

# Teaching Portfolio

Submitted to the Graduate School for Consideration for the 2022 Excellence in Teaching Award

## Elise Robinson

PhD Candidate

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UNIVERSITY OF  
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## Letter of Nomination

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11 January 2022

Dear Colleagues:

On behalf of the Institute for Women's Studies, it is my great pleasure to nominate Ms. Elise Robinson for the Excellence in Teaching Award. Elise has taught for IWS since 2018. She is a passionate and accomplished classroom instructor. She is dedicated to teaching her students to see opportunities for learning inside as well as outside the classroom, and indeed, has been instrumental in creating such opportunities in our community.

Elise is pursuing a PhD in Theatre and Film Studies and has already completed a Certificate in Women's Studies. Before she began teaching for us, Elise was a student in two of my graduate seminars. I found her to be a deeply prepared, enthusiastic and inquisitive learner. She brought our courses to life with her incisive observations. She has an amazing capacity to bring out the best in others, and she engaged her classmates with interest and respect. I suspected—and as it turns out I was correct—that these were capacities she would also bring to her own teaching.

Indeed, Elise came to us with many years of teaching experience in a range of settings. For IWS, she has taught at least nine sections of Introduction to Women's Studies. She is so effective in the classroom that we also entrusted her to teach several sections of our advanced Critical Readings course, and this semester, she is teaching our new Intro to LGBTQ course. Students adore Elise and find her courses life changing. Qualitative comments from her courses include observations like the following:

“Elise Robinson was far and away the best instructor I have ever had. She was extremely smart and gracious, she liberated me and my ability to see injustices. She changed my daily life by encouraging a healthy and positive image of oneself. She is an excellent educator and a positive force; she truly exemplifies what all educators and people in positions of power should be.”

“One of the greatest strengths and most important parts of her character was her ability to make everyone feel welcomed and acknowledged. It can be hard to be someone that has a different background or unique story than the majority of the class. My instructor made people feel like their unique perspectives were always important and even essential to class discussion.”

Elise works hard to connect with students, to help them connect to one another, and to engender in them a deep connection to the course material and the world around them. She succeeds in these efforts in part by involving her students in incredibly creative classroom activities and assignments—you will see evidence of these in her teaching portfolio. Her creativity and risk-taking as an instructor are an inspiration to me; she motivates me to challenge myself to take similar risks, and to see the world anew through my students' eyes each semester.

As excellent as she is as an instructor, Elise's work as a teacher extends far beyond the confines of the classroom. At the individual level, she mentors students, writing letters for them, connecting them with resources in our community. And at the collective level, she has shaped our community through her participation in dramatic production as a director, assistant director, and music director, where she has engaged creative and inclusive projects including ASL-interpretation for one of her productions and the facilitation of post-production reflection sessions. When community organizations come to us and ask for someone to speak at local events, Elise immediately comes to mind. She's uniquely able to engage multiple audiences, as evidenced by talks and workshops she's given for organizations ranging from the Athens library to a local senior living facility and a parent-teacher group in Minnesota. Elise is a true ambassador for IWS and UGA at large.

An engaged member of our Institute's community, Elise has served for several years as the Graduate Student Representative to our steering committee. She is actively involved in planning events like our Student Research Symposium and the Women and Girls in Georgia Conference and has helped create guiding templates for new instructors teaching our intro level classes. Elise is simultaneously an enthusiastic presence and a compassionate and thoughtful one. Her participation in our events brings liveliness and intellectual vigor to the Institute, and we are deeply indebted to her for her service to us.

Elise Robinson is committed to using her many talents to create spaces for the imagining of better futures for us all, and then to work toward making those imaginings a reality. I recommend her enthusiastically and completely without reservation. She is tremendously deserving of this award.

Sincerely,



Patricia Richards  
Meigs Professor & Graduate Coordinator  
Sociology & Women's Studies

## Personal Statement

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I am writing to apply for the Excellence in Teaching Award through the Graduate School at the University of Georgia. I am a sixth-year doctoral candidate in Theatre and Performance Studies, and I have been teaching as an instructor of record for the Institute of Women's Studies (IWS) since 2018. As a staunch believer that teaching happens both in and out of the classroom, I have contributed to teaching at UGA not only as an instructor, but also as a mentor, advisor, invited speaker, theatre director, and collaborator. My commitment to interdisciplinarity and intersectionality informs all my teaching activities, formal and informal.

As a theatre scholar and practitioner, one of the significant ways in which I have contributed to teaching beyond the classroom is in my production work. I have directed two full productions at UGA, three staged readings, and served as Assistant Director and Music Director on two other shows. My production work emphasizes diversity and inclusion in scripts, casting, rehearsal, and performance practice. For example, my production of *Revolt. She said. Revolt Again.* for UGA's 2018-2019 season pioneered the use of intimacy direction in the department (a system for ensuring the safety and awareness of cast members in intimate or explicit stage scenes), and I also raised independent funds to support an ASL-interpreted performance for the run. Additionally, the cast and crew collaborated with the Art department and Lyndon House to contribute to a visual art project on identity and self-expression, which we used for our dramaturgical lobby display and then traveled to Lyndon House for a local exhibition. I have also worked to establish and support a post-production reflection process in the department and have been invited to facilitate post-show discussions for many student and faculty productions and readings.

