Feminist Theory: Gender Justice

POLS 3770-01, WGST 3775-01, PHIL 4360-02
Fall 2015
(posted on Blackboard)

Dr. Wynne Moskop
Ofc hrs: T 1-2, W 10:00-12 & by appointment
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Required Reading

Available in Campus Bookstore:
Elizabeth Hackett & Sally Haslanger, Theorizing Feminisms: A Reader (Oxford University Press, 2006)

Other required readings can be found in electronic databases in Pius Library, on Pius electronic reserve (ERes), or on the internet, as noted below on the schedule of assignments. The password for our electronic reserve materials is “feminist.”

Course Description and Objectives

This course examines selected feminist political theories and their implications and applications in different U.S. and transnational contexts. Our ultimate goal is to assess the potential of each approach for illuminating injustices and shaping possibilities for justice—in public and private spaces, for women and men, and for marginalized groups whose situations may be illuminated by feminist perspectives. As we read, discuss, and write, we consider these questions:

- To what pressing problem(s) does the writer respond?
- What remedies does she suggest?
- What epistemology, or way of knowing truth, does she assume?
- What early version of contemporary feminist concepts such as social construction, intersectionality, anti-essentialism, and situated knowledge do you see in historical writings?

I look forward to hearing from everyone on these questions.

By the end of the course, you should be able to

- apply key feminist concepts in contemporary political, social, and cultural analyses
- make comparisons to, and draw insights from, the historical thinkers we study
- evaluate written and oral arguments and your own actions and choices from a feminist perspective
- make persuasive theoretical arguments, supported with evidence from the texts, in both written work and oral presentations.

The course is organized into three parts. Part I uses key concepts in feminist theory to reflect on gender justice as it intersects with race in two public controversies: 1) U.S. Senate confirmation hearings of Clarence Thomas as a U.S. Supreme Court Justice, which aired accusations by Professor Anita Hill that Thomas had sexually harassed her, and 2) public discussions of
discriminatory treatment of African American men in the criminal justice system following the shooting of Michael Brown. **Part II** focuses on how selected historical feminist thinkers treat the subordination of women in the context of race/ethnicity, class, and sexuality—beginning with Sei Shonagan in the 10th century and continuing into the 20th century. **Part III** considers how gender justice is served by selected contemporary feminist perspectives on differences, including transnational perspectives, with a specific look at Muslim and non-Muslim feminists in Turkey.

This course satisfies a number of requirements:

- the Arts and Sciences core requirement for Diversity in the U.S.
- the Arts and Sciences core requirement for an upper division Philosophy course
- the Arts and Sciences Social Science core requirement
- the political theory requirement for the major in Political Science
- the feminist theory requirement for the major in Women’s and Gender Studies

**Format & Requirements**

The format is a structured discussion. Because this course focuses on ideas, which are to be understood and applied critically rather than memorized, the format emphasizes opportunities to process feminist theories through discussion and writing. Students will be expected to complete reading assignments before coming to class, participate in class discussions, and contribute to tutorial groups. There will be occasional pop quizzes to encourage and check on familiarity with assigned readings. These will be part of the class participation grade.

At each regular class session, designated students will serve as "expert" discussants, responsible for raising questions about the reading assignment and commenting on questions raised by other students and by the instructor. Every student will serve as a discussant three or four times during the semester. This format places a great deal of responsibility on students. Students who do not complete reading assignments on time will not understand the class discussions and will not be able to contribute intelligently to them; neither will they be adequately prepared to write assigned essays and exams.

Each student will write two short essays and take a mid-term exam and a final exam. Both of these exams will have an oral and a written component. In addition, students will be expected to participate in assigned tutorial groups during the semester. Attendance at all class sessions is required. If you have to miss a class because of illness, university event, or some other good reason, please let me know—in advance if possible. *Your absence is not “excused” unless you also send me written responses to all discussion questions for the missed class by the beginning of the next class.* Finally, students are required to fill out a course evaluation at the end of the semester.

**Grading**

Grades will be determined as follows: class participation – 1/3, essays - 1/3, exams - 1/3. There will be some opportunities during the semester to earn extra credit by attending and reflecting on speakers and events. Grade Scale:
University Writing Services

I encourage you to take advantage of University Writing Services; getting feedback benefits all writers! Trained writing consultants can help with any writing, multimedia project, or oral presentation. During one-on-one consultations, you can work on everything from brainstorming and developing ideas to crafting strong sentences and documenting sources. These services do fill up, so please make an appointment! Also, bring your assignment description, and a few goals, to the consultation! For more information, or to make an appointment, visit www.slu.edu/writingservices.xml or call 977-3484.

