

Syllabus

GSWS 0500: Introduction to Feminist Theory

Fall 2017

Section: 1060

Schedule: Mondays 12-2:25pm

Classroom: Rm. 402

Professor: Dr. Natalie Kouri-Towe

Email: nataliekt@pitt.edu

Office: 402 Cathedral of Learning (middle cubicle in the hallway)

Office Hours: Mondays 2:30-3:30pm & Tuesdays 11am-12pm

Course Description

This course examines the theories that have shaped feminist thought and situates them historically and transnationally so as to emphasize the social conditions and conflicts in which ideas and politics arise, change and circulate. Reading key texts in feminist theory alongside their debates, the course will prepare students to apply and situate arguments in feminist politics within the historical trajectories of feminist thinking.

Topics include: feminist consciousness, theories of gender, standpoint theory, situated knowledge, intersectionality, identity, transnational feminism, feminist solidarity, anti-racism, and queer and trans theories.

Course Objectives

- Define and critically read feminist theory
- Compare, contrast, and critique various perspectives of feminist theorists
- Explain feminist epistemology and critically analyze the ways in which knowledge is produced
- Use feminist approaches to theory to think systematically about power and resistance in both public and private relations
- Analyze current events and cultural artifacts from feminist perspectives
- Apply feminist theory to your own research interests and home discipline(s)

Texts

All course readings are available on courseweb

Students should expect to read approx. 40-50 pages per week. Many of the readings will require students to read full texts, or a combination of excerpts of longer readings.

Assignments

Participation	10%
GSWS Lecture Synopsis	10%
Reading Journal	20%
Position Papers	30%
Research Paper Proposal	10%
Research Paper	20%
Total	100%

Participation (10%)

Active participation will be assessed overall at the end of the term based on each student's contribution to class discussion. Students should note that participation is not simply the amount or number of times one talks in class, but the quality of each student's contribution. For full participation grades, students should attend class regularly having completed all the readings, connect their contributions to class discussion by referencing the readings, drawing class attention to the content of the readings and media objects we examine, and offering insight and analysis into the topics and objects being discussed.

GSWS Lecture Synopsis (10%)

Students must attend at least one event from the list of GSWS lectures available at the end of this syllabus. Within 1 week of attending the event, students must submit a 500-word synopsis of the event, connecting the content of the lecture to one of the readings and reflecting on the relationship between the lecture and course topic(s).

Reading Journal (20%)

10 journal entries x 2% = 20%

Students must complete a total of 10 reading journal entries: 5 entries between weeks 1 and 8 and 5 entries between weeks 9 and 15. Reading journal entries should be self-reflections on the readings. This means drawing on a concept in the reading, citing the text, and reflecting on the relationship between your own experience and the ideas introduced in the readings. This is a space for you to work through difficult ideas, express your agreement or disagreement, confusion, and/or discomfort. Entries must be posted before class of the corresponding reading. There is no word limit, however entries should be no less than 100 words and no more than 500 words each.

Position Papers (30%)

2 position papers x 15% = 30%

Students will complete two feminist theory position papers throughout the term. Position Papers will take up a central topic across multiple readings and will examine the perspectives of various authors used in the class. Students may also include their own position on a specific topic, in dialogue with the authors examined. Papers should be between 750-1000 words.

Due: October 16 and November 20

Research Paper Proposal (10%)

Students will research a topic related to the readings and/or concepts examined in the course and develop a research paper. Proposals should be between 500-750 words with a bibliography of at least 6 texts (journal articles, books, or other scholarly sources) in addition to course readings.

Due: November 6

Research Paper (20%)

Final research papers are due on the last day of class and should be between 2500-3000 words.

Due: December 4

Instructions for Written Assignments

All assignments must be submitted at the beginning of class on the date listed in the syllabus, or prior. Missed in-class group work and late assignments will only be accepted with relevant documentation (e.g. doctor's note). Extensions or make-up tests will be granted at the discretion of the professor in advance of the date or within 48 hours of the missed test. If you anticipate not being able to complete the assignments for this course on time please speak with me or you will be penalized with grade loss.

