

## Feminist Theory

WS 439/Pols 339

Fall, 2007

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### Course description:

This course explores contemporary debates in feminist theory. We will look at different concepts of subjectivity and approaches to thinking about sex and gender: how do we generalize about women without projecting one set of experiences onto all of us? We will look at modes of representation in language and in politics, asking “who gets to speak?” and “what can be said?” We will explore relations between gender, race, and class; gender and colonialism; the gendering of bodies, sexualities, and nature; theory and activism; and the politics of representation.

This class asks you, in all your writings, to **MAKE USE OF THE COURSE READINGS**. We care about your opinions, too, but they need to be informed by and in response to the course material.

**Required reading:** The following books are required reading. The first book on the list, *Theorizing Feminism*, is also available through Modern Times Bookstore, run by Professor Oliver Lee, in Saunders 634. He can be contacted at [olee@hawaii.edu](mailto:olee@hawaii.edu)

The rest of the books have been ordered through UH bookstore. You can also purchase them on-line through Amazon Books or other sources.

Other course readings will either be handed out in class or posted on Web Ct for you to download.

Anne Herrmann and Abigail Stewart, *Theorizing Feminism* (2nd ed) (Westview, 2001).  
Paperback (ISBN: 0-8133-6788-3)

Andrea Smith, *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide* (South End Press, 2005). Paperback (ISBN: 0896087433)

Cynthia Enloe, *Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2007). Paperback. (ISBN: 978-0-7425-4112)

Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization* (University of Chicago Press: 1995)  
Paperback. (ISBN: 0-226-04139-5)

### Requirements:

#### 1. Attendance and participation. (10% of final grade)

You are expected to do the reading on time and come to class prepared to discuss it. **Please bring the assigned reading to class each day.** Class discussions entail active and thoughtful interactions with the material and with others in the class. You are invited to use class discussions, email, and other venues to listen respectfully, show that you have read and thought about the material, and develop your ideas. ***These readings are quite challenging and you will***

*often need to read them more than once.* It is important that you have your own copies of the readings so you can underline, write questions in the margins and make notes to help you write and talk about the arguments.

We will take attendance by passing around a sign-in sheet.

## 2. **Biographical notes.** (10% of final grade)

Who are these people we're reading, anyway? Each student will write a one page biographical note on a theorist we read in this class. Some of these folks are very famous, while others toil in greater obscurity. For your theorist, please write a one page sketch that includes the following information: brief biography, including place and date of birth; academic training and field (important for seeing feminist theory's interdisciplinary reach); places of employment; major intellectual accomplishments, including most significant published works; significant political or academic activism; picture, if available.

Biographical notes should be one page in length (you can use the front and back of the page, if needed). Please bring enough copies for the entire class. (If you come to my office at least a half hour before class, we can make copies on the polisci or women's studies machines).

The point of the biographical note is **NOT** to summarize the person's ideas. It is to sketch this person's place in the intellectual and political currents of her/his time and place.

Please utilize at least two sources, and indicate the sources at the bottom of the page. For writers still living, I strongly suggest emailing them for information.

## 3. **Electronic discussions.** (20% of final grade)

You are required to write one journal entry per week on Web CT. You may write more for extra credit. We will post the questions as early as possible each week, and your responses are due by the Friday of the following week. Any changes in deadlines will be announced in class. **Please keep up with your journal postings; it is much easier to write them when the material is fresh in your mind.**

To log on: Go to <http://webct.hawaii.edu> to log in using your UH email address (the part before the @hawaii.edu) for your ID and your UH email password for your password.

Click on our course; *be sure to go to Fall, 07*, not Spring, 07. That will take you to the main page. "Course content and related materials" contains the syllabus and other assignments or information as needed. "Communication tools" contains "discussions," where I will post the weekly journal questions, and "mail," where you will send and receive email communications about our class. **Please check your email regularly for announcements and information.**

Your journal entries should be at least one paragraph in length. When you are asked to analyze a reading, you should *utilize relevant quotations from the reading and discuss them in your own words*. When you are asked to give your opinion, you should provide evidence from the text to support your arguments. It is fine to respond to or argue with earlier postings, but **DO NOT** simply repeat what your colleagues have already said.

