Welcome to WGSS 516! This course explores women’s reality, focusing on feminist theories that explain and seek to improve human lives. We analyze major issues raised by the women’s movement and the development of feminist ideas, and engage in a critical examination of the varieties of feminist thought. In particular, we trace paradigm shifts from modernity to postmodernity that have characterized U.S. feminisms and explore the impetus for globalizing perspectives. Theory allows us to produce re-framings of reality and participate in new forms of consciousness that may transform our relationships with each other and the world. Of particular interest is exploration of emergent forms of subjectivity or agency in the context of privilege, oppression, compliance, and resistance.

This course is reading and writing intensive! We will read a number of feminist theoretical works in their entirety and the rest in significant portions. As a graduate student, you should develop a familiarity with primary sources. However, it is often not possible to read an entire primary source and so we will be reading selected chapters. When you selectively read like this, it is important to at least get a sense of the whole work. Read the table of contents and any introductions, and see how the chapters you are reading fit into the larger whole. Try to scan/“speed read” bits of the other chapters. This technique takes practice, but will be useful for other classes in graduate school. Get online or read reviews of these works so that you get other people’s summaries. This will help you be able to understand a work without actually reading all of it. This isn’t “cheating,” it just makes you more knowledgeable about the work. Of course, you must read as much of the original as you can. Hopefully the seminar (ovular 😊) approach will encourage a collegial academic discourse and help build professional competence by strengthening your confidence and ability to engage in sophisticated analyses of feminist ideas.

Please note that this course does assume a thorough understanding of undergraduate-level theories of feminisms and will begin at this point. We’ll be reviewing this during week one (see schedule). If you do not have adequate preparation for any given weekly topic, you must do some background reading and access the sources for my undergraduate section (explained below). If you find you are not adequately prepared overall, please consider postponing taking this course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES
As a result of having taken this course, students will be able to:

• explain the similarities and differences among various theories of feminism and social justice
• critique theories from perspectives inclusive of race, ethnicity, class, sexual identity, age, and ability
• apply theories to practical realities of women’s lives and help students develop the critical, analytical skills necessary to understand and to analyze new social conditions
• develop and refine one’s own theoretical framework for social justice practice
• help build an open, affirming, challenging community of feminist scholars

COURSE TEXTS


DFT on schedule


➢ Articles on blackboard: There are selected articles on blackboard under “course documents” in the file “WS 516 Readings.” These are denoted on your schedule as (BB). Please note that complete citations for these readings are on the syllabus schedule if they are not listed on the article. You also have access to the undergraduate WS 416 readings. I have downloaded them to your site for your interest as background and as recommended readings. You can access them through “course documents” on your WS 516 site. They are in folders called “WS 416 readings” and are itemized by week numbers. Any reading in these folders will be denoted below as (BB: WS 416 week #).

➢ Selections from following books: (available on 3-hour reserve in the OSU Valley Library under WS 4/516 – or purchase cheap used copies online). There is a free scanner in the copying center in the library where you can scan and email documents to yourself at no cost. Denoted in your schedule as (R):

  o Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands: La Frontera*
  o Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender; Judith Butler, Gender Trouble*
  o Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought*
  o Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*
  o Christine Delphy, *Close to Home: A Materialist Analysis of Women’s Oppression*
  o Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*
  o bell hooks, *From Margin to Center*
  o Ariel Levy, *Female Chauvinist Pigs: Women and the Rise of Raunch Culture*
  o Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*
  o Carole McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim, *Feminist Theory Reader*
  o Chandra Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders* (you’ll need this for WS 585)
  o Catherine Orr, Ann Braithwaite, and Diane Lichtenstein, *Rethinking Women’s and Gender Studies* (all required readings from this book are scanned for you)
  o Deborah Seigel, *Sisterhood Interrupted: From Radical Women to Girls Gone Wild*
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation
The goal of OSU is to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and wisdom they need to contribute to society. OSU has community rules and expectations that are formulated to guarantee each student’s freedom to learn and to protect the fundamental rights of others. I believe it is necessary for us to treat each other with respect and care in order for teaching, learning, and scholarship to thrive, and for us to adhere to the “guidelines for creating a safe space in the classroom” (handout). In addition, it is expected that all the work turned in for evaluation is your individual work unless you are given instructions for joint projects, and that you understand how to cite and reference others’ work (from journals, books, and web sites) in order to avoid plagiarism and referral to the OSU Student Conduct Program. If you need any special accommodations to succeed in this class, please let me know.

