

**MASTER SYLLABUS – INTRODUCTION TO FEMINIST THEORY -WGS 201**

**Course Overview:**

Overview of the different frameworks within feminist theory: cultural feminism, liberal feminism, Marxist/socialist feminism, radical feminism, womanist feminism/multicultural, French feminism, third wave, and lesbian. These theories will be examined through the work of founders of feminist theory like Adrienne Rich, Simone DeBeauvoir, Robin Morgan, Charlotte Bunch, Audre Lorde, and Betty Friedan, among others.

**Learning Outcomes:**

WGS 201 Course Specific Learning Outcomes

* develop ability to understand what theory is and read theoretical writings critically
* learn to apply various feminist theories
* learn names and histories of feminist theorists of 2nd wave of women’s liberation movement
* build critical reading and writing skills
* demonstrate strong communication skills through class discussions
* understand how feminist theories connect to larger feminist frameworks of theory and practice
* read with comprehension and critically interpret and evaluate work in women and gender studies
* demonstrate rhetorically effective writing for audiences of women and gender studies scholarship
* demonstrate, at an advanced level of competence, use of control of language, modes of development and formal conventions in women and gender studies.
* formulate a topic, place it in context, take a position, and support it with carefully crafted reasoning and reliable evidence (analysis and/or synthesis)
* conduct research using appropriate scholarly and other evaluated sources; integrate sources seamlessly and appropriately into the prose
* craft correctly formatted citations using the documentation system stipulated by the instructor

University Studies Learning Outcomes:

Introduction to Feminist Theory as a course to fulfill a requirement for the University Studies curriculum would fall under *Cluster 1, Area C-****Intermediate Writing.*** As such, its learning objectives are as follows:

After completing this course, students will be able to:

1. Read with comprehension and critically interpret and evaluate written work in discipline-specific contexts.

2. Demonstrate rhetorically effective, discipline-specific writing for appropriate audiences.

3. Demonstrate, at an advanced level of competence, use of discipline-specific control of language, modes of development and formal conventions.

4. Demonstrate intermediate information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing.

**Required Texts:**

Kolmar, Wendy & France Barkowski, Eds. *Feminist Theory: A Reader.* 3rd edition. New York: McGraw Hill, 2005.

Lorber, Judith. *Gender Inequality: Feminist Theories and Politics*. 5th edition Los Angeles: Roxbury Publishing Company, 2005.

These are the texts currently being used by most WGS faculty.

**Example Assignment:**

All WGS 201 courses require an individually written “Theoretical Approaches Project” assignment.

**The assignment meets all four of the learning outcomes for Cluster 1, Area. C.**

Theoretical Approaches Project:

This assignment will be completed in two stages. A draft will be due mid semester and then a final version due at the end of the semester.

Each of you will complete the following paper in 7-8 pages (no more than 8 pages!):

1. Choose a theoretical perspective (for example, Black feminist theory, Marxist feminist theory, or liberal feminist theory)

2. Explain the essential elements of the theory

3. Locate THREE articles that exemplify the theory’s approach (library research)

4. Explain in writing how each article employs the theory or deviates from the theory

5. In writing, assess/critique the theory as a tool—what are the strengths and weaknesses of the theory?

**Alignment:**

The assignment clearly aligns with the identified University Studies SLO below as demonstrated by the first five content elements of the assignment description. The Theoretical Approaches Project is a 7-8 page assignment that asks students to critically evaluate a specific feminist theoretical perspective, locate scholarly research and critically analyze the theory. This assignment requires students use the library databases to identify three scholarly articles, read and summarize in relation to the theoretical perspective. Therefore this assignment correlates to learning outcome “Read with comprehension and critically interpret and evaluate written work in discipline-specific contexts.” In addition, this assignment requires students to “Demonstrate, at an advanced level of competence, use of discipline-specific control of language, modes of development and formal conventions.” Students are asked to correctly use discipline specific terms and concepts while writing this assignment. In order to complete this assignment students must integrate their assigned course readings with outside research and lecture notes. Therefore this assignment “Demonstrate intermediate information literacy skills by selecting, evaluating, integrating and documenting information gathered from multiple sources into discipline-specific writing.” Students are required to select three articles that use the theoretical perspective. This means that students must be able to select and evaluate which scholarly articles adopt a specific theoretical perspective. They must integrate these sources into their assignment while evaluating and analyzing the theories the articles employ.

