

GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES (441)
CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST THEORIES

Fall 2019
T, TH 9:30-10:45 PM
Sterling 1333

Professor Keisha Lindsay
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-Credit Hours: 3 via Traditional Carnegie Definition
-Course Level: Intermediate
-Course Prerequisite: Sophomore standing, a GenWS course, an AfroAmer course or consent of instructor
-Course Breadth: Letters & Sciences (LAS) and Either Humanities or Social Science (Z)
-Instructional Mode: Face to Face
-Learn@UW/Canvas URL: <https://canvas.wisc.edu/courses/165457>

Office Hours:
Tuesdays 8:25-9:25 AM
Thursdays 1:00-2:00pm

Writing Fellows:
Alyssa Wing (wing3@wisc.edu)
Emily Chester (echester@wisc.edu)
Tori Tiso (vtiso@wisc.edu)

Course Description and Objectives:

The aim of this discussion-based course is to critically examine key issues, questions, and debates in contemporary feminist theory from the 1960s to the present. We begin by exploring contemporary liberal, radical, and materialist feminist thought and the socio- economic and political contexts in which these theoretical perspectives arise. Our aim in section one of the course is less about comprehensiveness and more about beginning to understand the key ideas, assumptions, and silences that motivate contemporary feminist theorists' debates about a range of concepts including but not limited to community, equality, and liberty. Section two explores specific themes in contemporary feminist theory. We will focus on postmodern and other feminist theorists' understandings of the body, sexuality, masculinity, and race. The final section of the course explores how contemporary feminist theorists utilize gender as a category of analysis. Chief among the questions we will explore in this section are the following: Is gender the social and cultural interpretation of male/female biological difference? Or is gender anything but divisible by two? What about claims that gender necessarily "intersects" with race, class, and sexuality? What, finally, is the relationship between how we utilize gender as a category of analysis and our feminist theory and practice in the classroom, the workplace, and the family?

Each section of the course will: 1) help develop the analytical skills necessary to think critically about feminism and gender; 2) pay particular attention to how feminist theory shapes and is shaped by other hierarchies of power including race and sexuality and 3) draw on a range of texts and films to situate feminist theory not only as an intellectual project but also as a personal and an activist one. Our ultimate aim is to build the skills and background that will enable us to apply these ideas and approaches to our own intellectual and political projects.

This is also a writing-intensive course which means that we will employ various writing activities that are closely integrated with course readings. Written work will include two one-page "reflection" papers; a formal five-page mid-term essay (which is revised); and a formal seven to eight-page final essay (which is revised). Each writing assignment requires increasingly complex and sophisticated analysis of course material. Each student will also have the opportunity to work with the Writing Fellows assigned to the course. Two key principles inform the Writing Fellows Program. The first is that all writers, no matter how accomplished, can improve their writing by sharing work-in-progress and making revisions based on constructive criticism; the second is that collaboration among student peers is an especially effective mode of learning. The Writing Fellows assigned to the course will review your draft mid-term essay and draft final essay.

Course Readings:

A required course pack/reader is available at the **L & S Social Science Copy Center**, 6120 Social Science Building, 1180 Observatory Drive, Tel: 608- 262-5396.

The following text is also required: *Feminist Theory Reader* (FTR), 4th Edition (eds.) Carole McCann and Seungkyung Kim (ISBN-10: 1138930210/ISBN-13: 978-1138930216). New and used copies are available at **A Room of One's Own Bookstore**, 315 W. Gorham St., 257-7888. The text is also on reserve at the Undergraduate Library, Helen C. White Building.

Course Requirements:

Class Participation (15%)

-Attending class

You must sign the sign-in sheet at the beginning of every class, except for the first class when I will take attendance. You are allowed two absences without explanation. Any absences greater than this number will drop your total participation grade by one full letter grade regardless of the extent to which you participate in class discussions. If you miss more than half of all of the class meetings without the instructor's permission you will receive a failing grade for the course.

-Participating in class discussions

You will complete a mid-term and final participation self-evaluation form using an instructor provided rubric. These forms, combined with the instructor's own written evaluation of your participation during the semester, are designed to help improve both the quantity and the quality of your contribution to class discussion.

-Attending Writing Fellow conferences

You are required to attend two conferences with your assigned Writing Fellow. Your participation grade will drop by a full letter grade if you fail to attend your Writing Fellow conferences.

