

**Women's and Gender Studies 5010/ Political Science 5760: Feminist Theory**  
Spring 2017

Instructor: Amanda Izzo

Office: 147 McGannon

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday, 1:15-2, and by appointment

Email: izzoal@slu.edu

Phone: 314-977-9863

This course examines developments in feminist thought over the latter decades of the twentieth century. By sampling a range of theoretical texts and cultural criticism, we will explore both historical and contemporary perspectives on the production and disruption of categories of gender and sexuality. The course's readings, discussions, and written assignments are designed to highlight core concepts and tensions accompanying the efflorescence of feminist scholarship 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.

Basic questions that guide the course include:

What models have scholars used to understand gender as a lived experience and as a social construct?

In what ways have these models informed the work of social movements?

What are the key concepts guiding feminist inquiry, and how have the emphases of the study of women, feminism, gender, and sexuality evolved over the span of the past forty years?

What is the relationship between gender and other categories of social difference, including race, class, nation, sexuality, and disability?

How has the study of women and gender been shaped by fields such as: critical race theory, postmodernism and poststructuralism, postcolonialism, queer theory?

What tools are necessary for critically evaluating theoretical interventions?

**Required Texts**

Kate Bornstein and S. Bear Bergman, *Gender Outlaws: The Next Generation* (Berkeley, CA: Seal Press, 2010).

Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body: Gender Politics and the Construction of Sexuality* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).

Audre Lorde. *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name* (Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1982).

**Course requirements**

1. Participation (15%): All students are expected to be present, on time, and ready to participate when class begins. May include short writing assignments and quizzes. Absences, insufficient preparation, inappropriate phone or computer use, and neglecting to make informed contributions to discussion will have an adverse effect on the participation grade. Exigencies happen, and, of course, you may find it necessary to miss class, but keep in mind that multiple absences without a documented hardship will have an impact on this portion of the grade. Should extended absence be required, the student must seek academic accommodations from the Office of Disability Services.

2. In-class text presentation and discussion (5%): during a class period of your choice (book presentation classes excepted), you will present a short cultural work (writing, music, video, etc.) or

news story related to class themes and lead a brief discussion around it. You should come prepared to a. present a text to the class, distributing or screening an item that can be read or viewed in 5-10 minutes and b. pose discussion questions that will enable your classmates to interpret the text (discussion questions should not have a yes-or-no answer or be designed to gather facts). This should not be a formal, written presentation but instead a more casual opportunity to share an item of interest and generate conversation. Please contact me with information about your text the night before the class in which you plan to present.

3. Book reviews and presentation (2, 15% each): Two weeks of the semester, **Feb. 28 and Apr. 11**, are set aside for you to choose a book-length work on your choice of topic in women's and gender studies. You will provide a brief presentation to the class that summarizes the work and explains its contribution to the field. You will also submit a scholarly book review based on the model of those in academic journals. The book review is due via email before the class meeting.

4. Midterm (15%): A take-home format with essays designed for you to synthesize the assigned readings. **Due Mar. 19, 11:59 pm.**

5. Paper (35%): You will have two options for the format of this paper. The first is a 22-25 page (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 readings paper of the same length in which you synthesize 4-5 book-length texts on a topic of choice. More instructions will be available during the semester. **Due May 12, 11:59 pm.**

### Academic Integrity

The penalties for academic dishonesty are significant, and they will be enforced. Simply, use your own words and ideas in coursework, and give proper attribution for any references you make to the work of another. Whether it is intentional or unintentional, minimal or extensive, copying or paraphrasing another's writings or ideas without attribution constitute plagiarism. Work submitted for this class must include bibliographic information for all source material using a recognized citation method, preferably MLA or Chicago Manual of Style.

