

WGST 234 Feminist Theories
This Course also Serves as an Elective in
Political Science and International Relations

Tues Thurs 10:10-11:55
WCC 233

Prof: Barbara Allen
Appointments Mon-Thurs
Times posted on sign-up
sheet at Willis 408
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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:

Discussion paper REC Readings	20%
Analytical Paper applying experience to “case” reading	30
Media critique or Take Home Exam	40
Participation	<u>10</u>
Total	100%

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)

Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha*. [c. 1648–1650] Chapter 1, “That the First Kings Were Fathers of Families.”

John Locke, *Two Treatises on Government*. [1690]. [Second Treatise of Civil Government] Chapter 6, “Of Paternal Power,” Chapter 7, “Of Political or Civil Society.”

Thomas Hobbes. 1651. *Leviathan*.
 Ch 13, “Of the Natural Condition of Mankind As Concerns Their Felicity, and Misery”
 Ch 14, “Of the First and Second Natural Laws and of Contracts”
 Ch 15, “Of the Other Laws of Nature”
 Ch 20, “Of Dominion Paternal and Despotical”

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/w864vw/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]

http://www.pinn.net/~sunshine/book-sum/ht_mill3.html

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
 Mercy Otis Warren. *History of the Rise, Progress, and Termination of the American Revolution*. V1, Ch 10 excerpt pp. 210–13; V3, Ch 31 excerpt pp. 679–698

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”

**Vol. 2 Pt 3 Ch 8, “Influence of Democracy on the Family;” Ch 9 “Education of Girls in the United States;” Ch 10 “How the Girl is Found beneath the Features of the Wife;” Ch 12 “How the Americans Understand the Equality of Man and Woman”

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:

**Carol Gilligan and Grant Wiggins. 1988. “The Origins of Morality in Early Childhood Relationships,” in *Mapping the Moral Domain*, Carol Gilligan, Janie Victoria Ward, and Jill McLean Taylor, eds. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 111–137.

Recommended critique of the critics:

Cressida J. Heyes. 1977. “Anti-Essentialism in Practice: Carol Gilligan and Feminist Philosophy” *Hypatia*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Third Wave Feminisms (Summer) pp. 142–163.

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:

**Sojourner Truth Ain’t I a Woman?

<http://www.kyphilom.com/www/truth.html>

Another version in colloquial speech

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/sojtruth2.html>

** Michele Wallace (1990) “Slaves of History” *Invisibility Blues*. (London: Verso Press) 137–145.

Recommended—Student Led Discussion:

Albert Memmi (1991 [1957]) *Colonizer and Colonized* (Boston: Beacon Press). Introduction by Jean-Paul Sartre xxi–xxix; and Part 2, “Portrait of the Colonized” pp. 77–141.

Betty Joseph. 2004. “Introduction” and “Critical Genealogies,” *Reading the East India Company 1720-1840*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1–32 and 153–177.

Emmeline Lott “The ‘English Governess’ in Egypt” (2006 [1835]) *Gender, Modernity and Liberty*, Reina Lewis and Nancy Mickelwright eds. London: I.B. Tauris, 89–109.

Reina Lewis and Nancy Mickelwright “Introduction,” *Gender, Modernity and Liberty*, Reina Lewis and Nancy Mickelwright eds. London: I.B. Tauris, 1–30.

Tues Jan 22

Contexts of Citizenship and Early 20th Century Theory and Practice

Read:

** Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Solitude of Self” (1892)
<http://www.nps.gov/wori/historyculture/solitude-of-self.htm>

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

**Virginia Sapiro. 1981. “When are Interests Interesting? The Problem of Political Representation of Women,” *American Political Science Review*, 75, 3: 701–16.

**Irene Diamond and Nancy Hartsock. 1981. Beyond Interests in Politics: A Comment on Virginia Sapiro’s ‘When are Interests Interesting?’” *American Political Science Review*, 75, 3: 717–21.

Recommended—Student Led Discussion:

Kristi Andersen *After Suffrage: Women in Partisan and Electoral Politics Before the New Deal*. Ch 3 “Women as Voters” pp.48–75
Ch 4 “Women in Party Politics” pp. 76–109

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

2: Contexts of the “Second Wave” (1950–1990? er, 1980? 2000?, who, what, when and why?)