Reflection Papers (15%)

You will submit a total of two reflection papers during the semester. Use reflection papers to comment on anything that you find contradictory, controversial, confusing or otherwise noteworthy in each of the assigned readings for a given class session. Your papers may seek clarification of particular terms or ideas; they may challenge the author(s)' presumptions; they may interrogate the implications of the author(s)' claims; or they may attempt to relate assigned readings to materials beyond the course. **Please end each of your reflection papers with two specific questions for class discussion.** Reflection papers are intended to keep you engaged with the readings. They should not be used to provide summaries of the assigned texts. Each paper must be between 250 to 275 words long.

We will use Canvas for reflection papers. You can access Canvas from the University of Wisconsin's home page. Please cut and paste your papers directly into the relevant text box (no attachments). Reflection papers are due at **noon** via Canvas on the **day before** class. You must be present in class to solicit responses to and receive credit for your reflection papers. If you are absent you must write an additional reflection paper (and be present in class to discuss it) in order to receive "make up" credit.

Mid-Term Essay (30%)

The first draft of your five-page mid-term essay is due on OCTOBER 14 AT NOON. I will drop your final mid-term essay grade by one full letter grade if you fail to submit a draft mid-term essay. A revised copy of your mid-term essay (hard copy only) is due in my office on OCTOBER 28 AT NOON.

Final Essay (40%)

The first draft of your seven to eight-page final essay is due on NOVEMBER 25 at NOON. I will drop your final essay grade by one full letter grade if you fail to submit a draft final essay. A revised copy of your final essay (hard copy only) is due in my office on DECEMBER 17 at 3:00 PM.

Classroom Conduct:

Electronics - Smartphones, laptops, and their accompanying devices are NOT allowed (without the instructor's permission) in order to facilitate a non-distracting and intellectually productive learning environment.

Email Communication - I aim to respond to student emails within a 24-hour period Mon-Fri.

Statement on Grade Related Questions and Appeals - If you have questions about a grade, please speak to me first. If the question is not resolved, speak with the Chair, Aili Tripp, who will attempt to resolve the issue informally and inform you of the Appeals Procedures if no resolution is reached informally. I will only discuss questions about grades during office hours or by appointment – not over email or before/after class. Final grades will be determined according to the following official UW grading scale: A 93-100; AB 88-92; B 83-87; BC 78-82; C 70-77; D 60-69; F below 60.

Late Paper Policy - Papers and exams turned in late will be penalized by ten (10) percentage points for each 24-hour period after the due date.

Academic Misconduct (Plagiarism and Cheating) - By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison's community of scholars in which everyone's academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

Writing Center - For additional help with papers, visit the Writing Center at any stage during the writing process. Stop by 6171 Helen C. White, call for an appointment (608-263-1992), or consult the Center's resources online at www.wisc.edu/writing/.

Accessibility - The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Section One: Roadmaps to Contemporary Feminist Theory Introduction -

What is Feminist Theory?

September 5:

- Meet and Greet
- Review Syllabus

September 10:

- (FTR) "Introduction: Feminist Theory, Local and Global Productions"
- Charlotte Bunch. "Not by Degrees: Feminist Theory and Education"
- Maria Lugones and Elizabeth Spelman. "Have We Got a Theory for You: Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism and the Demand for The Woman's Voice"

Liberal Feminisms

September 12:

- Betty Friedan. "The Problem that Has No Name"
- NOW Statement of Purpose
- Judith Jarvis Thomson. "A Defense of Abortion"

September 17:

- Susan Okin. "Vulnerability by Marriage"

-Sheryl Sandberg. "Internalizing the Revolution," "The Leadership Ambition Gap," and "Working Together Toward Equality"

Radical/Care Feminisms

September 19:

- Radicalesbians. "The Woman Identified Woman"
- (FTR) Shulamith Firestone. "The Culture of Romance"
- Marilyn Frye. "Oppression"
- (In-Class Film Clip) "1969 CBS report: "Radical Feminism"

September 24:

- Catherine MacKinnon "Difference and Dominance: On Sex Discrimination"
- (FTR) - Gayle Rubin. "Sex/Gender System" (Box 3, p. 17)
- Denise Thompson. "Differences Among Women"

September 26:

- (FTR) Allison Jaggar. "Love and Knowledge: Emotion in Feminist Epistemology"
- Joan Tronto. "An Ethic of Care"

Materialist Feminisms

October 1:

- (FTR) Karl Marx. "Historical Materialism" (Box 7, p. 167)
- (FTR) Heidi Hartmann. "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism"
- Chrys Ingraham. "Lifting the Veil"

October 3:

- (FTR) Nancy Hartsock. "The Feminist Standpoint: Toward a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism"
- Barbara Ehrenreich. "Serving in Florida"

Section Two: Themes in Contemporary Feminist Theory

Sexualities and Sexual Practices

October 8:

