

Feminist Theory: Gender Justice
POLS 3770-01, WGST 3775-01, PHIL 4800-01
Fall 2018

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Office hours: M 3-5pm
T 2:15-3pm, R 2:15-3pm
& by appointment



This class considers:

- What problems of social justice worry feminist thinkers?
- Over time, how have women experienced subordination through cultural practices, institutions, and ideas--in the U.S. and elsewhere?
- How have feminist thinkers and social movements tried to change institutions and practices that subordinate women and other groups ?

We examine these questions through historical and contemporary feminist writings and debates in different U.S. and transnational contexts. Our ultimate goal is to assess the potential of different feminist theories for illuminating injustices and shaping possibilities for justice--in public and private spaces, for women and men, and for marginalized racial and ethnic groups.

As we read, discuss, and write, we consider these questions:

- To what pressing problem(s) does the author respond?
- What remedies does the author suggest?
- What epistemology, or way of knowing truth, does she assume?

- What early version of contemporary feminist concepts such as situated knowledge, social construction, and intersectionality do you see in historical writings?

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

- Demonstrate understanding of how women have experienced and tried to address subordination through cultural practices, institutions, and ideas--in the U.S. and elsewhere
- 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.

This course satisfies several requirements:

- political theory requirement for the major in Political Science
- feminist theory requirement for the major in Women's and Gender Studies
- Arts & Sciences core requirements for Diversity in the U.S., upper division philosophy, & social science

Social science core student outcomes: Students will acquire conceptual tools and methodologies to analyze and understand their social world. With these tools, they will be able to act in their world more effectively and become forces for positive change. They will gain a better understanding of human diversity. Students will be able to think and write critically about human behavior and community. They will become aware of the various methodological approaches used by social scientists.

Format & Requirements

The format of the course 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 theories of justice through discussion and writing. Students will be expected to complete reading assignments before coming to class, participate in class discussions, and contribute to group writing and oral assignments. If necessary, 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. Occasionally, discussant responsibilities will take the form of short individual or group presentations. Every student will serve as a discussant three or four times during the semester. This format places a great deal of responsibility on students. Those 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 short article summaries and a short paper, as described on the class schedule and Blackboard, and take a mid-term exam and a final exam. Exams may have both oral and written components. There will be some opportunities to earn extra credit by attending and reflecting on designated events. 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 study 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.

Details for all assignments will be posted on Blackboard. Students are responsible for checking assignments on Blackboard.

The only required text for this course is *The Essential Feminist Reader*, edited by Estelle B. Freedman (New York: Modern Library, 2007). It is available in the campus bookstore. Other assigned readings are available online or on electronic reserve (ERes) in Pius Library, as indicated on the course schedule. The ERes password for this course is *feminist*. Here is the URL, <http://eres.slu.edu/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=4523>.

Grading

Grades will be determined as follows: class participation – 1/3, article summaries and short paper - 1/3, exams - 1/3. Students who earn A- or above on the article summaries and on the mid-term exam, may opt out of the written component of the final exam and choose instead to write a longer post-midterm paper and take only the oral component of the final exam. For these students, grades will be determined this way: class participation-1/3, article summaries, midterm exam and oral final exam 1/3, final paper– 1/3. There will be some opportunities during the semester to earn extra credit by attending and reflecting on designated events. Grade Scale:

A	93-100	B+	87-89	C+	77-79	D	60-70
A-	90-92	B	83-86	C	73-76	F	below 60
		B-	80-82	C-	70-72		

Tentative Schedule

Assignments may be adjusted depending on needs of the class.

I. Introduction: Feminist Practice and Feminist Theory

- 8/28 Introduction. View *A Jury of Her Peers* (Hitchcock version of Susan Glaspell's short story) in class, <https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x5ciuk8>, or <http://dai.ly/x5ciuk8> [*A Jury of Her Peers* starts about 2 minutes into the video.]
- 8/30 Catharine MacKinnon, "#Me Too Has Done what the Law Could Not," *New York Times* Op Ed, February 4, 2018
- View: Catharine MacKinnon and Durba Mitra, "Ask a Feminist: Catharine MacKinnon and Durba Mitra Discuss Sexual Harassment in the Age of #MeToo," *Signs Journal* podcast (58 minutes), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9YmpyPAHJ4w>, recorded June 4, 2018. Transcript can be found at <http://signsjournal.org/mackinnon-metoo/>
- 9/4 Amanda Fricker, "Testimonial Injustice," from *Epistemic Justice*, 17-29, electronic reserve, Pius Library (ERes). **ERes password for this class is *feminist*.**
- Moira Donegan, "How #Me Too Revealed the central rift within feminism today," *The Guardian*, May 11, 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2018/may/11/how-metoo-revealed-the-central-rift-within-feminism-social-individualist>
- A short writing assignment for this class is posted on Blackboard.
- 9/6 Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*, excerpts on "The Matrix of Domination," <http://media.pfeiffer.edu/Iridener/courses/BLKFEM.HTML>
- 9/11 Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," <https://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/mapping-margins.pdf>

