GENDER AND WOMEN'S STUDIES (441)
CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST THEORIES

Fall 2017
T, TH 11:00-12:15 PM
Sterling 1335

Professor Keisha Lindsay
Room 3311-Sterling Hall
263-2763

Office Hours:
Tuesdays 8:45-9:45 AM
Thursdays 12:30-1:30 PM

Course Description and Objectives:
The aim of this discussion based course is to critically examine key issues, questions, and
debates in contemporary feminist theory from the 1970s to the present. We begin by
exploring contemporary liberal, radical, and materialist feminist thought and the socio-
economic and political contexts in which these theoretical perspectives arise. Our aim in
section one of the course is less about comprehensiveness and more about beginning to
understand the key ideas, assumptions, and silences that motivate contemporary feminist
theorists’ debates about a range of concepts including but not limited to community,
equality, and liberty. Section two explores specific themes in contemporary feminist theory.
We will focus on postmodern and other feminist theorists’ understandings of the body,
sexuality, masculinity, and race. The final section of the course explores how contemporary
feminist theorists utilize gender as a category of analysis. Chief among the questions we will
explore in this section are the following: Is gender the social and cultural interpretation of
male/female biological difference? Or is gender anything but divisible by two? What about
claims that gender necessarily “intersects” with race, class, and sexuality? What, finally, is the
relationship between how we utilize gender as a category of analysis and our feminist theory
and practice in the classroom, the workplace, and the family?

Each section of the course will: 1) help develop the analytical skills necessary to think critically
about feminism and gender; 2) pay particular attention to how feminist theory shapes and is
shaped by other hierarchies of power including race and sexuality and 3) draw on a range of
texts and films to situate feminist theory not only as an intellectual project but as a
personal and an activist one. Our ultimate aim is to build the skills and background that will
enable us to apply these ideas and approaches to our own intellectual and political projects.

This is also a writing-intensive course which means that we will employ various writing activities
that are closely integrated with course readings. Written work will include two one-page
“reflection” papers; a formal five-page mid-term essay (which is revised); and a formal seven to
eight-page final essay (which is revised). Each writing assignment requires increasingly
complex and sophisticated analysis of course material. Each student will also have the
opportunity to work with the Writing Fellows assigned to the course. Two key principles
inform the Writing Fellows Program. The first is that all writers, no matter how accomplished,
can improve their writing by sharing work-in-progress and making revisions based on
constructive criticism; the second is that collaboration among student peers is an especially
effective mode of learning. The Writing Fellows assigned to the course will review your draft
mid-term essay and draft final essay.
Course Readings:
A required course pack/reader is available at the L & S Social Science Copy Center, 6120 Social Science Building, 1180 Observatory Drive, Tel: 262-5396

The following special order text is required: The Feminist Philosophy Reader (sections 2, 4 and, 8 only). Copies are available at A Room of One’s Own Bookstore, 315 W. Gorham St., 257-7888. The text is also on reserve at the Undergraduate Library, Helen C. White Building.

Course Requirements:
Attending class and participating in class discussion (10%) You must sign the sign-in sheet at the beginning of every class, except for the first two classes when I will take attendance. You are allowed two absences. Any absences greater than this number will drop your participation grade by one full letter grade regardless of the extent to which you participate in class discussions. If you miss more than half of all of the class meetings without a satisfactory explanation you will receive a failing grade for the course. I will drop your participation grade by one full letter grade if you fail to attend your two mandatory Writing Fellow conferences.

Reflection Papers (15%) You will submit a total of two reflection papers during the semester. Use reflection papers to comment on anything that you find contradictory, controversial, confusing or otherwise noteworthy in each of the assigned readings for a given class session. Your papers may seek clarification of particular terms or ideas; they may challenge the author(s)’ presumptions; they may interrogate the implications of the author(s)’ claims; or they may attempt to relate assigned readings to materials beyond the course. Please end each of your reflection papers with two specific questions for class discussion. Reflection papers are intended to keep you engaged with the readings. They should not be used to provide detailed summaries of the assigned texts. Each paper must be between 250 to 275 words long.

We will use Learn@UW for reflection papers. You can access Learn@UW from the University of Wisconsin’s home page. Please cut and paste your papers directly into the relevant text box (no attachments). Reflection papers are due at noon via learn@uw on the day before class. You must be present in class to solicit responses to and receive credit for your reflection papers. If you are absent you must write an additional reflection paper (and be present in class to discuss it) in order to receive “make up” credit.

Mid-Term Essay (35%) The first draft of your five-page mid-term essay is due on OCTOBER 16 AT 2:00 PM. I will drop your final mid-term essay grade by one full letter grade if you fail to submit a draft mid-term essay. A revised copy of your mid-term essay (hard copy only) is due in my office on OCTOBER 30 AT 2:00 PM.

Final Essay (40%) The first draft of your seven to eight-page final essay is due on NOVEMBER 27 at 2:00 PM. I will drop your final essay grade by one full letter grade if you fail to submit a draft final essay. A revised copy of your final essay (hard copy only) is due in my office on DECEMBER 15 at 2:00 PM.

Classroom Conduct: Cell phones, laptops, and their accompanying devices are NOT allowed during class in order to facilitate a non-distracting and intellectually productive learning environment. If you are found using any of these devices your attendance will be “zeroed” for
the day in question. “Testing” is not a valid excuse for using any of the above devices during class.

