

FEMINIST THEORY: Women's Studies 439/Political Science 339

Summer Session I 2014 (May 27 – July 3)

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As the title would indicate, this class will serve as an overview of issues in feminist theory. We will examine current debates in feminist theory by questioning race, class, gender and sexual orientation as analytic categories through various lenses. You will be able to utilize what you have learned in this course as a stepping stone for other Women's Studies courses and hopefully other courses throughout your university career.

Throughout the course, we will be examining the difference between sex and gender as well as the formation of gender identity and sexuality and how they inform feminist thought. We will use post-colonialism and writings by feminist theorists of color to interrogate our assumptions about “mainstream” feminist thought. We will also consider the epistemology behind the texts we read, as well as how their location guides them. As a result of the course, I hope that we will bring together our understanding of these issues and debates, having created a space to find our own individual version(s) of feminist theory, as well as a collective understanding of what feminist theory means (or can mean) for feminists.

For the purposes of clarity this course will be divided into four parts with two tracks that will run concurrently through the lectures and the readings. First, we will study some background to understanding mainstream feminist theory. The second portion of the course will focus on the uses of writing about sexuality to further feminist thought. The third part of the course will consider the intersection of post-colonial thought with feminist theory as well as writings by feminist of color and Third World feminists. Finally, the last portion of the course will consider the epistemology behind some of the issues we will have discussed in class.

Our reading will encompass writings from various disciplines as well as authors from non-traditional or academic backgrounds. Some of the supplementary readings we will discuss are the following: Donna Haraway, Sandra Harding, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and Uma Narayan among many others. Thinking through the issues and voices these authors present will help us formulate a clearer picture of feminist theory in different contexts. This is an ongoing process, one which won't end with the class. As you take what you have learned in this class to your other classes, or your work, you will begin to see women and feminist theory in a different (and hopefully clearer) light.

This class should serve as a space to questions our assumptions about feminism and feminist theory as well as a new way of understanding women's issues through and feminist scholarship.

Some learning outcomes of this course are:

- Students should understand key concepts, tensions, and debates in feminist theory;
- Students should be able to think critically about and through these debates;
- Students should be able to re-examine some of their assumptions about issues in feminist theory;
- Students should develop empathy for, and open-mindedness about, viewpoints different and sometimes opposite to their own.

Some of the strategies used to obtain these outcomes are:

- Reaction journals used to facilitate inquiries into topics that are related to students' personal lives and current events;
- Discussion board participation;
- One midterm paper and a final research paper discussed below;

Course requirements:

*Attendance and participation [Questions and Responses] (25%): Since this class is based on online discussion and scheduled student presentations, regular attendance on laulima (<https://laulima.hawaii.edu>), especially the discussion board, is absolutely critical to your success in this class and to the success of your fellow students. If you don't "attend," you can't participate and missing one week of class or even just a few days is equivalent to missing entire chunks of the semester in an in-person class. You are expected to contribute your thoughts, reactions, questions and responses online in the class. The questions and responses are based on the **readings**. Each week's reading, as you'll see below is divided into TWO sections. You will ask ONE question from EACH section (for a total of 2 questions per week). Please label your questions in the following way so that I can keep track of who is posting what: Jane's W1Q1, Jane's W1Q2. Please post SEPARATE messages for each question so that people can simply use the reply key to respond to your question. You will post **TWO responses** (again, one from each section's question posted by one of your classmates) of at least 100-150 words EACH **per week**. They should also be labeled appropriately in the following way: Leilani's W1R1, Leilani's W1R2. This means that when you do hit the reply key, you will have to change the subject line before you post your response. Thank you for your cooperation on this matter.

*Journal entries (25%): These are your personal critical reactions to each week's **lectures** found on the course website. Please note that the lectures are not necessarily on the same topic as the readings. *Due to the summer session schedule, there are two lectures each week. Please be sure that your journal covers BOTH lectures.* The journals should be **two (double-spaced) typed pages**. These will be due once a week on Fridays by midnight. **Please submit these in the laulima assignments tool** either as a Word attachment or cut and paste the text into the body of the message. The journal

assignments are linked to the **gradebook** tool and work together. If you submit your work in the wrong place(s), it becomes difficult to keep track of each student's work and there can be no guarantee of accurate recordkeeping. By submitting in the assignments tool, all of your assignments will be housed in the same tool and any discrepancies in recordkeeping can easily be addressed by either student or teacher.

