

Theories in Women's & Gender Studies

WGS 403 Fall 2010
University of Alaska Fairbanks
Dr. To B. Announced
Days TBA August XX – December XX, 2009



Photo above: Rosie the Riveter Action Figure scouts the bookshelves for an interesting read. Drop by the Women's Center to visit Rosie and to check out the most extensive collection of feminist theory books on campus.

Course description

This class will explore the intellectual herstory of the modern women's movement. We will start our exploration in the late 18th century, and follow feminist theoretical ideas through to the present. Although we will mostly focus on western theoretical work, we will also delve into non-western ideas, especially as these critique western ideas about women and gender.

Course objectives

There are several primary objectives of the course, and they are listed below. For more details about how we will achieve these objectives, please see the section "Obtaining Our Objectives."

- to learn about the amazing depth, breadth, and elasticity of feminist theories
- to develop, hone, and practice our critical thinking skills
- to enable us to engage in our own feminist theory building
- to create and share our feminist theory vlogs with the world Outside
- to enjoy learning and to create a strong sense of community among ourselves

Prerequisites

WMS 201 or permission of instructor

Readings—required

Readings on E-Res: <http://eres.uaf.edu/courseindex.asp> password: TBA
You are required to study the readings thoroughly for every class.

Professor contact info

name: Dr. To B. Announced
office location: TBA
email: TBA
website: TBA
office hours: TBA or by appointment



Dr. To B. Announced

Grading and assignments

You can earn up to 100 points in this class.

Assignment	Points	Due date
Critical commentaries	3 @ 10 points each = 30 points	TBA
Vlog participation	3 @ 10 points each = 30 points	TBA
Manifesto	20 points	TBA
Ordinary participation	20 points	every class meeting

Grading scale

A+ = 97>	B + = 87-89	C+ = 77-79	D+ = 67-69	F <60
A = 93-96	B = 83-86	C = 73-76	D = 63-66	
A- = 90-92	B- = 80-82	C- = 70-72	D- = 60-62	



Critical commentaries

Students will write four critical commentaries on readings of their choice. Your commentaries should follow this format: 1) summary of the main points; 2) analysis of the strengths; 3) discussion of weaknesses; 4) an assessment of the value and continued importance of the work. In your assessment, you might want to consider how the author’s time period or material conditions might have affected hu work, and how hu ideas developed from an earlier theoretical approach. Critique, synthesize, and assess the ideas presented in the article. Your creativity and critical thinking are encouraged, but avoid over-using your personal experience and accidentally stumbling into the trap of ecological fallacy. Each critical commentary is worth 10 points. Follow this format: 3-5 pages typed, using 12 point type, double-spaced, 1” inch margins all around, stapled. Grammar, punctuation, organization and style all count! Use tools from your feminist theoretical toolbox liberally and demonstrate that you are thinking critically.

Vlog

As a class, we will create a vlog site where each of us will share our insights about the readings and our extension and critiques of each others’ vlog entries. [Note: by the time this course is offered, I am hoping that vlogging technologies will be freely available on campus. Details about how we will accomplish the vlogging will be described on the final syllabus for the course.]

Manifesto

Following the manifesto example passed out in class, write a manifesto on a feminist issue about which you are concerned. Describe the problem in feminist terms, and describe your proposed solution to the problem. Some hints: do not be afraid to be visionary or too radical. Avoid framing problems and solutions in individualist terms. Think about structure. The very best manifestos will be published on the class vlog.

Ordinary participation

For every class meeting, prepare a bulleted list of points you can use to participate in our discussion of the readings. This is called “ordinary participation” because it should be just that: ordinary, routine, and regular. You can earn up to 20 points for your ordinary participation in this course.