In the feminist classroom, we understand that knowledge is a product constructed by knowers. This means that your participation and input into our collective knowledge-making is valuable. As a student in a feminist classroom, you are responsible to your colleagues as well as to yourself for the success of our joint teaching and learning. Therefore your attendance and active participation is required. You are expected to demonstrate your commitment to the class by arriving on time, being prepared in part by having completed the required readings, staying for the entire class, listening actively, contributing to discussions, and engaging in learning activities. If you must miss a class, you are responsible for making sure your work is turned in on time and finding out from your colleagues what you missed.

The Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program has a policy that if you miss more than the equivalent of two weeks of (unexcused) classes, a letter grade will be deducted from your final grade for each additional absence. If you must use your absences, do so wisely. Exceptions will not be made if you have used your absences and then have emergencies requiring additional absences.

Facilitating Discussion
You will sign up for one of the weekly reading assignments and present a summary of and insight about during class time. Please be ready to evoke lively and complex theoretical discussion of the themes of the reading and help class members make connections to other feminist works and other readings/discussion already completed. This course requirement is worth 5 points or 5% of your final grade.

Weekly Writing
Each week bring to class about 2 pages (approx. 500-700 words) of crafted writing on that week’s readings in order to focus your engagement in our shared class discussion. Please note that this is not impressionistic free-writing, personal journal-style writing, or summaries of the readings. You must write a thesis statement – an assertion that you claim in the form of one sentence – that is easily recognizable in the first paragraph. Choose a statement, assertion, or brief argument in an area of interest vis-à-vis the readings for the week – and about which you would like to suggest the whole class engage. Some ways to approach this, for example, include taking the theoretical approach and applying it to a topic or issue; comparing and contrasting the approach to/with something previously studied; or finding an aspect of the theoretical approach that you want to expand on beyond the readings or critique, etc. You will use the bulk of the paper to develop your assertion and provide evidence for the claim. The last paragraph is where you reassert your thesis, summarize the evidence for your claim, and conclude the essay. No grammatical or proofing errors, please.

I do not want to make this an onerous weekly assignment on which you spend too much time. Think of it as a relatively brief and limited assignment, yet one in which you are invested as you develop your intellectual life. It is a skill to find a balance whereby you focus and apply just enough with productive results without allowing it to stretch into too much work. Finding such a balance is essential in a professional life and is always difficult to achieve. Use this to practice that balance!

You are writing these weekly and they are due by the start of class on Wednesday. Please bring a copy to class plus send through blackboard for evaluation (click on “assignments” and then on the folder “weekly writing” to send your assignment). Please save and attach as a word document. Please also note the blackboard site will close down at 2pm on Wednesdays. Late writing without legitimate excuse will not be accepted. If you choose not to submit writing on any one week you will just lose the 5 points (5%) associated with that week. Weekly writing is worth 45 points or 45% of your final grade. There are 9 weekly writings each worth 5 points or 5% of your grade each. The first assignment is due for week 2 and the last one for week 10. There are 3 examples of excellent weekly writing samples from previous classes on blackboard under “course documents.” They may cite slightly different sources because they had different readings, but you’ll get the general idea. You will also see my comments using Word tracking.