***You are strongly advised to write your entries in Word first, then cut and paste the finished text into Web CT.*** Otherwise, Web CT may shut down unexpectedly and you could lose your work.

Treat these journal entries as mini-essays: be sure to proof read, edit, spell check, etc.

Please check Web CT periodically for our evaluations and comments on your weekly journals. You are welcome to re-write or add to your weekly writing to improve your grade or

satisfy your intellectual desires. If you do so, add your second comments as a new entry for that week's discussions, and label it clearly.

#### **4. Snowball paper (50% of final grade)**

Your paper aims at digesting the reading, putting the readings into conversation with one another, and continually rethinking and rewriting your ideas as you encounter new materials. It does not require further research outside of the common class reading.

**Topics:** Early in the semester you need to pick a general theme for your paper, a broad topic or question that will frame your writing for the semester. You will no doubt revise or refine your topic as you proceed through the reading and writing assignments, and you may even completely change your topic, but you need an initial direction for your thoughts. Some examples might be: relations between speech and silence; relations between nature and culture; feminist ideas about objectivity and truth; feminist views of bodies; relations between sexuality and identity; feminism and political change; the gendered aspects of colonialism; feminism and democracy; feminist analyses of war and violence; relations between articulating women's voice and deconstructing gender; etc. Your topic should be sufficiently broad that you can make some link with, find some point of entry into, most of the books and articles we are reading. You can narrow and refine your topic as you develop your paper and plumb your sources.

**Process:** You will begin with a 2-4 page paper on your topic as it relates to one reading within the first set (as defined below) – *not a book report, but an analysis and discussion of your topic* as it is treated in that book or article. Then you will re-write your first paper into a 4-6 page paper incorporating a book or article from the second set of readings; the third re-write will produce a 6-8 page paper incorporating a third book or article; the fourth re-write will produce an 8-10 page paper incorporating a final reading; and the final version will polish your paper for final submission, including an appropriate introduction and conclusion. By the end, you should have, not 4 separate papers pasted together, but an integrated 10-12 page analysis of your topic drawing upon a variety of the course readings.

**Length:** The paper can be longer than 12 pages, but not shorter than 10 pages. You must use standard font, standard margins, double spacing. Take pride in your work: edit and proof-read before submitting. Quality is more important than quantity.

**Readings used:** *Four readings* are the minimum you need to incorporate; more can be included for extra credit. You **MUST** use **at least TWO books** (not counting the collection of essays by Hermann and Stewart); the remainder of your sources can be either books or articles.

**Folders:** *Please hand in both paper and electronic versions of each draft.* For the hard copy, keep all your writing for this paper in a folder and hand in the entire folder each time. Send the electronic versions to both of us as attachments through email in Web CT. We will look at the progress of your work and suggest ways to revisit earlier papers in light of later ideas. We encourage you to meet individually with us and also to take advantage of the English department's writing labs. We will make suggestions for organizing and developing your ideas, and will help you with grammar and form; it is your responsibility to make all corrections.

**Goals:** This way of writing requires a great deal of revision and rethinking as you go. We're encouraging you to see your work in feminist theory as an ongoing encounter, not a one time, make-up-you-mind-and-be-done-with-it affair. You may find that your first 2 or 3 papers are not yet connected, that they are separate analyses of distinct ideas with little interaction between them. You may also find that the topic you initially select is fully explored in some sources, rather neglected in others. But as you progress through this writing assignment you will probably

find unexpected connections among the texts, and later readings may suggest points of entry into earlier texts that were not visible before.