**Email Communication:** I aim to respond to student emails within a 24-hour period Monday to Friday.

**Statement on Grade Related Questions and Appeals:**
If you have questions about a grade, please speak to me first. If the question is not resolved, speak with the Chair, Aili Tripp, who will attempt to resolve the issue informally and inform you of the Appeals Procedures if no resolution is reached informally. I will only discuss questions about grades during office hours or by appointment - not over email or before/after class. Final grades will be determined according to the following official UW grading scale: A 93-100; AB 88-92; B 83-87; BC 78-82; C 70-77; D 60-69; F below 60.

**Late Paper Policy:** Papers and exams turned in late will be penalized by ten (10) percentage points for each 24-hour period after the due date.

**Academic Misconduct (Plagiarism and Cheating):** By enrolling in this course, each student assumes the responsibilities of an active participant in UW-Madison’s community of scholars in which everyone’s academic work and behavior are held to the highest academic integrity standards. Academic misconduct compromises the integrity of the university. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these acts are examples of academic misconduct, which can result in disciplinary action. This includes but is not limited to failure on the assignment/course, disciplinary probation, or suspension. Substantial or repeated cases of misconduct will be forwarded to the Office of Student Conduct & Community Standards for additional review. For more information, refer to studentconduct.wiscweb.wisc.edu/academic-integrity/.

**Writing Center:** For additional help with papers, visit the Writing Center at any stage during the writing process. Stop by 6171 Helen C. White, call for an appointment (263-1992), or consult the Center’s resources online at www.wisc.edu/writing/.

**Accessibility:** The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student’s educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

**Section One: Roadmaps to Contemporary Feminist Theory**

**Introduction - What is Feminist Theory?**

**September 7:**
Meet and Greet/Review Syllabus
September 12:
Audre Lorde. “The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House” (FPR)
Charlotte Bunch. "Not by Degrees: Feminist Theory and Education"
Maria Lugones and Elizabeth Spelman. "Have We Got a Theory for You: Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism and the Demand for' The Woman's Voice"

**Liberal Feminisms**

September 14:
Martha Nussbaum. “Feminism, Internationalism, Liberalism”
Marilyn Friedman. “Autonomy, Social Disruption, and Women” (FPR)

September 19:
Sheryl Sandberg. “Introduction” and “The Leadership Ambition Gap”
Susan Okin. “Vulnerability by Marriage” (FPR)

**Radical/Cultural Feminisms**

September 21:
Radicalesbians. “The Woman Identified Woman”
Marilyn Frye. “Oppression” (FPR)

September 26:
Jane Alpert. “Mother Right”
Carol Gilligan. “Moral Orientation and Moral Development”

**Materialist Feminisms**

September 28:
Heidi Hartmann. “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism”
Chrys Ingraham. “Lifting the Veil”

October 3:
Film: Maid in America
Nancy Fraser. “After the Family Wage: Gender Equity and the Welfare State” (FPR)

**Section Two: Themes in Contemporary Feminist Theory**

**Bodies, Sexualities, and Sexual Practices**

October 5:
Catherine MacKinnon. “Sexuality” (FPR) 4
Ann Ferguson. "Sex War: The Debate Between Radical and Libertarian Feminists” (FPR)
Evelyn Hammonds. “Towards a Genealogy of Black Female Sexuality” (FPR) 4

October 10:
Marilyn Frye. “Willful Virgin or Do You Have to Be a Lesbian to Be a Feminist?”
Chris Cuomo. “Claiming the Right to Be Queer” (FPR)

October 12: IN-CLASS MIDTERM ESSAY REVIEW

**OCTOBER 16 at 2:00 PM – DRAFT MIDTERM DUE**
October 17:
Susan Bordo. “Reading the Slender Body”
Oyèrónké Oyeˇwùmí. Visualizing the Body: Western Theories and African Subjects”

**Masculinity and the Politics of Feminist Theorizing**
October 19:
Michael Kimmel. “Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame and Silence in Construction of Gender Identity”

October 24:
Diane Richardson and Victoria Robinson. “Theorizing Women's Studies Gender Studies and Masculinity: The Politics of Naming”
Judith Gardiner. “Introduction”

**Race, Post-Coloniality, and the Politics of Representation**
October 26:
Gloria Anzaldua. “La Conciencia de la Mestiza/Towards a New Consciousness” & "Haciendo Teorias”
Patricia Hill Collins. “Distinguishing Features of Black Feminist Thought”

**OCTOBER 30 at 2:00 PM – MIDTERM ESSAY DUE**

October 31:
FILM: They Call Me Muslim
Cynthia Enloe. “Updating the Gendered Empire” (FPR)

November 2:
Chandra Mohanty. “Under Western Eyes”

November 7:
Susan Okin. “Gender Inequality and Cultural Difference”
Maria Lugones. “Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception” (FPR)

**Section Three: Complicating Gender as a Feminist Category of Analysis**

**Intersectionality**
November 9:

November 14:
Peggy McIntosh. “White Privilege and Male Privilege” (FPR)

November 16:
Ange Marie Hancock. “Intersectionality as a Normative and Empirical Paradigm”

November 21: IN-CLASS FINAL ESSAY REVIEW

November 27 AT 2:00 PM – DRAFT FINAL ESSAY DUE

November 28:
FILM: Anita

Deconstructing the Tale of Two Genders?
November 30:
Judith Lorber. “Night to His Day”
Joan Scott. “Gender: Still A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?”

December 5:
Film: Juggling Gender
Judith Butler. “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution”

Theorizing Transgender
December 7:
Talia Bettcher. “Terminology”
Susan Stryker. “An Introduction to Transgender Terms and Concepts”

December 12:
Janice Raymond. “Sappho by Surgery: The Transsexually Constructed Lesbian”
Emi Koyama. “The Transfeminist Manifesto”
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. “Clarifying”

December 15 AT 2:00 PM – FINAL ESSAY DUE