**Sample of Assessment:**

**Pages % of Final Grade**

HW Assignment 1: Journal Review (1-2 pages) 5%

HW Assignment 2: What is Women’s Studies (1-2 pages) 5%

HW Assignment 3: Argumentation (1-2 pages) 5%

Weekly Journal (1-2 pages: total of 10) 20%

Problem Solving Essay (2 pages) 15%

Draft of Theoretical Approaches Project (3-5 pages) 5%

Peer Review (2 pages) 3%

Theoretical Approaches Project (7-8 pages) 30%

Topic Proposal (2 page) 2%

Online Self-Tests (0 pages) 2%

Individual Conference (0 pages) 3%

Attendance (0 pages) 5%

**Semester** **Total Pages:** 29-44

**Percent of Final Grade from Writing:** 90%

**Sample Course Assignments:**

Peer Review: This is a 2-page form that will be filled out in class. You will be asked to review your peers’ draft of the Theoretical Approaches Project.

Problem Solving Essay: Identify a feminist issue/problem that has come up in our studies of feminist theory. After describing the problem, you must then identify 2 potential solutions/strategies to address the problem. This essay should be 2 pages and in MLA or APA format. You should cite readings from our class syllabus to support your proposed solutions.

Homework Assignments:

**Assignment 1:** Review and answer questions from two peer reviewed academic journals in Women’s Studies (Feminist Studies and SIGNS). Please see the course site for details. This should be a 1-2 page in essay format.

**Assignment 2:** Review and answer questions after looking over Women’s and Gender studies majors/minors and cross-listed courses to understand the discipline of Women’s and Gender Studies. Please see course site for details. This should be a 1-2 page in essay format.

**Assignment 3:** Identify claims, reasons and evidence. Please see course site folder for details. . This should be a 1-2 page in essay format.

Weekly Reading Responses (Journal): This will be a 1-2 page response paper on the week’s readings. This is due at the start of class in printed copy. This is an informal writing journal where you respond and reflect on the week’s readings.

Online Self-Tests (Quizzes):

These are online quizzes that must be taken after reading learning modules posted on the course site. They are multiple choices and are based on the learning modules on Writing for the Discipline posted on the course site. There will be a total of 3 throughout the semester. Due dates are listed in the course schedule.

Topic Proposal: This is a 1-page topic proposal that you will post on a discussion board on the course cite. You must explain which feminist theory you plan to use for your theoretical approaches project, explain why this is an important topic, and how you plan to approach the assignment. This proposal will be submitted on the course site. You will then write a 1-page response to one of your peers’ proposals.

Draft Theoretical Approaches Project:This draft will be 3-5 pages.

Individual Conference: This semester you will sign up for a individual conference to be held with McHenry in her office LARTS 396F. This is a mandatory conference and there will be no make ups scheduled. The sign up sheet will be passed out early in the semester.