Project and Presentation: choose one from the following or come up with your own idea for a project: This assignment involves the completion of a culminating, professional writing project that addresses/explores/synthesizes class themes. Some suggestions include:

1. Write a draft of the theory section or theoretical context of the literature review of your thesis or dissertation. Using material from the class, articulate the theoretical foundations of your (I’m assuming potential) project. Please note this is NOT what will become your lit review, but rather the theoretical premises or paradigm that inform your analysis of the knowledge in your eventual lit review. It is very important if you
choose this option that you understand this difference between substantive knowledge in the lit review and a focus on the theoretical aspects that inform that review. These theoretical aspects include attention to both the perspectives of the authors you are working with and your analysis of those authors. Please also note the difference between these two aspects (their analysis and your analysis of their analysis) before you embark on this option. The paper can be any length, but should be at least 10 pages (about 2500-3000 words), be well-cited and referenced, using any referencing guidelines (APA, Chicago, MLA). Begin the paper with a (no more than 250 word) abstract. This is not the abstract to your thesis but the abstract for this theory paper.

For example, if you are thinking that your thesis might be in the genre of violence against women, you could use this assignment in the following (individual or combinations of these) ways. In other words, you would not be writing your literature review about gendered violence, but exploring the theoretical underpinnings of the literature pertinent to your project:

a. Feminist theoretical approaches to power in terms of gendered and racialized violence.

b. Feminist analysis (historical and contemporary approaches) of heterosexism, colonialism, racism, sexism, etc. as they support gendered and racialized violence.

c. Theoretical foundations of feminist strategies for personal resistance, agency, ally-work, and social change movements associated with gendered and racialized violence.

In addition, as you explore the above, you would also be explicit in terms of your theoretical analysis of the perspectives you are addressing. For example, if you discuss U.S. radical feminist analyses of gendered violence and you are interested in postcolonial theory, you might critique U.S. radical feminism from that perspective. This is applying the two aspects alluded to above.

2. Using Charlotte Bunch’s four categories of feminist theory (description, analysis, vision, strategy: handout from week 1) develop your own intersectional theory of feminism/social justice. This assignment requires you demonstrate a nuanced understanding of a broad range of theoretical insights to support your contentions. It expects a synthesis of various approaches with a new focus/angle that you can claim as your own. In other words, it is expected that you go beyond a summary of the different approaches we’ve been studying to create something unique. This paper should be at least 12-15 pages (about 3500-4500 words and be well-cited and referenced, using any referencing guidelines (APA, Chicago, MLA). Begin the paper with a (no more than 250 word) abstract.

3. Complete a strong first draft of a scholarly article destined for publication that focuses on some aspect of the theoretical work we have studied during the class. This might be an opportunity for you to apply theoretical knowledge to your scholarly area of interest, or expand a weekly writing into a fully-fledged article. This paper should be at least 12 pages (about 3500 words) and be well-cited and referenced, using any
referencing guidelines (APA, Chicago, MLA). Begin the paper with a (no more than 250 word) abstract.

4. Other ideas? Please let me know if you have something else in mind.

When you have decided upon your project, write an approx. 250 word draft abstract and send through blackboard assignments, posting also on the discussion board, by class time, week 3 (October 16).

A first draft of your project is due by class time week 7 (November 13), sent through blackboard assignments and emailed to your reviewer (explained below). Also post a copy on discussion board. There are no points attached to this assignment, although sending a less-than-first draft to your reviewer will be reflected in your final score. We’ll talk in class about what to expect in a strong first draft.

Please review a colleague’s draft and give constructive and specific feedback using the tracking changes option in Word. Email your reviewed document to its author by Monday, week 8 (November 18), copied to me, and also posted on the discussion board. We’ll work out the details of who will review whom later.

Submit your final project assignment through blackboard assignments by 5pm, Friday, week 10 (December 6) and post a copy to the discussion board. Please do your best to read as many papers as you can before presentations during finals week.

THEN
Develop a professional presentation of your project as you would for a conference or for your thesis defense. During exam week, we will meet for presentations on Tuesday, December 10, at noon (our final exam time according to the registrar) in our classroom. Your presentation should be no more than 15 minutes that includes 5 minutes for questions. Please time yourself to go no more than 10 minutes so that you leave 5 minutes for questions and answers. You may include a Power Point slide show or poster. Because your classmates will have already read your paper, your presentation should develop the ideas presented in your paper more thoroughly and invite dialogue. I will organize this as a catered “mini-conference” and will invite faculty, so do treat this as a formal, professional experience. Please feel free to invite guests.

