

GENDER & FEMINIST POLITICAL THEORY

POSC 350

Winter 2010, Tuesdays 1430-1720
Room AB C1427

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Course Description

How does 'gender' and 'sex' relate to politics? What is the difference between gender and sex? Is gender and feminist politics just about women? Should it be? How do issues of gendering relate to issues of racism, colonialism, class, sexuality and desire, disability? Why does whiteness matter to the study of gender, feminism and politics? Can men be feminists? How can feminism be deployed to challenge violence against women, racism, transphobia, poverty and other social inequities? This course will explore these questions through the study of various political theories of gender and feminism.

In the first part of the course we will explore two major themes in the field of Gender and Feminist Political Thought, both of which challenge the category of 'woman' as *the* central category of analysis: the first theme involves a challenge to the duality between men/women, and the second theme involves a challenge to the assumption that women are a social collective. In the second part of the course, we will explore some major themes in the field of Gender and Feminist Political Thought. Drawing on different theoretical perspectives, we will consider the role of individual rights, the female body, race, disability, class and materialism, anti-colonialism and gendered Indigeniety, white privilege, and male privilege.

The course consists of a combination of lectures, readings, and class-based discussions. Each week you will be required to attend the lecture and keep up with the required readings. The success of the course very much depends on each student reading the material before class and participating in class discussions.

Note: The instructor reserves the right to correct, change or modify the syllabus as the course progresses.

Course Objectives

1. Gain an understanding of the theoretical debates and differing perspectives within the field of feminist and gender politics.
2. Develop some critical responses to the questions listed in the course description.
3. Critically and self-reflectively evaluate key categories of analysis relevant to the study of gender and feminist politics, including concepts such as gender, sex, woman, difference, and power.
4. Link the theoretical ideas to practices of feminism.

Required Readings: Course Package

A *required course package* (CP) is available in the University bookstore. It provides a collection of articles and chapters put together specifically for this course. The CP contains full bibliographic information.

Assessment

Analysis & Facilitation (15%)	TBA
Critical Analysis paper (25%)	March 2
'Practicing Feminism' Abstract (5%)	March 30
'Practicing Feminism' Research Paper (30%)	April 6
Final examination (30%)	TBA

I. Analysis & Facilitation (15%): dates to be assigned in week 2

Once in the term you will be responsible for facilitating part of the class discussion on one reading from the weekly assigned readings. Students will sign up for readings in the second week of classes, so please review the syllabus and come to class ready to make your selections. Think about alternatives as you may not get your first choice.

First, you should begin the presentation by outlining what you see as the major arguments of the reading. You may want to talk about the process you undertook as you read this piece. Were there personal resources, conversations outside of the classroom, lived experiences, or other sources that helped you to understand the arguments? Second, discuss your critical engagement with the piece you have chosen. How did the article influence your thinking? In what ways do the insights of this piece apply to your academic work/workplace/social relationships/activism? Do you agree or disagree with the arguments, and why? Finally, pose a few questions to the class that you believe will stimulate further discussion. Are there parts of the article that require further clarification for you?

You will be assessed on all three of the above aspects. I will not be evaluating your opinions or experiences, but rather, how you present your *analysis* of the reading. Many students find making class presentations challenging. If you need to read from a prepared text in order to feel comfortable, you should feel free to do so.

The purpose of this exercise is for students to develop their critical analysis skills, and stimulate classroom discussion.

II. Critical Analysis Paper (25%): due March 2

This written assignment focuses on the assigned readings from weeks 2, 3, 4 and 5. Your project is to critically analyze one of the challenges to the category of 'woman'. You are required to draw on at least two of the assigned readings, although you can use more and you can also go beyond these readings. Specifically, this assignment asks you to:

- a) Choose one of the two major challenges to the category of woman, and clearly state the nature of this challenge for feminist politics (i.e. how is the challenge defined).
- b) Explain why this challenge (to the category of 'woman') matters to the study of gender, feminism and politics.
- c) Outline how your chosen thinkers understand/define the relationship between either a) sex and gender OR b) difference and commonality, and the relevance of these understandings.
- d) State which thinker(s) you find most persuasive and why.

Critical analysis paper format and requirements:

- ❖ The critical paper should be 5-7 pages each (approx. 1250-1750 words) not including the bibliography.
- ❖ Papers should be double-spaced, with a standard 12 point font and one inch margins.