**Sample Course Outline:**

**September 11 What is Feminist Theory?**

* **(Course Site PDF)** “The Historical Case For Feminism,” by Estelle B. Freedman
* **(Course Site PDF)** "Feminist Activism: Historical Context," Sheila Ruth.
* **(Pg. 7-11 in Feminist Theory)** “Feminism” from The Feminist Dictionary (1985) by Cheris Kramarae and Paula Treichler
* **(Pg. 12-14 in Feminist Theory)** “Not by Degrees: Feminist Theory and Education” (1979) by Charlotte Bunch
* **(Pg. 17-26 in Feminist Theory)** “Have We Got a Theory for You! Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism and the Demand for ‘The Woman’s Voice’” (1983) by Maria Lugones and Elizabeth Spelman
* **(Pg. 27-33 in Feminist Theory)** “Theory as Liberatory Practice” from Teaching to Transgress (1994) by bell hooks

**September 18 Writing for the Discipline of Women’s Studies**

* (Course Site) Read “Writing for Women’s Studies: Introduction and Context” learning modules on the Course Site.
* (Course Site) Complete online Quiz #1 by midnight.
* (Course Site) Read and complete Homework Assignment 1 by midnight.
* Weekly journal due

**September 25 19th Century Feminist Foundations**

* **(Pg. 60-63 in Feminist Theory)** “Chapters II, IX, and XIII from Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792)” by Mary Wollstonecraft
* **(Pg. 65-66 in Feminist Theory) “**Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Women (1838)” by Sarah Grimke
* **(Pg. 67-69 in Feminist Theory)** “Declaration of Sentiments” (1848) by Elizabeth Cady Stanton
* **(Pg. 75 in Feminist Theory)** “Ain’t I a Woman” (1867) by Sojourner Truth
* **(Pg. 107-109 in Feminist Theory)**  “Lynching and the Excuse for It” by Ida B. Wells
* **(Pg. 109-114 in Feminist Theory)**  “The Traffic in Women” from Anarchism and Other Essays (1910)” by Emma Goldman.
* Weekly journal due

**October 2 20th Century Feminist Foundations**

* **(Pg. 1-19 in Gender Inequality)**  “Part I” by Lorber
* **(Pg. 11 in Feminist Theory)** “Womanist” from In Search of Our Mothers Gardens (1983) by Alice Walker
* **(Pg. 126-128 in Feminist Theory)** “Birth Control—A Parents’ Problem or Woman’s?” (1920) By Margaret Sanger
* **(Pg. 147-158 in Feminist Theory)** “Introduction” and Chapter 12 from *The Second Sex* (1949) by Simone de Beauvoir,
* **(Pg. 162-167 in Feminist Theory)** “The Feminine Mystique (1963)” by Simone de Beauvoir
* **(Pg. 402-407 in Feminist Theory)** “Feminism: a Transformational Politic” from *Talking Back: Thinking Black*, *Thinking Feminist* (1989) by bell hooks
* (Course Site) Read and Complete Homework Assignment 2 by midnight.
* Weekly journal due

**October 9 Women’s Movement: Radical/Liberal Feminism**

* (**Pp. 27-50**; **123-150** **in Gender Inequality)** by Lorber
* **(Pp. 42-59 in Feminist theory)** “Lexicon of the Debates”
* **(Pg. 180-182 in Feminist Theory)** *Sexual Politics* (1969) Kate Millet
* **(Pg. 182 in Feminist Theory)** *Redstockings Manifesto* (1969)
* **(Pg. 178-180 in Feminist Theory)** “SCUM Manifesto” by Valerie Solanas
* (Course Site) Read the “Writing for Women’s Studies: Building an Argument” Learning Modules by midnight.
* (Course Site) Complete online Quiz #2 by midnight.
* (Course Site) Read and Complete Homework Assignment 3 by midnight.
* Weekly journal due

**Additional Web Resources**

For additional information on the Women’s Liberation Movement, check out: Jo Freeman’s “The Women's Liberation Movement: Its Origin, Structures and Ideals,” <http://scriptorium.lib.duke.edu/wlm/womlib/>

Voice of the Women's Liberation Movement, <http://www.uic.edu/orgs/cwluherstory/CWLUArchive/voice.html>

**October 16 Library Research Session. Location TBA**

* **(Course Site)** Read “Writing for Women’s Studies: Library Tutorials” learning module.
* Meet with Librarian “How to Research using Databases”
* Problem Solving Essay due