All late assignments will lose 1 mark per day late (e.g. an assignment worth 10% of the final grade received a grade of 7/10, but was submitted 3 days late, therefore this assignment will only receive 4/10).

Assignments should be typed, and double-spaced. No cover page is necessary, and students are encouraged to double-side their papers. A standard font, such as Times New Roman, at size 12pt should be used. Margins should be a standard 1-1.25 inches. Students should submit all papers in MLA or Chicago style for citations and bibliographic references. All in-text citations should include Author name and page numbers. Guides are available online here:

MLA: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Chicago: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html

Citation Style Chart: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/media/pdf/20110928111055_949.pdf

Attendance Policy

Students must attend all classes having completed the readings. Missing class will result in missing important content and assignment information, as well as class participation. It is the responsibility of each student to ensure they follow up with other students in the class to get access to missing information. Missing more than 25% of classes (4 or more absences) without valid documentation or prior approval from the professor will result in automatic failure of the course.

Email Communication Policy

Emails to your professors should include a polite greeting (e.g. Dear Prof. Kouri-Towe or Hello Natalie) and outline clearly your question or request. Please ensure that you first check the syllabus before emailing your professor. If the answer is available in the syllabus, but you need clarification, be specific about what you need further information on. Please allow at least 24hrs for responses to emails during weekdays.

Accessibility

In addition to the resources and support of Disability Resources and Services office, students are invited to communicate with me any accessibility needs they might have in attending lecture, participating in group-work, or completing the assignments. In recognition of the diverse ways that accessibility is experienced and understood, I will approach accessibility on an individual basis to better accommodate each student and context. Students are strongly encouraged to speak with me as soon as possible to discuss alternative forms of accessibility beyond the officially offered services for this class.

University and GSWS Program Policies and Statements

Disability resources and services:

If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your instructor and Disability Resources and Services, 140 William Pitt Union, 412-648-7890 as early as possible in the term. Disability Resources and Services will verify your disability and determine reasonable accommodations for this course. For more information, visit <https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/drs/>.

Academic integrity and plagiarism:

Cheating/plagiarism will not be tolerated. Students suspected of violating the University of Pittsburgh Policy on Academic Integrity will be required to participate in the outlined procedural process as initiated by the instructor. A minimum sanction of a zero score for the quiz, exam or paper will be imposed. For the full Academic Integrity policy, go to: www.as.pitt.edu/faculty/policy/integrity.html.

Violation of the Academic Integrity Code requires the instructor to submit an Academic Integrity Violation Report to the Dean's Office.

Classroom recording policy:

To ensure the free and open discussion of ideas, students may not record classroom lectures, discussion and/or activities without the advance written permission of the instructor, and any such recording properly approved in advance can be used solely for the student's own private use.

E-mail policy:

Each student is issued a University e-mail address (username@pitt.edu) upon admittance. This e-mail address may be used by the University for official communication with students. Students are expected to read e-mail sent to this account on a regular basis. Failure to read and react to University communications in a timely manner does not absolve the student from knowing and complying with the content of the communications. The University provides an e-mail forwarding service that allows students to read their e-mail via other service providers (e.g., Hotmail, AOL, Yahoo). Students that choose to forward their e-mail from their pitt.edu address to another address do so at their own risk. If e-mail is lost as a result of forwarding, it does not absolve the student from responding to official communications sent to their University e-mail address.

Cell phone and laptop policy:

All cell phones and other electronic communication devices are to be turned to the off setting during class. Laptops are to be used for note-taking only.