<b>Paper</b>	<b>Due date</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Texts used (books are in italics)</b>	<b>% of final grade</b>
1st	F 9/21	2-4 pages	Moraga, <i>Enloe</i> , Butler, Ruddick, Scott, Kessler, “Is it a Boy or a Girl?”	10%
2nd	F 10/19	4-6 pages	Butler (2), “Juggling Gender,” Haraway, Williams, Kaminsky, Silva, <i>Smith</i>	10%
3rd	F 11/30	6-8 pages	Morrison, <i>Bederman</i> , Petchesky, Ferguson, Sylvester, “Dream Girls,” Robertson	10%
4th	W 12/5	8-10 pages	Rich, Duggan, Roy, Sparks or any text from earlier readings that you have not yet utilized.	10%
5th	F 12/14	10-12 pages	Final polished version	10%

**Late papers.** Your papers are due in class on the day stated in the syllabus. We will accept late papers for one week following the due date, but you will only receive one half credit for the late assignment. That is, each rendition of your paper is worth 10% of your final grade if you turn the paper in on time, but late papers will earn only 5% of the final grade. ***This should be clear motivation to turn your papers in on time.***

**Electronic AND hard copies.** Please turn in **BOTH** electronic copies and hard copies. Email your electronic copy to Kathy and Brianne at WITHIN WEB CT.

### **5. Final exam** (10% of final grade)

Your final exam will be an on-line (not in class) assignment. Each of you will read one or more of your colleague’s papers and write a response of about two pages. There will be a form on the Web CT site called “Feminist Theory-Final Exam Form” giving you questions to frame your thoughts. You can complete this assignment at any time during the semester, using any version of your colleague’s paper, but must complete it by ***Friday, Dec 7***. The goal is to see what your fellow-students are writing, to take each other seriously as writers, to be a constructive critic, and to learn from one another.

You may choose a person to work with, a “writing buddy,” for this assignment, or we will assign you someone. You may work with more than one person, making a “writing group,” or with one person. You may submit more than one “final exam,” but must do at least one. You will receive extra credit for extra exams.

### **Important points to note:**

**ALL CELL PHONES and PAGERS must be OFF during class sessions. Taking notes on your laptop is fine, but do not use class time to check your email or do other computer tasks. Also, do not use the class to nap or read the paper. Respect the class, please.**

**Plagiarism.** Plagiarism means that you claim some one else's work as your own. It is cheating. You will fail the course at the first instance of plagiarism or cheating of any kind on any assignment. **PLEASE NOTE: YOU ARE MUCH MORE LIKELY TO FAIL THE COURSE FOR PLAGIARIZING THAN FOR DOING YOUR HONEST BEST.** Plagiarism is both unethical and ineffective.

**Services to students with disabilities.** If you are a student with any kind of disability (physical, mental, learning, etc.) and you have any concerns about access to the course or about completing the work for the class, I encourage you to contact the KOKUA program on the ground floor of the Student Services Center. KOKUA's phone number is 956-7511.

**Grading policy.** For the paper and the final grade: A = excellent work. B = good but not yet excellent work. C = adequate work. D = pretty bad but I can see you are trying. F = completely inadequate.

The on-line writing and the rough drafts are graded more crudely: + (plus) = excellent. ✓ (check) = ok. - (minus) = poor. No entry or completely unacceptable entry = 0.

At the end of the semester, these marks will have to be translated into a final grade. Plus will be an A or B; check will be a B or C; minus is a C or D; zero is an F. We will make these judgments based on our assessment of the overall quality of your work.

**Labs on campus:** Computer labs are available on campus in Sinclair and Hamilton Libraries and Keller Hall. Go to <http://www.hawaii.edu/itslab/index.htm> for locations and hours.

The College of Social Sciences also has computer labs in Saunders and Crawford Halls. Go to <http://www.socialsciences.hawaii.edu/pages/tech/lab/labschedules.html> for locations and hours.

Social Science labs in Saunders Hall: check posted hours on lab doors in SS 342 (Mac) and 635 (PC).

