

Women's Studies 5101
Theories and Methods in Women's Studies: Theories
Winter 2024, Friday 2:30-5:30, zoom
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Feminism has fought no wars. It has killed no opponents. It has set up no concentration camps, starved no enemies, practiced no cruelties. Its battles have been for education, for the vote, for better working conditions . . . for safety on the streets . . . for child care, for social welfare . . . for rape crisis centers, women's refuges, reforms in the laws. If someone says 'Oh, I'm not a feminist,' I ask 'Why? What's your problem?'"

Dale Spender, For the Record: The Making and Meaning of Feminist Knowledge

Course Description:

The aim of the winter term is to provide an overview of the major themes and debates in feminist theory since the second wave and to equip students to integrate feminist theories into a variety of disciplines. We operate as a flipped classroom: that means you do the readings and preparation prior to class and are ready to discuss the concepts during class time.

Land Acknowledgement:

As participants together in this course, we acknowledge that Lakehead Thunder Bay is located on the ancestral lands of the ᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱᐱ (Anishinabe) people, signatories to the Robinson Superior Treaty of 1850, in particular Fort William First Nation. Lakehead Orillia is located on the traditional territory of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Pottawatomi nations, collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy. As a class, we are committed to relationships with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples based on the principles of mutual trust, respect, reciprocity, and collaboration. We recognize the continual commitment needed by non-Indigenous people and institutions to learn from and about Indigenous peoples and to reconcile this colonial relationship.

Learner Outcomes:

By the end of this course, you will:

- Have a working knowledge of the major schools of feminist thought and be able to apply them to analysis and transformative action;
- Have a strong understanding of gender/women's/sexuality studies as an applied discipline;
- Have a strong understanding of the definitions, practices, and foundations of gender/women's/sexuality studies;
- Have produced Master's level written work; and

- Have articulated evidence-based positions in in-class discussions and postings that show creative application of both course concepts and experiential knowledge.

Required Readings:

All required readings (and viewings) are provided on D2L or are available on the internet.

Evaluation:

NOTE: this term is worth 50% of your overall grade.

Oral/In-class work:

a. Discussion – Mandatory:

This is a participation-based class and attendance is mandatory. Students may miss one class without documentation and receive no penalty; if you miss more than one class without appropriate documentation your discussion grade will be reduced by 1 full mark out of ten. You are able to augment in-class participation (but not attendance itself) with on-line responses to the readings on D2L. This may be an important option for those who are shy to speak in a group.

Grade weighting: 10%

b. Facilitation - Mandatory:

We meet for 3 hours weekly. Each student will present one reading to the class. The presentation should be about 20 minutes in length. The student will then present an analysis of the week's overall themes and pose questions for the group based on all the combined readings. When there are multiple articles being presented by students in a single week, they will work together on part two of this assignment, the questions on the overall themes.

Grade weighting: 10%

Written work: Choose one of the following three options.

a. My Theory Project:

You will apply feminist theories from the term to the thesis/research paper/creative project you are developing in your home discipline. The Theory Project paper will illustrate how the theory you chose intersects with course materials and discussions, and why it is the best framework for your project. It will be important to reflect on your own social location when you explain why the theoretical framework you chose appeals to you. What are the strengths and limitations of using this particular framework?

Grade weighting: 30%

b. Readings Journal:

You will journal a response to **one reading per week**. Please note: responses are not descriptions. Responses must show analytical engagement with the text. Either connect it to your own life in a way that illustrates experiential knowledge (i.e.: explore how the

text helps you to understand why you experienced something in a particular way) or connect it with other readings from this course, showing how it speaks to / with / against them.

Grade weighting: 30%

c. Annotated Bibliography:

You will compile an annotated bibliography on a topic related to your thesis/research paper/creative project in your home discipline. Each entry in the bibliography should be approximately a paragraph in length. This assignment should be used to help you to prepare a literature review for your thesis or project.

Grade weighting: 30%.

Tips for Reading Feminist Theory

Context is everything. Some of the following tips are from Charlotte Bunch, “Not by Degrees: Feminist Theory and Education”.

