



GWS 449: FEMINISM AND SOCIAL AND CULTURAL THEORY

Gender, Race, Colonization, Capitalism

Fall 2018

Tuesday/Thursday 9:30-10:45 am

Sterling 2301

INSTRUCTOR

Annie Menzel

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Office: 3416 Sterling Hall

Office hours: Thursdays 1-3 pm, and by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course begins with the premise that we cannot understand gender oppression without understanding the ongoing histories of racism, colonization, and capitalist exploitation through which modern Western gender and kinship categories emerged. Conversely, concepts and practices of gender justice and liberation require a deep understanding of the resistances that have shaped these histories from the start. We will engage with feminist and race and gender theorists who chart the complex relations between patriarchy/heterosexism and racial slavery, conquest, Indigenous dispossession and genocide, and racial capitalism, as well as the relations between gender and abolition, justice movements, and decolonization.

The course is divided into three units: 1) *Slavery and its Afterlives: Foregrounding Antiblackness*; 2) *Structure Not Event: Foregrounding Settler Colonialism*; 3) *Interlinked Chains: Capitalism and Incarceration*.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students who successfully complete this course will be able to:

- Define and use feminist political theoretical, Black feminist, decolonial and indigenous feminist, abolitionist, and Marxist feminist theoretical frameworks to analyze historical and contemporary gender in “the West”
- Understand how histories of racial, sexual, economic, and colonial domination and resistance continue to shape gender in the present
- Put historical texts and contemporary research on these themes in generative dialogue
- Explicate and deploy concepts and themes central to recent feminist political thinking, including but not limited to: gender, kinship, racism, colonialism, exploitation, “the human,” the body, abolition, care, and power.
- Carry out an independent comparative analysis of one of the core course concepts in a representative selection of course readings

COURSE INFORMATION

This is a 3-credit course. The class meets for two 75-minute periods each week over the spring semester and carries the expectation that students will work on course learning activities (reading, writing, studying, etc) for about 3 hours out of classroom for every class period.

- Counts toward 50% graduate coursework requirement
- Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S

GRADES

Student grades will be based on the following:

<i>ITEM</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>DUE DATE</i>
Participation	15%	Ongoing, every class
Keyword Entry I	15%	October 9
Keyword Entry II	15%	November 1
Keyword Entry III	15%	December 6
Conceptual Analysis Abstract	10%	November 20
Conceptual Analysis Paper	30%	December 20

Final grades will be assessed in the following manner:

A=93-100 B=83-87 C=70-77
 AB=88-92 BC=78-82 D=65-69 F=under 65

Honors Option: Complete a second conceptual analysis paper, focusing on a concept different than your primary paper. Please notify me by the end of Week 3 if you plan to pursue the honors option.

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- Counts toward 50% graduate coursework requirement
- Biological Sciences course, counts toward the Natural Science requirement
- Counts as Liberal Arts and Science credit in L&S

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course Materials

Books: (Available at Room of One's Own)

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* ([1861] 2012), Dover Thrift Edition
Roxane Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* (2015),
Beacon Press

Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch* (2004), Autonomedia

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* (2018),
Arsenal Pulp Press.

You may use any edition of the text by Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. The other required books have only one edition.

Canvas: Assigned readings and links are posted in PDF form on the Canvas course site.

Exams and Assignments

- You are expected to **complete the reading(s)** before each class, and **bring the reading(s) to class**, either on a device or in print form.
- You will complete **three KEYWORD ENTRIES** of approximately 4-5 double-spaced pages, corresponding to each of the three units. The response is due to Canvas at 9 pm on the due dates indicated on the syllabus. Detailed instructions for these assignments will be handed out in Week 2.
- A **COMPARATIVE CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS PAPER** of approximately 8-10 double-spaced pages will put two or more of the course readings in

dialogue, offering a detailed examination of one key course theme via a careful comparative reading of the texts.

- There is no final exam for this course.

Participation

Because the discussion of readings is a major component of this course, you will be graded on your preparation for and involvement in class.

We will frequently do short in-class writing assignments. I will collect some of these for part of your participation grade (I will always let you know if they will be collected). Participation will also be assessed from the quality of your engagement in small-group discussions.

Students are expected to complete the assigned readings before coming to class and to take responsibility as active participants in class discussions. You should come to class prepared to engage in thoughtful and constructive conversation that is respectful of others in the classroom and takes seriously the issues and themes presented in the readings.

A participation grade will be assigned for each class meeting according to the following criteria:

0 Absent

1

- Present, not disruptive.
- Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion.
- Minimal effort in writing exercise

2

- Demonstrates adequate preparation: knows basic case or reading facts, though little analysis or interpretation
- Offers straightforward information (e.g., straight from the case or reading), without elaboration or very infrequently (perhaps once a class).
- Actively listens
- Participates in writing exercise
- Demonstrates sporadic involvement.

3

- Demonstrates good preparation: knows case or reading facts well, has thought through implications of them.
- Offers interpretations and analysis of case material (more than just facts) to class.