At the IWS, my teaching has expanded beyond the classroom and into the community in several arenas. Within the university, I have been fortunate in helping to organize several student research conferences, which the IWS coordinates every spring, and in which a number of my students have participated. I have also taken part in the Women and Girls in Georgia conference as both a moderator and a panelist, collaborating with current and former students to reflect on feminist practices in and out of the classroom. My presentation for the IWS Friday Speaker Series led to invitations to speak at several community institutions, including the Athens Public Library and Presbyterian Senior Village, where I was able to share my research on the Suffragettes with local audiences. I have also been an invited speaker on several national podcasts relating to feminism, performance, and teaching, as well as a guest lecturer on Critical Race Theory in secondary education for a Minnesota parent/teacher group.

As I note in my Teaching Philosophy, for me the essential component of teaching is *connection*. One of the delights of teaching at UGA, both in the Theatre department and at IWS, has been the lasting connection I make with my students. Many of my students keep in touch after their class is over—via social media, requesting letters of recommendation (often I am one of the few instructors who knows their name and interests), getting advice on graduate programs or job opportunities, or asking for feedback on writing and creative projects. I cherish these connections as evidence that my teaching has been as meaningful for my students as it always is for me. Thank you for your recognition of the importance of teaching excellence, and for your consideration of my nomination.

## Teaching Philosophy

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As a college instructor for over twenty-five years at a range of institutions (public, private, large, small) in a range of disciplines (Women and Gender Studies, Performance Studies, Theatre, Communication, Liberal Arts), my teaching philosophy can be boiled down to two words: Only Connect. For me, the art of teaching is the art of fostering connection: between student and teacher, between theory and practice, between learners and content, and between college and the wider community. When I come into the classroom, whether I am teaching an introductory class in LGBTQ Studies or an advanced seminar in Feminist Critical Reading, I strive to create an environment in which students recognize the significance of what they are learning for their everyday lives and feel supported in exploring difficult subjects and having challenging conversations about the world around them. This means that I prioritize student-centered learning strategies and employ a mix of teaching methods including guided discussions, critical analysis, creative projects, formal presentations, and written reflection. I have found that offering students a variety of ways to respond to and interact with course content results in a richer course environment for everyone. For example, in my Feminist Critical Readings course (an upper-level course for Women's Studies majors and minors), the class sessions are primarily discussion-based, but each week the students are also asked to submit a "Friday Reflection" piece, which can be a written reflection on the week's readings or some other creative response that demonstrates their engagement with the theory and content. I am often amazed by the work students submit for these reflections, from original songs that respond to Kate Manne's philosophy of misogyny in *Down Girl*, to annotated photo collages deconstructing gender roles in the film *Ma Vie En Rose*, to sonnets about the social model of disability as it applies to the documentary *Crip Camp*. Students who are not comfortable speaking up in class know that they can contribute in other ways that will be seen and valued, while students whose verbal skills eclipse other modes of communication can think through the readings in a supportive and informed class environment. Offering a range of response modalities and empowering students to express their reactions to the course in a way that is meaningful to them strengthens the students' connections not only to the course material, but also to each other and to the discipline.

As a part of centering connection in my classes, I also seek to dismantle the traditional or colonialist classroom model wherever possible. I pride myself on creating challenging coursework and holding students to high standards of achievement, and I find that these goals are entirely compatible with decolonizing the classroom. Recognizing that my students bring a wealth of lived experience to the classroom, I encourage student input and autonomy on class assignments, and emphasize process over product when it comes to assessment and evaluation. In my Intro to Women's Studies class, for example, students are offered a choice of significant novels to read, and they then, working in small groups, determine how best to summarize and analyze their chosen work in a presentation for the rest of the class. We work collaboratively to establish fair and meaningful assessment rubrics for course assignments, and students are always encouraged to revise or rework assignments for higher grades. I rarely penalize late work or missed classes, preferring to emphasize the students' agency in managing their educational experiences, and supporting them in being as successful as they can be in my classes. I have also successfully incorporated mid-term student course evaluations so that I can adjust course content and delivery as needed during the semester. Sometimes this means adding discussion time or offering alternative content delivery (such as zoom meetings, recorded lectures, audiovisual materials, or take-home exams), but even when no adjustments are indicated, the students are given the chance to touch base on their course experience while the course is still happening.

