

## FEMINIST THEORY

WSS 565 (5600)

[http://www.albany.edu/faculty/jhobson/femtheory/wss565\\_05.htm](http://www.albany.edu/faculty/jhobson/femtheory/wss565_05.htm)

Fall 2005

Thur. 4:15-7:05 p.m.

West Seminar Room, Science Library ground floor

Instructor: Dr. Janell Hobson

Office: Social Sciences, Room 344

Phone: 442-5575 email: [jhobson@albany.edu](mailto:jhobson@albany.edu)

Office Hours: Tuesdays-Thursdays, 10:00 am – 12 noon.

### Description:

What constitutes a viable feminist theory for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and who gets to participate in our formulations of theory? Through interdisciplinary and intersectional frameworks, this course will explore concepts and ideologies that articulate and define principles of feminism –a political movement to end all aspects of domination in the lives of women and their communities. We will read and view texts that challenge the centrality of gender in feminist analyses through intersections of race, class, nationality, sexuality, and empire. We will also reconstitute the political agenda of feminism as we apply a global perspective on women's lives and blur the lines between theory and practice, academia and policy, grassroots organizing and public media.

### Online Syllabus:

An online version of this syllabus has been created to enhance your information and knowledge for this class, including access to hyperlinks and online essays. The URL (website address) is included at the top of this page, and you are strongly encouraged to visit it on a regular basis (a hyperlink to the online syllabus is also available on our webCT home page). To access webCT, use your net ID (first and last initials followed by the last four digits of your SSN) and your password (first initial, followed by the first four digits of your SSN, and your last initial) to log on.

### Women's Studies Department Goals and Learning Outcomes:

Students who graduate from our program will: (1.) understand Women's Studies as an interdisciplinary field of study and research. (2.) understand intersectional feminist theory at an advanced level. (3.) apply feminist theory to research, scholarship, and/or creative work that engages gender, race, class, sexuality, and nation as intersectional vectors of feminist analysis. (4.) learn concepts and theories of feminist pedagogy and observe feminist pedagogy in practice.

For more information, please visit: [http://www.albany.edu/ws/ma\\_goals.htm](http://www.albany.edu/ws/ma_goals.htm)

### Course Goals and Learning Outcomes:

This course will parallel departmental goals and objectives in that students will:

1. integrate diverse studies through an interdisciplinary framework.
2. dismantle the intersecting ideologies of racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, etc.
3. conceptualize social justice beyond gender equity and toward human dignity.
4. fully participate in the teaching process as active learners, peer educators, and public scholars.

### Required Texts (available at Mary Jane Books):

Edson, Margaret. 1999. *Wit*.

Lorde, Audre. 1983. *The Cancer Journals*.

Mohanty, Chandra. 2003. *Feminism without Borders*.

Trinh, T. Minh-ha. 1990. *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality & Feminism*.

Course Packet – available at Shipmates (hereafter abbreviated in course schedule as CP).

**Requirements:**

1. ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION (20%): fully expected of every student in order for this seminar to run successfully. You are allowed 2 unexcused absences; afterwards, 2 points will be deducted for each additional absence and 1 point deducted for tardiness once you begin accumulating more than 2 of these. Weekly abstracts (200 words) in response to readings must be posted on webCT and brought to class.
2. CLASS PRESENTATION (10%): each student is required to lead at least one discussion over reading assignments. Prepare discussion questions, posted on webCT and brought to class.
3. WEB PROJECT (20%): See online syllabus for sample web pages. A website overview is due **Sept. 15**; the home page **Sept. 29**; and the completed website **Oct. 27**.
4. BOOK REVIEW (10%): You will need to submit a book review (5-8 pages, typed and double-spaced) of one anthology. Four anthologies have been ordered for our "recommended readings": *Feminist Genealogies* (1996); *Talking Visions* (1998); *Global Critical Race Feminism* (2000); and *This Bridge We Call Home* (2002). We will choose two of these texts for our **Sept. 22** and **29** discussions. You will also choose another anthology from this list on which to base your book review, due **Oct. 6**.
5. STUDENT CONFERENCE (20%): This class will organize a student conference based on this seminar. You will need to assemble panels of graduate and possibly undergraduate students, accepted in our conference, who will present to the public a paper or project-in-progress based on a conference theme. Students enrolled in this class may choose to submit a paper abstract and present a paper (based on this seminar or for another class), but it is not required. You will be given a timetable around which you will schedule panel presentations. You will also divide into smaller committees to work on this conference, such as the **Publicity Committee, Selections Committee, Scheduling Committee, and On-Site Committee**.
6. RESPONSE PAPER (20%): Develop an essay (10-15 pages, typed and double-spaced) in response to a conference paper, panel, keynote address, roundtable discussion, or undergraduate student creative project, due in my office by 4 pm on **Dec. 15**. Submit both a hard copy and web-ready digitized version on CD. Well-written and critical pieces will be published on our class conference website.