- ❖ **You must use at least three properly introduced and explained quotations from the assigned readings. If this requirement is not met, there will be an automatic deduction of 5%.**
- ❖ Staple your paper in the top left corner only; no bindings please.
- ❖ Include a cover page with your name, student number and title of paper, and one blank page at the end for comments.
- ❖ Include page numbers, with the first page of text numbered page 1.
- ❖ You are required to keep a copy of your essay.
- ❖ When using readings assigned for class, you must demonstrate serious engagement—merely re-writing class notes will not be sufficient.

The purpose of this assignment is for you to reflect on the major challenges to ‘woman’ as a category of analysis, develop your critical thinking skills, analyze the similarities and differences between assigned readings, and enable me to assess your understanding of the material and ideas covered thus far.

III. ‘Practicing Feminism’ Research Paper (30%): March 30 for abstract & April 6 for paper submission

This assignment requires that you research one or more ways to practice feminism. There are two parts to this assignment:

1. *Abstract (5%):* bring in a written outline/abstract of your paper to class on March 30. We will discuss your abstracts in class so that you get some feedback before final submission. I will collect the abstracts at the end of the class. Assessment will be based on the discussion.
2. *Research Paper (25%):* You can pick your own topic, although I strongly recommend you confirm your topic with me. If you unsure what to pick, come and see me. The assignment question is: What makes your chosen practice feminist, and what is your assessment of this practice?

Feminism can be practiced in many places and many ways: in everyday interactions with family or friends or colleagues (e.g. challenging ideas about gender, sex, commonality, and difference), in the workplace (e.g. fighting for a harassment free workplace, or for work-provided child care), with or against government (e.g. organizing a protest, supporting a feminist MP etc.), in a community or social activist organization (on or off campus), through mainstream media (e.g. writing a news story), and through poetry or dance or song. Think creatively! The goals are to:

- a) Identify a practice of feminism;
- b) Explain the workings of this practice (i.e. what is the purpose of the practice, how is this practice exercised or put into action?);
- c) Say what makes it specifically feminist. This should be part of your thesis statement;
- d) Relate your chosen practice to some of the ideas we discuss in the course, the assigned readings, or other academic texts;
- e) Consider *your* role is in this practice (how do you relate to it?);
- f) Assess the value of this practice (what are the strengths, weaknesses, aspects to change etc.?). This should be part of your thesis statement as well.

Remember that this is a research essay, and should be approached and written as such.

Research essay format and requirements:

- Essays should be 8-10 pages (including bibliography), typed, double spaced, with a standard 12 point font and one inch margins.
- Staple your paper in the top left corner only; no bindings please.

- Include a cover page with your name, student number and title of paper, and one blank page at the end for comments.
- Include page numbers, with the first page of text numbered page 1.
- You are required to keep a copy of your essay.
- You may begin with your course package readings but you are required to examine other articles and books that will shed light on the question that you have chosen.
- **You must use and cite at least five scholarly books and articles, including one reference from a scholarly journal of the last five years. 5% will be deducted if you do not meet this requirement. Remember to have a complete bibliography.** Some suggested journals are: *Political Theory*, *Constellations*, *American Political Science Review*, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, and *Political Studies*. You may use information found on the internet but be careful about the source of information, and be certain to make specific reference to the URL in your references. Web sources like Wikipedia are not scholarly sources, but if used these should be properly cited. Journal articles found on the internet are NOT counted as web sources.

This assignment is intended to increase your research, critical reading and writing skills. It also fosters yours skills to link the theoretical ideas to practice.

Assessment of Critical Analysis and Research paper:

1. A clearly stated thesis – what are you trying to demonstrate or argue
2. Argument to support your thesis:
 - analysis of the subject matter and not just a description
 - setting out key issues
 - essay flows from one point to the next
 - addresses key points on the other side of the argument
3. Effective use of materials
 - use of relevant articles, books and other materials
 - demonstrate familiarity with the literature on the subject
 - quotations properly used (remember, to avoid the 5% deduction, ensure that the critical analysis paper includes 3 quotes from the assigned readings that are properly introduced and explained; and the research essay has the required number/kind of academic sources).
 - careful use of websites
 - footnotes and references done correctly; any Political Science accepted method of referencing is acceptable (e.g. Humanities/MLA style or Author & Date/APA style), so long as you are consistent.
 - complete bibliography
4. Relevant subject material – leave out irrelevant material
5. Organization and Style
 - paper is well written
 - good construction of paragraphs
 - essays concludes and does not just end
 - mechanics (spelling, punctuation, grammar etc.).