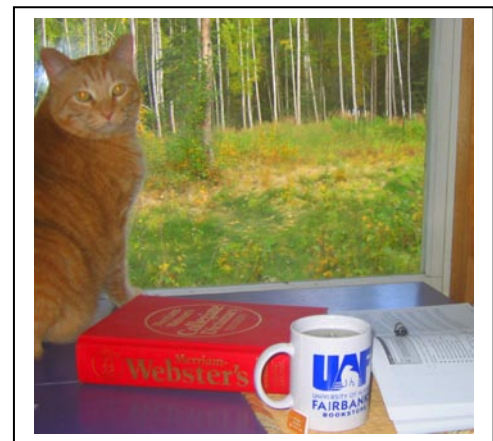
Achieving our course objectives

There are five major objectives of this course. The first objective is for students to learn about the amazing *depth* of feminist theories. We will achieve this objective by examining a series of feminist meta-theories that seek to explain what appear to be ahistorical universals of women's oppression. A second important objective of the course is for students to understand the *breadth* of feminist theoretical work. We will accomplish this by exploring a range of feminist theoretical works that focus on differences among and between women. As students will discover, differences based on culture, historical time period, ethnicity/race, sexuality, motherhood/non-motherhood, age, and other markers of difference often have theoretically vital consequences. The third objective of this course is for students to appreciate the *elasticity* of feminist theoretical work. We will do this by studying feminist theories as they have been articulated during four time periods that mark the modern women's movement, noting how theoretical approaches have shifted in response to the shifts in women's material conditions and in response to critiques both inside and outside of the movement. The fourth objective of the course is for students to practice their *critical thinking*. We will accomplish this by discussing how to critically examine feminist theories for their cultural biases, their universalizing tendencies, their gaps in vision, their failure to examine the importance of difference, their western biases, and other problems inherent in theoretical work. The fifth major objective of this course is to enable students to engage in their *own feminist theory building*. We will achieve this objective in several ways: working to encourage community building and the free exchange of feminist ideas and challenges; fostering a classroom environment where students are encouraged to dream about feminist possibilities, to dare to articulate their visions, and to plot strategies of action; daring to publish our work online in vlogs; and working as a class to support each other in building on the strong theoretical framework already articulated by several generations of our feminist foremothers.

Learning strategies

We will engage in many different classroom activities that will depend on each of us coming to class prepared to engage with the subject material. We will chat about the readings, watch videos, listen to feminist music, and enjoy each other's words. Be sure to come to class having thoroughly read and studied the readings so that you can fully participate in class activities. Plan to invest a minimum of two hours preparing for each class.

This class also will take a pedagogical approach that is consciously feminist. This feminist pedagogical approach will take several forms, and we may invent new forms as the course progresses. We will sit facing one another to encourage ordinary participation. Instead of traditional methods of testing student learning such as multiple-guess tests, there are alternative forms where students can demonstrate course competencies. A feminist pedagogical approach means much more work for the instructor than traditional teaching methods. And it might mean additional responsibilities for students as well, because this approach requires that we all challenge each other to do our very best work.



Sunny takes a break from studying. Note that Sunny reads with a dictionary handy, in case he discovers an unknown word in the readings.

Course policies

I may alter this syllabus at any time, but I will give notice when I do. If you have concerns about my policies, please contact me.

Contacting me

The best way to contact me is through email or by visiting my office hours. If my posted office hours don't work for you, email me to set an appointment or to text. I try to answer emails within 48 hours, but I do not check my email on weekends or at night. It is difficult to reach me by phone, and I will not return long distance calls.

Reading

Study the readings carefully so that you can effectively participate in class activities. Plan to commit sufficient time to do the reading in a comprehensive manner. This is an upper-level course, so please, no whining about reading.

Participation

I welcome lively participation in class, but you can only talk if you can demonstrate that you studied the readings and if you stay on topic. I expect you to be respectful of those who disagree with you. You do not have to agree with me, your student peers, or course material, but you **ARE** required to utilize course perspectives when talking or writing about your ideas.

Attendance

Regular and prompt attendance is required. You may miss up to four classes without penalty. After you miss four classes, expect to lose five (5) points per additional class missed regardless of the reason.

Due dates

Late assignments will not be accepted. Student presentations cannot be made up. If you miss your assigned day, you forfeit your points. I will not accept emailed assignments.

In class behavior

Please turn off your cellphone, close your laptop, and put away your PDA and other electronic toys. Please do not do craftwork in class or work on an assignment from another class. You are paying lots of money to take this class; please be an active participant by coming to class prepared to engage fully with the course material, with me, and with your student colleagues.

Extra credit

There are no possibilities for extra credit assignments.

Incompletes, Withdrawal

I will give an Incomplete grade (I) only in extremely rare circumstances. If after reviewing your documentation I decide to give you an Incomplete, your extension will be for only 30 days. UAF policy dictates that unresolved Incompletes become permanent Fs.

Academic Honesty

Expect an F and instructor-initiated withdrawal from the course if you are caught in an act of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, or falsification.