Note – For the two course requirements above, not only will you be graded simply on whether you turn the work in or not, but also on the quality of the submitted work.

*One midterm paper (20%): The **midterm** will examine students' assumptions about issues within feminist theory we will have studied thus far. Students will determine the exact topic of the paper with the instructor's final approval. Please see the course schedule below for information on when and where to post/vote for your topic idea. **Please submit the finished midterm papers in the laulima assignments tool** as a Word attachment. **(5-6 pages)**

*One final research paper (30%): This paper will be the culmination of the course with each student choosing individual topics within the overarching topic of feminist theory for further research. Please be sure to submit your final paper topic proposal ideas as early as possible in Week 4 of the class to the final paper topic discussion board as the topics are assigned on a first come, first served basis. **Please submit these in the laulima assignments tool** as a Word attachment. **(8-10 pages)**

Late paper policy note: It isn't fair for some people to have more time to turn in assignments than others. If your paper is late, there will be three points deducted from your grade EACH day that it is late. It is very easy to go from an A to a B to a C very quickly. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to turn your papers in on time.

Plagiarism note: Plagiarism is a serious academic offense. Taking credit for someone else's work is a grave ethical offense. It is especially tempting to engage in this practice as busy/overworked students, but *don't*. After reading your short journals throughout the semester, I become quite proficient at discerning your writing from someone else's. If I do find that you are engaging in this practice, you will receive an "F" for that assignment and be placed on probation in my course, where I will keep a sharp eye on your further work. Therefore, please cite your sources in an appropriate way, (see the citation for the required texts below as an example) and if you have any questions you can either ask me, refer to your library, or to any style manual you have available.

Note: Any class is like a marathon. If you don't run the entire race, you don't get a finisher's t-shirt. The same goes for this class. If you don't do all the work, and don't "attend" this online class, you can't expect to get a passing grade.

Required Readings:

Hackett, Elizabeth, and Sally Haslanger. 2006. *Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Readings marked with an asterisk (*) will be located in the **Course Resources** tool in a folder entitled “**Course Readings.**” Please find them there. You can either read them online or print them out on your own.

Class Films: You can watch these and write a journal for **extra credit** up through the 4th week. No extra credit will be accepted during the last two weeks of class. They are available through UH Manoa’s Sinclair Library/Wong A/V Center.

Sexuality and Social Justice
Killing Us Softly 4
Juggling Gender
Cultural Criticism and Transformation
If Women Counted

Course Schedule:

Note: This schedule is not set in stone. With class consensus, we can alter to fit our needs.

(Reading topics are separated by parts of the class. Lecture topics separated by weeks. Please note that they may not overlap.)

PART I: BACKGROUND OF MAINSTREAM FEMINIST THOUGHT

Week 1: Introduction to Feminist Movements *and* Feminist Movements

Reading: (Part 1) Delmar, Rosalind “What is Feminism?”* and Gluck, Sherna Berger “Whose Feminism, Whose History?”* **(Part 2)** Scott, Joan “Deconstructing Equality-versus-Difference: Or, the Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism,”*

Tuesday, May 27

Post Introductions in the Welcome and Introductions discussion board

Wednesday, May 28

Questions due to Week 1 Discussion Board by midnight

Friday, May 30

Responses due to Week 1 Discussion Board by midnight

Journals due to Week 1 assignments tool by midnight

Week 2: Liberal Feminist Theory *and* Marxist/Socialist Feminist Theory

Reading: (Part 1) Young, Iris Marion: “Five Faces of Oppression” (p. 3) and Grillo, Trina: “Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality: Tools to Dismantle the Master’s House” (p. 30) and **(Part 2)** Alcoff, Linda: “The Problem of Speaking for Others” (p. 78)

