

Women's Studies 5101 – Winter 2021
Theories and Methods in Women's Studies: Theories
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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 theory into a variety of disciplines.

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 students must purchase Sandra Kemp and Judith Squires, *Feminisms* (Oxford University Press, 2009), and Joyce Green, *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* (Fernwood Press, 2017). If you are ordering from the university bookstore, you should order your books well in advance as they will be mailed to you at your home address. Readings from these texts are indicated below with page numbers only (indicated with F – all readings from *Making Space* are for week 6). A number of articles beyond these texts are also required but are either readily available through the online journal collections or provided for you on D2L. I have clearly indicated articles as available via the library or D2L throughout the course outline for your convenience.

Evaluation – this term is worth 50% of your overall grade:

You may choose your own written project and due dates; however, due dates must fall before March 29, 2021.

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 10. 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 week, beginning in Week 3, one student – or a pair of students working together - will be responsible for facilitating class learning. Each student will present one reading to the class. The presentation should be about 20 minutes in length. The student, or pair of students, will then present an analysis of the week's overall themes and pose questions for the group based on all the combined readings.

Grade weighting: 10%

Written work:

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, and then understood or perceived, 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.

Accommodations: Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities/medical conditions. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities/medical conditions to ensure everyone has an equitable opportunity to participate in all their academic activities. I make every effort to meet the varied needs of students. Please feel free to speak to me directly about your needs. If you are a student with a disability/medical condition 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>.

Assignment due dates: All assignments must be handed in at the beginning of class on the due dates. If you have trouble meeting a due date, please discuss it with me at least one week prior to your due date. Missing due dates without prior approval will result in a deduction of 5% per day.

Expectations and marking: All written work will be evaluated based on organization, presentation, grammar, and clarity as well as content. Writing is a process and 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, but the paper must be ready for review one week before the final due date.

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.

Student Health and Counselling Centre: We will be dealing with difficult material, and self-care is very important. Please monitor your well-being, keep me informed if you need accommodations, and seek help as needed. For assistance and counselling with personal and/or medical issues, please visit the Student Health and Counselling Centre: <http://healthservices.lakeheadu.ca/>.

Weekly Schedule for Readings

Week 1 – January 11, 2021
Introductions

Week 2 – January 18, 2021 – Foundations (no student facilitator this week)
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”, F 22-27.
- Mary Evans, “In Praise of Theory: The Case for Women’s Studies”, F 17-22.
- Francine Descarries, “Language is Not Neutral: The Construction of Knowledge in the Social Sciences and Humanities”, *Signs* 39 (3) (2013), 564-569. **Online journal collection.**

Week 3 – January 25, 2021 – Liberal and Standpoint Feminisms

Required Readings:

- Kathleen Gerson, “Changing Lives, Resistant Institutions: A New Generation Negotiates Gender, Work, and Family”, *Sociological Forum* 24 (4) (2009), 735-753. (Liberal). **Online journal collection.**
- Cynthia Fuchs Epstein, “Great Divides: The Cultural, Cognitive, and Social Bases of the Global Subordination of Women”, *American Sociological Review* 72 (2) (2007), (Liberal). **Online journal collection.**
- Dorothy Smith, “Women’s Standpoint: Embodied Knowledge versus the Ruling Relations”, *Institutional Ethnography*, (2005), 7-26 (Standpoint). **D2L.**
- Sandra Harding, “Are there Gendered Standpoints in Nature?”, *Is Science Multicultural? Postcolonialism, Feminisms, and Epistemologies* (Indiana University Press, 1998), 89-104 (Standpoint). **Online book collection.**
- Patricia Hill Collins, “Toward an Afrocentric Feminist Epistemology”, F 198-206 (Standpoint).

Week 4 – February 1, 2021 – Marxist and Socialist Feminisms

Required Readings:

- Joan Acker, “Thinking About Gender and Racialized Class”, *Class Questions: Feminist Answers* (Rowman and Littlefield 2006), 45-75 (Marxist). **D2L.**
- Evelyn Nakano Glenn, “The Social Construction and Institutionalization of Gender and Race: An Integrative Framework”, Myra Max Ferree, Judith Lorber and Beth Hess, eds., *Revisioning Gender* (Sage 1999), 17-23 (Marxist). **D2L.**
- Leslie McCall, “The History and Politics of Inequality Reconsidered”, *Complex Inequality: Gender, Class, and Race in the New Economy* (Routledge 2001), 175-192 (Socialist). **Online book collection.**

Week 5 – February 8, 2021 – Radical, Cultural, and Psychoanalytical Feminisms

Required Readings:

- Marilyn Frye, “Some Reflections on Separatism and Power”: <https://feminist-reprise.org/library/resistance-strategy-and-struggle/some-reflections-on-separatism-and-power/>.
- Carol Gilligan, “Visions of Maturity”: sfonline.barnard.edu/sfxxx/documents/Gilligan.pdf.
- Nancy Chodorow, “Feminism, Femininity, and Freud”, *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory* (Yale University Press, 1989), 165-177. **D2L.**

Week 6 – February 15
Reading Week

Week 7 – February 22, 2021 – Indigenous Feminisms

Required Readings:

- Joyce Green, “Taking Account of Indigenous Feminism”, in Joyce Green, *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* (Fernwood Press, 2017), 20-32.
- Verna St. Denis, “Feminism is for Everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism, and Diversity”, in Joyce Green, *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* (Fernwood Press, 2017), 33-52.
- Emma Larocque, “Metis and Feminist: Reflections from the Margins”, in Joyce Green, *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* (Fernwood Press, 2017), 53-71.
- 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. **Online journal collection.**

Week 8 – March 1, 2012 – 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 (Multiracial). **Online journal collection.**
- Seyla Benhabib, “The Generalized and the Concrete Other”, F 212-215 (Transnational).
- Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses”, F 91-95 (Transnational).
- 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 (Transversal). **Online journal collection.**
- Patricial Hill Collins, “On Violence, Intersectionality and Transversal Politics”, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 40 (9) (2017), 1460-1473 (Transversal). **Online journal collection.**

Week 9 – March 8, 2021 – Postmodernism

Required Readings:

- 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. **D2L.**
- Denise Riley, “Am I That Name? Feminism and the Category of ‘Women’ in History”, F 241-245.
- Diana Fuss, “The ‘Risk’ of Essence”, F 250-258.
- Lena Gunnarson, “A Defense of the Category ‘Women’”, *Feminist Theory* 12 (1) (2011), 23-37 (Radical response to postmodernism). **Online journal collection.**

Week 10 – March 15, 2021 – Lesbian Identity and Queer Politics

Required Readings:

- Kathy Rudy, “Radical Feminism, Lesbian Separatism and Queer Theory”, *Feminist Studies* 27 (1) (2001), 191-222. **Online journal collection.**
- Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence”, F 320-325.
- Judith Butler, “Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire”, F 278-285.
- Lori Chambers, “Unprincipled Exclusions: Transgender Jurisprudence, Feminist Theory and Kimberly Nixon”, *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 19 (2) (2007), 305-334. **Online journal collection.**
- Julie Nagoshie and Stephan/ie Brzuzy, “Transgender Theorizing: Embodying Research and Practice”, *Affilia* 25 (4) (2010), 431-443. **Online journal collection.**

Week 11 – March 22, 2021 – Cyborg, Cyber- and Posthuman Feminisms

Required Readings:

- Donna Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s”, F 474-482.
- 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. **D2L.**
- Jessie Daniels, “Rethinking Cyberfeminism(s): Race, Gender and Embodiment”, *Women’s Studies Quarterly* 37 (1/2) (2009), 101-124. **Online journal collection.**
- Anita Harris, “Young Women, Late Modern Politics and the Participatory Possibilities of Online Cultures”, *Journal of Youth Studies* 11 (5) (2008), 481-495. **Online journal collection.**

Week 12 – March 29, 2021 – Ecofeminism

Required Readings:

- Carolyn Merchant, “Women and Ecology”, F 468-472.
- Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva. “Ecofeminism”, F 497-503.
- Karen Warren, “The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism”, *Environmental Ethics* 12 (2) (1990), 125-146. **D2L.**
- A. E. Kings, “Intersectionality and the Changing Face of Ecofeminism”, *Ethics and the Environment* 22 (1) (2017), 63-87. **Online journal collection.**

Week 13 – April 5, 2021 – Feminist Studies of Men and Masculinity

Required Readings:

- Raewyn Connell and James Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept”, *Gender and Society* 19 (6) (2005), 829-859. **Online journal collection.**
- Ada Harvey Wingfield, “Racializing the Glass Escalator: Reconsidering Men’s Experiences with Women’s Work”, *Gender and Society* 23 (1) (2009), 5-26. **Online journal collection.**
- Christine Beasley, “Rethinking Hegemonic Masculinity in a Globalizing World”, *Men and Masculinities* 11 (1) (2008), 86-103. **Online journal collection.**

- Lara Karaian, “Pregnant Men: Repronormativity, Critical Trans Theory, and the Re(conceiv)ing of Sex and Pregnancy Law”, *Social and Legal Studies* 22 (2) (2013), 149-169. **Online journal collection.**