One of the most exciting things about teaching in Gender Studies is the relevance of an intersectional feminist lens to students' lives in and out of the classroom. A grounding in the history of feminism, classism, LGBTQ studies, and critical race theory serves as a springboard for analyzing current events and trends on and off campus. Students in all majors and disciplines must navigate a world riddled with hierarchies (gender, race, sexuality, class, among others) and in my classes they are given the tools to recognize these structures, critique them, and, where necessary, work to change them. I strongly believe that Gender Studies is more important to the college curriculum than ever before, and my passion as a teacher is to create a classroom where my students can find their own connections to this vibrant and essential area of study.

## Description of Courses Taught

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### THEA 4220: Theatre History and Society

**Role:** Teaching Assistant

**Term:** FALL 2016

**Enrollment:** 44 students, mostly undergraduate theatre majors and several graduate theatre students. The course fulfills major and minor requirements for the theatre program.

**Course Description:** Across time periods, cultures, and places, theatre has been a privileged arena for addressing people's relationship with the state. While theatre can be a site for resistance to the governing body or ruling class, so too can it solidify sentiments of community, nationalism, and patriotism. Theatre is performed by actors present onstage in the flesh, and thus highlights the plight and vulnerabilities of individual bodies subject to the laws of a larger political society as well as the sway of the masses. Providing a survey of world theatre history and dramatic literature, this course examines theatre and its publics in diverse historical and geographical contexts.

**Teaching Responsibilities:** Keeping attendance, providing feedback and grading for all undergraduate quizzes, tests, and papers in coordination with the Instructor of Record, assisting with assignment development and implementation, assisting with in-class discussion, and two lectures on areas of expertise.

### WMST 2010: Introduction to Women's Studies

**Role:** Instructor of Record

**Terms:** FALL 2018, SPRING 2019 (2 sections), SP20, FA20 (2 sections), SP21 (2 sections), FA21

**Enrollment:** 30-40 undergraduates at all levels, both majors/minors and non-majors/minors.

**Course Description:** The study of women of diverse racial, ethnic, and class backgrounds. Topics include contemporary concerns within women's studies: labor markets, health, reproduction, socialization, language, media representations, law, and public policy.

**Teaching Responsibilities:** Syllabus design, content, activity, and assessment practices. This course is discussion intensive and includes mini-lectures, small-group work, writing and reflection, and creative projects. I rewrite the syllabus every term, updating resources and adding new material as needed. I make extensive use of eLC and online resources to enhance student engagement and increase flexibility of access.

## WMST 3010: Feminist Critical Reading

**Role:** Instructor of Record

**Terms:** FALL 2019 (2 sections), SPRING 2020, FA21

**Enrollment:** 20-25 undergraduate students, primarily Women's Studies majors and minors, as the class fulfills a program requirement.

**Course Description:** Students will learn basic methods of feminist critical reading. This will prepare them to better read and understand feminist theory. Topics will include feminist critical thinking, media literacy and criticism, and text interpretation, including both written and multimedia texts.

**Teaching Responsibilities:** Syllabus design, content, activity, and assessment practices. This class is an intensive reading experience for advanced students, and the syllabus covers a wide range of texts from memoir to novel to poetry to critical theory. Class activities include high-level discussion and analysis (students are required to lead at least two discussions per term), weekly reflection journals, and creative projects, all of which center on applying a feminist critical lens and developing their feminist critical "toolbox" through exposure to foundational texts and ideas from the feminist canon.

## WMST 2300: Introduction to LGBTQ Studies

**Role:** Instructor of Record

**Term:** SPRING 2022 (2 sections)

**Enrollment:** 20-30 students at all levels. The course is a requirement for the new LGBTQ undergraduate certificate and serves as an elective in some majors.

**Course Description:** Literature, memoir, and readings from various disciplines on LGBTQ history, politics, health, philosophies, and cultures. Understanding sexualities as historical, personal, and political, we will critically engage homophobia, heterosexism, and oppressions within LGBTQ communities. Highlighting African American, Asian American, Latina American, and Native American cultures, the course also incorporates international and transnational perspectives.

**Teaching Responsibilities:** All syllabus design, content, activity, and assessment practices. As one of the first instructors to teach this new course, I have coordinated with IWS stakeholders to develop content and outcomes for the class, including the selection of a required textbook and standards for assessment. The course combines lectures, readings, discussion, small-group presentations, and creative projects, and incorporates a range of media and course material.



## Sample Teaching Materials

### Small Group Presentations (WMST2010)

WMST2010 is an introductory and interdisciplinary class for students from all over the university. In an effort to expose the class to maximal content, I create small groups at the beginning of the semester, each of which is responsible for reading and presenting on a different feminist novel or memoir. This way the entire class gains knowledge of at least six important feminist texts but each student has to intensively read and analyze only one (in addition to the other course readings). Students are allowed to choose which novel/group they want to be a part of, on a first-come/first-serve basis. Recent options include *Kindred*, by Octavia Butler; *Darling Days*, by iO Tillet Wright; *Hunger*, by Roxane Gay; *Persepolis*, by Marjane Satrapi; *Americanah*, by Chimimanda Ngozi Adiche; and *The Joy Luck Club*, by Amy Tan. After reading their chosen book, the small groups are wholly responsible for leading an entire class session, including a presentation on the book and author as well as connecting the book to class themes. I offer support and assistance as asked, including the FAQ below. Students are assessed based on a combination of peer and instructor feedback. This is consistently one of the most popular elements of the course.