Non-discrimination policy:

As an educational institution and as an employer, Pitt values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, genetic information, disability, or status as a veteran. For more information, visit <http://cfo.pitt.edu/policies/documents/policy07-01-03web.pdf>

Gender-Inclusive language guidelines:

Aspiring to create a learning environment in which people of all identities are encouraged to contribute their perspectives to academic discourse, the University of Pittsburgh Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program provides guidelines and resources regarding gender-inclusive/non-sexist language (gsws.pitt.edu/node/1432). Following these guidelines fosters an inclusive and welcoming environment, strengthens academic writing, enriches discussion, and reflects best professional practices.

Language is gender-inclusive and non-sexist when we use words that affirm and respect how people describe, express, and experience their gender. Gender-inclusive/non-sexist language acknowledges people of any gender (e.g. first-year student versus freshman, chair versus chairman, humankind versus mankind). It also affirms non-binary gender identifications, and recognizes the difference between biological sex and gender expression. Students may share their preferred pronouns and names, and these gender identities and gender expressions should be honored.

These guidelines fulfill the best intentions of the University of Pittsburgh's Non-Discrimination Policy: <https://www.cfo.pitt.edu/policies/policy/07/07-01-03.html>.

Content warning and class climate:

Our course readings and classroom discussions will often focus on mature, difficult, and potentially challenging topics. As with any course in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Program, course topics are often political and personal. Readings and discussions might trigger strong feelings—anger, discomfort, anxiety, confusion, excitement, humor, and even boredom. Some of us will have emotional responses to the readings; some of us will have emotional responses to our peers' understanding of the readings; all of us should feel responsible for creating a space that is both intellectually rigorous and respectful. Above all, be respectful (even when you strongly disagree) and be mindful of the ways that our identities position us in the classroom.

I expect everyone to come to class prepared to discuss the readings in a mature and respectful way. If you are struggling with the course materials, here are some tips: read the syllabus so that you are prepared in advance. You can approach your instructor ahead of time if you'd like more information about a topic or reading. If you think a particular reading or topic might be especially challenging or unsettling, you can arrive to class early and take a seat by the door so that you can easily exit the classroom as needed. If you need to leave or miss class, you are still responsible for the work you miss. If you are struggling to keep up with the work because of the course content, you should speak with me and/or seek help from the counseling center.

Sexual misconduct, required reporting, and Title IX:

The University is committed to combatting sexual misconduct. As a result, you should know that University faculty and staff members are required to report any instances of sexual misconduct, including harassment and sexual violence, to the University's Title IX office so that the victim may be provided appropriate resources and support options. What this means is that as your professor, I am required to report any incidents of sexual misconduct that are directly reported to me, or of which I am somehow made aware.

There are two important exceptions to this requirement about which you should be aware: A list of the designated University employees who, as counselors and medical professionals, do not have this reporting responsibility and can maintain confidentiality, can be found here:

<http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report/confidentiality>

An important exception to the reporting requirement exists for academic work. Disclosures about sexual misconduct that are shared as part of an academic project, classroom discussion, or course assignment, are not required to be disclosed to the University's Title IX office.

If you are the victim of sexual misconduct, Pitt encourages you to reach out to these resources:

- * Title IX Office: 412-648-7860

- * SHARE @ the University Counseling Center: 412-648-7930 (8:30 A.M. TO 5 P.M. M-F) and 412-648-7856 (AFTER BUSINESS HOURS)

If you have a safety concern, please contact the University of Pittsburgh Police, 412-624-2121.

Other reporting information is available here: <http://www.titleix.pitt.edu/report-0>

Course Schedule & Readings

Week 1: Introduction to Feminist Theory

Monday 28 August

- Read/Listen to this podcast & article:
 - <http://www.npr.org/2016/04/17/474525392/attention-students-put-your-laptops-away>

Week 2: NO CLASS due to Labor Day

Monday 4 September

Week 3: Theorizing Gender Beyond the Binary

Monday 11 September

- Butler, Judith. 2004. Gender Regulations. Undoing Gender. New York and London: Routledge. (Read p.40-43 & 52-56)
- Bettcher, Talia M. 2016. Intersexuality, Transgender, and Transsexuality. The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory. Eds. Lisa Disch & Mary Hawkesworth. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Towel, Evan B. and Morgan, Lynn M. 2002. Romancing the Transgender Native: Rethinking the Use of the “Third Gender” Concept. GLQ. 8(4): 469-497.