This assignment is worth a total of 42 points or 42 % of your final grade, distributed in the following way: Paper: 25%; Peer review of first draft: 5%; Presentation: 12%;

Self-evaluation
By 5pm, Thursday of finals week (December 12), complete a thoughtful self-evaluation that overviews your learning process and progress in terms of written papers and in-class participation and also includes a theoretical synthesis in terms of your intellectual journey through feminist theoretical paradigms. Reflect on the challenges and opportunities in the class for your personal and professional growth, commenting on the uses of this knowledge. What issues/theories were most difficult for you and why?
Discuss your intellectual journey and summarize your thoughts on using feminist perspectives to address inequalities and advocate for social justice. Send this through blackboard assignments. Please note that the blackboard site will close when the due date is past. Self-evaluations account for 8% of your final grade.

**Total course requirements:** facilitation 5% + weekly writing 45% + final project 42% + self-evaluation 8% = 100%.

**Grades will be issued as follows:**
A = 94%+; A- = 90-93%; B+ = 87-89%; B = 83-86%; B- = 80-82%; C+ = 77-79%; C = 73-76%; C- = 70-72%; D+ = 67-69%; D = 63-66%; D- = 60-62%; Below 60% = F. OSU does not offer the A+ grade.

**SCHEDULE**
Readings are from Mann *Doing Feminist Theory* (DFT); articles are available on blackboard under “course documents” in the file “WS 516 Readings.” These are denoted on your schedule below as (BB). Please note that complete citations for these readings are on the syllabus schedule if they are not listed on the article. Please also note that you have access to the undergraduate WS 416 readings and some are recommended reading for you. You can access them through “course documents” on your WS 516 site. They are in folders called “WS 416 readings” and are itemized by week numbers. Any reading in these folders will be denoted below as (BB: 416 week #). Finally chapters from books on 3 hour reserve in the library are denoted by (R).

**If this material feels new to you,** buy Rosemarie Putnam Tong, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction* (3rd edition): a classic undergraduate text providing foundation for U.S. feminism, or McCann and Kim’s *Feminist Theory Reader* (Routledge, 2009) that is more transnational in focus. Both are on 3-hour reserve.

**Week 1 (October 2) Doing feminist theory**
- Susan Mann, *Doing Feminist Theory* (DFT), “Introduction,” and Chapter 1
- Layli Maparyan, “Feminism” in Orr, Braithwaite, and Lichtenstein, *Rethinking Women and Gender Studies* (R) [on BB]
- **Recommended:** Vivian M. May “Intersectionality” in Orr, Braithwaite, and Lichtenstein, *Rethinking Women and Gender Studies* (R) [on BB]; Linda Alcoff, “Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory” (BB); bell hooks, “Theory as Liberatory Practice” (BB: 416 week 1); Maria Lugones and Elizabeth Spelman, “Do we have a theory for you?” (BB)

**Week 2 (October 9) Liberal feminisms**
- DFT, chapter 2
- DFT, “Liberal Feminism Inspired by Modernization/Globalization Theory” (pp. 327-329)
• Short documents: 5 (Wollstonecraft); 9 (Stanton); 10 (Truth); 15 (Toshiko); 17 (Diniz); 21 (Amin); 32 (Ali); 36 (Shaarawi); 40 (Friedan): all in Freedman, *The Essential Feminist Reader*.

