The Course

Feminist theories concerns not only our understanding of gender relationships, but also the prescriptions for change that politically and intellectually engaged feminists have recommended for these relationships. Analyses of the construction of gender and its political meaning is intimately tied to our understanding of the meaning of other characteristics of people, such as race and social class, and our analysis of how authority relationships work generally (i.e. politics) in varying historical and social contexts. In this course we will look at several feminist theories and their antecedents. Language and culture, as precursors to conceptions of the social and political, are also basic to our inquiries in this course. Rather than trying to find the One True Feminism, we will consider what is offered by the various approaches taken by feminist political theorists and activists.

Feminism is not simply concerned with the construction of theories. Praxis, actions proceeding from ideas, is also at the core of feminist theory. Any examination of ideas relating the statuses of women and men to conceptions gender, race, class, and ethnicity and, in turn, to social, economic, and political processes may also be considered (and evaluated) in terms of its logical prescriptions for action. In addition to assessing the internal logic of a theory and its prescriptions for “the world,” feminist theories may also be considered or evaluated in application to one's own situation. How much analytical leverage do you gain in understanding your own life by taking a particular feminist perspective?

One way that we will approach this latter topic is through an analysis of the content of media representations of gender, sex, and sexuality, as an example of using feminist theory to critique a particular aspect of popular culture and its role in our lives. As you will see, many of our theorists draw on a genre of cultural representation to illustrate or give evidentiary “proof” of their conjectures and hypotheses. At a meta-level of theorizing, the use of cultural data as “facts” and illustrations raises a number of challenging philosophical and methodological questions, many of which will be at the core of your research and our discussions.

Requirements and Grading

1. Our topics for discussion and readings for each class session are listed below. Readings are marked as “Required” with an asterisk. “Required” means that everyone should read these selections. Each class session also lists “Recommended” readings. If you have chosen to focus your media analysis on a particular theorist, school of thought, or topic, for your media analysis, the recommended readings are a good place to start.
2. Most of our classes will be based on discussion so you will be responsible for posting a discussion question on the forums provided. Your postings will help to determine your participation grade. Everyone starts with a participation grade of
8.5 points or “B+” and can move upward or downward depending on the quality of questions, discussion, and participation in class activities.

3. In addition, I have selected eight class sessions for student-led discussion. You will sign up for one of these dates, read the recommended readings, lead our discussion, and write a brief (three to five page, double-spaced) analysis of ONE THEME from the required and recommended readings. Your discussion papers will be due in the class meeting following your presentation/discussion leading.

4. In two of our class sessions we look specifically at the idea of involving personal experience as “evidence” in theoretical and empirical inquiry. Personal narrative, introspection, depth-interviewing, and survey research all draw in one way or another on “experience” as evidence. In feminist theory, the uses of experience and the situating of subjects/self extensively discussed. For these classes each of you will read the required reading and choose one additional reading to be used as a source of evidence, example, illustration, or critique of the required reading. We will discuss these “case readings” in class and you will write a brief analysis (three to five double-spaced pages) of the required readings in light of the supplemental reading. These analytical papers will be due IN CLASS on the day that we discuss these readings. [An analytical paper consists of a thesis, explication of thesis (with evidence and illustrations from the text to back up your claims) and conclusion drawn from this discussion of your thesis.]

5. You may choose either of two options to demonstration your overall learning from our readings, films, presentations, and discussions: 1) a critical feminist theory-informed analysis of an cultural “artifact” in any medium (e.g. film, graphic design, graphic novel, news representation, music video, popular analysis of persons or events (e.g. magazine articles), advertising, etc. etc.) or 2) a comprehensive take home exam. The syllabus shows various due dates for topic selection, the draft, and final ten to twelve page gender and media analysis paper. Details will be spelled out in “Instructions for Media Critique” handed out in class. The paper is due on the last day in class. We will also present a synopsis of your analysis to the class on either Tuesday or Thursday of the last week of class. Your answers to the final Take Home Exam are also due in class on Thursday March 7, 2012. The Take Home Exam is available at any time during the course for your review and consideration.

Grades will be computed as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discussion paper REC Readings</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analytical Paper applying experience to “case” reading</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media critique or Take Home Exam</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading Assignments:

1. Contexts

Thurs Jan 3 I. Introduction to the Course
II. Pre-Liberal Political Theory and Gender-Patriarchalism and Its Critics

Recommended Reading (after class—I will present from these works):
John Winthrop, “A Modell of Christian Charity” (1630) and “Speech to the General Court” (1645)


Tues Jan 8  Pre-liberal Political Theory and Gender—Pre-Platonic Thought

Read:
Arlene Saxonhouse, *Women in the History of Political Thought*, Read: **Ch 1, 2 Recommended: Ch 8

