participation on BB—Discussion 40% Notebook 40% Final Essay 20%**

| Percentage of Earned Points | Grade |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| 94% - 100%                  | A     |
| 90% - less than 94%         | A-    |
| 87% - less than 90%         | B+    |
| 84% - less than 87%         | B     |
| 80% - less than 84%         | B-    |
| 77% - less than 80%         | C+    |
| 74% - less than 77%         | C     |
| 70% - less than 74%         | C-    |
| 67% - less than 70%         | D+    |
| 64% - less than 67%         | D     |
| Under 64%                   | F     |

## University Policies

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Students are required to be aware of and follow all general and academic policies established by Kent State University. A list of the general academic policies is listed on the Kent State University Policy Register, which can be found in the **University policies section** of the Getting Started in Your Online Course link within the Start Here folder. Specific policies related to the successful completion of this online course can be located and reviewed in your Blackboard Learn course.

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### Students with Disabilities

University policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through Student Accessibility Services (contact 330-672-3391 or visit [www.kent.edu/sas](http://www.kent.edu/sas) for more information on registration procedures).

The Blackboard accessibility statement can be found in the **University policies section** of the Getting Started in Your Online Course link within the Start Here folder.

### Course Enrollment and Withdrawal

University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Students who are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines should not be attending classes and will not receive credit or a grade for the course. Each student must confirm enrollment by checking his/her class schedule (using Student Tools in FlashLine) prior to the deadline indicated.

If registration errors are not corrected by this date and you continue to attend and participate in classes for which you are not officially enrolled, you are advised now that you will not receive a grade at the conclusion of the semester for any class in which you are not properly registered. Also, it is your responsibility to check the withdrawal dates for each semester.

Every class has its own schedule of deadlines and considerations. To view the add/drop schedule and other important dates for this class, go to Student > Resources > Courses and Registration in FlashLine. Choose View or Print Course Schedule and Purchase Textbooks. To see the deadlines for this course, click on the CRN. The add/drop schedule and important dates may also be found on the Drop or Add a Course link. Click on the green clock next to the course under Registration Deadlines.

### Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

Students enrolled in the university, at all its campuses, are to perform their academic work according to standards set by faculty members, departments, schools and colleges of the university; and cheating and plagiarism constitute fraudulent misrepresentation for which no credit can be given and for which appropriate sanctions are warranted and will be applied.

For more information see the Kent State policy on plagiarism in the **University policies section** of the Getting Started in Your Online Course link within the Start Here folder.

## Subject to Change Statement

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The syllabus and course schedule may be subject to change. Changes will be communicated via email or the Blackboard Learn announcement tool. It is the responsibility of students to check email messages and course announcements to stay current in their online courses.