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:
 **Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (1990 [1969]) Introduction from the 1990 edition, Preface to the First (1969) Edition, Ch 1, 2

B. From Margin to Center?

Thurs Jan 31 Conceptualizing Class and Women’s Estate
 Read:
 **Herbert Marcuse. 1974. “Marxism and Feminism,” *Women’s Studies*, 2, 3: 279–288.

**Iris Young. “Beyond the Unhappy Marriage: A Critique of the Dual Systems Theory,” in Lydia Sargent, ed., *Women and Revolution*, Boston: South End Press, 1981, pp. 43–69.

Recommended:
 Nancy Hartsock. 1983. “The Feminist Standpoint: Toward a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism,” and “Power, Class, and Gender: Questions for the Future,” *Money, Sex, and Power: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism*. New York: Longman. 231–51 and 252–63.

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):

1. Chandra Talpade Mohanty. 1999. "Women Workers and Capitalists Scripts," *Feminist Approaches to Theory and Methodology*, Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies at Radcliffe, eds. Oxford University Press. 362–88.
2. Catherine Raissiguier. 1999. "The Construction of Marginal Identities," *Feminist Approaches to Theory and Methodology*, Graduate Consortium in Women's Studies at Radcliffe, eds. Oxford University Press. 128–151.
3. Patricia J. Williams. 1994. "On Being the Object of Property," *Theorizing Feminism*, Anne C. Herrmann and Abigail J. Stewart, eds. Boulder: Westview Press. 198–213. And Marilyn Frye. 1983. "On Being White: Toward a Feminist Understanding of Race and Race Supremacy," in *The Politics of Reality Freedom: The Crossing Press*. 110–27.
4. Iris Marion Young. 1997. "House and Home Feminist Variations on a Theme," *Intersecting Voices*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 134–165.

3. Confluence: Second Into Third Wave

Tues Feb 12 Experience as Evidence: Sexualities and Gender Analysis

Read:

**Shane Phelan. 1994. "Ch 2 Building a Specific Theory," *Getting Specific*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 16–31.

**Ann Ferguson. 1997. "Moral Responsibility and Social Change: A New Theory of Self," *Hypatia*, Vol. 12, No. 3, Third Wave Feminisms (Summer) 116-141.

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

1. Marilyn Frye. 1983. "Some Reflections on Separatism and Power," 95–109, in *The Politics of Reality Freedom: The Crossing Press*.
2. Georgia Warnke. 2001. "Intersexuality and the Categories of Sex" *Hypatia*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Summer), 126-137.
3. Shane Phelan. 1993. "(Be)Coming Out: Lesbian Identity and Politics," *Signs*, Vol. 18, No. 4, Theorizing Lesbian Experience (Summer), 765-790.
4. Adrienne Rich. 1980. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Signs*, Vol. 5, No. 4, Women: Sex and Sexuality (Summer), 631-660.
5. Judith Butler. 1990. "Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions" in *Gender Trouble*, New York: Routledge. 163–80.

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

Read:

**Julia Kristeva. 1986 [1977]. "Stabat Mater" *The Kristeva Reader*, Toril Moi, ed. London: Basil Blackwell. 160–86.

**Maria Lugones. 1987. "Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception," *Hypatia*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (Summer) 3-19.

**Annie Leclerc 1992 [1987] "Woman's World," *Feminist Philosophies*, Janet A. Kourany, James P. Sterba, and Rosemarie Tong, eds. New York: Prentice Hall. 362–65.

**Hélène Cixous. 2001 [1975]. "The Laugh of the Medusa," in *Feminisim—Art Theory*. Hilary Robinson, ed. Malden, MA: Basil Blackwell 627–35.

**Luce Irigaray. 1992 [1985]. "Questions," *Feminist Philosophies*, Janet A. Kourany, James P. Sterba, and Rosemarie Tong, eds. New York: Prentice Hall. [From *This Sex Which is Not One*] 372–77.

** Luce Irigaray. 1991. [1985] "Women-amongst-themselves: creating a woman-to-woman sociality. *The Irigaray Reader* Margaret Whitford, ed. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell. 190–197.

Recommended—Student Led Discussion:

Maria Lugones. 2003. "On the Logic of Pluralist Feminism" *Pilgramages=Peregrinajes*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. 65–77.

Hélène Cixous. 1992 [1980]. "Sorties," *Feminist Philosophies*, Janet A. Kourany, James P. Sterba, and Rosemarie Tong, eds. New York: Prentice Hall. 366–71.

