This course examines developments in feminist thought at the turn of the twenty-first century, highlighting core concepts and tensions accompanying the growth of the field of women’s studies. Using an intersectional range of theoretical texts and cultural criticism, it explores both historical and recent perspectives on gender, sexuality. The readings, discussions, and written assignments are designed to highlight core concepts and tensions as feminist scholarship has grown since the emergence of the field of women’s studies in the 1970s. Readings cover a range of topics and methodologies, and students will have opportunities to investigate areas of their own interest. The course will enable students to draw connections between the intellectual, the personal, and the political, using these theoretical innovations to engage contemporary social issues.

Readings:


There will also be additional readings distributed through Blackboard.
Course Goals
As a graduate level course, this course seeks to increase knowledge and skills that students already have some foundation in, namely increasing

- Knowledge of key concepts and normative and theoretical commitments employed in feminist theories.
- Ability to use feminist theories to contextualize social relationships, organizations, and politics.
- Ability to critically appreciate and constructively criticize texts, structures, processes, and ideas.
- Ability to communicate clearly and effectively in discussion and writing in an audience-centered way.

Assignments and grading

- Participation (10%): which includes attendance and constructive contributions to discussion
- Discussion leading (15%): In groups of two or three, work together to lead the discussion for one of the classes. This can include bringing in outside materials (short texts, video, or audio) that relate to the reading. You must arrange a time to discuss your plan with me in advance of the class—the discussion can be in person, by phone, or by email.
- Assigned Readings Synthesis paper (20%): Due by 7:00 p.m. October 11. For one of the first five classes (the Knowing unit), synthesize the readings in a 1000-1200 word paper. You might think of this as a literature review, and a nice guide can be found here.
- Reflection paper (20%): Due by 7:00 p.m. November 8. Using materials from class, reflect on an event you attend, a situation you encounter, an event in the news, or a piece of culture, art, or entertainment you see/hear/watch/read in a 1000-1200 word essay.
- Final paper (35%): Due by 10:00 p.m., December 17. You have two options for the format of this paper. The first is a 5500-6000 word (not including bibliography) research paper in which you conduct original research to produce an argument-driven analysis of a topic of your choice. The second is a synthesis paper of the same length in which you synthesize 4-5 book-length texts on a topic of choice. More details and interim deadlines for topic selection, etc. will follow.
The Deets

Grading

The University’s letter grade grading scale will apply, along the following guidelines:

- A = 93-100%
- A- = 90-92%
- B+ = 87-89%
- B = 83-86%
- B- = 80-82%
- C+ = 77-79%

Late papers will incur grade penalties of a 1/3 deduction per day late (or portion thereof). In other words, an A becomes an A-, an A- becomes a B+, etc.

Attendance/discussion/participation

Graduate study means learning to learn from every possible source—assigned readings, your peers, your life experience, your professors, and your research. Discussion is one of the best ways to do that. You are expected to contribute your questions and insights to the class. Class is a guaranteed space to explain, debate, test arguments about, evaluate, and critique the theoretical approaches we will be reading. When you are in class, please minimize distractions that take you out of being present, particularly with devices that also can distract others. Sometimes remaining connected is unavoidable due to other responsibilities, but where it is avoidable, please avoid it.

Academic Integrity

You are bound by the University’s Academic Integrity Policy, which can be found on the Provost’s website. In addition, we’re going to be talking about some deeply personal matters. Think a bit about how you say things, but it’s ok to be candid. Assume good faith when your colleagues speak (including me), but feel free to ask questions about people’s positions and express a contrary point of view or set of arguments.

Accommodations

Students with a documented disability who wish to request academic accommodations must formally register their disability with the University. Once successfully registered, students also must notify their course instructor that they wish to use their approved accommodations in the course.

Please contact Disability Services to schedule an appointment to discuss accommodation requests and eligibility requirements. Most students on the St. Louis campus will contact Disability Services, located in the Student Success Center and available by email at Disability_services@slu.edu or by phone at 314.977.3484. Once approved, information about a student’s eligibility for academic accommodations will be shared with course instructors by email from Disability Services and within the instructor’s official course roster. Students who do not have a documented disability but who think they may have one also are encouraged to contact to Disability Services. Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries.
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 that involves a Title IX matter, that faculty member must notify SLU’s Title IX coordinator (or that person’s equivalent on your campus) and share the basic facts of your experience. This is true even if you ask the faculty member not to disclose the incident. The Title IX contact 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.

For most students on the St. Louis campus, the appropriate contact is Anna R. Kratky (DuBourg Hall, room 36; anna.kratky@slu.edu; 314-977-3886). 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 addresses: https://www.slu.edu/here4you and https://www.slu.edu/general-counsel.

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students Office (deanofstudents@slu.edu or 314-977-9378) for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable her to provide any resources that she may possess.

If you or someone you know is having trouble coping, there are many resources for help. Here are just a few contacts:

- University Counseling Center 314-977-8255 (TALK)
- Suicide Prevention Lifeline 800-273-8255 (TALK)
- Crisis Text Line text “HOME” to 741741
- RAINN National Sexual Assault Hotline: 800-656-4673 (HOPE)
- The Trevor Project — Serving LGBTQ people under 25: 866-488-7386
- The LGBT Hotline: 888-843-4564
# The Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug. 26</td>
<td>Introduction and discussion of our plans for the course</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Knowing</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Experiencing, knowing, speaking</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 9</td>
<td>Intersectionality</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FEMINIST THEORY READER (FTR) pp. 161-212</td>
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<td>Sept. 16</td>
<td>Standpoint Theory</td>
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<td>• FTR pp. 351-437</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 23</td>
<td>Reason, impartiality, power, hierarchy, and dyadic reasoning</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Iris Marion Young, <em>The Ideal of Impartiality</em>, in JUSTICE AND THE POLITICS OF DIFFERENCE 96-105 (1990)</td>
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<td>• FTR 509-38</td>
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<td><strong>Speaking for others</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 30</td>
<td>Naturalism, essentialism, and social construction: sex, gender, performativity, subjectivity, and identity</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• FTR pp. 439-92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 7</td>
<td>Autonomy, agency, and identity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Melissa Wright, <em>Maquiladora Mestizas And a Feminist Border Politics</em>, in DECENTERING THE CENTER 208-25</td>
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The Plan

**Valuing**
Caring in the context of justice and injustice

**Oct. 14**  
**Ethics of care, autonomy, responsibility, and ethical structures for ethical action**  

**Oct. 28**  
**Justice**  

**Nov. 4**  
**Relationships of intimacy: structural constraints, structures and acts of resistance**  
- FTR 88-149

**Acting**  
Individual and collective action; political economic, and social structures of action

**Nov. 11**  
**Equality, difference, and human rights**  
The Plan

Nov. 18  **Others, otherness, affinity, aversion, abjection**

**Privilege and what to do about it**

Nov. 25  Feminist approaches and activism
- FTR pp. 557-628

Dec. 2  Draft papers due to peer reviewer. Bring two hard copies of your double spaced draft; email one to me: marcia.mccormick@slu.edu

Dec. 9  No class—work on final paper, due Dec. 19