IV. Final Exam (30%): date TBA

The date of the final exam will be scheduled by the University. The exam will be held for 2 hours, and will address material covered in the entire course (i.e. all textbook readings, course package material, and lectures). You are required to take the final exam as scheduled.

Lecture Topics and Readings

1. January 12 INTRODUCTION

Arneil, B. 'Politics and Feminism: An Introduction'.

Hawkesworth, M. 'Engendering Political Science: An Immodest Proposal'.

THE CATEGORY OF 'WOMAN' I: THEORIZING SEX & GENDER

2. January 19 SEX & GENDER DIFFERENCE

de Beauvoir, Simone 'Introduction to The Second Sex'.

Ortner, Sherry B. 'Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?'

Jaggar, Alison M. 'Human Biology in Feminist Theory: Sexual Equality Reconsidered.'

3. January 26 TROUBLING SEX & GENDER

Butler, Judith 'Imitation and Gender Subordination'.

Garber, Marjorie. 'Introduction: Clothes Make the Man'.

Noble, Jean Bobby. 'Introduction: The New Men of 1998'

THE CATEGORY OF 'WOMAN' II: COMMONALITY & DIFFERENCES

4. February 2 QUESTIONS OF DIFFERENCE

The Combahee River Collective, 'A Black Feminist Statement'.

Reece, Raimunda, 'Feminist Theorizing on Race and Racism'.

Mohanty, Chandra. T. 'Under Western Eyes: Scholarship and Colonial Discourses'.

5. February 9 QUESTIONS OF COMMONALITY

Beckwith, Karen. 'A Common Language of Gender?'

Young, Iris Marion. 'Gender as Seriality: Thinking About Women as a Social Collective.'

NOTE: SPRING BREAK FEBRUARY 15-21

6. February 23 NO CLASS (I suggest you take the time to complete the assignment that is due in week 7, and to prepare for your facilitation & analysis assignment if you haven't already done so).

THEMES IN GENDER & FEMINIST POLITICS

7. March 2 INTERSECTIONS OF DIFFERENCE: ANTI-RACIST FEMINISMS and Critical Analysis Paper Due

Hancock, Ange-Marie. 'When Multiplication Doesn't Equal Quick Addition: Examining Intersectionality as a Research Paradigm'.

Crenshaw, K.. 'Intersectionality and Identity Politics: Learning from Violence against Women of Colour'.

Weber, Lynn. 'What's in it for you? The Personal Benefits of Developing a Race, Class, Gender and Sexuality Analysis'.

8. March 9 WOMEN & REPRESENTATION: LIBERAL FEMINISMS

Wollstonecraft, Mary. 'The Effects of Discrimination on Women.'

Trimble, L., & Tremblay, M. 'Women Politicians in Canada's Parliament and Legislatures, 1917-2000: A Socio-demographic Profile'.

9. March 16 MATERIALISM & PATRIARCHY: SOCIALIST FEMINISMS

Hartmann, Heidi. 'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism & Feminism'.

Mohanty, C. T. 'Women workers and the politics of solidarity'.

10. March 23 THE BODY POLITIC

Firestone, Shulamith. 'The Dialectic of Sex'.

Radicalesbians, 'The Woman Identified Woman'.

Wendell, Susan. 'The Flight from the Rejected Body'.

Morrison, Todd G., and Marie Halton. 2009. 'Buff, Tough, and Rough: Representations of Muscularity in Action Motion Pictures'.

11. March 30 ANTI-COLONIALISM, GENDER EQUALITY & INDIGENIETY: INDIGENOUS FEMINISMS and Research Paper Abstracts

Kuokkanen, R. 'Globalization as Racialized, Sexualized Violence'.

Monture-Angus, Patricia. 'Standing against Canadian Law: Naming Omissions of Race, Culture and Gender.'

12. April 6 DECONSTRUCTING PRIVILEGE: CRITICAL WHITENESS STUDIES, MALE FEMINISM and Research Paper on 'Practicing Feminism' Due

Kahane, David. 'Male Feminism as Oxymoron.'

