

**Lakehead University
Department of Women's Studies**

**WS 5101 YA – Theory and Method in Women's Studies
Fall 2019 (Theory)**

**Dr. Jenny Roth (jroth@lakeheadu.ca)
Office Hours: RB 2014, Wednesdays 1:30 - 2:30 or by appointment**

Truly interdisciplinary work – the work demanded by women's studies – is not easy...the critical differences between disciplines have to do with what questions we think are important, what we want to know about. The difficulty of interdisciplinary work lies both in developing a set of questions that can be approached with integrity from multiple perspectives and in gaining the courage to actually work from them. Since at this point most of us have been trained within one discipline, I am not surprised that we can usually tell where someone started; the questions and methods of one discipline tend to be paramount. But paramount doesn't mean exclusive, and that is the difference made by interdisciplinarity.

-- Susan Amussen, "Studying Early Modern Women"

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 (Feminist Theory):

The aim of this term is to provide an overview of the major schools of feminist theory. You will learn feminist praxis, which is how feminists have transformed theory into practice, and how to use theory in analyzing your research data (textual; numerical; interview-based; etc.). Theory is the tool that allows us to understand why an event, trend, or research finding occurs. Used alongside feminist research methods, feminist theory aims to transform knowledge and knowledge production, and, through praxis, to work towards social transformation of the personal and social in pursuit of equality. By the end of this term you will understand the main schools of feminist theory; and understand how to apply a particular theory (or theories) to your scholarly analysis.

Learner Outcomes:

By the end of this course you will:

- Have a working knowledge of the major schools of feminist theory and be able to apply them to analysis and transformative action;
- Have a strong understanding of Women's / Sexuality / Gender Studies as an applied discipline; its definitions, practices, and foundations.
- Have designed, produced, and successfully delivered an evidence-based project.
- Have designed, produced and successfully delivered an activity based in participatory pedagogy.
- Have produced Master's-level written work.
- Have articulated evidence-based positions in your written work and in-class communications that show creative and innovative application of course concepts and experiential knowledge.

My Availability: I am always available during my drop-in hour on a first-come, first-served basis. I am also available by appointment if you can't make that time. I check my work email during work hours: 8:30 – 4:30, Monday to Friday. I do not check my work email on weekends or holidays.

Required Course Materials:

Available on the D2L website. Hard copies of the articles should be brought to class for discussion.

Weekly Schedule:

Week 1, Sept. 2-6 – Introduction, Overview, and Evaluation Planning

What is theory? What is the purpose/importance of feminist theory? How do we challenge the academic paradigm? How does feminist theory challenge/transform your home discipline?

Week 2, Sept. 9-13 – Liberal and Standpoint Feminisms

Readings:

Gerson, Kathleen. "Changing Lives, Resistant Institutions: A New Generation Negotiates Gender, Work, and Family Change." *Sociological Forum*, vol. 24, no. 4, 2009, pp. 735-53. [Liberal]

Smith, Dorothy. "Women's Standpoint: Embodied Knowledge versus the Ruling Relations." *Institutional Ethnography*. AltaMira Press, 2005, 7-26. [Standpoint]

Optional Readings:

Fuchs Epstein, Cynthia. "Great Divides: The Cultural, Cognitive, and Social Bases of the Global Subordination of Women." *American Sociological Review*, vol. 72, no. 2, 2007, pp. 1-22. [Liberal]

Harding, Sandra. "Are There Gendered Standpoints on Nature." *Is Science Multicultural? Postcolonialism, Feminisms, and Epistemologies*. Indiana UP, 1998, 89-104. [Standpoint]

Week 3, Sept. 16-20 - Marxist and Socialist Feminisms

Readings:

- Acker, Joan. "Thinking About Gendered and Racialized Class." *Class Questions: Feminist Answers*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2006, 45-75. [Marxist]
- McCall, Leslie. "The History and Politics of Inequality Reconsidered." *Complex Inequality: Gender, Class, and Race in the New Economy*. Routledge, 2001, 175- 192. [Socialist]

Optional Readings:

- Nakano Glenn, Evelyn. "The Social Construction and Institutionalization of Gender and Race: An Integrative Framework." *Revisioning Gender*, edited by Myra Marx Ferree, Judith Lorber, and Beth Hess, SAGE, 1999, 17-23. [Marxist]
- Folbre, Nancy. "Planning Care." *The Invisible Heart: Economics and Family Values*. The New Press, 2001, 225-232. [Socialist]

Week 4, Sept. 23-27 - Transnational and Transversal Feminisms**Readings:**

- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "'Under Western Eyes' Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles." *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Duke University Press, 2003, 221-251. [Transnational]
- Roth, Jen and Lori Chambers. "Transversal and Postmodern Feminist Praxis in Everyday Politics." *Atlantis: Critical Studies in Gender, Culture, and Social Justice*. Forthcoming. [Transversal]

Optional Readings:

- Tripp, Aili Mari. "Challenges in Transnational Feminist Mobilization." *Global Feminism: Transnational Women's Activism, Organizing, and Human Rights*, edited by Myra Marx Ferree and Aili Mari Tripp, NYU Press, 2006, 296-312. [Transnational]
- Hill Collins, Patricia. "On Violence, Intersectionality, and Transversal Politics." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40(9), 2017, 1460-1473.

Week 5, Sept. 30-Oct. 4 - Indigenous Feminisms**Readings:**

- Green, Joyce. "Taking Account of Indigenous Feminism." *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, edited by Joyce Green, Zed Books, 2008, 20-32.
- St. Denis, Verna. "Feminism is for Everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism and Diversity." *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, edited by Joyce Green, Zed Books, 2008, 33-52.

Optional Readings:

- Mohammed, Patricia. "Towards Indigenous Feminist Theorizing in the Caribbean." *Feminist Review*, vol. 52, no. 1, 1998, 6-33.
- Larocque, Emma. "Métis and Feminist: Reflections from the Margins." *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, edited by Joyce Green, Zed Books, 2008, 53-71.

Week 6, Oct. 7-11 - Radical Feminism**Readings:**

“Redstockings Manifesto.” *Redstockings*, 7 Jul. 1969,
<http://www.redstockings.org/index.php/rs-manifesto>. Accessed 8 December 2017.

Hawthorne, Susan. “Land, Bodies, and Knowledge: Biocolonialism of Plants, Indigenous Peoples, Women, and People with Disabilities.” *Signs*, vol. 32, no. 2, 2007, 314- 323.

Optional Readings:

McGlynn, Clare, et al. “Beyond ‘Revenge Porn’: The Continuum of Image-Based Sexual Abuse.” *Feminist Legal Studies*, vol. 25, 2017, 25-46.

Gunnarsson, Lena. “A Defence of the Category ‘Women.’” *Feminist Theory*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2011, 23-37.

Week 7, Oct. 14-18 – Reading Week – No class

Week 8, Oct. 21-25 - Psychoanalytical and Cultural Feminisms

Readings:

Chodorow, Nancy. “Feminism, Femininity, and Freud.” *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory*. Yale University Press, 1989, 165-177. [Psychoanalytic]

Cixous, Hélène. “The Laugh of the Medusa,” translated by Keith Cohen and Paula Cohen, *Signs*, vol. 1, no. 4, 1967, 875-893. [Cultural]

Optional Readings:

Hird, Myra. “Vacant Wombs: Feminist Challenges to Psychoanalytic Theories of Childless Women.” *Feminist Review*, no. 75, 2003, 5-19. [Psychoanalytic]

Smelik, Anneke. “Feminist Film Theory.” *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies*, first edition, John Wiley & Sons Ltd., 2016, 1-5. [Cultural]

Week 9, Oct. 28-Nov. 1 - Multiracial / Multiethnic Feminism

Readings:

Lorde, Audre. “Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference.” *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Crossing Press, 1984, 114-123.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. “La Conciencia de la Mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness.” *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, edited by Wendy Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski, third edition, McGraw Hill, 2010, 362-368.

Optional Readings:

Ngan-Ling Chow, Esther. “The Development of Feminist Consciousness Among Asian American Women.” *Gender & Society*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1987, 284-299.

Lugones, Maria and Elizabeth Spelman. “Have we got a theory for you! Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism and the demand for ‘the woman’s voice.’” *Women’s Studies International Forum*, vol. 6, no 6, 1983, 573-581.

