

Introduction to Feminist Theory

Instructor: Frayda Cohen, PhD



Course: **GSWS 0500 - 25578**

Meeting times: **TU/TH 2:30-3:45PM**

Classroom: **CL 402**

Email: frfst5@pitt.edu

Office: **402C CL**

Office Hours:

TU/TH 1:00-2:00, WE 3:00-4:30 & appt.

This is a Writing Requirement course that also fulfills a Philosophy general education requirement.

What do you think about Cosmo?

This course is an interdisciplinary introduction to the core feminist ideas and debates concerning gender, women and men, and their political, social and economic positions over the last two hundred years. Feminism is a relatively recent term coined in France in the 1880s and thus one must

question the ways in which this term is used very differently across time and space. In short, what is "feminism" and what constitutes "theory"? How can we use these concepts to understand contemporary phenomenon, such as Cosmopolitan, and express our reactions to them?

Course Objectives

What are the goals of this course and how can we meet them?

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Policies & Grading

What are the expectations for this course? What Pitt policies do I need to know?

Pages 3-5

Course Schedule & Requirements.

What are the readings and assignments and when are they due?

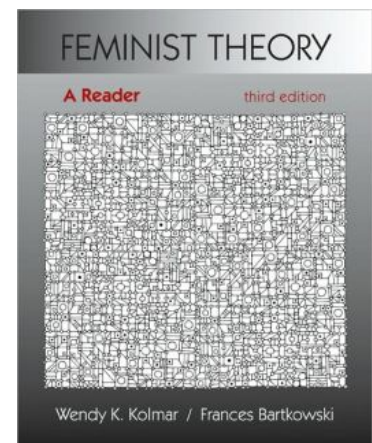
Pages 6-9

Texts

Course Reading Packet. Available online through course web. (CW)

2003 Kolmar, Wendy & Frances Bartkowski, eds.

Feminist Theory: A Reader. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield Press. **3rd Edition**, (Black and White Cover). **(FTR)**



COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course you will be able to:

- 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).



University Policies

University and GSWS Program Policies and Statements

Attendance: VERY IMPORTANT

Absences hurt your ability to learn and *they hurt your grade*. Signing up for this class indicates that you are committed to being here for the full class period each class meeting. For the purposes of this policy, you are either present for an entire class meeting or not.

Late arrivals and early departures will count as absences -really.

You are allowed two unexcused absence over the course of the semester. If you miss class, you are still responsible for whatever was covered in lecture and discussion that day.

Unexcused absences in excess of two will be excused only under exceptional and unavoidable circumstances. Requests for excused absences must be submitted in writing, with documentation, and immediately upon a student's return to class. Students who enroll late are not exempt from this policy.

Assignments and Extensions

Assignments (except for quizzes, in-class work, and the like) will be announced well in advance of due dates. If you know in advance that you can't make a due date, please discuss it with me beforehand. In all other cases, late assignments will not be accepted.

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.

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.

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>.

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.

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.

Course Requirements: Total 300 Points**I. SEMINAR ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION (50 points):**

It is very important that you attend all sessions to benefit and contribute fully. As a seminar, participation is ESSENTIAL and will be measured by your active presence in small group work and in the larger class as a whole.

In order to participate actively in discussion, you should prepare the assigned readings before class begins.

II. Writing Portfolio and Workshop (100 points):

Throughout the semester you will be compiling a writing portfolio that will consist of:

3 reaction papers, reaction paper revisions, an event paper (based on attendance at a GSWS event), and writing workshop comments.

Each reaction paper will be graded on a 25 point scale. Details are available in the attachment and under Assignments in Courseweb.

All papers (with comments), revisions, etc. should be saved and turned in as a completed portfolio (in a folder or otherwise attached) at the end of the semester

- Papers should be 3 pages in length and are due on paper in class on the day the readings are designed for discussion. Email submissions will receive a ½ grade reduction.
- You may decide which days to write and turn in a reaction paper. However, one paper must be turned in by each deadline.
- There will be in-class writing workshops that will involve peer review and revisions of papers. This workshop should be included in your folder and counts towards your participation grade.

III. Final Legacy Paper + Group Presentations (100 Points)

A final 8-10 page paper on an additional reading. This paper should make meaningful use of a minimum of 3 CLASS sources to analyze a contemporary reading assigned by the instructor.

IV. Quizzes (50 Points)

Quizzes (2 @ 25 points for a total 50 points): Two primarily short answer quizzes will be given.