#### WMST 2010 Small Group Guidelines

One of the ways in which you will be participating in this course is by reading and presenting to the class on a feminist novel. The class will be divided into six groups, and at regular intervals each of those groups will be responsible for reading an important feminist novel from the 20<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, researching the novel and its author, and presenting that information to the class.

#### DISCUSSION GROUP F.A.Q.S

##### Q: How do I prepare for my group presentation?

**A:** First, read the novel carefully. Take note while you're reading of any questions that come up or any issues that particularly strike you as interesting, unusual, or relevant to the class. Then contact your group and compare notes. Are there any major issues in the novel that you want to discuss? Anything you think is shocking, controversial, weird, or just plain confusing? Those are usually good places to start. Once you and your group have some idea of the ground you want to cover, you should get online and see what you can find out about the novel and author. Look for interviews or biographies of the author, or book reviews in major newspapers or magazines. Wikipedia can be a good place to start, but don't rely solely on that for your information. Finally, with your group, decide on the format of your presentation. Feel free to be creative! Maybe you want to have class members read a section out loud; maybe you want to include a video or power point presentation to highlight certain information; maybe you want to act out a key moment from the story or come dressed as a central character. The whole class period is at your disposal, so think of how you can best explain the plot and the themes of the novel, and how you can make that information interesting and engaging for the rest of the class. And as always, contact me with any questions or concerns!

##### Q: What information do we need to cover for the presentation? Do we just summarize the novel?

**A:** Nope! ;) There are basically four things I'm looking for in these presentations:

1. Give us a **brief summary of the plot**—keep it short and interesting. Think about how you'd describe the novel to a friend if you wanted them to be interested in it.
2. Tell us something about the **author**—what other things has she written, what is she known for, where is she from, when was she born, is she still alive, what was her writing process for this book, etc.
3. Give us a sense of **how this novel fits** into a Women's Studies class: what feminist issues does the novel deal with? How was the novel received when it was originally published? What important questions does it raise that the class should know about? Why should we care about this book and this author? What did you like about the novel and what did you have problems with?
4. What was your personal response to this novel? Did you love it? Hate it? Which parts resonated with you? What was confusing or enraging? What did it make you think about or feel? (Each group member should post their own individual response.)

##### Q: Can I use movie or TV versions of the novel as part of my research? Can I just watch the movie instead of reading the script?

**A:** You can **DEFINITELY** use movies as part of your research—filmed versions of the novel can be a great resource for understanding difficult scenes or getting a feeling for a certain character. However, you should NOT substitute watching a video for reading the novel. For one thing, film versions often cut scenes or move them around, so you won't be getting the same version as the original. For another thing, if you don't read the **novel** you're missing out on all the inner thoughts, authorial observations and other non-verbal information that the text can give you. Finally, reading the novel can clue you in on little details that are easy to miss in the filmed version. Use videos to complement the books, not substitute for them.]

Students are empowered to organize and structure the content of their presentation as they see fit, incorporating their own knowledges, backgrounds, and interests.

Clear expectations around what I expect offer a loose structure within which the students can successfully create their own personal take on the readings.

## Decolonizing the Classroom (WMST2010)

As a final project for Intro to Women's Studies, I ask students to synthesize the knowledge they've accumulated over the semester by designing assignments for a decolonized classroom. The students read materials defining and exploring decolonization in education; we have a series of small group discussions exploring what decolonization has looked like in our class and what it might look like in different disciplines, and then the students must construct and submit two assignments they've created that contribute to decolonizing the curriculum, either in Women's Studies or in their own major or minor discipline. Students can then submit a lesson plan, paper, or presentation outlining their assignments and connecting them to the work we've done in class all semester long.

Throughout the semester I ask students to reflect on how the material they're studying can be put into practice or applied to their everyday lives. This project allows them to think globally about the concept of higher education and specifically about their own area of interest.

### WMST 2010 Final Project: Decolonizing the Classroom

For your final project this semester, I want you to think about diversity and decolonization in your university education.