- 1. Description:** How does the theorist *describe* society? What *problem(s)* does the author identify? Does the theorist introduce or define any important terms or concepts?
- 2. Analysis:** How does the theorist *analyze* why society exists as it does? How does the author explain the *problem*? Who benefits from the reality she describes?
- 3. Vision:** What does the theorist argue *should* exist?
- 4. Strategy:** What are the short and long-term *goals* to make the vision real?
- 5. Timing:** How does the theorist’s *time period* affect the theory? What parts of the theory are still relevant today?
- 6. Social location:** What is the social location of the theorist or the theory? *Whose reality* does the theory describe? How does the social location of the author impact the theory?

Other Issues for Student Information:

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else’s words and/or ideas. Not acknowledging your debt to the ideas of a secondary source, failing to use quotation marks when you are quoting directly, buying essays from essay banks, copying another student’s work, or working together on an individual assignment all constitute plagiarism. Resubmitting material you have submitted to another course is also academic dishonesty. The minimum penalty for academic misconduct is a 0 on the assignment in question. Students might also be subject to more severe academic penalties. All students are

required to know what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it. Please review the university guidelines at <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/academic-support/skills-for-success/responsibilities>, or speak with the professor. All cases of plagiarism will be dealt with in accordance with the Code of Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Procedures approved by Senate and the Board of Governors.

GenAI Use:

Generative artificial intelligence (Generative AI or GenAI) is a category of AI systems capable of generating text, images, or other media in response to prompts. These systems include ChatGPT and its variant Bing (built by OpenAI) and Bard (built by Google) among several others. Other Generative AI models include artificial intelligence art systems such as Stable Diffusion, Midjourney, and DALL-E. GenAI tools can provide valuable assistance and support in academic work. However, it is essential to use them responsibly and ethically. The following information and guidelines apply to the use of AI-based tools in this course:

- a) **Student Responsibility** – It is the responsibility of the student to understand the limitations of AI-based tools. While these tools can provide suggestions and insights, final decisions and critical thinking should come from the student's own understanding and effort. Before submitting, review your work with this in mind. If you don't understand what type of GenAI usage is appropriate, ask the course instructor for clarification.
- b) **Formative Usage** – In this class, you may use GenAI for formative, but not summative, work. That means it can be used as a “possibility engine” (brainstorm tool), a “study buddy,” a “collaboration coach,” a “guide on the side,” a “personal tutor,” a “co-designer,” etc. to help you learn course content, but it cannot be used as the primary vehicle for any work that is submitted for marks or evaluation.
- c) **Error & Bias** – AI content is created by computer algorithms that have been trained using large amounts of data. The AI learns from patterns and examples in the data to generate new content that resembles what it has been trained on. If the training data used to train the AI model is biased or limited in scope, the AI may reproduce content that is inaccurate, incomplete, offensive, and/or biased. Students should weigh this as they consider material produced by AI.
- d) **Trustworthiness** – Generative AI can be vulnerable to manipulation and misuse. It can be used to generate fake news, misinformation, or deepfake content, which can have harmful consequences. Students should check AI generated content against reputable sources.
- e) **Plagiarism** – Since [writing and critical thinking ability] are learning outcomes of this course, all work submitted for evaluation must be the student's original work. Using the work of others (including content curated/generated by AI) without proper citation is considered plagiarism.
- f) **Citation of Sources** – If you use material generated by an AI program for an assignment in this course, it must be cited like any other source (with due consideration for the quality of the source, which may be judged as poor). Failure to do so will be considered a violation of academic integrity.

Accommodations: I make every effort to meet the varied needs of students. Please feel free to speak to me directly about your needs. You are also strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and to register with them as early as possible. For more information, please email sas@lakeheadu.ca or view <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/sas>.

Incomplete Standing (from the Lakehead University Calendar): An incomplete grade may, at the discretion of the instructor and in consultation with the student, be assigned to a course when the instructor considers that for a valid reason the student has not yet completed all the requirements of the course. Please talk to me in advance if this is something we need to consider. I will not automatically provide an incomplete if you have not talked to me.

Expectations and Marking: All written work will be evaluated based on organization, presentation, grammar, and clarity as well as content. Writing is a process. It is only learned through practice and repetition. It is also an important skill you can take into the workplace. Written communication can be very powerful. However, your first draft is unlikely to be the best possible work you can produce. For this reason, I strongly encourage you to submit rough drafts of papers for review. I will mark your paper as many times as you want to submit it, and only the final mark will count towards your grade.