No make-up quizzes will be given

**What is a “reaction paper” and how can I write one?**

A reaction paper is a short essay that covers all of the readings in one weekly section. The essay should be organized with an introduction, body and conclusion and should contain a brief discussion of the key points of the readings, and should also very briefly critique and/or raise questions about the readings. *The best papers will connect ideas and themes across various readings and express your point of view.*

Semester Schedule of Readings and Assignments

Week 1: INTRODUCTION

Aug 29: Overview of Class

Aug 31: Writing Overview (*When Harry Met Tony*)

Read: Lexicon of the debates (FTR p.42-60)

Week 2: SETTING THE AGENDA – “THE FIRST WAVE”

Sep 5: *POLITICAL RIGHTS & REPRESENTATION*

Discuss: 1792-1920 Introduction (FTR)
 Anthony – *Speech After Arrest for Illegal Voting* (FTR)
 Truth – *Ain't I a Woman* (FTR)
 Douglass- *Why I Became...* (FTR)
 Cady Stanton – *Declaration of Sentiments* (FTR)

Sep 7: *WOMEN, MONEY, & THE FAMILY*

Discuss: 1920-1963 Introduction (FTR)
 Engels - *Origin of the Family* (FTR)
 Goldman - *The Traffic in Women* (FTR)

Week 3: SETTING THE AGENDA – “THE SECOND WAVE”

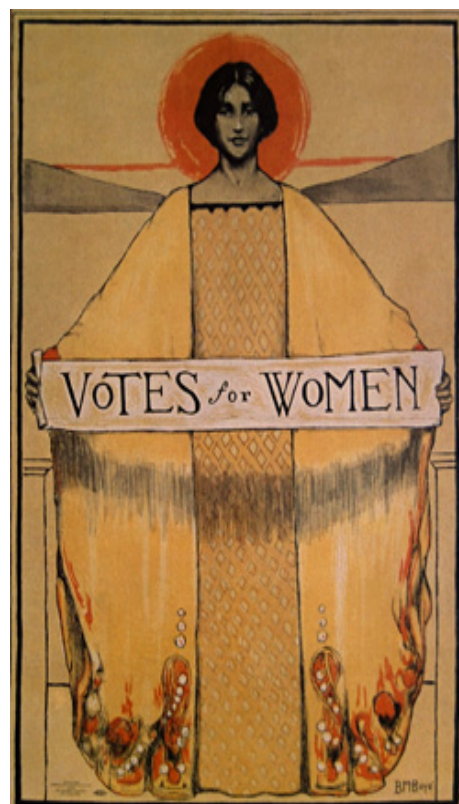
Sep 12: *ROSIE THE RIVETER*

Discuss: 1963-1975 Introduction
 TBA
 Sanger - *Birth Control—A Parent's Problem or Woman's?* (FTR)

Film: Rosie the Riveter

Sep 14: *PROBLEM WITH NO NAME*

Discuss: Simone de Beauvoir - *Intro and Chapter 12 from the Second Sex* (FTR)
 Friedan – *The Problem that Has No Name* (FTR)



Much of what we think of as contemporary feminism begins in earnest after World War II. What is the legacy of the war and how did it help lay a foundation for the significant social movements of the 1960s and 1970s?



Week 4: THE RADICALS, "SISTERS" & ACADEMICS

Sep 19: "RADICALS"

Discuss: 1975-1985 Introduction (FTR)
Solanas - *SCUM Manifesto* (FTR)
Weathers – *Black Women's Liberation* (READ CW NOT FTR)
Joreen - The Bitch Manifesto (FTR)

DEADLINE: AT THIS POINT, AT LEAST ONE REACTION PAPER SHOULD HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED.

Sep 21: CLASS CANCELLED

Read: Freud Excerpts (CW)
Foucault - Excerpts (CW)

Week 5: POWER & SEXUALITY

Sep 26: *A HISTORY OF SEXUALITY?*

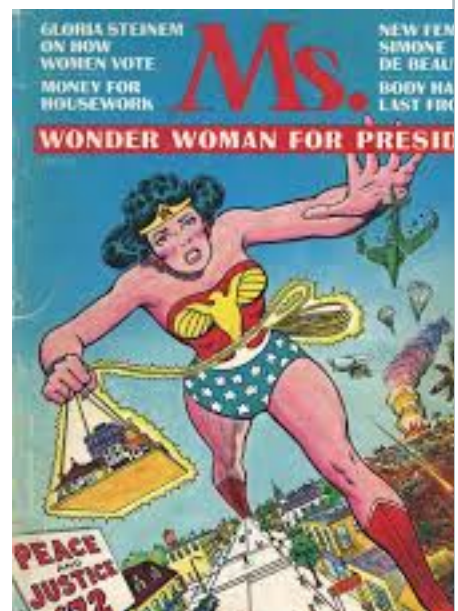
Discuss: Wittig – *The Straight Mind* (FTR)
Rubin – *The Traffic in Women* (FTR)

Sep 28: *SEX AND IDENTITY*

Discuss: Koedt – *The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm*(FTR)
Radicalesbians – *The Woman-Identified Woman* (FTR)
Wilchins – *A Certain Kind of Freedom* (CW)

• Times are changing. What events are shaping social movements that address inequality?