- Actively listens
- Contributes well to large and small group discussion: responds to other students' points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way,
- Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement.
- Significant effort in writing exercises

4

- Demonstrates excellent preparation: has analyzed case exceptionally well, relating it to readings and other material
- Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of course material, develops new approaches/questions that take the class further.
- Significant effort in writing exercises
- Contributes in a very significant way to large and small group discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments,
- Actively listens
- Demonstrates ongoing very active involvement.

Discussion Guidelines

Discussion participation and silence often manifest structural power differentials. The historical and contemporary forms of oppression, violence, and resistance that shape racial, class, gender, ability, citizenship, and sexuality differentials in reproductive health also shape this campus. The classroom cannot be a "safe space," but my hope is that it can be a space of learning and growth.

In order to foster such a space, the following guidelines and discussion starters were developed by experienced social justice educators Özlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo. These guidelines are "intended to recognize and respond to unequal power relations in the room, help more reticent students speak up, help more dominant students slow down, and guide open and humble entry into the conversation."

- Strive for intellectual humility. Be willing to grapple with challenging ideas.
- Differentiate between opinion—which everyone has—and informed knowledge, which comes from sustained experience, study, and practice. Hold your opinions lightly and with humility.
- Let go of personal anecdotal evidence (e.g. "I don't feel I have ever been personally impacted by sexism") and look at broader group-level patterns.
- Notice your own defensive reactions and attempt to use these reactions as entry points for gaining deeper self-knowledge, rather than as a rationale for closing off.

- Recognize how your own social positionality (e.g., race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, citizenship) informs your perspectives and reactions to your instructor, other course members, and those whose work you study.
- Differentiate between safety and comfort. Accept discomfort as necessary for social justice growth.
- Identify where your learning edge is and push it. For example, whenever you think, *I already know this*, ask yourself, *How can I take this deeper?* Or, *How am I applying in practice what I already know?*

Discussion Starters

- I'm really nervous/scared/uncomfortable to say [X], but . . .
- From my experience/perspective as [identity], . . .
- Can you help me understand whether what I'm thinking right now might be problematic?
- This is what I understand you to be saying: . . . Is that accurate?
- I've been wondering about how we are using [term] in this discussion . . .
- How would you respond to [X] from a [e.g. Marxist feminist] framework?
- I am having a "yeah, but..." (sceptical/defensive) moment. Can you help me work through it?

Adapted from Özlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo, *Respect Differences? Challenging the Common Guidelines in Social Justice Education. Democracy and Education* 22:1 (2014), p. 8.

Attendance

Attendance in this class is required and essential for our collective learning process. I will not take attendance daily, but absences can hurt your grade in various ways. If you are not present, you will lose that day's opportunity for participation points. Also, lecture notes and slides will not be posted online, and these will always comprise at least some information not contained in the readings.

At the same time, I understand that life happens. If you are going to miss a class, please let me know in advance if possible.

Religious Holidays: Absences due to religious holidays will not be penalized. Please inform me at least one week in advance if you are missing a class for religious reasons.

If any problems arise, either academic or personal, that might jeopardize your participation in the course, please try to inform me of the problem and set up an appointment with me as soon as possible.

Classroom Conduct

Please respect your fellow students' right to a quiet and non-distracting learning environment. **Cell phone use, websurfing, texting, IMing, and other distractions**

of modern life are not allowed during class. Please turn off your phone as soon as you enter the classroom.

Assignment Submission and Late Work

Assignments are due by the time and date specified on the syllabus as an upload to Canvas. Email attachments will not be accepted except as a time stamp (e.g. if Canvas is not functioning, send the assignment to me and then upload it later that day).

Assignments submitted after the specified due date and time will be deducted 5 percentage points per 24 hours. For example, if an assignment is passed in one day late, the highest possible grade that the student could earn would be a 95 rather than an 100; if the assignment is two dates late, the highest possible grade would be an 90. I will not accept assignments more than five days after the original due date. Incomplete final grades will not be given EXCEPT in situations of serious illness or family emergency, which must be documented.

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Where to Take Concerns about the Course

If you have questions or concerns about course content, your grade, or any other important issue related to this class, please speak to me. If the question or concern is still not resolved, or if you do not feel comfortable speaking with me directly about your concern, make an appointment with the Chair of the Gender & Women's Studies Department, Dr. Aili Tripp, by emailing atripp@wisc.edu. She will attempt to resolve the issue and inform you of the Appeals Procedure if no resolution is reached informally.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is critical to maintaining fair and knowledge based learning at UW-Madison. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation and will have serious consequences, per university policy.

If you present the words or ideas of others without giving them proper credit, you are guilty of plagiarism. It is your responsibility to learn what constitutes plagiarism and the correct rules for citing sources. Please refer to the Dean of Students' web page for further information:

www.wisc.edu/students/amsum.htm

Disability Access

In order to receive disability-related academic accommodations in GWS 449, students must first be registered with the McBurney Disability Resource Center

(<http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>). Students who have or think they may have a disability are invited to contact the McBurney Center for a confidential discussion at 608-263-2741 (phone), 608-225-7956 (text), or by email at mcburney@studentlife.wisc.edu.