Week 10 - Mar 13 - Feminist Studies of Men

Readings:

Connell, Raewyn and James Messerschmidt. “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept.” *Gender & Society*, vol. 19, no. 6, 829-859.

Wingfield, Adia Harvey. "Racializing the Glass Escalator: Reconsidering Men's Experiences with Women's Work." *Gender & Society*, vol. 23, no. 1, 5-26.

Optional Readings:

Beasley, Christine. "Rethinking Hegemonic Masculinity in a Globalizing World." *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2008, 86-103.

Almog, Ran, and Danny Kaplan. "The Nerd and his Discontent: The Education Community and the Logic of the Game as a Geeky Solution to the Challenges of Young Masculinity." *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 20, no. 1, 2017, 27-48.

Week 11 - Mar 20 - Postmodern and Queer Feminisms

Readings:

Butler, Judith. Introduction. *Bodies that Matter*. Routledge, 1993, 1-23.

Meadow, Tey. "A Rose is a Rose: On Producing Legal Gender Classifications." *Gender & Society*, vol. 24, no. 6, 2010, 814-837.

Optional Readings:

Hines, Sally. "What's the Difference? Bringing Particularity to Queer Studies of Transgender." *Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2006, 49-66.

Walters, Suzanna. "From Here to Queer: Radical Feminism, Postmodernism and the Lesbian Menace (Or, Why Can't a Woman be More like a Fag?)." *Signs*, vol. 21, no. 4, 1996, 830-869.

Week 12 - Mar. 27 - Cyborg, Cyber-, and Posthuman Feminisms

Readings:

Haraway, Donna. "A Cyborg Manifesto." *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, edited by Wendy Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski, third edition, McGrawHill, 2010, 336-346.

Daniels, Jessie. "Rethinking Cyberfeminism(s): Race, Gender, and Embodiment." *Women's Studies Quarterly*, vol. 37, no. 1/2, 2009, 101-124.

Optional Readings:

Harris, Anita. "Young Women, Late Modern Politics, and the Participatory Possibilities of Online Cultures." *Journal of Youth Studies*, vol. 11, no. 5, 2008, 481-495.

VNS MATRIX. "A Cyberfeminist Manifesto for the 21st Century." VNS MATRIX Merchants of Slime, 1998. <https://vnsmatrix.net/the-cyberfeminist-manifesto-for-the-21st-century/> Accessed 18 December 2017.

Week 13 - Apr 3 - Ecofeminism and Wrap-Up

Readings:

Kings, A.E. "Intersectionality and the Changing Face of Ecofeminism." *Ethics & the Environment*, vol. 22, no. 1, 2017, 63-87.

Abbasi, Pyeaam. "Ecofeminism and Gilman's *Herland*: A Gaardian Approach." *The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2017, 17-29.

Evaluation

This term is worth 50% of your overall grade.

Participation	10%	Weekly
Praxis Project	15%	A Assigned Group (see D2L for your group and the dates)
Major (or two smaller) Assignment(s)	25%	Due by December 12 (hard copy)

This term, you choose your own due dates and weighting for the major assignment, or two minor assignments – your choice (see options below).

Due dates must fall on or before December 12, 2019, and late written work will be penalized 5% per day. Work over a week late will not be accepted without Registrar-approved documentation.

Print and fill in the “Assignment and Due Dates Contract” form on D2L, due back to me in class, Week 3. If I haven’t received one from you by that time, I will arbitrarily assign you a Major Assignment and a due date.

Due dates are firm. Your chosen grade weights and major (or two smaller) assignments cannot be changed once your form is submitted, or I have assigned them if you forget to hand in your form by the due date. No exceptions.

1. Participation – Mandatory Weekly - 5%

Class participation will be based on your full attendance and preparedness for weekly classes, the quality (not quantity) of your contributions, and your demonstration of both active listening and active engagement with the course materials and concepts. It is expected that students will have read all of the assigned readings prior to class and come prepared with discussion points and questions to contribute.

Participation Rubric

You can miss one class without documentation and not be penalized. Otherwise, I will require University-approved documentation.