Due Dates: All due dates in my classes are suggested dates for submission to keep you on schedule for timely completion. All are subject to revision/extension if you need time. You do not need to explain yourself or your reason for a delay, you just need to keep me informed about when to expect papers. Do keep in mind that I CANNOT change end of term dates, so I must receive all materials before the mark deadline for the university. If you cannot complete by this time, we can submit an incomplete, but you must tell me that you need it.

Student Success Centre: Help regarding academic matters can be found at the Student Success Centre: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/students/academic-success/student-success-centre/academic-support-zone> and make an appoint for assistance at mysuccess@lakeheadu.ca.

Health and Well-Being: We will be dealing with difficult material, and self-care is very important. If you or anyone you know experiences academic stress, difficult life events, or feelings of anxiety or depression, Student Health and Wellness is available to help: 343-8361 or <http://healthservices.lakeheadu.ca/>. Their services are free for Lakehead students and appointments are available. If you require immediate support regarding a mental health crisis, call Crisis Response at 346-8282 (24 hours/day). For non-crisis issues, please call Good To Talk at 1-866- 925-5454. Please monitor your well-being, keep me informed if you need accommodations and seek help as needed.

Weekly Schedule for Readings

Week 1 – January 12

Foundations

Why does theory matter? Who gets to make theory?

Required Readings:

- Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House”: https://collectiveliberation.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Lorde_The_Masters_Tools.pdf.
- bell hooks, “Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression”, *Feminist Theory: From Margins to Center* (New York: Routledge, 1984), 17-31.
- Francine Descarries, “Language is Not Neutral: The Construction of Knowledge in the Social Sciences and Humanities”, *Signs* 39 (3) (2013), 564-569.

Week 2 – January 19

Liberal and Standpoint Feminisms

Required Readings:

- Excerpt from Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*: <https://www.berfrois.com/2013/02/vindication-of-the-rights-of-woman-mary-wollstonecraft/>.
- Kathleen Gerson, “Changing Lives, Resistant Institutions: A New Generation Negotiates Gender, Work, and Family”, *Sociological Forum* 24 (4) (2009), 735-753.
- Dorothy Smith, “Women’s Standpoint: Embodied Knowledge versus the Ruling Relations”, *Institutional Ethnography*, (2005), 7-26.

Week 3 – January 26

Socialist and Marxist Feminisms

Required Readings:

- Hyde Park Chapter, Chicago Women’s Liberation Union, “History is a Weapon; Socialist Feminism: A Strategy for the Women’s Movement: www.historyisaweapon.org/defcon1/chisocfem.html.
- Heidi Hartmann, “The family as the locus of gender, class and political struggle: the example of housework”, *Signs* 6 (3) (1981), 366-394.
- Nakano Glenn, Evelyn. “The Social Construction and Institutionalization of Gender and Race: An Integrative Framework”, in Myr Marx Ferree, Judith Lorber and Beth Hess, eds., *Revisioning Gender* (SAGE, 1999), 17-23.

Week 4 – February 2

Radical and Cultural Feminisms

Required Readings:

- Excerpt from Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex*: <https://www.marxists.org/subject/women/authors/firestone-shulamith/dialectic-sex.htm>.
- Marilyn Frye, “Oppression”, *The Politics of Reality* (The Crossing Press, 1983), 1-16.

- Carol Gilligan, “In A Different Voice: Women’s Conceptions of Self and of Morality”, *Harvard Educational Review* 47 (4) (1977), 481-517.
- Susan Hawthorne, “Land, Bodies, and Knowledge: Biocolonialism of Plants, Indigenous Peoples, Women, and People with Disabilities,” *Signs* 32 (2) (2007), 314-323.
- Alison Bailey, “Mothering, Diversity, and Peace Politics”, *Hypatia* 9 (2) (2020), 188-198.