**October 23 Power, Economics, and Women’s Bodies: Marxist & Socialist Feminism**

* **(pp51-89 in Gender Inequality)** "Marxist Feminism" and "Socialist Feminism" by Lorber
* **(Pg. 90-93 in Feminist Theory)** *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) by Friedrich Engels
* **(Pg. 100-104 in Feminist Theory)** Chapters VII and XIV from *Women and Economics: A Study of the Economic Relation between Men and Women as a Factor in Social Evolution* (1898) by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
* **(Pg. 299-308 in Feminist Theory)** “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Toward a More Progressive Union” (1981) by Heidi Hartmann
* Weekly journal due
* Topic proposal due

**October 30 Theorizing Difference: Psychoanalytic Feminism / Draft Process and Peer Review**

* **(Pg. 264-270 in Feminist Theory)** “The Sexual Sociology of Adult Life” from *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978) by Nancy Chorodow
* **(Pg. 168-182 in Gender Inequality)** by Lorber
* **(Pg. 312-319 in Feminist Theory)** “Concepts of Self and Morality” from *In a Different Voice* (1982) by Carol Gilligan
* **(Course Site)** Read Learning Module “Writing for Women’s Studies: Draft Process and Peer Review,” “General Writing Guidelines,” and “Citation and Plagiarism” by midnight
* **(Course Site)** Complete online Quiz # 3 by midnight
* Weekly journal due
* Draft of Theoretical Approaches Project Due in print at start of class.
* Peer Review Form to be filled out in class.

**November 6 Theorizing Difference: Multicultural Feminism**

* **(Pp. 231-252 in Gender Inequality)** by Lorber.
* **(Pg. 245-248 in Feminist Theory)** “Chicana Feminism” (1976) by Anna Nieto-Gomez
* **(Pg. 254-259 in Feminist Theory)** Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement” (1977)
* **(Pg. 308-311 in Feminist Theory)** “Asian Pacific American Women and Feminism” (1981) by Mitsuye Yamada
* **(Pg. 362-368 in Feminist Theory)** “La Conciencia de la Mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness” from *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mesitza* (1987) by Gloria Anzaldua
* **(Pg. 442-447 in Feminist Theory)** *Black Feminist Thought* (1990) by Patricia Hill Collins.
* Weekly journal due

**November 13 Theorizing Difference: Lesbian Feminism**

* **(p. 151-167 in Gender Inequality)** by Lorber
* **(Pg. 197-200 in Feminist Theory)** “The Woman-Identified Woman” (1970) by Radicalesbians
* **(Pg. 211-214 in Feminist Theory)** “Not for Lesbians Only” (1975) Charlotte Bunch
* **(Pg. 286-290 in Feminist Theory)** "The Straight Mind" from *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* (1978) Monique Wittig
* **(Pg. 290-298 in Feminist Theory)** "Compulsory Heterosexuality & Lesbian Existence" (1980) from *Blood, Bread and Poetry* (1984) by Adrienne Rich
* Weekly journal due

**November 20 Individual Paper Writing Conferences by appointment in LARTS 396F**

**November 27 Third Wave Feminism and Beyond**

* **(Pg. 284-303; 304-325; 90-122 in Gender Inequality)** by Lorber
* **(p. 477-482 in Feminist Theory)** “Femmenism” by DeLombard
* **(p. 336-346 in Feminist Theory)** “A Cyborg Manifesto” by Haraway
* **(p. 522-524 in Feminist Theory)** “Third Wave Manifesta) by Baumgarder and Richards
* **(Course Site)** Richards: “Ask Amy” link on our class website
* Weekly journal due

**December 4 Wrapping Up / Last Day of Class**

* **(Pg.326-329 in Gender Inequality)** “Do we have a new feminism?” by Lorber
* Weekly journal due
* Theoretical Approaches Project due during Final Exam Period