1. Read the two linked pieces on decolonizing education. Pay special attention to the 11 points in [Keefe's](#) manifesto for decolonizing the curriculum.
2. Think about the ways in which your education reflects colonialist practices. What kinds of authors are you assigned to read? How are your classrooms structured? What kinds of knowledge are privileged in your classes? Who is considered an authority? Who is typically not included, or only included at the fringe? Who is empowered to make decisions and evaluate progress or learning? How has this class informed your thoughts on these matters?]
3. Attend one of the small group discussion sessions on decolonization with me via Zoom.
4. Choose EITHER your own major (or intended major) OR Women's Studies, and design TWO assignments that would help to decolonize the discipline. For each assignment, you must include:
  - A thing being studied (a reading, a video, a piece of music, artwork, a concept, a historical event, a skill or practice, an idea)
  - An activity related to the thing being studied (what do you want the class to do with what they're studying? Some ideas might include discussion, journaling, writing a monologue, performing a song or poem for the class, making a collage, replicating an experiment, analyzing a film, learning a movement sequence, interviewing someone, etc.)
  - How the student's work will be evaluated (peer review? self-evaluation? written or oral feedback from the instructor? letter grade? pass/fail?)
  - How and why this assignment contributes to the decolonization of the curriculum in your field.

#### Assignment 2 Summary

- The students will be asked to analyze a historical example of colonialization from two perspectives: They must pull one source from "the colonizer" and one source from "the colonized." The first step in decolonizing the classroom is to ensure that students have an understanding of how colonialization affects the texts they read. The goal of this assignment is to demonstrate the need to use sources from people with a wide range of backgrounds rather than those from a perspective of power.



#### Assignment 2 Student Guidelines

Research	Provide a brief historical summary of the example of colonialization.
Analyze	Analyze two texts from different perspectives of the issue
Reflect	Reflect why it is important to research multiple sides of a historical event, not just sources that are easily accessible (as the easily accessible sources are usually coming from those who hold the most power).

Example of student-developed assignment for a WMST class

## Using Your Feminist Critical Toolbox (WMST3010)

In WMST 3010, we alternate various texts (novels, poetry, memoir, essays, film) with critical theory. Each theoretical piece is chosen to equip the students with a critical “toolbox” that they can use to evaluate and analyze both the course texts and other texts they encounter at school and in life. Their final project invites them to creatively demonstrate how to use their toolbox on a text of their choosing.

**WMST3010 Final Project Guidelines**













For your final project this semester you need to do three things:

1. Choose a text. (Loosely defined! this can be a book, film, tv show, song, dance, performance, lecture, blogpost, podcast, sculpture, painting, photo, poem, etc.)
  - o This can be something you've already read or a new "text"; it should NOT be one of the texts we've read in class
  - o It should be a text that can be fruitfully analyzed from an intersectional feminist perspective ... so, like, that's almost everything.
2. Analyze your chosen text using the intersectional feminist toolbox you've been building this semester. (Review the various critical texts to remind yourself of the tools we've assembled: Kolodny, Manne, Walker, Haslanger, Sedgwick, Gunn Allen, Moraga, Lorde.)
  - o You do not have to use ALL the "tools" in our toolbox; just choose the one(s) that are most useful for your project.
  - o Make sure that it's clear WHICH "tools" you're using--in other words, make sure that I can tell which theories/concepts you've chosen for your analysis and why they are useful for your chosen "text".
3. Produce some kind of work to demonstrate your analysis to me/the class. (This can be a standard written paper, or you can: write/perform a song, write a poem, make some visual art/collage, give a presentation, do an interpretive dance, record a podcast episode, make a short film, etc.)
  - o If you choose to do a paper, it should be around 5 pages, double spaced, 12-point font, 1-inch margins, etc. You should also include a Works Cited page for your references.
  - o If you choose a creative option, consider whether you will need to add a one-page concept statement or artist's statement explaining the project. (You might not need this! If your ideas are clear in the project itself, that's fine. But if I might need some extra info or explanation, be sure to include that.)

Projects are due **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 10** at NOON. Our exam period is from noon-3pm that day, so we will meet in person to celebrate the end of the semester. Anyone who wants to share their final project is absolutely encouraged to do so during this period--particularly if you are doing something visual or performative, we would all love to see it! However, THIS IS OPTIONAL. You must *submit* your final project during the finals period, but it is up to you whether you want to share it with the whole class or just with me. Please attend the finals session either way so we can celebrate together! There will be food!

Project overview. The students are given a high degree of autonomy in designing and presenting their final project, which builds on the readings and discussions throughout the semester.

Sample of critical readings for 3101 on eLC

-  [Annette Kolodny, "Dancing Through The Minefield"](#)   
 PDF document
-  [Alice Walker, "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens"](#)   
 PDF document
-  [Sally Haslanger, "Gender and Race: \(What\) Are They? \(What\) Do We Want Them To Be?"](#)   
 PDF document
-  [Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Epistemology of the Closet \(excerpt\)](#)   
 PDF document

## Sample Student Work

This student in my WMST 3010 class submitted a zine for her final project, in which she collected material of her own creation and from various artist friends to assemble a statement on the fluidity of gender construction.



In her presentation to the class, she brought a physical copy of the zine for us to see, and also explicitly drew on her "toolbox" to describe and defend the content and aesthetic choices she had made for the project. She also linked to the social media accounts of all the artists included, in a conscious effort to expand the reach of the project.