## Committees and Due Dates:

- *Publicity Committee*: create Call-For-Papers (**Sept. 22**) & flyers; abstracts deadline: **October, 28, 2005**.
- *Selections Committee*: selection of 9-12 papers (**Nov. 3**)
- *Scheduling Committee*: arrange & order panels/speakers; invite keynote speaker. (**Nov. 10**)
- *On-Site Committee*: take on needed roles during conference (opening and closing remarks, moderating panels, etc.); reserve equipments, prepare conference programs. (**Nov. 17**)

Late assignments will result in one-letter grade reduction for each day late; plagiarism is a violation of University policy and will result in failing assignments and other measures.

**Course Schedule**

Sept. 1 Course overview and introduction; online: V-DAY, INCITE!, and MADRE.

**UNIT ONE: THEORIZING PLACE & SPACE**

Sept. 8 CP: (1) The Traffic in Women; (2) Can the Subaltern Speak?; (3) The Girl Who Wouldn't Sing; (4) The Race for Theory; (5) Dis Place: The Space Between;

(6) Queerness, Disability, and *The Vagina Monologues*; (7) Area Studies, Gender Studies, and the Cartographies of Knowledge.

Sept. 15 CP: (8) At Your Service: Latin Women in the Global Information Network.  
Online: "Theorizing the Future: Feminist Thought on the Digital Age."  
Web Design Workshop.  
**Due: Website Overview.**

## UNIT TWO: THEORIZING JUSTICE

Sept. 22 Anthology: TBA.  
**Due: CFP (Publicity Committee).**

Sept. 29 Anthology: TBA.  
**Due: Website Home Page.**

Oct. 6 Film: "Closet Land."  
**Due: Book Review (anthology of choice).**

Oct. 13 holiday – no class.

## UNIT THREE: THEORIZING DIFFERENCE

Oct. 20 *Woman, Native, Other.*

Oct. 27 Film: "Bedevil."  
**Due: Website.**

## UNIT FOUR: THEORIZING THE BODY

Nov. 3 Play and Film: *Wit*.  
**Due: Paper Selections (Selections Committee).**

Nov. 10 *The Cancer Journals*.  
CP: (9): Mastering the Female Pelvis: Race and the Tools of Reproduction.  
Online: "Re-sensitizing African Healthcare and Policy Practitioners: The Gendered Nature of AIDS Epidemics in Africa."  
**Due: Conference Schedule (Scheduling Committee).**

## UNIT FIVE: PRACTICING FEMINIST THEORY

Nov. 17 *Feminism without Borders*.  
**Due: Conference Program (On-Site Committee).**

Nov. 24 holiday – no class.

Dec. 1 Conference Planning.

**Conference Program:**

- Nov. 30      Wed. ‘Feminist Poets’ and “Reclaiming The Women’s Building,”  
79 Central Ave., 6 pm.
- Dec. 1      Thur. Performance Collective @HUM B39, 7 pm.
- Dec. 2      Fri. Student Conference @HUM 354, 10:30 am -5 pm  
 10:30 am      Welcome (Instructor) & Opening Remarks  
 10:45 am-12:00 noon      PANEL 1  
 12:00 noon-1:00 pm      LUNCHEON  
 1:00-2:00 pm      Keynote Address  
 2:15-3:30 pm      PANEL 2  
 3:45-5:00 pm      PANEL 3  
 5:00 pm      Closing Remarks
- Dec. 3      Sat. Roundtable Discussion, “Bridging the Academic and Activist Divides in  
Feminism,” 12 noon, The Women’s Building, 79 Central Ave.

**CONCLUSION**

- Dec. 8      Course Review.
- Dec. 15      **Due: Response Paper.**