SLU's Academic Integrity Policy reads as follows: The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity. Academic integrity is violated by any dishonesty such as soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of work submitted toward academic credit. While not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, examples include copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed book exam, submitting materials authored by or revised by another person as the student's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, and colluding with another student or students to engage in academic dishonesty. Any clear violation of academic integrity will be met with appropriate sanctions. Possible sanctions for violation of academic integrity may include, but are not limited to, assignment of a failing grade in a course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University. Students should review the College of Arts and Sciences policy on Academic Honesty, which can be accessed on-line at <http://www.slu.edu/x12657.xml> under "Student Resources" or in hard copy form in the Arts and Sciences Policy Binder in each departmental or College office.

### **Disability Services and Academic Accommodations**

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. Please contact the instructor as soon as possible regarding accommodations.

### **Other guidelines**

No disruptive or disrespectful behavior. Turn off phones. Laptops and tablets may be used to take notes and consult readings. Any other computer use—web, email, outside work, etc.—or phone/text use constitutes disrespectful behavior and will adversely affect the participation grade. Late assignments will receive a penalty of one full grade deduction per day late (or portion thereof). No material from this class may be redistributed or posted to the web.

### **Schedule**

Key to readings: \*=Blackboard

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|---------|---|
| Jan. 17 | Introduction and Historical Foundations<br>*"Lexicon: Power"<br>*Stanton, "Declaration of Sentiments"; Truth, "Ar'n't I a Woman?"; Mill, from <i>The Subjection of Women</i>  |
| Jan. 24 | *"Lexicon: Essentialism and Social Construction/Difference"<br>*Woolf, from <i>Three Guineas</i> ; deBeauvoir, from <i>The Second Sex</i> ;<br>Murray, "The Negro Woman in the Quest for Equality"; Bunch, "Women's Rights as Human Rights"   |
| Jan. 31 | "Second Wave" Radical Critique<br>*"Lexicon: Epistemologies"<br>*"Redstockings Manifesto"; Vidal, "New Voice of La Raza"; Shulman, "Marriage Contract"; Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence"; excerpts, <i>This Bridge Called My Back</i> ; Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement" |
| Feb. 7  | Deconstruction and Decolonization<br>*Lexicon: "Intersections of Race, Class, and Gender"<br>Lorde, <i>Zami: A New Spelling of My Name</i>  |
| Feb. 14 | *Lexicon: "Third World"/Global/Transnational Feminism"<br>*Anzaldúa, excerpts from <i>Borderlands/La Frontera</i> ; Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes"; Rich, "Notes Toward a Politics of Location"  |

- Feb. 21           Violences  
                   \*MacKinnon, "Rape: On Coercion and Consent"; Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins"; Young, "Five Faces of Oppression"; Narayan, "Cross-Cultural Connections, Border-Crossings and 'Death by Culture'"
- Feb. 28           Book reviews and presentations**
- Mar. 7            Gender Troubles  
                   \*Fuss (1989), "Risk of Essence" and "Lesbian and Gay Theory"; Butler, excerpts from *Gender Trouble*; Christian, "Race for Theory"
- Mar. 14           No class spring break**
- Mar. 19           Midterm exam due, 11:59 pm**
- Mar. 21           Bodies that Matter  
                   \*"Lexicon: Bodies"  
                   Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body*
- Mar. 28           \*Steinem, "If Men Could Menstruate"; Roberts, "Punishing Drug Addicts Who Have Babies"; Garland-Thomson, "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory"; Butler, "Doing Justice to Someone"; Haraway, "Manifesto for Cyborgs"
- April 4           Third World to Postcolonial  
                   \*Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes Revisited"; Mahmood, "Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent"; Grewal and Caplan, from *Scattered Hegemonies*
- Apr. 11           Book reviews and presentations**
- Apr. 18           TBA
- Apr. 25           Poststructural subjectivities and queer theory  
                   \*Rubin, "Thinking Sex"; Sedgwick, "Queer and Now"; Hammonds, "Black (W)holes and the Geometry of Black Female Sexuality"; Halberstam, from *In a Queer Time and Place*
- May 2            Bornstein and Bergman, *Gender Outlaws*
- Friday May 12    Paper due, 11:59 pm**