## **M 8/20: I. Introduction**

**W 8/22:** Reading: Moraga, in *Theorizing Feminism*, pp. 38-55.  
Sign up for biography presentations.

## **II. Militarism and peace**

**F 8/24:** Enloe, *Globalization and Militarism*, ch 1 & 2  
Film: "The Women Outside" by J.T. Orinne Takagi and Hye Jung Park

**M 8/27:** Enloe, ch 3 & 4

**W 8/29:** Enloe, ch 5 & 6

**F 8/31:** Enloe, ch 7 & 8

**M 9/3:** Holiday: Happy Labor Day (You might want to think about what Sara Ruddick would say about this holiday.)

**W 9/5:** Judith Butler, “Violence, Mourning, Politics,” from *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (handout)

**F 9/7:** Sara Ruddick, in *Theorizing Feminism*, p. 196-214

### **III. Theorizing Sexual Difference**

**M 9/10:** Scott, in *Theorizing Feminism*, pp. 254-270

**W 9/12 & F 9/14:** Kessler, in *Theorizing Feminism*, pp. 135-157  
Film: “Is it a boy or a girl?” by Phyllis Ward

**M 9/17 and W 9/19:** Judith Butler, “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” (handout)  
Film: Tami Gold with Jennifer Miller, “Juggling Gender”

**By Wednesday, 9/19** – please select your writing buddy or buddies and email the information to us in Web CT. If you don’t have a preference, we will assign you.

### **IV. Theorizing Gender/Race/Colonial Intersections**

**F 9/21 & M 9/24:** Donna Haraway, “Teddy Bear Patriarchy” (handout)

**W 9/26:** Patricia Williams, in *Theorizing Feminism*, pp. 276-294.

**F 9/28:** Amy Kaminsky, in *Theorizing Feminism*, pp. 295-320.

**M 10/1:** continue discussion of Williams and Kaminsky; organize writing buddies.

**W 10/3:** Smith, *Conquest*, Intro, ch 1 & 2

**F 10/5:** Smith, ch 3 & 4

**M 10/8:** Smith, ch 5 & 6

**W 10/10:** Smith, ch 7 & 8

**F 10/12:** Noenoe Silva, “Ku`e! Hawaiian Women’s Resistance to Annexation” (handout)

### **VI. Thinking about representation (part 1)**

**M 10/15:** Toni Morrison, “Recitatif” (handout)

**W 10/17 & F 10/19:** Morrison, Nobel Prize acceptance speech (handout and audio tape)

## **VII. Gender/race/colonial histories of the present**

**M 10/22:** Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, Forward and ch 1

**W 10/24:** Bederman, ch 2 & 3

**F 10/26:** Bederman, ch 4 & 5

**M 10/29:** Bederman, conclusion

## **VII. Thinking about representation (part 2)**

**W 10/31 and F 11/2:** Petchesky, in *Theorizing Feminism*, pp. 416-442.

Before class, visit the website <http://www.silentscream.org> Explore the site and come to class with something you have found on that website; it could be a quote, an image, a link, etc. Be prepared to discuss what you found in relation to the article. You can view the video at <http://www.silentscream.org/video1.htm> It is 85 minutes long. Please watch at least part of it.

**M 11/5 and W 11/7:** Kathy Ferguson, "Interpretation and Genealogy in Feminism," from *The Man Question* (handout)

**F 11/9:** Sylvester, in *Theorizing Feminism*, pp. 501-530.

**M 11/12:** holiday: Happy Veterans Day. (You might want to think about what Cynthia Enloe would say about this holiday.)

**W 11/14 and F 11/16:** Film: "Dream Girls" by Kim Longinotto and Jano Williams

**M 11/19 and W 11/21:** Robertson, in *Theorizing Feminism*, pp. 158-195.

**F 11/23:** holiday: Happy Thanksgiving (You might think about what Andrea Smith would say about this holiday.)

**M 11/26:** Adrienne Rich, "The Politics of Location," (handout)

**W 11/28 and F 11/30:** Lisa Duggan, in *Theorizing Feminism*, pp. 215-231.

## **VI. Concluding thoughts on theory/practice**

**M 12/3:** Holloway Sparks, in *Theorizing Feminism*, pp. 443-481.

**W 12/5:** Arundhati Roy, "Peace is War" (handout)