- (FTR) Kathy Davis. "Stopping the Traffic in Women: Power, Agency, and Abolition in Feminist Debates Over Sex-Trafficking"
- Claire Potter. "Not Safe for Work: Why Feminist Pornography Matters"

October 10: IN-CLASS MIDTERM REVIEW

OCTOBER 14 NOON – DRAFT MIDTERM DUE

October 15:

- (FTR) Audre Lorde. "I Am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities"
- (FTR) Cheshire Calhoun. "Separating Lesbian Theory from Feminist Theory"
- Wei Ming Darriotis. "On Becoming a Bi Bi Grrrl"
- Podcast. "The Ethical Slut"

October 17:

- Dubravka Zarkov and Kathy Davis "Ambiguities and dilemmas around #MeToo: #ForHow Long and #WhereTo?"
- Ebony Miranda. "Did #MeToo Forget About Me?"
- Moirá Donegan. "How #MeToo revealed the central rift within feminism today"
- (In-Class Film Clip) Tarana Burke. "Me Too is a Movement, Not a Moment"

Masculinities and the Politics of Feminist Theorizing

October 22:

- (FTR) R.W. Connell. "The Social Organization of Masculinity"

-Michael Kimmel. "Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame and Silence in Construction of Gender Identity"

-bell hooks. "Reconstructing Black Masculinity"

October 24:

-Diane Richardson and Victoria Robinson. "Theorizing Women's Studies Gender Studies and Masculinity: The Politics of Naming"

-Judith Gardiner. "Unmaking: Men and Masculinity in Feminist Theory"

OCTOBER 28 at NOON – MIDTERM ESSAY DUE

Race, Post-Coloniality, and the Politics of Representation

October 29:

-(FTR) Sara Ahmed. "Multiculturalism and the Promise of Happiness"

-(FTR) Becky Thompson. "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism"

October 31:

-(FTR) Gloria Anzaldua. "Mestiza Consciousness" (Box 9, p. 174)

-(FTR) Gloria Anzaldua. "The New Mestiza Nation: A Multicultural Movement"

-(FTR) Andrea Smith. "Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change"

-(FTR) Patricia Hill Collins. "Defining Black Feminist Thought"

November 5:

-(FTR) Chandra Mohanty. "Under Western Eyes"

-(FTR) Leila Ahmed. "The Veil Debate Again"

-In-Class Film "They Call Me Muslim"

Section Three: Complicating Gender as a Feminist Category of Analysis

Intersectionality

November 7:

-(FTR) Kimberlé Crenshaw. "Intersectionality" (Box 6, p. 164)

-(FTR) Patricia Hill Collins. "Matrix of Domination" (Box 11, p. 355)

-(FTR) The Combahee River Collective. "The Combahee River Collective Statement"

-Kimberlé Crenshaw. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color"

November 12:

-(FTR) Minnie Bruce Pratt. "Identity: Skin, Blood, Heart"

-Rosemarie Garland-Thomson. "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory"

November 14:

-(FTR) Jennifer Nash. "Re-Thinking Intersectionality"

-Nikol Floyd-Alexander. "Disappearing Acts: Reclaiming Intersectionality in the Social Sciences in a Post-Black Feminist Era"

Deconstructing the Tale of Two Genders?

November 19:

-NPR Podcast: "Edge of Gender"

-(FTR) Joan Scott. "Dimensions of Gender" (Box 4, p. 20)

Joan Scott. "Gender: Still A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?"

November 21: IN-CLASS FINAL ESSAY REVIEW

NOVEMBER 25 AT NOON – DRAFT FINAL ESSAY DUE

November 26:

- (FTR) Judith Butler. "The Gender Binary" (Box 15, p. 363)
- (FTR) Judith Butler. "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution"
- (FTR) Sandra Bartky. "Foucault, Femininity, and Patriarchal Power"
- (In-Class Film) "Juggling Gender"

Theorizing Transgender

December 3:

- Talia Bettcher. "Terminology"
- Jack Halberstam. "Trans* What's in a Name?"
- Julia Serano. "There Is No Perfect Word: A Transgender Glossary of Sorts"

December 5:

- (FTR) Emi Koyama. "The Transfeminist Manifesto"
- (FTR) Vivian Namaste. "Undoing Theory: The '*Transgender* Question' and the Epistemic Violence of Anglo-American Feminist Theory"
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. "Clarifying"

December 10:

- H. Fogg-Davis. "Sex-Classification Policies as Transgender Discrimination: An Intersectional Critique"
- Dean Spade. "What's Wrong with Rights"

DECEMBER 17 at 3:00 PM – FINAL ESSAY DUE