Week 5 – February 9

Black Feminisms

Required Readings:

- Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (Knopf, 1981, reprint 2011).
- bell hooks, “Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory”, *Feminist Theory: From Margins to Center* (New York: Routledge, 1984), 1-15.
- Patricia Hill Collins, “On Violence, Intersectionality and Transversal Politics”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40 (9) (2017), 1460-1473.
- Eziwanne Too-chukwu Odozor, “A Love Ethic for Black Feminisms”, *Hypatia* 37 (2) (2022), 241-256.

Week 6 – February 16

READING WEEK

Week 7 – February 23

Indigenous Feminisms

Required Readings:

- Gina Starblanket, “Being Indigenous Feminists”, in Joyce Green, ed., *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, (Fernwood Publishing, 2017), 21-41.
- Emma Larocque, “My Hometown Northern Canada, South Africa”, in Joyce Green, ed., *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, (Fernwood Publishing, 2017), 63-68.
- Verna St. Denis, “Feminism is for Everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism, and Diversity”, in Joyce Green, *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* (Fernwood Publishing, 2017), 42-59.
- Tracey Lindberg, “Not My Sister: What Feminists Can Learn about Sisterhood from Indigenous Women”, *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 16 (2) (2004), 342-352.

Week 8 – March 1

Multiracial/Multiethnic, Transnational, and Transversal Feminisms

Required Readings:

- Maria Lugones and Elizabeth Spelman, “Have We Got a Theory for You?: Cultural Imperialism and the Demand for ‘the woman’s voice’”, *Women’s Studies International Forum* 6 (6) (1983), 573-581.
- Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism”, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Duke University Press, 2003), 43-84.

- Jen Roth and Lori Chambers, “Transversal and Postmodern Feminist Praxis in Everyday Politics”, *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture and Social Justice* 40 (1) (2019), 1-17.

Week 9 – March 8

Postmodernism

Required Readings:

- Denise Riley, “Am I That Name? Feminism and the Category of ‘Women’ in Stephen Heath, Colin McCabe and Denise Riley, eds. *The Language, Discourse, Society Reader* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1988), 138.
- Joan Scott, “Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference: or, The Uses of Poststructuralist Theory in Feminism”, in Wendy Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski, (eds), *Feminist Theory: A Reader* (London: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2000), 414-423.
- Lena Gunnarson, “A Defense of the Category ‘Women’”, *Feminist Theory* 12 (1) (2011), 23-37 (Radical response to postmodernism).

Week 10 – March 15

Lesbian Identity and Queer Politics

Required Readings:

- Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence”, F 320-325.
- Judith Butler, “Introduction”, *Bodies that Matter* (Routledge, 1993), 1-23.
- Lori Chambers, “Unprincipled Exclusions: Transgender Jurisprudence, Feminist Theory and Kimberly Nixon”, *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 19 (2) (2007), 305-334.
- Julie Nagoshie and Stephan/ie Brzuzny, “Transgender Theorizing: Embodying Research and Practice”, *Affilia* 25 (4) (2010), 431-443.

Week 11 – March 22

Feminism, Science, and the Cyborg

Required Readings:

- Sandra Harding, “From the Woman Question in Science to the Science Question in Feminism”, in Wendy Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski, *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, 389-398.
- Donna Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s”, *Socialist Review* 80 (15.2) (1985), 92.
- Jessie Daniels, “Rethinking Cyberfeminism(s): Race, Gender, and Embodiment,” *Women’s Studies Quarterly*, 37 (1/2) (2009), 101-124.
- Anita Harris, “Young Women, Late Modern Politics and the Participatory Possibilities of Online Cultures”, *Journal of Youth Studies* 11 (5) (2008), 481-495.

Week 12 – March 29
Easter Friday, no class

Week 13 – April 5

Ecofeminism

Required Readings:

- Carolyn Merchant, “Chapter 1: A garden planet”, *Reinventing Eden: The fate of nature in western culture* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 1-9.
- Vandana Shiva, “Democracy Now” (2013) (video):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZeDAbDQ70s>.
- Karen Warren, “The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism”, *Environmental Ethics* 12 (2) (1990), 125-146.
- D. McGregor, “Anishnaabe-kwe, traditional knowledge and water protection”, *Canadian Woman Studies* 26 (3-4) (2008), 25-30.
- H. Hunter, “The birth of an eco-mom: Cancer, feminism and the environment”, *Journal of Motherhood Initiative* 2 (2011), 37-51.