Disability

UAF's Disability Services Office offers assistance, including academic accommodations, to students who have a documented disability. Please contact them for more information: website: www.uaf.edu/chc/disability.html; phone: 907-474-7043; email: fydso@uaf.edu

Schedule

“Failure Is Impossible”¹: First Wave Feminist Ideas		
<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Reading assignments</i>
	Introduction to the class and to each other.	none
	Early articulations of women’s condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Wollstonecraft, “A Vindication of the Rights of Woman” • John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, “The Subjection of Women”
	Ways to get through: women’s communities and connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in 19th Century America”
	Extending the analysis of oppression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sarah Grimké, “Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Women” • Sojourner Truth, “Keeping the Thing Going While Things are Stirring”
	Two Rebels: Stanton and Wollstonecraft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Declaration of Sentiments” • Marjean D. Purinton, “Mary Wollstonecraft”
	Theorizing the origins of oppression: private property and religion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frederick Engels, “The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State” • Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “The Woman’s Bible”
	Extending materialist ideas to women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charlotte Perkins Gilman, “Women and Economics” • Emma Goldman, “The Traffic in Women”
	Elaborating examples of oppression: women’s paid work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother (Mary) Jones, “Girl Slaves of the Milwaukee Breweries” • Olive Schreiner, “Women and Labor”
	Suffrage as means and goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Francisco O. Ramirez; Yasemin Soysal; Suzanne Shanahan, “The Changing Logic of Political Citizenship: Cross-national Acquisition of Women’s Suffrage Rights, 1890 to 1990”
	Critiquing the ethnocentrism & class bias in suffragist strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane Cox, “Racism and Carrie Chapman Catt Today” • Philip N. Cohen, “Nationalism and Suffrage: Gender Struggle in Nation-Building America”

¹ Susan B. Anthony

“Her Emancipation Became a Real Menace”²: Feminist Theory From the Suffrage Era Through The “Doldrums”		
Bondage to her body: the rhetoric of reproductive freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Margaret Sanger, “Woman and the New Race” • Diane C. Haslett, “Hull House and the Birth Control Movement” 	
Sex, sexology, and the Progressive Era	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laura Abrams, “Guardians of Virtue: The Social Reformers and the ‘Girl Problem’, 1890-1920” • Stella Browne, “Studies in Feminine Inversion” 	
Developing women’s identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virginia Woolf, “A Room of One’s Own” • Karen Horney, “The Dread of Women” 	
Comrades on the Left	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kate Weigand, “Red Feminism: American Communism and the Making of Women’s Liberation” 	
Theorizing sex differences: tradition, realities, fictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Margaret Mead, “Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies” • Mary Ritter Beard, “Woman as a Force in History” 	
Disputing essentialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florynce Kennedy, “A Comparative Study: Accentuating the Similarities...of Women and Negroes” • Simone de Beauvoir, “The Second Sex” 	
“A Hunger That Food Cannot Fill”³: Early Second Wave Feminist Theories and Manifestoes		
Naming the “problem”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Betty Friedan, “The Feminine Mystique” • Shoshana Felman, “Women and Madness: the Critical Phallacy” 	
Materialism revisited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shulamith Firestone, “The Dialectic of Sex” • Heidi Hartmann, “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union” 	
Theorizing patriarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kate Millett, “Sexual Politics” • Eva Figes, “Patriarchal Attitudes” 	
Manifestoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redstockings Collective, “Redstockings Manifesto” • Valerie Solanas, “SCUM Manifesto” • Kimber Charles Pearce, “The Radical Feminist Manifesto as Generic Appropriation” 	
Linking revolutionary possibilities: Black power, Black women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary Ann Weathers, “An Argument for Black Women’s Liberation as a Revolutionary Force” • Pauli Murray, “Liberation of Black Women” 	
“Feminism is the theory, lesbianism is the practice ⁴ ”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Radicalesbians, “The Woman Identified Woman” • Alix Dobkin, “Lavender Jane is Born” 	