Week 4: Theorizing Gender and Masculinity

Monday 18 September

- Carrigan, Tim, Bob Connell and John Lee. 2002. Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity. The Masculinity Studies Reader. Eds. Rachel Adams and David Savran. Malden and Oxford: Blackwell.
- Hearn, Jeff. 2004. From Hegemonic Masculinity to the Hegemony of Men. Feminist Theory. 5(1). (Read p.49-55)
- Halberstam, Judith. 1998. An Introduction to Female Masculinity. Female Masculinity. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. (Read p.1-9 & 13-29)

Week 5: Feminist Consciousness

Monday 25 September

- Bartky, Sandra. 1990. Towards a Phenomenology of Feminist Consciousness. Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression. New York and London: Routledge.
- Wittig, Monique. 2013(1981). One is Not Born a Woman. Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives 3rd Edition.
- Sandoval, Chela. 2000. U.S. Third World Feminism: Differential Social Movement 1. Methodology of the Oppressed. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Week 6: Feminist Politics: Race and Sexuality

Monday 2 October

- Lorde, Audre. 1997 (1981). The Uses of Anger. *Women's Studies Quarterly*. 25(1/2): 278-285.
- Reagon, Bernice Johnson. 1983. Coalition Politics: Turning the Century. Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology. Ed. Barbara Smith. New York: Women of Color Press.
- Rich, Adrienne. 1980. Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence. Signs. 5: 631-660. (Read: p.631-632 & 637-653 & 657-660)
- Rich, Adrienne. 2004. Reflections on "Compulsory Heterosexuality." Journal of Women's History. 16(1): 9-11.

Week 7: NO CLASS

Monday 9 October

Week 8: Feminist Politics: Capitalism and Ideology

Monday 16 October

Position Paper #1 Due

- Rubin, Gayle. 1975. The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex. Toward an Anthropology of Women. Ed. Rayna R. Reiter. New York & London: Monthly Review Press. (Read p.157-169 & 173-180)
- Hartsock, Nancy. 1983. The Feminist Standpoint: Toward a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism. Money, Sex, and Power: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism. New York: Longman.
- Einstein, Zillah. 1999(1978). Developing a Theory of Capitalist Patriarchy and Socialist Feminism. Critical Sociology. 25(2/3). (Read p.196-201 & 211-212)
- Faser, Nancy. 2005. Mapping the Feminist Imagination: From Redistribution to Recognition to Representation. Constellations. 12(3).

Week 9: Situated Knowledge & Standpoint Theory

Monday 23 October

- Harding, Sandra. 1993. Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is "Strong Objectivity?" Feminist Epistemologies. Eds. Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Porter. New York: Routledge.
- Haraway, Donna. 1997. The Persistence of Vision. Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory. Eds. Katie Conboy, Nadia Medina, and Sarah Stanbury. New York: Columbia University Press.

Week 10: The Politics of Location

Monday 30 October

- hooks, bell. 1984. Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory. Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center. 2nd Edition. London: Pluto Press, 2000.
- Kaplan, Caren. 1994. The Politics of Location as Transnational Feminist Practice. Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodern and Transnational Feminist Practices. Eds. Inderpal Grewal & Caren Kaplan. Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press.

Week 11: Intersectionality

Monday 6 November

Research Paper Proposal Due

- Crenshaw, Kimberle. 1991. Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color. Stanford Law Review. 43(6). (Read p. 1241-1253 & 1296-1299)
- Hill Collins, Patricia. 1998. Some Group Matters: Intersectionality, Situated Standpoints and Black Feminist Thought. Fighting Words: Black Women and the Search for Justice. Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press.
- Spade, Dean. 2013. Intersectional Resistance and Law Reform. Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society. 38(4).