Thurs Jan 10  Democratic Revolutions: Liberalism, Individualism, and Gender

I. 18th Century Wollstonecraft
Mary Wollstonecraft A Vindication of the Rights of Women [1792]
http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/wollstonecraft/mary/w64vww/complete.html#notechapter1
Read **Ch 1–3**
II. 19th Century Mill & Taylor
Read:
**Harriet Taylor [1832–1833?] “On Marriage”**
**John Stuart Mill [1869] “The Subjection of Women” Ch 1, 2

Three Websites available for this essay (in addition to e-reserve)

http://www.constitution.org/jsm/women.htm

http://www.gutenberg.org/files/27083/27083-h/27083-h.htm

http://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/m/mill/john_stuart/m645s/

Another Resource Recommended: John Stuart Mill [1832–1833?] “On Marriage”
Harriet Taylor, “Enfranchisement of Women” [1851]
And Ch 3 and 4 of Mill’s “Subjection”

Tues Jan 15  Democratic Revolutions: Liberalism, Individualism, and Gender
III. Recommended Reading: 18th Century Republican Motherhood

IV. Read: 19th Century Gender Equality and Difference
Alexis de Tocqueville (2000 [1835–1840]) *Democracy in America*
**Vol 1 Ch 7 “On the Omnipotence of the Majority in the United States and Its Effects”


Recommended from Tocqueville:
Vol 1 Ch 9 “On the Principle Causes Tending to Maintain a Democratic Republic in the United States”

V. 20th Century Concepts of Care and Justice
Read:

Recommended critique of the critics:

Thurs Jan 17  Contexts of Slavery and Colonialism
****************** Topic Proposal for Media Paper Due in Class******************

Film Pratibha Parmar 1991. *A Place of Rage*
**View Before Class (52 min)
Read:

Another version in colloquial speech
[http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/sojtruth2.html](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/sojtruth2.html)


Recommended—Student Led Discussion:


Tues Jan 22 Contexts of Citizenship and Early 20th Century Theory and Practice

Read:

**Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Solitude of Self” (1892)**

**Emma Goldman “Women’s Suffrage” (1911)**
http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/goldman/aando/suffrage.html


**Recommended—Student Led Discussion:**


Emma Goldman “The Traffic in Women” (1911)
http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/goldman/aando/traffic.html


A. From Center to Margin?
Thurs Jan 24  Existentialism, the Individual and Women's Situation(s)
Read:
**Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex** Introduction, Ch 9, 11

Recommended for Student Led Discussion:
Ch 1–3, 25, and Conclusion

Tues Jan 29  Gender, Culture, Power and Politics=the political aspects of “sex”
Read:

**B. From Margin to Center?**

Thurs Jan 31  Conceptualizing Class and Women’s Estate
Read:


Recommended:

Karl Marx. (1847) What are Wages? How are they Determined?  
http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/wage-labour/ch02.htm

Karl Marx. (1847) The Nature and Growth of Capital  
http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/wage-labour/ch05.htm

Tues Feb 5  NO CLASS MEETING
Thurs Feb 7  Experience as Evidence: Class, “Race,” and Gender Analysis

** Explanation of Approach (Method, Medium, Genre) to Media Project Due in Class***

Read:
**Joan W. Scott. “Evidence of Experience” Feminist Approaches to Theory and Methodology, Graduate Consortium in Women’s Studies at Radcliffe, eds. Oxford University Press. 79–99.**

Sign up to Report on One of the Following (Report/Analysis Due in Class):


3. Confluence: Second Into Third Wave

Tues Feb 12  Experience as Evidence: Sexualities and Gender Analysis

Read:


Sign up to Report on One of the Following (Report/Analysis Due in Class):


Thurs Feb 14  On Structure, Post Structure, Material, Post Material and Border Crossings

Read:


** Recommended—Student Led Discussion:


The Little Girl I (Only) a Little Boy 25–33
Penis-envy, 55–60
An impractical sexual relationship 105–111
Any theory of the Subject Has Always Been Appropriated by the “Masculine,” 133–146
Life in Philosophy, 319–329
Divine Knowledge, 330–338
An unarticulated/inarticulate Go-Between: Split between sensible and insensible, Return to Father 346–52
Woman's Jouissance 353–64
All From: The Speculum of the Other Woman. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Tues Feb 19 On the Post Colonial
Film: Mohsen Makhmalbaf (2001) Kandahar
**View Before Class

Read:

**Recommended—Student Led Discussion:


**Thurs Feb 21 Constructing Gender and Polity

Read:


**Recommended—Student Led Discussion:


Tues Feb 26  Feminist Theory Applied: Ecofeminism and Reproduction


**Recommended—Student Led Discussion:**


*************** Draft of Media Critique/Analysis Due in Class ***************

Thurs Feb 28  Feminist Theory Applied: Terrorism and Evil

Read:


**Recommended—Student Led Discussion:**


Tues Mar 5 Presentations
Thurs Mar 7 Presentations
******** Media Critique Or Take Home Exam Due in Class ********