Student Success Center Syllabus Statement:
In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. The Student Success Center, a one-stop shop, which assists students with academic and career related services, is located in the Busch Student Center (Suite, 331) and the School of Nursing (Suite, 114). Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:
- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring services, university writing services, disability services, academic coaching, career services, and/or facets of curriculum planning) by visiting the Student Success Center or by going to www.slu.edu/success.

Disability Services Academic Accommodations Syllabus Statement
Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Please contact Disability Services, located within the Student Success Center, at Disability_services@slu.edu or 314.977.3484 to schedule an appointment. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Once approved, information about academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors via email from Disability Services and viewed within Banner via the instructor’s course roster.

Academic Integrity Syllabus Statement
Academic integrity is honest, truthful and responsible conduct in all academic endeavors. The mission of Saint Louis University is "the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity." Accordingly, all acts of falsehood demean and compromise the corporate endeavors of teaching, research, health care, and community service via which SLU embodies its mission. The University strives to prepare students for lives of personal and professional
integrity, and therefore regards all breaches of academic integrity as matters of serious concern.


Additionally, each SLU College, School, and Center has adopted its own academic integrity policies, available on their respective websites. All SLU students are expected to know and abide by these policies, which detail definitions of violations, processes for reporting violations, sanctions, and appeals. Please direct questions about any facet of academic integrity to your faculty, the chair of the department of your academic program, or the Dean/Director of the College, School or Center in which your program is housed.

In the College of Arts and Sciences, all clear violations of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. In this course, academic dishonesty on an assignment will result in an automatic grade of 0 for that assignment and a report of academic dishonesty sent to the Academic Honesty Committee of the College of Arts and Sciences. In the case of Class B violations, the Academic Honesty Committee may impose a larger sanction including, but not limited to, assigning a failing grade in the course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University.

Students should refer to the following SLU website for more information about Class A and B violations and the procedures following a report of academic dishonesty: [http://www.slu.edu/college-of-arts-and-sciences-home/undergraduate-education/academic-honesty](http://www.slu.edu/college-of-arts-and-sciences-home/undergraduate-education/academic-honesty).

**Title IX Syllabus Statement**

Saint Louis University and its faculty are committed to supporting our students and seeking an environment that is free of bias, discrimination, and harassment. If you have encountered any form of sexual misconduct (e.g. sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, domestic or dating violence), we encourage you to report this to the University. If you speak with a faculty member about an incident of misconduct, that faculty member must notify SLU’s Title IX coordinator, Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; akratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886) and share the basic fact of your experience with her. The Title IX coordinator will then be available to assist you in understanding all of your options and in connecting you with all possible resources on and off campus.

If you wish to speak with a confidential source, you may contact the counselors at the University Counseling Center at 314-977-TALK. To view SLU’s sexual misconduct policy and for resources, please visit the following web address: [http://www.slu.edu/general-counsel-home/office-of-institutional-equity-and-diversity/sexual-misconduct-policy](http://www.slu.edu/general-counsel-home/office-of-institutional-equity-and-diversity/sexual-misconduct-policy www.slu.edu/here4you).
Tentative Schedule

The schedule below may be revised occasionally, depending on the needs and interests of the class. Class discussions will assume that you have completed and reflected on the reading assignment for that class. Assignments in Hackett and Haslanger’s reader, Theorizing Feminisms, are designated TF.

Part I. Gender justice in public controversies about race

This section defines and illustrates the importance of some key concepts in feminist theory: social construction, intersectionality, anti-essentialism, situated knowledge.

8/25 Introduction.

bell hooks, *Feminism is for everybody*, Introduction (handout). Entire book is free online at, [https://excoradfeminisms.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/bell_hooks-feminism_is_for_everybody.pdf](https://excoradfeminisms.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/bell_hooks-feminism_is_for_everybody.pdf)

Snapshot: Hill-Thomas hearings (confirmation hearings for the nomination of Clarence Thomas to the Supreme Court), video excerpts of statements by Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IEDD2vxaE;](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1IEDD2vxaE;)


Questions: Which witness has, or tries to claim, more credibility as an African American? Why do you think so? How does gender affect credibility in this case?


If you missed the first day of class, you’ll need to view the two videos on the syllabus for 8/25. These were shown in class. Also read the introduction to bell hooks, *Feminism is for everybody* (assignment above).

If you have time to view or read more, you can visit these websites:

Video of Thomas’s statement, [https://www.y.com/watch?v=oyUXuoBuNOE](https://www.y.com/watch?v=oyUXuoBuNOE), 1 hr 25 min. Includes chairman Joe Biden’s introductory statement about the hearings’ purpose.


Here is the full Hill-Thomas hearing record, for any who may be interested, [http://www.enotes.com/topics/clarence-thomas-confirmation-hearings](http://www.enotes.com/topics/clarence-thomas-confirmation-hearings)

9/1 Sally Haslanger, “Gender and Social Construction,” in *Theorizing Feminisms* (TF)
Miranda Fricker, excerpt from *Epistemic Injustice* (“The Central Case of Testimonial Injustice”), ERes

9/3 No class.