You will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Top students	You initiate discussion and show that you have understood (or are working to understand) and can apply the ideas presented in the week’s required materials and brief lecture in a professional and courteous way that respects your peers and supports ideas-sharing. This means coming to class thoroughly familiar with the assigned reading(s), being prepared to actively watch the films (taking notes throughout based on the discussion questions and in relation to the ideas presented in the reading[s]), and being prepared to identify topics of interest in the
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	<p>reading in relation to the film in a clearly evidenced way (you show that you know the reading well by backing up what you're saying with a direct quotation or page number reference).</p> <p>This does not mean monopolizing a discussion or shutting others down, or taking up too much space by talking for its own sake rather than engaging in the week's themes and materials. You work to allow everyone a chance to share their observations and ideas. You clearly connect anecdotal evidence to the week's materials and topic.</p>
Mid-range Students	<p>You participate on a regular basis, though less frequently than a 2-point student. 1-point discussants' participation may indicate that they are not well-prepared for class, or have not given thought to the assigned materials, because you do not support the point you make with clear reference to evidence from the materials / lecture.</p>
Non-participants	<p>Participation is impossible if you do not attend class, or if you do not share your ideas.</p>

For those interested in process: Top students receive 2 marks per week; middling students 1 or 1.5, and non-participants, 0. Those marks are then averaged over the term to produce your final grade.

2. Praxis Project - Mandatory - 20%

You will be assigned a group and a theory.

Your group will:

- 1) Find a feminist organization that uses your assigned theory as its basis for political action. Most organizations will not explicitly spell out which theory they ground their work in: it could be up to your group to have a look at the philosophy, rationale, and aims of the group and decide which theory most influences the group's approach. Share your feminist organization find with the class, and tell us why and how your chosen organization uses the theory you have been assigned (15 minute presentation, organized however the group would like);
- 2) Design an engaging, in-class, activity that can be accomplished in approximately 15 minutes, with 10 minutes for a wrap-up by your group, for the rest of the class to do that will have them "doing" the theory you've been assigned. Your creative piece can be whatever you would like, and brainstorming as a group to come up with ideas is encouraged.

I encourage the groups to come and speak with me if you have questions well in advance of your presentation week. This project will take you more than one week to do it well.

Praxis Project Rubric

11-15	<p>Your group has found a relevant feminist organization, and explains clearly what the organization does, and how the organization puts your theory into practice. The group makes direct connections between the week’s readings about the theory, and the explanation of how and why the chosen organization uses the theory assigned to the group.</p> <p>The group’s activity shows thoughtful and creative engagement with the theory, and with the process of praxis – turning theory into practice. The activity helps the rest of the class to see how the theory can be applied to explain gender inequality, and the group’s wrap-up of the exercise helps to conclude and summarize for the class the point of the exercise and why the group thought it would be a helpful example of praxis.</p>
6-10	<p>Your group has found a relevant feminist organization, and either explains clearly what the organization does, OR how the organization puts your theory into practice. The group makes indirect connections between the week’s readings about the theory, and the explanation of how and why the chosen organization uses the theory assigned to the group.</p> <p>The group’s activity shows thoughtful OR creative engagement with the theory, and with the process of praxis – turning theory into practice. The activity somewhat helps the rest of the class to see how the theory can be applied to explain gender inequality, and the group’s wrap-up of the exercise helps to conclude and summarize for the class the point of the exercise OR why the group thought it would be a helpful example of praxis.</p>
1-5	<p>Your group has not found a relevant feminist organization, OR does not explain clearly what the organization does to put theory into practice. The group makes few direct connections between the week’s readings about the theory, and the explanation of how and why the chosen organization uses the theory assigned to the group.</p> <p>The group’s activity is not a thoughtful, creative engagement with the theory, and shows a lack of understanding about the process of praxis – turning theory into practice. The activity does illustrate how the theory can be applied to explain gender inequality, OR the group’s wrap-up of the exercise does not conclude and summarize for the class the point of the exercise OR why the group thought it would be a helpful example of praxis.</p>
0	<p>You do not participate: your group reports to me that you have not responded to their calls to come together; you have not fulfilled your responsibility to the group, as decided by the group in an early meeting (I encourage the group to keep</p>

professional notes of meetings, in the event that one member does not do the work, and I must be involved).

