

DISABILITY SERVICES:

The Office for Disability Services (ODS) offers a variety of services and auxiliary aids for students with documented disabilities. To access services, students must provide ODS with documentation of the disability. ODS is located in 150 Pomerene Hall; you can contact them at 292-3307.

Professor Juno Parreñas

Office Hours: W 12:30-1:30pm at Dulles Hall 308C

WGSS 2550: History of Feminist Thought
Wednesdays and Fridays 11:10AM-12:30PM
Jennings Hall 0140

Course Description:

What is feminist theory? What do we mean when we speak of liberalism, socialism, and intersectionality? Why do these ideas matter in the study of women, gender, and sexuality? This course introduces some fundamental concepts of feminist thought from the eighteenth century to the present. Consider this class to be a sampling of the many ways of thinking that is offered by what we identify as feminist theory.

We begin this course by questioning the terms of our endeavor: “feminism,” “women,” and “theory.” We then consider the powerful paradigms that have shaped the past two centuries and more of feminist thought, namely liberalism and socialism. We then engage a few dynamic forms of scholarship developed and adapted by feminist thinkers of the late twentieth century and the new millennium, such as poststructuralism, postcolonialism, and posthumanism. We finish the class by focusing on the distinctions between theories of gender and sexuality.

Course Requirements:

PAPER #1: 25%

PAPER #2: 25%

PAPER #3: 25%

DEBATE PARTICIPATION: 15%

COURSE PARTICIPATION AND ATTENDANCE: 10%

The required readings can be found on Carmen. This is a reading intensive class. It will be important for you to carve out the time, space, rest, and energy necessary for you to be able to read and re-read the course materials. You are expected to have read the readings in advance of the lecture. Three papers will be due. Each term paper is roughly five pages each and will demonstrate a clear engagement with the course readings. I will give the paper prompts a week ahead of each paper’s due date. Each paper must be uploaded in the Carmen dropbox before class on the due date.

Three in-class debates correspond to the three course paper assignments, sometimes exactly and in other times closely. On the day each paper is due, we will have a debate. Students will sign up for one of six debate groups by September 5. For the debate, students should be ready to debate either side, regardless of how they might have engaged the question in their own papers. So for instance, in Unit 1, you might have persuasively argued one position and then be in the predicament of having to argue a different position. Either way, you will have a chance in class to confer with your colleagues. This will be an opportunity to publicly think about the nuances of the text's argument. A coin toss at the beginning of class will determine what side each of the two teams will debate. Meanwhile, the rest of the class will speculate together about which side will win and why!

This course entails a total minimum of twelve pages of writing. Each paper must have a clear argument that is successfully supported with properly cited sources. I expect written work to consist of a 11 or 12 point standard font such as Times New Roman with 1" margins. Whether you choose Chicago or MLA style, I ask for your consistency in using a single citation system. Please remember to proofread all submitted assignments. Proofreading goes beyond simple spellcheck: it entails rereading and rewriting for clarity. The OSU Writing Center, which offers free tutoring to students (grad and undergrad), is located at 475 Mendenhall Lab. You can obtain more information about the Center at http://cstw.ohio-state.edu/writing_center/index.htm, and you may contact them at 688-4291.

The pleasure you have in this class will be contingent upon your ability to keep up with the readings as well as your attendance. Attendance in our class meetings will deepen your understanding of the texts. Thus, three unexcused absences will lead to an automatic F in the course.

Academic Dishonesty Policy

It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct.

UNIT 1: REDEFINING SEX AND GENDER

August 27

Introduction

August 29 - What is Gender? What are women?

Truth, Sojourner. "Ain't I a Woman?"

Riley, Denise. *Excerpt from* Am I That Name? Feminism and the Category of Women.

September 3

Devi, Mahasweta [and Gayatri Spivak], "Preface" and "The Hunt."