² Simone de Beauvoir

³ Betty Friedan

⁴ Ti-Grace Atkinson

“Mountain Moving Day is Coming”⁵: The Blossoming of Second Wave Possibilities		
	Theorizing institutional means of control: rape, family, and marriage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Susan Brownmiller, “Against Our Will: Men, Women, and Rape” • Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the Political Economy of Sex”
	Theorizing peace, war, and patriarchy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beth Junor, “Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp: A History of Non-Violent Resistance” • Susan Jeffords, “Masculinity as Excess in Vietnam Films: The Father/Son Dynamic of American Culture”
	Theorizing the Divine as Feminine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merlin Stone, “When God Was a Woman” • Elaine H. Pagels, “What Became of God the Mother?” • Rosemary Curb and Hannah Blue Heron, “Sister Mystics”
	Theorizing difference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement” • Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex” • Mitsuye Yamada, “Asian Pacific American Women and Feminism” • Franchild, “You Do So Well: A Blind Lesbian Responds to Her Sisters”
	Theorizing cultural constructs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sherry B. Ortner, “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?” • Mary Daly, “Gyn/Ecology • Carol Adams, “The Sexual Politics of Meat”
	Theorizing old women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older Women’s League, “Why OWL?” • Ti-Grace Atkinson, “The Older Woman” • Gentry et al., “A Joyous Passage”
	Theorizing sex, sexuality, and domination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” • Catharine A. MacKinnon, “Sexuality” • Patricia S. Mann, “Glancing at Pornography, Recognizing Men”
	Theorizing ethics and subjectivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carol Gilligan, “In a Different Voice” • Catherine Belsey, “Constructing the Subject: Deconstructing the Text”
	Theorizing separatist political possibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estelle Freedman, “Separatism as Strategy” • Gutter Dykes, “Over the Walls” • Marilyn Frye, “Reflections on Separatism and Power” • Sonia Johnson, “Going Out Of Our Minds”

⁵ Mountain Moving Day Collective

Theorizing the creation of a unique womyn's culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eder et al., "National Women's Music Fest" • Judy Chicago, "The Dinner Party" • Sine Anahita, "Love and Anger Woven Throughout: Conflict in Landdyke Communities"
Theorizing the psychoanalytic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nancy Chodorow, "The Reproduction of Mothering" • E. Ann Kaplan, "Is the Gaze Male?"
Theorizing ecofeminism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ynestra King, "Feminism and the Revolt of Nature" • Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Ecofeminism"
Critiques of western feminist theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" • Uma Narayan, "The Project of Feminist Epistemology: Perspectives from a Nonwestern Feminist"
"The Dangerous Possibilities of Transgressed Boundaries"⁶: Third Wave Feminisms	
Cyber feminisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith Wilding, "Where is Feminism in Cyberfeminism?" • Sheryl Hamilton, "Maid in Cyberspace" • Deanna Weber, "<u>Subjectivity and Gender Identity in Cyberspace</u>"
Materialist feminisms (revisited)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iris Marion Young, "Is Male Gender Identity the Cause of Male Domination?" • Ann Ferguson, "On Conceiving Motherhood and Sexuality: A Feminist Materialist Approach" • Anarchafeminists, "Manifeste Anarchofeministe"
Women of color feminisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gloria Anzaldua, "La Conciencia de la Mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness" • Patricia Hill Collins, "Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment" • Ula Taylor, "The Historical Evolution of Black Feminist Theory and Praxis"
Women of color feminisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shirley Geok-Lin Lim, "Feminist and Ethnic Theories in Asian American Literature" • Paula Gunn Allen, "Kochinnenako in Academe" • Amelia McDonald-Perry, "Viva la revolucion! Black Grrrl Revolution puts a new spin on Third Wave Feminism"
Dyke feminisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Betsy Brown, "The Art of the Impossible: Some Thoughts on Lesbian Separatist Political Strategy" • Joyce Trelbicot, "Dyke Ideas"

⁶ Donna Haraway

	Mothering feminisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Michelle Stanworth, “Birth Pangs: Conceptive Technologies and the Threat to Motherhood” • Angela Y. Davis, “Outcast Mothers & Surrogates: Racism & Reproductive Politics” • Patricia J. Williams, “The Unbearable Autonomy of Being”
	Marginal feminisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patricia Hill Collins, “From Margin to Center” • Emma Pérez, “Speaking from the Margin: Uninvited Discourse on Sexuality and Power”
	Queer feminisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judith Butler, “Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity” • Jeannine DeLombard, “Femmenism” • Patrick Califia, “Feminism and Transexualism”
	Post-structuralist feminisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linda Alcoff, “Cultural Feminism v. Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory” • Joan W. Scott, “Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference: or, The Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism”
	Activist feminisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bell hooks, “Feminism: A Transformational Politic • Chicago Lesbian Avengers, “Lesbian Avengers Action Handbook” • Betsy Brown, “Five Things to Work For Instead of Gay Marriage: A Radical Dyke Experiment for the Next Century”

I reserve the right to alter the schedule or other aspects of the syllabus depending on student interest, current local or global events, unexpected visiting scholars, the way the course progresses, weather-related cancellations, or other circumstances.