If you have already registered with the McBurney Center, and if you wish to request any accommodations on the basis of disability, you should schedule an office appointment with me **within the first two weeks of the semester**. Please schedule this office appointment by email. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach me before or after class to discuss your accommodation needs. Please bring a copy of your service plan to our meeting.

Please note that I am unlikely to honor an accommodation request made within 72 hours of an assignment due date. Advanced planning on your part enables both of us to create an accessible classroom environment. Please do not delay in contacting me regarding your accommodation requests.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Week 1 Introduction

Th September 6

Introductory discussion, syllabus review

UNIT 1: Slavery and its Afterlives: Foregrounding Antiracism

Week 2

T September 11

Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women* (2004), Introduction and Ch. 1, "Some Could Suckle over Their Shoulders," pp. 1-49.

Th September 13

Angela Davis, *Reflections on the Black Woman's Role in the Community of Slaves*, *The Black Scholar* (1971) 3:4, 2-15.

Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (1981), Ch. 1, "Standards for a New Womanhood," pp. 3-29.

Daniel Patrick Moynihan, "The Negro Family: The Case for National Action," short selection TBD

Week 3

T September 18

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, selection, pages TBD

Th September 20

Harriet Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, selection, pages TBD

Week 4

T September 25

Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection* (1996), selection from Chapter 3, "Seduction and the Ruses of Power," pp. 94-112.

Th September 27

Jasmine Syedullah, "Harriet Jacobs' Abolitionism" (forthcoming)

Week 5

T October 2

Hortense Spillers, *Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book* *Diacritics* (1987), 64-81.

Th October 4

C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* (2017), Chapter 1, "Anatomically Speaking," pp. 17-53

In class: Doreen Garner performance art video and discussion

Week 6

T October 9

Kyla Schuller, *The Biopolitics of Feeling* (2017), Chapter 3, "Vaginal Impressions," pp. 100-133

KEYWORD ENTRY 1 DUE AT 9 PM

UNIT 2: Structure Not Event: Foregrounding Settler Colonialism

Th October 11

Roxane Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous People's History of the United States* (2014), selection TBD

Week 7

Th October 18

Roxane Dunbar-Ortiz, *An Indigenous People's History of the United States*, selection TBD

Week 8

T October 23

Required:

Wolfe, Patrick. 2006. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8(4): 387-409.

Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill. Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy. *Feminist Formations*, Volume 25, Issue 1, Spring 2013, pp. 8-34.

Recommended:

Audra Simpson (Kahnawake Mohawk), "The State is a Man: Theresa Spence, Loretta Saunders and the Gender of Settler Sovereignty," (2016), *Theory & Event* 19(4).

Th October 25

Dhillon, Jaskiran. "Indigenous Girls and the Violence of Settler Colonial Policing." *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education, and Society*, (2015) 4(2): 1-31.

Sarah Deer (Muscogee), "The Beginning and End of Rape" (2017), video presentation

Week 9

T October 30

Lugones, Maria. "Heterosexualism and the Colonial / Modern Gender System." 2007. *Hypatia* 22(1): 186-209.

Miranda, Deborah A. (Ohlone-Costanoan Esselen Nation, Chumash). 2010. "Extermination of the Joyas: Gendercide in Spanish California." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16(1-2): 253-84.

Th November 1

Alexis Shotwell, *Against Purity: Living Ethically in Compromised Times*, selection TBD

KEYWORD ENTRY 2 DUE AT 9 PM

UNIT 3: Interlinked Chains: Racial Capitalism and Incarceration

Week 10

T November 6

Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch* (2004), selection TBD

Th November 8

NO CLASS, INSTRUCTOR TRAVEL

Week 11

T November 13

Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch* (2004), selection TBD

Th November 15

Claudia Jones, "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of the Negro Woman!"
Political Affairs (1949), 3-19.

Selma James, "Sex, Race, and Class" (1974), in in *Sex, Race, and Class*, 92-102

Selma James, "Hookers in the House of the Lord" (1985), in *Sex, Race, and Class*,
110-129

Week 12

T November 20

Combahee River Collective Statement (1977)

Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River
Collective* (2017), "Introduction."

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS ABSTRACTS DUE AT 9 PM

Th November 22

NO CLASS

Week 13

T November 27

Angela Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (2003), selection TBD

Th November 29

Eric Stanley and Nat Smith, Eds, *Captive Genders: Trans Embodiment and the Prison*

Industrial Complex, 2nd edition (2015), selections TBD

Week 14

T December 4

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* (2018),
selection TBD

Th December 6

Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* (2018),
selection TBD

KEYWORD ENTRY 3 DUE AT 9 PM

Week 15

T December 11

Final discussion and send-off

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS PAPER DUE DECEMBER 20 AT 9 PM

I reserve the right to amend this syllabus over the course of the semester.

Please contact me as soon as possible if you need clarification on any aspect of the course objectives, requirements, material, deadlines, and/or grading criteria.