



Women and Gender Studies (WGST) 423

Mothering/Motherhood in the Real World (Revision 2)

Status: Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#) for the current revision ✕

Delivery mode: [Individualized study online](#) . Delivered via Brightspace.

Credits: 3

Areas of study: Arts or Social Science

Prerequisites: None. **WGST 201** or **PSYC 345** and any other 300-level WGST course (or equivalent courses from another institution) are strongly recommended.

Precluded: None

Challenge: WGST 423 has a challenge for credit option.

Faculty: Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences [↗](#)

Overview

This course looks at motherhood and mothering within the context of Western society. As you study the materials in this course, you will be encouraged to distinguish between mothering as a construct that informs personal identity and motherhood as a role determined and shaped by gendered, social, economic, and cultural structures. You will have the opportunity to explore how changes in expectations have affected mothers' roles and mothering practices. You will look at the roles that theory and popular culture have played in shaping contemporary mothering practice; issues affecting women's choices to combine professional careers with mothering; public policy that works to either constrain or reinforce the practice of mothering; the impact of poverty and mental well-being on motherhood; and how others outside of the boundaries defining the "good mother" experience motherhood. All the topics discussed in this course offer insights encouraging a critical awareness of factors affecting the lives of contemporary women who are also mothers.

Outline

- Unit 1: The Study of Motherhood
- Unit 2: Reflections on Motherhood—Theory and Popular Culture
- Unit 3: Paid Employment and the Practice of Motherhood
- Unit 4: Enabling Policies—In Theory and in Practice
- Unit 5: Mothering and Poverty
- Unit 6: Mothers, Mothering, and Mental Health
- Unit 7: “Other” Mothers, “Other” Mothering
- Unit 8: The Future of Motherhood

Evaluation

To **receive credit**  for WGST 423, you must complete all five assessment activities and achieve a minimum grade of 50 percent on the final exam as well as an overall grade of **D (50 percent)**  or better for the entire course.

Activity	Weight	Complete by
Assessment Activity 1: Reflection	10% of final grade	After Unit 1
Assessment Activity 2: Compare and Contrast	15% of final grade	After Unit 2
Assessment Activity 3: Midterm Take-Home Review	20% of final grade	After Unit 4

Activity	Weight	Complete by
Assessment Activity 4: Film Review and Critique	25% of final grade	After Unit 8
Assessment Activity 5: Final Invigilated Exam	30% of final grade	After Unit 8
Total	100%	

The **final examination** for this course must be requested in advance and written under the supervision of an AU-approved exam invigilator. Invigilators include either ProctorU or an approved in-person invigilation centre that can accommodate online exams. Students are responsible for payment of any invigilation fees. Information on exam request deadlines, invigilators, and other exam-related questions, can be found at the [Exams and grades](#)  section of the Calendar.

Materials

Digital course materials

Links to the following course materials will be made available in the course:

Ross, L. R. (2016). *Interrogating Motherhood*. Edmonton, AB: AU Press.

Physical course materials

The following course materials are included in a course package that will be shipped to your home prior to your course's start date:

Kinser, A. (2010). *Motherhood and feminism*. Berkeley, CA: Seal Press.

Other Resources

All other materials are available online.

Challenge for credit

Overview

The challenge for credit process allows you to demonstrate that you have acquired a command of the general subject matter, knowledge, intellectual and/or other skills that would normally be found in a university-level course.

Full information about **challenge for credit**  can be found in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Evaluation

To **receive credit**  for the WGST 423 challenge registration, you must achieve a grade of at least **D (50 percent)**  or greater on the research essay to be eligible to write the challenge examination. A cumulative average of 50 percent on both activities is required. Credit is awarded on a pass/fail basis only.



Challenge for credit course registration form

Important links

- › [Academic advising](#) 
- › [Program planning](#) 
- › [Request assistance](#) 
- › [Support services at AU](#) 

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery modes may vary from their individualized study counterparts.

Opened in Revision 2, October 4, 2024

Updated July 20, 2026

View [previous revision](#) 