September 5 - What is Feminism? What is Theory?
Lugones and Spellman, "Have We Got a Theory for You?"
Grosz, Elizabeth. "Sexual Difference and the Problem of Essentialism"

September 10 - The Problem of Theory: Fear, Loathing, and Power
Lorde, Audre. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House" *In* Sister Outsider:

<http://solomon.bltc.alexanderstreet.com.proxy.lib.ohio-state.edu/cgi-bin/asp/philo/bltc/getvolume.pl?S8108#DIV15>

Christian, Barbara. "The Race for Theory."
hooks, bell. "Feminist Theory: A Radical Agenda"
Anzaldúa, Gloria. "Towards a New Consciousness"

September 12 – DEBATE #1
UNIT 1 PAPER DUE BEFORE CLASS

UNIT 2: A "WESTERN" GENEALOGY OF FEMINIST THEORY

September 17 - Liberal Theory: Classics
Mill, J.S. from the Subjection of Women
Wollstonecraft, Mary. A Vindication of the Rights of Women

September 19 - Problems in Feminist Liberalism
Harris, "Race and Essentialism in Feminist Legal Theory"
Olsen, "Statutory Rape: A Feminist Critique of Rights Analysis"
Pratt, "Identity: Skin Blood Heart"
Morales, "I Recognize You" and "I am the Reasonable One"
MacKinnon, "Difference and Dominance: On Sex Discrimination"
MacKinnon, "Whose Culture? A Case Note on Martinez v. Santa Clara Pueblo"
[I will omit about half of these readings. Please read the texts on Carmen for this day]

September 24 - Intersectionality
Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color"
Wells, Ida B. "The Negro Case in Equity"
Optional: Nash, Jennifer. "Intersectionality Revisited"

September 26 - Socialist Theory: Classics
Engels "Preface" and "The Family"
Kollontai, "Social Basis of the Woman Question" "Working Woman and Mother" and "Sisters"

October 1 - Second Wave Socialist Theory
Davis, Angela. "Communist Women" and "The Approaching Obsolescence of Housework: A Working Class Perspective"

October 3 - Problems in Socialist Categories of Analysis
Joseph, "The Incompatible Menage a Trois: Marxism, Feminism, and Racism"
Davis, "Racism, Birth Control, and Reproductive Rights"

October 8 – DEBATE #2
UNIT PAPER 2 DUE BEFORE CLASS

UNIT 3: DIFFERENT WAVES AND NEW THEORETICAL INTERVENTIONS

October 10 – Historical Materialism and "Posthumanism"
Haraway, Donna. "Teddy Bear Patriarchy"

October 15 - Postmodernity and Poststructuralism
Poovy, "Feminism and Deconstruction"

October 17 – Poststructuralism continued
Alcoff "The Identity Crisis in Feminism"

October 22 Discourse Analysis and Deconstruction
Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination"
Scott, "Deconstructing Equality v. Difference: The Use of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism"

October 24 - Anti-Orientalist and Postcolonial
Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes"
Trinh, "Not You/Like You: Postcolonial Women and the Interlocking Questions of Identity and Difference"

October 29 - Anti-Orientalism and Postcolonial Feminism, continued.
Lughod "Do Muslim Women Need Saving?"
Ong, "Colonialism and Modernity"

UNIT 4: THEORIZING SEXUALITY

November 5 - Heterosexuality as an Institution
Rich, Adrienne. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence"
Optional: Parrenas, Juno. "Forced Copulation: How Reproductive Futurism and Compulsory Heterosexuality Harms Orangutans"

November 7 - Heterosexism v. Homophobia
Boellstorf, Tom. "The Emergence of Political Homophobia in Indonesia"
NO CLASS (American Studies Association Conference in Los Angeles)

November 12 - Phallogocentric Language and Sexuality
Cixous, "Laugh of the Medusa"
Irigaray, "This Sex Which is Not One"
Irigaray, "When Our Lips Speak Together"

November 14 – Sex Wars
MacKinnon, "Sexuality"
Rubin "Thinking Sex"
West "The Taboo of Black Sexuality"

November 19 - Sexuality/Race/Gender/Class
Nestle, "My Mother Liked to Fuck" and "Two Women"
Hall "The Mind that Burns in Each Body"
Gossett "is it true what they say about colored pussy?"
Moraga and Hollibaugh, "What We're Rollin Around in Bed With"
[These readings are subject to change. Please read the texts on Carmen for this day.]

November 21 - Feminist Theory: Penultimate Thoughts
Hammonds "Black (W)holes and The Geometry of Black Female Sexuality"
Rubin "Sexual Traffic"

November 26: NO CLASS
November 28: NO CLASS

December 3:
UNITS 3&4 PAPER DUE BEFORE CLASS
UNITS 3&4 DEBATE

December 5: (American Anthropological Association Meeting in DC)
NO CLASS