

Political Science 116A: Feminist Theory

UCSD Spring 2008
MWF, 2:00-2:50pm
Sequoyah Hall, Rm. 147
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Wednesday 11:00am-12:30pm
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Scope of the Course: In this course we will explore some of the issues with which feminist theorists have been grappling, both historically and in the present. As you will discover, there is no unitary feminist theory. There is overlap, but there are also marked differences among the approaches that feminists have taken in their pursuit of social change, and with the goal of establishing a more just social order. As we work through the course, we will explore the strengths of the approaches we encounter, looking at how they may or may not help us understand and confront our own gendered existence. We will also examine recurrent themes of subjectivity, belonging, becoming, and participating in and contesting one’s communities.

Expectations: I expect you to **read** the assigned material for each class **before** you come to class that morning. I will provide study questions for each day’s assigned reading, which will help you better understand the material and **participate** in class discussions. I expect each of you to be part of conversations that will help us all work through material that can be very complex, challenging, and that will demand careful, thoughtful attention. I also expect all classroom interactions to be respectful of others and of yourself (this includes turning off all noise-making electronic devices).

Course Materials: The articles required for this course are available via electronic reserves from the UCSD library website. Reading questions and this syllabus will be available (in .pdf format) for download at the course webpage.

Your Grade: Final grades will be determined as follows:
reading quizzes (2 points each, highest 5) 10%
a midterm exam 45%
an 8-10 page (2000-2500 words) final essay 45%

Quizzes are in-class quizzes. No makeup quizzes will be given. No late papers will be accepted nor makeup exams given without proper documentation and instructor’s approval. Makeup exams must be taken within 10 days of the missed exam. Your final essay will be submitted online via GoogleDocs (information to follow).

Cheating or plagiarism will result in zero credit for the assignment in question, may result in a failing grade for the class, and you will be referred to your dean for disciplinary action, in accordance with the University’s academic dishonesty policy (<http://www-senate.ucsd.edu/manual/Appendices/app2.htm>).

Schedule of Courses:

Week 1: Monday 3/31 – Course Introduction

Wednesday 4/2 – Why Feminism?

- Seneca Falls Declaration (handout)
- “Riot Grrrl Is...” (handout)

Friday 4/4 – Foundations of Liberal Feminism

- Sojourner Truth “Ain’t I A Woman?” (*Oxford Book of Women’s Writing in the U.S.* p.441-442)
- Mary Wollstonecraft, “A Vindication of the Rights of Woman” (Everyman Classics edition, “Author’s Introduction” p.3-7, “Chapter XII” p.185-92)

Week 2: Monday 4/7 – Liberal Theory and Feminist Politics

- Kathy Rudy, “Liberal Theory and Feminist Politics” (*Women & Politics*, v. 20(2) 1999: 33-57)

Wednesday 4/9 – Marxist and Socialist Feminisms I

- Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, “Communist Manifesto” & “Origins of Family, Private Property and the State” (selections -- *Marx Engels Reader*, p.487-489 & 734-744)

Friday 4/11 – Marxist and Socialist Feminisms II

- “Combahee River Collective Statement” (B. Smith, ed. *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology* p.264-74 [2000], p.272-82 [1983])
- Monique Wittig, “One is Not Born a Woman” (*The Straight Mind and Other Essays* p.9-20)

Week 3: Monday 4/14 – Feminism and the State I

- Kum-Kum Bhavnani and Margaret Coulson, “Transforming Socialist Feminism: The Challenge of Racism” (*Feminist Review* #23, p.81-92)

Wednesday 4/16 – Feminism and the State II

- Wendy Brown, “Finding the Man in the State” (*Feminist Studies* 18, #1, 1992 p.8-34)

Friday 4/18 – Feminism and the State III

- Lisa Duggan, “Queering the State” (in *Sex Wars: Sexual Dissent and Political Culture*, p.179-193; cf. *Social Text* 39, Summer 1994, p.1-14)

Week 4: Monday 4/21 – Feminism and U.S. Institutions

- Mary Hawkesworth, “Congressional Enactments of Race–Gender: Toward a Theory of Raced–Gendered Institutions” (*American Political Science Review* v.97, #4, Nov 2003, p. 529-550)

Wednesday 4/23 – Feminism and Race I

- Patricia Hill Collins, “The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought” (*Signs* 14:4, 1989, p.745-773)

Friday 4/25 – Feminism and Race II

- Kimberle Crenshaw, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics” in Weisberg, ed., *Feminist Legal Theory: Foundations*, p.383-395)

Week 5: Monday 4/28 – Feminism and Race III

- Gloria Anzaldúa, ch. 7 of *Borderlands: La Frontera* (p.77-91, notes p.97-98)
- Patricia Williams, “Hate Radio: Why we need to tune in to Limbaugh and Stern,” (*Ms.* March/April 1994, p.25-29)

Wednesday 4/30 – Feminism and Race IV

- Ien Ang, “I’m a feminist but... ‘Other’ women and postnational feminism” (excerpted in *Feminism and Race*, ed. Kum-Kum Bhavnani, p.394-409)

Friday 5/2 – Midterm Exam (bring a bluebook and a pen)

Week 6: Monday 5/5 – Post-Colonial Feminisms

- Trinh T. Minh-Ha “Not you/like you: postcolonial women and the interlocking questions of identity and difference” (*Inscriptions* 3/4: 71-77)
- Aihwa Ong, “Colonialism and Modernity” (*Inscriptions* 3/4: 79-93)

Wednesday 5/7 – Psychoanalytic Feminism I

- Freud, “On Femininity” (Lecture XXXIII, *The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey, vol.XXII, p.112-135)

Friday 5/9 – No class meetingWeek 7: Monday 5/12 – Psychoanalytic Feminism II

- Hortense Spillers, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe” (*diacritics* 17, #2, Summer 1987, p.65-81)

Wednesday 5/14 – Troubling Femininity I

- Simone de Beauvoir, “Introduction” to *The Second Sex* (p.xix-xxxvi)

Friday 5/16 – Troubling Femininity II

- Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, p.1-34 and 142-149

Week 8: Monday 5/19 – Troubling Femininity III

- Rosi Braidotti, “The Politics of Ontological Difference” (*Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis*, ed. T. Brennan, p.89-105)

Wednesday 5/21 – Troubling Masculinity

- In-class Film: *Tough Guise*

Friday 5/23 – Feminism and Transgender Theory

- Bernice L. Hausman, “Recent Transgender Theory” (*Feminist Studies*, V.27, #2, Summer 2001, p.465-490)

Week 9: Monday 5/26 – No class meeting – Memorial DayWednesday 5/28 – Feminism in Postmodernity I

- Judith Butler “Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of ‘Postmodernism’” (*Praxis International*, v.11, #2, July 1991, p.150-165)

Friday 5/30 – Feminism in Postmodernity II

- bell hooks, “Postmodern Blackness” (*Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics*, 1990 p.23-31)

Week 10: Monday 6/2 – Postfeminism?

- M. Hawkesworth, “The Semiotics of Premature Burial: Feminism in a Postfeminist Age” (*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society*; Summer 2004, v. 29 # 4, p.961-986)

Wednesday 6/4 – Activism and Engagement I

- Chela Sandoval, “U.S. Third World Feminism: The Theory and Method of Oppositional Consciousness in the Postmodern World” (*Genders* #10, U of Texas P, 1991, p.1-23)

Friday 6/6 – Activism and Engagement II

- Milan Women’s Bookstore Collective, “Introduction” (*Sexual Difference* p.25-34)

Friday 6/13 – Final Essay Due: Submit via GoogleDocs by 3pm