## Innovative Teaching Projects and Roles

### Creative Projects—Power Walking Assignment

As a scholar from a creative discipline, I enjoy including creative options at least once a semester in most classes I teach. Sometimes the creativity is in the form, sometimes in the content. The students enjoy taking a different approach to demonstrating their knowledge and I am regularly amazed at their innovation. Here is an assignment from my 2019 WMST 2010 class which combines in-class readings with real-world observations:

### Power Walking Assignment 🔍 ⏪ ⏩

**Instructions**

1. Read "[Power Walking](#)," by Aminatta Forna.
2. Choose the type of observation you want to do: 1st person (self) or 3rd person (observer)
  - **For 1st person observations:** take a 30 minute walk across campus or downtown. Really pay attention to the way people do or don't make eye contact with you, do or don't move around you, do or don't say something to you. Take note of how close people stand to you on corners or at bus stops or in shops. Do you get different interactions or responses from different genders? Ages? Races? Do people respond or interact with you in ways that reflect your gender/age/race? How does walking in public reflect or remind you of your identity in this town, on this campus? How does your experience compare with Forna's?
  - **For 3rd person observations:** pick a place on campus or in town where there's good people watching. For at least 30 minutes, observe patterns in how people move and interact in public. Who makes eye contact? With whom? Who interacts, verbally or physically? Who takes up space and who makes room? Who makes noise and who is quiet? What kind of body language is on display? Are there differences based on whether people are alone or in groups? Or based on gender, age, race, size, ability? What conclusions can you draw about the local culture from your observations? How do your observations compare with Forna's?
3. Write a summary of your observations and submit it here. BE SURE to include how your experience/observation compares to Forna's. Aim for around 250-350 words. Assignment is due by the start of class Wednesday, 2/20.

Two excerpts from student observations:

When walking on campus I saw and experienced men and women failing to yield to each other. When I stopped moving out of the men on campus's way, my entire day became a game of chicken. I stopped moving out of everyone's way, not just men and experienced different things from different sides. I collided with several white girls in sorority shirts and men of all ethnicities. All of these people just expected me to move out of their way because they somehow have more right to continue on the path that they chose for themselves than I do.

Last night I went out with a couple of girls to downtown for dinner and then to the clubs. I was able to notice things that I would never have if it wasn't for this assignment. My girls and I took a table outside the restaurant since it was a beautiful weather. People kept passing us as we were having dinner outside and to my surprise, at least five guys gave out a wink, a weird smile or a comment at us. Most of us definitely took some pride in that because not ever girl gets all this attention. The real trouble began when we were walking to the clubs. A man that was almost my father's age was following me and commenting on how he liked my body in the dress I was wearing, and this really made me feel uncomfortable. I was able to relate this to Forna when she says, "the men own the power of the gaze" and there is absolutely nothing we can do about it. If you try to question them or say something back then it might get messier than it already is.

## Student Mentoring—Chiquita Sofia

One of the joys of teaching is supporting students in their journeys of self-expression and exploration. One of my theatre undergraduates, whom I have directed in several shows, asked me to mentor her in a creative project developing a one-woman show for inclusion in the Atlanta Fringe Festival. Over the course of a year, we workshopped various iterations of the script and performance, with my role to provide feedback and help organize the project timeline and several staged readings. The result was a stunning performance exploring the student's Latinx heritage and family role, intersected with cultural images and stereotypes of North and South America. It was successfully performed to rave reviews at the 2019 Atlanta Fringe and is in continuing development by the actor.

First page of the provisional script

/// *Chiquita Sofia*///  
 Lights up:

*The inside of a Costa Rican casita, clay-ish white walls, circular window shapes. SOFIA is setting up an elaborate dinner party. Everything is white. There are multiple large assortments of matte white fruit, and the other dishes have elaborate silver dish covers. On a gauzy curtain, a banana is lit as if it is art, very SPACE FRUIT by andy warhol. Banana sprouts, like a potato, and grows into a costa rican rainforest through the magic of cinema, time lapse of growth, parasitic plants, decay, like the rainforest floor. Behind the gauzy curtain, Sofia is applying her face. This is not characterization, simply functional- methodical. voice-over, this is NOT SOFIA, but still Eva: my heart is the fertile soil of the homeland i can't blend into and you are exactly what i am trying not to grow. but somehow the seeds keep getting sown and though i can seal the holes of my watering can*

Chiquita Sofia notes: 5/29/19 rehearsal

Decide what parts of the voiceover you want to emphasize?  
 Who is Mamita?  
 Make the divisions between the Aztec story and narrative clearer—in general make the divisions clearer at the beginning  
 Should there be a ding earlier?  
 "Everyone has been to Costa Rica"—are you correcting the audience?  
 Maybe say \*merely\* the sum of its parts?  
 Interesting that your emphasis is on being darker—but too dark is also bad, no?  
 Consider how you will make them applaud the Donna Summer (big finish, bow)