McIntosh, Peggy. 'White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondence through Work in Women's Studies.'

13. April 13 WRAP UP & PREPARING FOR THE EXAM

Course Policies (Please read the following notes very carefully before week 2)

- Your marked assignments will be returned to you in a timely fashion.
- If you are unsure how to document your work or if you have any questions about the lectures, readings, and issues discussed in class or assignment expectations, *please come and see me*. I will do my utmost to respond promptly to your concerns.
- All assignments should be handed to me *at the start of class*, unless otherwise specified.
- I will be using power point during the lectures. These are outlines and not adequate for study or research purposes alone. The lectures and readings are essential aspects of the course. You do not need to copy down every word on these slides.
- Late essays will be penalized 2.5% per day (including weekends). Essay extensions will be granted only in cases of illness or personal tragedy and not because of academic or employment conflicts or workload. All extensions will require a note from a doctor or another authority that can vouch for your circumstances. Extensions will **NOT** be given in the event of computer problems or software incompatibility.
- Assignments submitted 7 days after the due deadline will not be marked, unless an extension has been granted in writing by the instructor.
- As you are ultimately responsible for your own learning, if you are absent from class on a given day, you are still responsible for any material covered as well as any handouts, assignments discussed, videos presented, guest lecturers, etc. Please follow the course outline and stay on top of your assignments.
- Electronic etiquette in the classroom: All cell phones are to be turned off at the start of class, except with the permission of the instructor in the event of emergency situations. Please do not text messages or check your voice mail during lectures; do not use your laptop in class unless it is directly required for the course; and do not listen to portable music players in class. Students who fail to abide by these rules will be asked to leave the class.
- If you need to withdraw from a course and don't want a "W" grade on your transcript, you need to do it before the 11th week of class (check the current UFV calendar for the exact date each term). If you withdraw after that date, a "W" will appear on your transcript. If you don't withdraw formally, you will be assigned an NC (no credit) grade.
- Students will be excused from exams only in the instance of illness or a grave family emergency. In such cases, make up exams will be scheduled, as long as a doctor's note is provided. Absences from exams will not be permitted for any other reason, including work conflicts.
- You must be available to write the final exam in the allotted slot at the end of term. Do not make any other commitments until the university has announced the final exam schedule. Conflicts with other exams must be brought to the attention of the instructor by the last class.
- Please be aware that academic and personal support is available from various units at UFV including Aboriginal Access Services, Disability Services, and Student Services. Information can be found on the web.
- All cases of cheating will be reported to the Director of Student Services and a grade of zero will be awarded for the assignment. Please consult the University policy.
- Plagiarism occurs when paragraphs, phrases, sentences or ideas within the work are taken from another source without referencing or citing the author. Make sure you reference or cite work by someone else! UFV's policy regarding Student Conduct and Plagiarism can be viewed at www.ufv.ca/studentaffairs.htm.
- Test and assignment grades may be appealed. See the university policy manual for appeal process. The grading process will start anew. It is possible that the revised grade will be lower than the original; the second grade will be final.
- Any changes to your status in the course after final withdraw dates must be made through the Office of Student Services. Please be aware of official withdrawal dates.

- Please be advised that I will not discuss the course or your performance in the course with your parents or any other advocates.

Guidelines for Grading

A+ = 90%+ A = 85-89% A- = 80-84%	EXCELLENT	Evidence of original thought, and exceptional writing skills (i.e. superior composition and no grammatical errors or typos)
B+ = 77-79% B = 73-76% B- = 70-72%	GOOD	Mastery of material and solid writing skills (i.e. good syntax and no more than one or two typos)
C+ = 67-69% C = 63-66% C- = 60-62%	SATISFACTORY*	Clear understanding of material and adequate writing skills (less than five typos, grammatical errors and or awkward sentences)
P = 50-59%	UNSATISFACTORY	Limited understanding of material and/or deficient writing skills (i.e. awkward syntax and or frequent errors)
F = below 50%	INADEQUATE	Misunderstanding of material and or unacceptable writing skills (i.e. terrible syntax and copious errors)

***NOTE:** The UFV calendar describes grades in the C range as “average.”

The conversion of numeric grades to letter grades at the end of the course will also be made according to this chart.