Wednesday, June 4

Questions due to Week 2 Discussion Board by midnight

Post midterm paper topics by midnight in midterm paper topic discussion board

Friday, June 6

Responses due to Week 2 Discussion Board by midnight

Vote on midterm paper topics by midnight in midterm paper topic discussion board

Journals due to Week 2 assignments tool by midnight

PART 2: SEXUALITY

Week 3: Radical Feminist Theory *and* Sexuality

Reading: (Part 1) Lorde, Audre: “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power” (p. 188) and Kessler, Susan “The Medical Construction of Gender: Case Management of Intersexed Infants”* available at <http://www.aissg.org/PDFs/Kessler-Medical-Construction-1990.pdf>
(Part 2) Stoltenberg, John, “Confronting Pornography as a Civil Rights Issue” (p. 298), and Duggan, Lisa, Nan Hunter and Carole Vance: “False Promises: Feminist Antipornography Legislation” (p. 311)

Wednesday, June 11

Questions due to Week 3 Discussion Board by midnight

Friday, June 13

Responses due to Week 3 Discussion Board by midnight

MIDTERM PAPER DUE TO ASSIGNMENTS TOOL BY MIDNIGHT

No Journals due

PART 3: INTERSECTION OF FEMINIST THEORY WITH POSTCOLONIAL THOUGHT, WRITINGS BY WOMEN OF COLOR, AND THIRD WORLD FEMINISTS

Week 4: Theorizing Intersecting Identities *and* Race, Nation, and Class

Reading: (Part 1) Crenshaw, Kimberle: “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color” (p. 159) and Roberts, Dorothy: “Punishing Drug Addicts Who Have Babies: Women of Color, Equality and the Right of Privacy” (p. 445) **(Part 2)** Ghandi, Leela: “Postcolonialism and Feminism” (p. 470) and Sen, Amartya “More than 100 Million Women are Missing” (p. 150) and Shiva, Vandana: “Women’s Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity Conservation” (p. 238)

Wednesday, June 18

Questions due to Week 4 Discussion Board by midnight

Pick final paper topics ASAP in the final paper topic discussion board

Friday, June 20

Responses due to Week 4 Discussion Board by midnight

Journals due to Week 4 assignments tool by midnight

Week 5: Multicultural, Global, and Postcolonial Feminism *and* Ecofeminism

Reading: (Part 1) Stoler, Laura Ann: “Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race, and Morality in Colonial Asia” (p. 481) **(Part 2)** Reading: MacLeod, Arlene “Hegemonic Relations and Gender Resistance: The New Veiling as Accommodating Protest in Cairo”* and Mohanty, Chandra Talpade “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses”* available at <http://racismandnationalconsciousnessresources.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/chandra-talpade-mohanty-under-western-eyes.pdf>

Wednesday, June 25

Questions due to Week 5 Discussion Board by midnight

Friday, June 27

Responses due to Week 5 Discussion Board by midnight

Journals due to Week 5 assignments tool by midnight

PART 4: FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGIES

Week 6: Standpoints *and* Postmodern and Third Wave Feminism

Reading: (Part 1) Narayan, Uma: “Cross-Cultural Connections, Border Crossings, and ‘Death by Culture’” (p. 62) and Patricia Hill Collins: “The Politics of Black Feminist Thought” (p. 51) and bell hooks: “Postmodern Blackness” (p. 363) **(Part 2)** Harding, Sandra “Introduction: Is there a Feminist Method?”* and “Conclusion: Epistemological Questions”* and Haraway, Donna “Situated Knowledge: The Science Question in Feminism as a Site of Discourse on the Privilege of Partial Perspective”* available at <http://www.staff.amu.edu.pl/~ewa/Haraway,%20Situated%20Knowledges.pdf>

Wednesday, July 2

Questions due to Week 6 Discussion Board by midnight

Thursday, July 3 (Note the alternate day due to the Independence Day holiday)

Responses due to Week 6 Discussion Board by midnight

FINAL PAPERS DUE TO ASSIGNMENTS TOOL BY MIDNIGHT