Excerpt of my notes from a rehearsal shortly before the Fringe performance

## Professional Activities Related to Teaching

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### Honors and Awards

- 2021 Graduate School Dean's Award
- 2021 Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award
- 2020 August Staub Graduate Student Award

### Presentations, Podcasts, and Invited Talks

- Post-show discussion moderator, *Loving God Boldly Together: The LGBT Church Play* staged reading by Caroline Caden (UGA Theatre Undergraduate), December 6, 2021, UGA Balcony Theatre.
- *Girl.gov* podcast, episode 27: "Feminism and Women Throughout History with Elise Robinson," November 12, 2021.
- "Critical Race Theory: What it is, What it isn't, and Why it Matters," Wayzata Protect Critical Thinking in Our Schools Parent Group, August 24, 2021.
- *The Iowa Idea* podcast, episode 15: "Elise Robinson on theatre, craft, and collaboration," June 15, 2020.
- "Suffrage Games and the British Women's Suffrage Movement," Athens-Clarke County Public Library (Invited speaker for Women's History Day), March 23, 2019.
- "Playing for the Vote: Suffrage Games and the British Women's Suffrage Movement," Institute for Women's Studies Friday Speaker Series, November 9, 2018.
- *This Moved Me* podcast, episode 3: "Elise Robinson—on 'Holy Theatre,'" October 29, 2014.
- "Children Teaching Children? Questions of Pedagogy for Town and Gown," Theater as a Liberal Art, Association for Theater in Higher Education Conference, August 10, 1996.

### Professional Activities and University Service

- Member of the National Women's Studies Association
- Member of the American Society for Theatre Research
- Member of the Association for Theatre in Higher Education
- Member of the International Federation for Theatre Research/Feminist Working Group
- Graduate representative to the IWS Curriculum Committee, 2021-present
- Panel Moderator, "Staging Animals," International Federation for Theatre Research Conference, July 2021
- Panel Moderator, "Art and Athletics: (Re)presenting the Female Body," 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Women's Studies Student Research Symposium, February 2020
- Panel Moderator, "Radical Feminism, Radical Women," Women and Girls in Georgia Conference, October 2019.
- Graduate Student Representative to the Institute for Women's Studies Steering Committee, UGA, 2018-present
- Graduate Student Representative to the Department of Theatre and Film Studies Awards Committee, 2018-2019

### Workshops and Training

- Online workshop on Liz Lerman's Critical Response Process ([www.lizlerman.com](http://www.lizlerman.com)), April 2019
- Online workshop on Intimacy Director Training (<https://www.idcprofessionals.com>), April 2021

## Teaching Evaluations

### WMST2010 selected comments

All of the discussions, books, readings, and assignments overall were great	I learned so much not only about women's studies, but racial identities, disabled studies, etc. I will definitely use this knowledge in the future	She is AMAZING! Whenever I had a question, she was there. She was always inclusive of student needs and identities and overall just an amazing teacher.
discussion post promoted critical thinking	Feel more passionate about the topic after this course	Very clear with instructions, fair, and gives interesting and relevant assignments.
Dividing each unit into specific topics that intersect with women's studies helped create a flow of learning for the class.	I came into this class very open minded and wanting to learn more about the topics that surround women's studies. Overall, I feel more knowledgeable in certain topics than before and have been encouraged to further educate myself after this class ends.	Dr. Robinson was kind, attentive, and understanding with her students. She worked with our schedules overall and encouraged free thoughts and opinions from all of her students. She is engaging in her teaching and was great to have this semester.
I learned and thought about oppressed groups that I have never thought about before.	I think more critically about gender and sexuality	She made the class feel welcoming. I have never felt more comfortable or like I could go to a professor with my problems in a class at the University like I did with this class.
I loved all the readings and media I was assigned in this course. My weekly assignments did not feel like homework because I enjoyed reading them and found the subject interesting.	The discussion format of this class was great and I think it allowed for open, honest conversation. I felt comfortable to share my feelings and experiences and learn from my classmates.	Dr. Robinson is one of the kindest, funniest, most empathetic teachers I have had at UGA. She understands what it means to be a student, was extremely flexible with our class throughout the semester, and prioritized our learning and wellbeing. I loved taking this class and getting to know her!