View 4-minute video on police violence against black women, “Say Her Name: Families Seek Justice in Overlooked Police Killings of African-American Women,”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vggMAkhQK4

http://www.democracynow.org/2015/5/20/say_her_name_families_seek_justice

Write a two-page reflection (double-spaced) using the concept of either *social construction* or *testimonial injustice* to reflect on some aspect of the report “Say Her Name.” Email your reflection to me at moskopww@slu.edu by 3:30 pm on 9/4 (the time our class would normally end).

9/8 Kimberle Crenshaw, “‘Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color,” TF

9/10 Tina Grillo “Anti-Essentialism and Intersectionality: Tools to Dismantle the Master’s House,” TF

Iris Young, “Five Faces of Oppression,” TF

9/13 **Draft of Paper #1 due by email to moskopww@slu.edu and all students in your tutorial group—before 6 pm.** Drafts are graded S or U according to whether they are turned in on time and whether they meet basic guidelines in the handout. Because failure to turn in an acceptable draft on time disrupts the tutorial process for others as well as for the paper’s author, a grade of U on the draft will result in a deduction of one letter from the grade on your final paper.

9/15,17 Class will not meet this week. Instead students will meet in tutorial groups of three to discuss drafts of paper #1. Your helpful critiques of classmates’ papers count toward your class participation grade. **The revised version of your paper is due 48 hours after your tutorial session, by email to moskopww@slu.edu.**

9/22 Uma Narayan, “Cross-Cultural Connections, Border-Crossings, and ‘Death by Culture,” TF

**Part II. Selected perspectives in the history of feminist thought**

(Most excerpts will be either online or on ERes. This is a preliminary selection. We may take more time than indicated with some of these; and we may drop or add others, depending on the class’s interests and needs.)

9/24 Sei Shonagan, *The Pillow Book of Sei Shonagan*, ERes

10/1 Mary Astell, *Some Reflections on Marriage*,
    [http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/astell/marriage/marriage.html](http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/astell/marriage/marriage.html)
10/6 Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*,
10/8 Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions*,
    [http://ecssba.rutgers.edu/docs/seneca.html](http://ecssba.rutgers.edu/docs/seneca.html)
    
    Sojourner Truth, *TF*
    
    John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, *TF*
10/13 Tekahionwake [E. Pauline Johnson], ER
10/15 **Midterm exam**
10/20 **Fall Break**
10/22 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Economics*;
    [http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/gilman/economics/economics.html](http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/gilman/economics/economics.html); *The Yellow Wallpaper*,
10/27 Jane Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, Ch. 2 “Charitable Effort,”
    [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15487/15487-h/15487-h.htm](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15487/15487-h/15487-h.htm); *Hull House Maps and Papers*, Ch. 10 “The Settlement as a Factor in the Labor Movement,”
    [http://media.pfeiffer.edu/lridener/DSS/Addams/hh10.html](http://media.pfeiffer.edu/lridener/DSS/Addams/hh10.html)
10/29 Emma Goldman, “Woman’s Suffrage,” *TF*
    
    Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, *TF*
11/3 Virginia Woolf, “Three Guineas,”
    [http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/content/BPL_Images/Content_store/Sample_chapter/9780631177241/woolf.pdf](http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/content/BPL_Images/Content_store/Sample_chapter/9780631177241/woolf.pdf)
11/5 **No class. Paper #2 due by 8 pm.**

**Part III**  **Selected contemporary perspectives on difference(s)**

11/10 Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, And Sex: Women Redefining Difference,” *TF*  
    
    Marilyn Frye, “Willful Virgin, or Do You Have to be a Lesbian to be a Feminist,” *TF*  
    
    Leslie Feinberg, “Walking Our Talk,” *TF*  
    
    Elinor Burkett, “What Makes a Woman,” NY Times, June 6, 2015,
    [http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/07/opinion/sunday/what-makes-a-woman.html?_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/07/opinion/sunday/what-makes-a-woman.html?_r=0)
11/12 John Stoltenberg, “Confronting Pornography as a Civil-Rights Issue,” *TF*

Gayle Rubin, “Thinking Sex,” TF


11/19 Gloria Anzaldua, “La Conciencia de la Mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness,” TF

11/24 Feminism and Islam in Turkey

Sources:

“Feminist Movements in Turkey,”

1-hour video, “Following the Trail of Islam and the Veil Across Time and Borders,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p7JNxlJ_7T8

Tuula Sakaranaho, “Equal but Different: Women in Turkey from the Islamic Point of View,” in Islamic Feminism: Current Perspectives, ed. Anitta Kynsilehto (Tampere, Finland: University of Tampere), 47-56,


11/26 Holiday

12/1 TBA

12/3 Review