3. Major Project (or two smaller, if you'd prefer) – Total 25%

Option #1: My Theory Project – Apply a feminist theory from the term to the thesis/research paper/creative project you are developing in your home discipline. The Theory Project paper will illustrate why the theory you chose is the best to analyze the data in your project. You will also explore the theory's limitations in its application to 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 and the aims of your analysis in your introduction.

Length: 11-12 pages, typed, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman, 12 pt font, double-spaced.

Grade weighting: minimum 10%, maximum 25%

Option #2: Reading Journal – Journal your reflective analytical responses to the week's readings to illustrate praxis: the transformation of theory into transformative practice / experiential knowledge. Please note: responses are not descriptions. An entry that simply describes the article's evidence and argument will garner zero.

Some options for journal entries include (but are not limited to):

- a) connect the themes of the readings to your own life in a way that illustrates experiential knowledge (i.e.: explore how the text helps you to understand why you experienced what you did in the way that you did);
- b) connect the ideas in the readings with other readings from this course, showing how they speaks to / with / against each other;
- c) identify how what you may have been taught is 'true' throughout your life is challenged by the readings, and then analyze how cultural norms create a dominant discourse that supports oppression and systemic violence;
- d) identify a concept in the readings that you were uncomfortable with, and explore how your social location and privilege may affect why you felt discomfort in that moment with that particular concept. Further, how does the reading allow you to think about what you may have internalized in a potentially new way?

Length: if hand-written, up to 2 pages per week; if typed, up to 1 page for a total of approximately 12 pages, typed or its equivalent, in length. If typed: 1-inch margins, Times New Roman, 12 pt font, double-spaced.

Grade weighting: minimum 10%, maximum 25%

Option #3: Annotated Bibliography of Feminist Theory in your Home Discipline— Compile a bibliography of feminist theorists in your home discipline. Write a discussion

paper reviewing the theories employed and concerns identified by the feminist theorists in your field. In what ways have feminist theories challenged/contributed to conventional knowledge (or materials) in your field? Which topics and areas within the discipline are feminist theory most frequently used to study? In what other areas might it be used effectively? Note that any errors in the citation style formatting, given the availability of resources, will result in a deduction of 5 marks for each entry in which there are errors (100 marks = percentage you assign).

Length: 11-12 pages (approximately 2 entries per page), typed, 1-inch margins, Times New Roman, 12 pt font, double spaced.

Grade weighting: minimum 10%, maximum 25%.

Rubric for All Written Work – Graduate Level

90-100

Superlative: Exemplary Work that demonstrates excellent comprehension of the subject, exceptional thoughtfulness and a superior inquiring mind. This work quality has the potential for publication in peer-review journals.

85-89

Excellent: Consistently applies a high level of critical scrutiny to texts with a willingness to explore ideas beyond what has been presented, to question and critically evaluate one's own thinking and learning processes. Consistently articulates innovative ideas based on a broad background of reading and experience. Consistently creative and innovative, integrating a strong discipline orientation towards terminology, discourse and writing. Excellent writing.

80-84

Very Good: Shows a strong degree of personal engagement with the topic and frequently makes connections that are deeper and insightful. Regularly articulates innovative creative ideas based on a broad background of reading and/or experience. Developing a good sensibility of the discipline of Women's / Gender / Sexuality Studies. Frequently creative and thought-provoking. Strong writing.

75-79

Good: Good work that demonstrates comprehension of the subject or topic. May be able to articulate original, critical insights connected with the readings of the course. Evidence of some critical reflections, questioning and creativity. Good writing.

70-74

Satisfactory: Some thoughtful use of existing knowledge in the subject or topic. May reveal a willingness to engage actively in the materials of the course. Beginning to makes personal connections to the literature. May be some evidence or a beginning stage of critical reflection, questioning and creativity. Writing would benefit from further development, polishing or careful editing.

Lower 70

Just Satisfactory: Few original critical insights articulated in work. Background knowledge is just beginning to be enlarged through the course and few connections are being made with the literature of the topic or discipline. Just some reading beyond the course assigned literature. Writing needs further editing and development.

Below 70

Unsatisfactory for the graduate level. Has not engaged with the assignment in a scholarly way; has not done the minimum assignment requirements. Multiple errors in scholarly citations, many errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and syntax. Does not show a sensibility of the discipline of Women's / Gender / Sexuality Studies.