### WMST3010 selected comments

I LOVED THIS CLASS AND ELISE!!!	Made me think about things beyond the lectures and PowerPoints I see in most classes and I loved that!!	Very kind, so funny, and extremely approachable and understanding!
I love that this is a discussion based class, but no one feels pressured to speak or uncomfortable to speak their mind. This was a class I learned not only from Professor Robinson, but from my peers, which was really refreshing. I learned many critical feminist theories and how to apply them to outlets of media and publication throughout my life. This was a class that shifts the way you think, and one I'll remember for the rest of my life.	I learned not only critical feminist theories, but I learned a new way to look at literature and media. I can analyze a piece of text and take into account many perspectives, I never thought I could get so much out of my reading until now. My style of writing is a little different too, I don't feel like I have to follow a certain structure for every writing piece, I have more freedom in developing my ideas.	Dr Robinson is one of the most patient, insightful, and intellectually challenging professors I've ever had. While her knowledge is certainly plentiful, she doesn't make the class feel stupid for not immediately understanding the lesson she is trying to convey. She always steered us in the right direction and challenged us to get there on our own.
I really appreciated the range of works we discussed this semester. We got to read about the experiences of various women and men with various backgrounds and discuss them critically and I enjoyed that very much. It challenged me to think from multiple perspectives.	I am better equipped at writing about how my own experiences influence my interpretation of texts. Previously I had not been as conscious of myself as reader/viewer and now I know how to better understand and articulate how my perspective affects my relationship to texts.	Elise is an incredible instructor. Not only is she very impassioned about the works we've read, but she is also such an open instructor who truly listens to her students and helps them in any way she can. She has been such an amazing professor, and I would absolutely take another class with her.

## Quantitative Evaluations

Prompt:	WMST 3010 Fall 2021	WMST 2010 Fall 2021	WMST 2010 Spring 2021
Assignments and activities were useful for helping me learn.	4.45	4.63	4.88
This course challenged me to think and learn.	4.55	4.63	5.0
Issues raised in class encouraged you to think critically.	5.0	4.86	4.88
The instructor made challenging material accessible.	5.0	4.5	4.88
The learning environment in this class stimulated the intellectual curiosity of the students.	5.0	4.88	4.88
The instructor communicated the key concepts clearly.	5.0	4.88	5.0
In this class constructive debate was encouraged.	5.0	4.75	4.75

Prompts were scored using a 5 point Likert scale. Average scores are reported.



## Faculty Observations

[From THEA4280/Women in Performance] “Because Ms. Robinson was enrolled in this split-level course along with two other doctoral students and nineteen undergraduates drawn from both Theatre and Women’s Studies, I was also able to observe her engagement and ability to engage with and explain material with which she was less familiar and, in some cases, less sympathetic. I have full confidence that in her ability to teach any of the theory, history, and performance covered during the semester and look forward to seeing her take more risks in choice of material to presentation. I was impressed with the amount and nature of participation in this well-organized class, which used a variety of approaches to analyze the course material. Ms. Robinson established a good rapport with the students and demonstrated her own intellectual and creative engagement as a model for their own.” –**Dr. Marla Carlson**, Graduate Coordinator, Theatre and Film Studies

[From THEA4230/Theatre and Ritual] “She led us through the slides, but did not solely rely on them. She was fully engaged with the class, asking questions that made the students consider not only the readings for the day (*Ars Poetica* by Horace and *The Rope* by Plautus), but to place these works both in their own contexts as well as how we regard these works in the 21st Century. Where might we see examples of situational comedy? Do we still by-and-large agree with Horace’s prescriptions for dramatic writing? The conversation was very rich and rewarding. It is clear Elise has a thorough knowledge of the philosophies, religion(s), culture(s), and works of the Graeco-Roman era; she also has an infectious enthusiasm for that period. It was truly a wonderful day of class.” –**Dr. John Bray**, Theatre and Film Studies

## Unsolicited Student Emails

“I wanted to reach out to you and let you know of the impact your class continues to make on my educational experience. This summer, I'm current taking a philosophy class through Penn State entitled, “The Philosophy of Love and Sex” which focuses on sexual stereotypes, homosexuality and ancient views, hyper-sexuality of different races, consent, and marriage and divorce among other themes. I thought it would be a wonderful way to connect my minor and expand my intersectional perspective. This week, we were instructed to read an essay called “From ‘Normal’ to Heterosexual: The History of Making Heterosexualities” by James Dean. Within the reading, the author mentions Eve Sedgwick's “Epistemology of the Closet” as a principle of social organization. When I read this, I immediately thought of your class and how you demonstrated the importance of queer theorists and the voices of those outside of the historical cannon. By taking your class, I feel that I have a better foundation for this philosophy course and recognize now more than ever the significance of women's studies.” –KVM, July 2020

“This is such an overdue email, and I apologize for taking this long to reach out. I want to thank you again for taking the time to discuss my grad school options and a potential essay for future grad school applications. I consider your class one of the best classes I ever took at UGA, and I’m still kicking myself for not pursuing the women's studies certificate. Over the summer, I also worked on an online exhibit related to Native Americans in Public Broadcasting for the American Archive of Public Broadcasting. The project helped me realize that I can continue to be research oriented/academically and intellectually engaged with the subjects I’m most passionate while also being a librarian. I’m sending good vibes your way as you complete your dissertation/wrap up your doctorate. Stay safe!” –SKS, August 2020