Luce Irigaray. 1991. [1982] "Sexual Difference" and [1975] "The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine," *The Irigaray Reader* Margaret Whitford, ed. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell. 118–132, 157–164.

Luce Irigaray. 1985.
 Woman, Science's Unknown, 13–24
 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.

Film: Mohsen Makhmalbaf (2001) Kandahar
 **View Before Class

Read:

**Seyla Benhabib. 1992. "Feminism and the Question of Postmodernism," *Situating the Self*. New York: Routledge. 203–41.

Recommended—Student Led Discussion:

Hélène Cixous. 1998. "My Algeriance, in other words: to Depart not to arrive from Algeria" *Stigmata*. London: Routledge.152–72.

Reina Lewis. 1996. *Gendering Orientalism*, New York: Routledge. "Race Femininity and Representation" 12– 52 and "Gendering Orientalism" 236–40.

Marnia Lazreg 1988. "Feminism and Difference: The Perils of Writing as a Woman on Women in Algeria," *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 1 (Spring), 81-107.

Thurs Feb 21 Constructing Gender and Polity

Read:

**Monique Wittig. 1992. *The Straight Mind*, "The Straight Mind" and "The Social Contract" 21–32 and 33–45. Boston: Beacon Press.

**Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger. 1991, "Introduction," *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, (New York: Routledge) 1–20.

Recommended—Student Led Discussion:

Iris Marion Young. 2003. "Feminist Reactions to the Contemporary Security Regime," *Hypatia*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Feminist Philosophy and the Problem of Evil (Winter) pp. 223-231.

Geraldine Heng and Janadas Devan. 1991. "State Fatherhood: The Politics of Nationalism, Sexuality and Race in Singapore," *Nationalisms and Sexualities*, Andrew Parker, Mary Russo, Doris Sommer, and Patricia Yaeger eds. (New York: Routledge) 343–364.

Bat-Ami Bar On. 2003. "Terrorism, Evil, and Everyday Depravity," *Hypatia*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Feminist Philosophy and the Problem of Evil (Winter) 157-163.

Catharine MacKinnon. 2000. "Postmodernism and Human Rights" *Are Women Human?* Cambridge: Belknap Press 44–63.

Tues Feb 26 Feminist Theory Applied: Ecofeminism and Reproduction

Read: **Vandana Shiva 1993. "Women's Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity Conservation," Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva *Ecofeminisms*. London: Zed Books. 164–173.

**Maria Mies. 1993. "New Reproductive Technologies: Sexist and Racist Implications" London: Zed Books. 174–197.

Recommended—Student Led Discussion:

Rosemary Tong. 1992. "The Overdue Death of a Feminist Chameleon: Taking a Stand of Surrogacy Arrangements," *The Ethics of Reproductive Technology*, Kenneth Alpern, ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 277–97.

Donna Haraway, Ch 9 "Situated Knowledge," *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* New York: Routledge. 183–201.

Karen Warren. 2000. "What are Ecofeminists Saying," *Ecofeminist Philosophy*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield. 21–41.

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

Thurs Feb 28 Feminist Theory Applied: Terrorism and Evil

Read:

**Robin May Schott. 2003. "Introduction: Special Issue on 'Feminist Philosophy and the Problem of Evil'" *Hypatia*. Vol. 18, No. 1, Feminist Philosophy and the Problem of Evil (Winter) 1-9.

**Claudia Card. 2003. "Genocide and Social Death," *Hypatia*, V. 18, No. 1, Feminist Philosophy and the Problem of Evil (Winter) 63-79.

Recommended—Student Led Discussion:

Mary Anne Franks. 2003. "Obscene Undersides: Women and Evil between the Taliban and the United States," *Hypatia*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Feminist Philosophy and the Problem of Evil (Winter), 135-156.

Debra Bergoffen. 2003. "February 22, 2001: Toward a Politics of the Vulnerable Body," *Hypatia*, Vol. 18, No. 1, Feminist Philosophy and the Problem of Evil (Winter) 116-134

Jennifer Geddes. 2003. "Banal Evil and Useless Knowledge: Hannah Arendt and Charlotte Delbo on Evil after the Holocaust,"

Hypatia, Vol. 18, No. 1, Feminist Philosophy and the Problem of
Evil (Winter) 104-115.

Tues Mar 5 Presentations

Thurs Mar 7 Presentations

***** Media Critique Or Take Home Exam Due in Class *****