• What changes do you see in these movements?



Week 6: SETTING THE AGENDA - THE 3RD WAVE

Oct 3: *BACKLASH AND THE 3rd WAVE*

Discuss: Walker – *Becoming the Third Wave* (CW)
Manifesta – *Third Wave Manifesta* (FTR)
Bikini Kill – *Riot Grrrl Philosophy* (FTR)
Faludi – excerpt from *Backlash* (CW)

Oct 5: *WAVES OR KALEIDOSCOPES?*

Discuss: Nicholson - *Feminism in 'Waves': Useful Metaphor or Not?* (CW)
Baumgardner

<http://www.feminist.com/resources/artsspeech/genwom/baumgardner2011.html>

Week 7: COLONIALISM & "DIFFERENCE"

Oct 10: FALL BREAK – NO CLASS!

Oct 12: *(POST) COLONIAL*

Discuss: Mohanty – *Under Western Eyes* (FTR)
Narayan – *Dislocating Cultures* (CW)
Gupta – *Towards Transnational Fem.* (CW)

Week 8: "DIFFERENCE" & INTERSECTIONALITY

Oct 17: Gayle Rubin Lecture: (EVENT PAPER): Scaife Hall
Auditorium 5

READ: Talking Sex (CW)

Oct 19: *OFF OUR BACKS*

Discuss: Anzaldua – *The New Mestiza* (CW)
Davis – *Racism, Birth Control & Repro. Rights* (CW)

DEADLINE: AT THIS POINT, AT LEAST TWO REACTION
PAPERS SHOULD HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED.

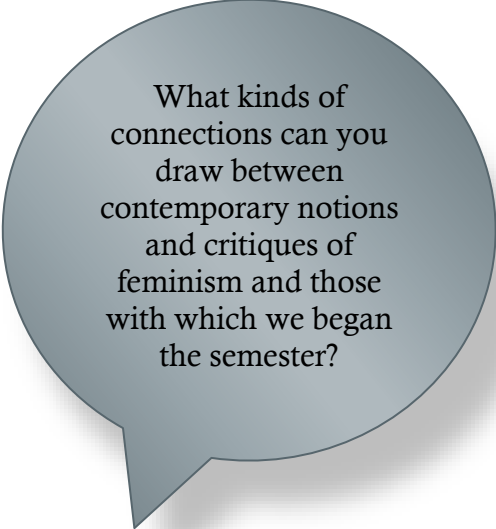
Recommended: Rich (FTR), Combahee River Collective –
Black Feminist Statement (FTR)



Extra Credit – 2 points if you can identify the woman above?

What
images
would you
put here?

Why?

Week 9: WORKSHOP & QUIZOct 24: *Writing Workshop*Pick Presentation Groups
Quiz ReviewOct 26: *Quiz*DUE: Mid-Term Quiz


What kinds of connections can you draw between contemporary notions and critiques of feminism and those with which we began the semester?

Week 10: FEMINIST THEORY & SCIENCE

Oct 31: FEMINISM & SCIENCE

Discuss: Harding – *The Woman Question in Science to the Science Question in Feminism* (FTR)
Fox Keller (FTR)Nov 2: Discuss: Martin – *The Egg and the Sperm* (CW)Fausto-Sterling – *Should There Be Only Two Sexes* (FTR)**Week 11: SEX & POWER**

Nov 7: SEX & POWER

Discuss: Dworkin – *Pornography: Men Possessing Women* (CW)
TBARecommended: Hartsock, hooks (FTR); Hill-Collins (CW)
MacKinnon (FTR); Levine (CW)Nov 9 Discuss: Vance – *Negotiating Sex and Gender*(CW)Wolf – *The Porn Myth* (CW)**Week 12: FEMINIST BODIES**Nov 14 : *THE BODY*Discuss: Bordo – *Material Girl* (CW)
Haywood or Jackson (CW)Nov 16: *QUEERING THE BODY*Discuss: Halberstam – *An Intro to Female Masculinity* (FTR)Shilt & Westbrook– *Bathroom Battlegrounds and Penis Panics* (CW)

Week 13: THANKSGIVING

Nov 21: Discuss: Nash – The Black Body in Ecstasy EXCERPT (ebook via Pittcat)

DEADLINE: AT THIS POINT, ALL THREE REACTION PAPERS
SHOULD HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED

COMPLETED PORTFOLIOS ARE DUE.

Nov 23: THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS!

Week 14: FEMINIST BODIES

Nov 28: Video: TBA & QUIZ Review

Nov 30: DUE: Final Quiz



Week 15: LEGACY PROJECTS

Dec 5: Group Presentations

Dec 7: Group Presentations

Week 16: LEGACY PAPERS DUE

Dec 15: Due: Final Papers (Feminist Legacy) turned in
by 4:30PM In GSWS office.