

The University of Western Ontario
London Canada

Department of Women's Studies and Feminist Research

The Department acknowledges that we are on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples.

Women's Studies 2240F
Foundations of Feminist Thought
(Wednesday 10:30-1:30, UCC 67)

Fall 2018

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Office Hours: Tuesday, 11:30-12:30; Thursday 11:30-12:30.

The focus of this course is to provide an introduction to the interdisciplinary, multi-faceted area of feminist theory. As the title suggests, we will be examining those first-and second-wave feminists whose writings form the foundations of contemporary feminist thought. We will examine the ways in which feminists write about the condition of women, focusing not only on *what* they say but on *how* they pursue their critiques. In addition, we will examine the ways in which feminist theorists have responded to the assertions, assumptions and omissions of some "malestream" theories. The course does not aim to be exhaustive, but we will consider historical writings that analyse the diversity of feminist approaches to issues of race, culture, sexuality class, etc., and discuss the reciprocal interactions between feminist theories and feminist political and cultural practices. Students will learn to engage with theoretical discourse, and to formulate critical responses to it in oral and written discussion.

Texts: If you wish to have a hard copy of (most of) the material we are discussing, and if you can find a cheap copy, then you may wish to look into: Kolmar, Wendy K. and Frances Bartowski, eds. *Feminist Theory: A Reader*. Fourth Edition. New York: McGraw Hill.

OTHERWISE: Texts will be posted on OWL by week and date OR the URL will be provided on the course outline.

Recommended:

1. A Dictionary. You may find there are words in the readings that are unfamiliar to you. If you don't have a paper dictionary, *The Oxford English Dictionary* is available online through the Western Libraries page. <http://www.oed.com/>

Miriam-Webster Online is available at www.m-w.com/. Dictionary.com is at dictionary.reference.com/.

2. A Style Guide. All written work will be graded for style (organisation, grammar, etc.) as well as content, and so some sort of style guide is a useful companion. Most style guides also contain information on how to cite the scholarly sources that you may use for seminars and essays. I prefer *Modern Language Association* citation style, but am happy to accept *APA* or other

documentation methods **as long as you are consistent in your usage**. Copies of MLA and APA style guides (and others) are available in the Library. Online, you may find the Online Writing Lab at Purdue University useful: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Evaluation:

1. Contribution to class discussion: 10%
2. Presentation (explanation below): 10%
3. Write up of presentation: 10% (**due one week after presentation**)
4. Mid-Term: 15% (October 24)
5. Essay: 20%: 2500-3000 words, (**1-INCH MARGINS, DOUBLE SPACED, TIMES NEW ROMAN 12-POINT FONT**) (due Dec 5. Submit on OWL AND hard copy in class).
QUOTATIONS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE WORD COUNT.
6. Final Exam: 35%

Presentation:

I will randomly assign each student to one of the essays on the course as well as the partner(s) with whom you will give a very short presentation. Between you, come up with what you consider to be the **THREE** major points in the essay. You should also come up with **ONE** question **EACH** to pose to the class, and be prepared to lead class discussion on the topic. Since the readings on the course are distant from us in time, one approach might be to consider how or if the week's readings speak to our present moment.

Write up:

The aim of the presentation is to communicate the main points of the article to the class—think of your presentation as creating study notes; in the write up, however, you might wish to evaluate the arguments the author is making more broadly, or make an argument about a specific point, or inflect the argument with your own perspective. **Due: one week after presentation, 500-750 words (2-3 pages)**. Make sure your essay has a title and a *Works Cited*. This is not a jointly written essay.

Official Things You Need to Know:

- **Late assignments** will be penalized 2% per day to a maximum of 7 days after which the assignment will receive a "O." If exceptional circumstances arise, extensions may be negotiated before the due date, but not on or after the due date. If illness or tragedy is going to disrupt your studies, you must provide documentation to the Academic Counselor in your Faculty of registration
- **ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION**
- Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being

requested.

- **SUPPORT SERVICES:** Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.
- **Attendance:** In this department, it is the expectation that students will attend each class and come to lectures prepared for discussion. **Please note that students whose absences from class are deemed excessive by the instructor can be (after due warning) debarred from the final exam (see *Western Academic Calendar*, “Examinations/ Attendance”).**
- **Essays** should be submitted in class or placed EITHER in the Women’s Studies dropbox (Lawson Hall 3260) OR in the English Department dropbox (University College 2401). Make sure my name is clearly indicated on the front page.
- **Please Note: Final papers will be submitted to me (or the Essay Dropbox) in hardcopy as well as to Turnitin through OWL.**
- **Email:** 1. Official communication from the university goes to your UWO address.
2. Email is great for communication that is purely factual, ephemeral or superficial, SO if you want to tell me you can’t make it to class, use email; if, however, you have substantive issues to discuss with regard to assignments or anything else, please do so by phone or in person.
- **Wikipedia:** is fine for *preliminary* exploration, especially because entries often point the way to original sources or critical material, but the information contained in Wikipedia and similar sites is not always accurate. Please make sure you have confirmation of your facts from **at least two** sources, and please make sure all secondary sources are documented in a **Works Cited** page. UWO has many searchable databases for online scholarly articles. Ask me if you need help accessing these sources.

University Policies:

- **Plagiarism:** “Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes and citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense. Students should be aware of the Scholastic Offense Policy in the Academic Calendar.”
- **Plagiarism checking:** “All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under licence to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licencing agreement currently between the University and Turnitin.com.” (*Western Academic Calendar*)

Lecture Schedule

Week 1, September 12: Introduction

Women's Suffrage

bell hooks, "Theory as a Liberatory Practice," (1994).

Almroth Wright, "Letter on Militant Hysteria," (1913).

Week 2, September 19: Wollstonecraft, "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman." Chapters 2, 7 and 13, (1792).

Stanton, "Declaration of Sentiments," (1848); "Solitude of Self," (1892).

Week 3, September 26:

Taylor, "Enfranchisement of Women," (1851).

Mill, from "The Subjection of Women," Chapters 2 and 4, (1870).

Truth, "Ain't I a Woman?" (1851).

Week 4, October 3: Friedan, "The Problem That Has No Name," (1963).

Woolf, "A Room of One's Own." From Chapters 2, 5 and 6, (1929).

De Beauvoir, from *The Second Sex*. Introduction and Chapter 12, (1949)

Week 5, October 8-12: Reading Week

Week 6, October 17: Engels, from "The Origin of the Family," (1884)

Marx, *The Communist Manifesto*, (1848).

(<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1848/communist-manifesto/index.htm>)

Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism,"

(https://web.ics.purdue.edu/~hoganr/SOC%20602/Hartmann_1979.pdf) (1979)

Week 7, October 24: Mid-term

Week 8, October 31: Butler, "Letter to My Countrywomen," (1871).

Gilman, from "Women and Economics." Chapters 7 and 14, (1898).

Goldman, "The Traffic in Women," (1910).

Week 9, November 7: Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses."

(<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm>) (1969-70)

Firestone, from *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970).

Week 10, November 14: Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement" (1977).

Weathers, "An Argument for Black Women's Liberation...", (1969)

Lorde, "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Defining Difference," (1984)

Week 11, November 21: E. Pauline Johnson, "A Strong Race Opinion" (1892)

Paula Gunn Allen, "Where I Come From is Like This," (1986)

Lee Maracle, "I am Woman"; "Isn't Love a Given?" (1996)

Week 12, November 28: Horney, "The Dread of Woman," (1932)

Joreen, "The BITCH Manifesto," (1968)

Koedt, "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm," (1970).

Week 13, December 5: REVIEW