Kimberle Crenshaw et al, "Say Her Name: Resisting Police Brutality Against Black Women,"
http://static1.squarespace.com/static/53f20d90e4b0b80451158d8c/t/560c068ee4b0af26f72741df/1443628686535/AAPF_SMN_Brief_Full_singles-min.pdf

9/13 Sally Haslanger, "Social Construction: Gender and Other Social Categories,"
http://sallyhaslanger.weebly.com/uploads/1/8/2/7/18272031/haslanger-social_construction_gender_other_social_categories_final.pdf

A short writing assignment for this class is posted on Blackboard.

9/18 bell hooks, *Where We Stand: Class Matters*, excerpts, online at
http://carbonfarm.us/amap/hooks_class.pdf.

9/20 hooks, *Where We Stand*, continued

Part II. Historical perspectives

9/25 Christine di Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (France, 1405), in Freedman text
Penny Weiss, "The Politics of Ignorance," from *Canon Fodder*. ERes.

9/27 Mary Astell (England, 1694), *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies*, excerpt in Freedman; excerpts from *Some Reflections on Marriage*, <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/astell/marriage/marriage.html>

10/2 Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (England, 1792), excerpts in Freedman and online, <http://www.bartleby.com/144/>

10/4 Sarah Grimke, "Letters on the Equality of the Sexes" (US., 1837), in Freedman,

Flora Tristan, "The Emancipation of Working Class Women" (France, 1843), in Freedman

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions" (U.S., 1848), in Freedman

Sojourner Truth, Two Speeches (U.S., 1851, 1867), in Freedman

10/9 Harriet Taylor Mill, "The Enfranchisement of Women" (England 1851)

10/11 Anna Julia Cooper, *A Voice from the South* (US., 1892), in Freedman

Ida Wells-Barnett, *A Red Record* (U.S., 1895), excerpt on ERes

The National Colored Women's Congress and the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs, "Resolutions and Objectives" (1896), from *Feminist Manifestos: A Global Documentary Reader*, ed. Penny Weiss, ERes.

10/16 **No class. Take home midterm exam due by 2 pm to wynne.moskop@slu.edu**

10/18 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper* (U.S., 1892), in Freedman

Emma Goldman, "The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation" (U.S., 1906), in Freedman

Luisa Capetillo, *Mi Opinion* (Puerto Rico, 1911), in Freedman.

Visitor from Reinert Center at end of class.

10/23 **Fall Break.**

10/25 Jane Addams, *Democracy and Social Ethics*, Chapter 2 "Charitable Effort" (U.S., 1892),
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15487/15487-h/15487-h.htm>

10/30 Virginia Woolf, *Three Guineas* (England, 1938), in Freedman

- Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (France, 1949), in Freedman
- 11/1 Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement" (U.S., 1977), in Freedman
Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House (U.S., 1979), in Freedman
United Nations, "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women" (1979),
in Freedman
Domitila Barrios De La Chungara, "The Woman's Problem" (Bolivia, 1980), in Freedman
- 11/6 Monique Wittig, "One is not Born a Woman" (France, 1981)
Winona La Duke, "The Indigenous Women's Network: Our Future, Our Responsibility" (U.S., 1995)
Palesa Beverly Ditsie, "Statement of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission"
(South Africa, 1995)

III. Contemporary Perspectives

- 11/8 Judith Butler, "Beside Oneself: On the Limits of Sexual Autonomy," from *Undoing Gender*, 17-40, ERes.
Julia Serano, "Trans Woman Manifesto," ERes
- 11/15 Vandana Shiva, "Women's Indigenous Knowledge and Biodiversity Conservation," ERes
- 11/20 **No class. Paper due to wynne.moskop@slu.edu via email by 2 pm.**
- 11/22 Thanksgiving holiday
- 11/27 Uma Narayan, "Cross-Cultural Connections, Border-Crossings, and 'Death by Culture': Thinking About Dowry-Murders in India and Domestic-Violence Murders in the United States," ERes.
- 11/29 Nancy Fraser, "Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History" (2009), <http://paas.org.pl/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/FRASER-Feminism-Capitalism-and-the-Cunning-of-History.pdf11/13>
- 12/4 Reading TBA.
- 12/6 Review

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 through 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.

The governing University-level Academic Integrity Policy was adopted in Spring 2015, and can be accessed on the Provost's Office [website](#).

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.

Specific College of Arts and Sciences Academic Honesty Policies and Procedures may be found [here](#).

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; anna.kratky@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. View SLU's [sexual misconduct](#) policy.

Student Success Center Syllabi 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 assists students with academic related services, and 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.

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.