

The University of Western Ontario
London Canada

Department of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies

We acknowledge that Western University is located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabek (Ah-nish-in-a-bek), Haudenosaunee (Ho-den-no-show-nee), Lūnaapéewak (Len-ahpay-wuk) and Chonnonton (Chun-ongk-ton) Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum.

With this, we respect the longstanding relationships that Indigenous Nations have to this land, as they are the original caretakers. We acknowledge historical and ongoing injustices that Indigenous Peoples (First Nations, Métis and Inuit) endure in Canada, and we accept responsibility as a public institution to contribute toward revealing and correcting miseducation as well as renewing respectful relationships with Indigenous communities through our teaching, research and community service.

GSWS 2240F, Fall 2025
Foundations of Feminist Thought
Wednesday, 10:30-1:30
UCC 54B

Winter 2025

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Office Hours: Thursday, 10:30-12:30. Other times by appointment in person or by zoom.

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. 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 will be posted on OWL according to the week of term **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**. You may find the Online Writing Lab at Purdue University useful: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

Evaluation:

1. Presentation (explanation below): 15%
2. Write up of presentation: 15% (**due one week after presentation**). **PLEASE NOTE:** because everyone has a different due-date for the write-up, I have to leave the due date on OWL open, to December 12. **The due date for individual assignments, however, is one week after the presentation.**
3. Midterm: 15% October 15
4. Essay: 20%: 2000-2500 words, (1-INCH MARGINS, DOUBLE SPACED, TIMES NEW ROMAN 12-POINT FONT) (due November, Submit on OWL. I won't grade any paper that has not been submitted to Turnitin through OWL). QUOTATIONS ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE WORD COUNT.
5. Final Exam: 35%

Presentation:

I will randomly assign each student to one of the essays on the course as well as to the partner(s) , if necessary, with whom you will give a very short presentation. Between you, come up with what you consider to be the **THREE main points** of the assigned article (ie: what are you meant to take away from this article; what's the "so what"? There may be more than one take away, but don't focus on more than three) and provide some evidence as to why you think so. In order to help other students follow along, please **provide page numbers from the texts on OWL** for your textual evidence. If you wish, you can put supporting quotations on PowerPoint or other platform. This should be *absolutely* no more than 15 minutes.

The group will receive the same grade for the presentation, unless you tell me you'd prefer to be graded individually; the write-up is individually graded.

Come up with **at least ONE** question (one per presenter) to pose to the class. 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, but your questions should not veer too far from the text. Make sure the questions are focused and specific.

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. Submit through OWL.

Final paper: Essay questions are posted on OWL. You are free to come up with your own topic, as long as it involves some aspect of what we have covered on the course, uses at least two of the writers we have read, and as long as you clear the topic with me by early March.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

I am interested in your thinking and writing. I therefore ask that you complete your work without the use of AI (automatic translation tool, grammar checkers, ChatGPT etc.). If I suspect AI use in your assignments, I will request research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and any other relevant material.

You are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. I will treat AI use as plagiarism, and will report it to the Undergraduate Chair, which could result in a 0 for the assignment. Critical thinking and independent problem solving are among the aims of this course; neither of those is helped by using AI.

Lecture Schedule

Week 1, September 10:

Introduction

Women's suffrage.

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

Week 2, September 17:

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

Stanton, "Solitude of Self," (1892).

Week 3, September 24:

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

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

Week 4, September 24:

Friedan, "The Problem That Has No Name," (1963).

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

Week 5: October 1:

Stopes, "Radiant Motherhood," (1921).

Sanger, "Woman's Error and Her Debt" (1920).

Week 6, October 15: Mid-term

Week 7: October 22:

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>)

FOR REFERENCE: Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism,"
(https://web.ics.purdue.edu/~hoganr/SOC%20602/Hartmann_1979.pdf) (1979)

Week 8, October 29:

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 3-7: READING WEEK

Week 10: November 12

Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses."

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

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

Week 11: November 19:

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

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

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

Week 12, November 26:

E. Pauline Johnson, "A Strong Race Opinion" (1892)

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

Lee Maracle, "I am Woman" (1996)

For interest: Beth Brant, "Keep the Drum Playing" (1994)

Week 13, December 3 Review

OFFICIAL THINGS THAT MAKE YOUR EYES GLAZE OVER, BUT THAT YOU REALLY 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**.

Email: While I appreciate that email is the dinosaur of communication strategies, it is nevertheless the medium through which the University, and I, will get in touch. Please check it from time to time. I try to respond to email within 24 hours, 48 on weekends.

Academic Consideration

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student's control that have a substantial but temporary impact on the student's ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of the student's Faculty of Registration.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:
 - a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
 - b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
 - c. Supporting documentation as relevant.

Requests without supporting documentation are limited to one per term per course.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner.

Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term always require formal supporting documentation.

Attendance: Attendance is mandatory in all classes and tutorials. In cases of excessive absenteeism (e.g. more than 9 unexcused hours for a half course, 18 for a full course), which are not accounted for by either academic consideration or accommodation, students may be debarred from taking the final examination, and will receive an official warning to this effect by or before the course drop date (see Senate policy). In classes with or without final exams, students who do not attend class will receive 0% for course participation grades. Unless other policies dictate a different set of penalties in specific English and Writing Studies programs, this will apply to all department programs.

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Intellectual Property/Copyright

All instructor-written materials (e.g. PowerPoints, lecture notes, oral lectures) for this course are created solely for students' personal use within the course, and remain the instructor's intellectual property. Further reproduction, fixation, distribution, transmission, dissemination, communication, or any other uses, without securing the consent of the copyright owner (the course instructor) may be an infringement of copyright. You may not distribute, email, or otherwise communicate these materials to any other person. These limitations extend to recording, photographing, or sharing lectures (online or in-person) and lecture material without permission. Posting the instructor's content from this course to online course sharing sites like OneClass or Course Hero without permission is both an infringement of intellectual property law and a violation of academic integrity guidelines. The instructor will pass these cases on to the Western University Ombudsperson or their Department Chair as appropriate.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the Western Multicultural Calendar.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support & Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking 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 licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.