Week 12: Identity and Feminist Politics

Monday 13 November

- Butler, Judith. 1992. Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of “Postmodernism.” Feminists Theorize the Political. Eds. Judith Butler & Joan W. Scott. New York: Routledge.
- Weir, Allison. 2008. Global Feminisms and Transformative Identity Politics. Hypatia. 23:4 (October-December).

Week 13: Foucauldian Feminist Analysis

Monday 20 November

Position Paper #2 Due

- Heyes, Cressida J. 2007. Cosmetic Surgery and the Televisual Makover: A Foucauldian Feminist Reading. Feminist Media Studies. 7(1).
- Bordo, Susan. 1993. Reading the Slender Body. Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body. Berkley and London: University of California Press.

Week 14: Transnational Feminism

Monday 27 November

- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 2003. “Under Western Eyes” Revisited: Feminist Solidarity Through Anticapitalist Struggles. Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity. Durham & London: Duke University Press. (Read p.238-251)
- Alexander, M. Jacqui. 2005. Introduction. Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred. Durham & London: Duke University Press.
- Grewal, Inderpal, and Caren Kaplan. 2001. Global Identities: Theorizing Transnational Studies of Sexuality. GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies. 7(4). (Read p.663-666)

Week 15: Queer and Trans Theories of Gender, Sexuality and Society

Monday 4 December

Research Paper Due

- Butler, Judith. 1993. Critically Queer. GLQ. 1.
- Spade, Dean. 2011. Introduction: Rights, Movements, and Critical Trans Politics & Trans Law and Politics on a Neoliberal Landscape. Normal Life: Administrative Violence, Critical Trans Politics, and the Limits of Law. Brooklyn: South End. (Read. p.19-22)
- Stryker, Susan. 2008. Transgender History, Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity. Radical History Review. 100(Winter).

GSWS Lecture Schedule Fall 2017

Attend at least 1 of the following lectures to complete your GSWS Lecture Synopsis assignment

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 1:30-3 P.M.

602 Cathedral of Learning

General lecture by Denis Provencher on “**Queer Maghrebi French.**”

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 4-5:30 P.M.

William Pitt Union, Room 548

General lecture by Kathryn Stockton, “**Race, Face, Ravage, & Lyrical Fat: Deleuze & Childhood Poverty.**”

WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 11, 5-6:30 P.M.

407 Cathedral of Learning

Undergraduate event, “**Black Masculinity and Intimacy: Discussing Jay-Z’s 4:44.**” Moderated by Gabby Yearwood

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 17, 5-7 P.M.

University Club

General lecture by Gayle Rubin, on “**Gay Sex and the Post-Industrial City: Leathermen and San Francisco’s South of Market.**”

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 3-5 P.M.

602 Cathedral of Learning

General lecture by Chloé Georás, University of Puerto Rico, on “**The Unkindest Cut of All’: Coloniality, Performance, and Gender in the Courtroom and Beyond.**”

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26, 6-7:30 P.M.

Frick Fine Arts Auditorium

Lecture by Jack Halberstam, Columbia University, on “**Wild Things: Notes on Queer Anarchy.**”

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2:30-4 P.M.

Scaife Hall, Auditorium 5

General lecture by Benjamin Kahan, “**Sex in the Age of Fordism: The Standardization of Sexual Objects.**”

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 14, 4-5:30 P.M.

602 Cathedral of Learning

General lecture by Kathleen Perry Long, Cornell University, on “**Depathologizing Diversity: Critiques of Normative Thinking about the Body.**”

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 4-5 P.M.

501 Cathedral of Learning

General lecture by Elizabeth Rodriguez Fielder, Department of English, on “**The ‘Crooked Stitches’ of Desire: Sewing and Sexual Awakening in Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple*.**”