• **Recommended:** Short documents: 11 (Taylor Mill); 13 (Anthony); 18 (Cooper); 29 (WILPF); Henry, “Waves” in Orr, Braithwaite, and Lichtenstein, *Rethinking Women and Gender Studies* (R); Susan Moller Okin, excerpt from *Justice, Gender, and the Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1987) (BB: 416 week 2); Friedan, *The Feminist Mystique* (R); Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (R); Tong, “Liberal Feminism” in *Feminist Thought* (BB: 416 week 2)

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**Week 3 (October 16) Radical/cultural feminisms**

**Project abstract due by class time**

- DFT, chapter 3
- DFT, “Radical Feminist Global Analyses” (pp. 338-340)

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**Week 4 (October 23) Materialist analyses: Marxist/socialist feminisms: existential insights**

- DFT, chapter 4
- DFT, “Marxist and Socialist Feminisms Inspired by Dependency Theory” (pp. 329-337)
- Short documents 8 (Tristan); 16 (Engels); 44 (Dalla Costa)
- Documents 24 (Goldman); 25 (Kollontai); 27 (Capetillo); 34 (Myrdal); 35 (Ling)
- Hartmann, “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism” (BB)

If you are not familiar with existentialism, read Tong, “Existential feminism,” *Feminist Thought* [BB]. Then read document 38 (Simone de Beauvoir).

- **Recommended:** Angela Y. Davis, “The Approaching Obsolescence of Housework” (BB); Michele Barrett, “The Oppression of Women Today” (BB); Vandana Shiva, Piracy through patents,” excerpt from *Biopiracy* (South End Press) (BB); Christine Delphy, *Close to Home: A Materialist Analysis of Women’s Oppression* (R); Nancy Hartsock, “The Feminist Standpoint” (BB 416 week 2); Engels, excerpt from *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* in Wendy Kolmar and Frances Bartowski, eds. *Feminist Theory: A Reader* (New York:
Week 5 (October 30): Theorizing agency: Identity politics/intersections: standpoint revisited

- DFT, chapter 5
- DFT, “Third World Feminisms/Intersectionality Theory Applied to Global Issues” (pp. 344-354)
- Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*, choose one essay (R)
- Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (2nd. Edition), preface to first and second editions, choose one chapter (R)
- Andrea Smith, “introduction” and chapter 1, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (R)

Week 6 (November 6) Theorizing agency: Postmodernisms/poststructuralism revisited

- DFT, chapter 6 (pp. 211-233)
- Paula M. L. Moya, “Chicana Feminism and Postmodern Theory” in *Feminist Theory Reader* (BB)
- Document 54 (Wittig)
Week 7 (November 13) Queer theory

Draft of final project due by class time; Peer feedback on draft due next Mon, by 5pm

• DFT, chapter 6 (pp. 233-255)
• DFT, “Queering Global Analyses” (pp. 388-393)
• Jennifer Purvis, “Queer” in Rethinking Women and Gender Studies (BB)
• Bobby Noble, “Trans,” in Rethinking Women and Gender Studies (BB)

Week 8 (November 20) Third wave feminisms

Peer feedback on draft due this Monday, by 5pm

• DFT, chapter 7
• Documents 58 (Hanna); 59 (Walker); 63 (Baumgardner and Richards)
• Jessica Valenti, Full Frontal Feminism (R – whole book: easy read!)

Week 9 (November 27) Transnational/postcolonial feminisms

Your reading for week 10 due by class time

• DFT, chapter 10 (you already read pp. 388-396)
• Chandra Talpade Mohanty, chapters 1 and 9, Feminism Without Borders (R)
• Documents 60 (UN speeches); 64 (RAWI)
• Recommended: Laura Parisi, “Transnational,” in Rethinking Women and Gender Studies (BB); Review of Feminism Without Borders in Hypatia 20, 2 (2005), 221-224 (BB); More chapters from Feminism Without Borders; Lila Abu-Lughod, “Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving?” (BB); Noel Sturgeon, “Ecofeminist Appropriations
and Transnational Environmentalism” (BB); Amitra Basu, “Globalization of the Local/Localization of the Global: Mapping Transnational Women’s Movements” in Feminist Theory Reader (BB); June Jordan, “Report from the Bahamas” (BB)

Week 10 (December 4) Closures and Futures
Final project due Friday by 5pm
• DFT, Conclusion

Finals presentations: Tuesday, December 9, at noon, our classroom. According to the registrar’s office, this is our “final exam” time and so should work for your schedules. We might go late into the afternoon depending on class size and number of presentations.

Self-evaluation due 5pm, Thursday, December 12.