Graduate Seminar in Feminist Theory (Fall 2011)
Political Science 565 – 9187 (Crosslisted as AWSS 565 – 9037)

Torrey Shanks
Department of Political Science
201 Milne Hall
TShanks@uamail.albany.edu

Tuesdays 5:35 – 8
Husted 12
Office hours: by appt.

Course Description
The entry of women into the political sphere produces a challenge to the core concepts of political thought. Feminist political thought thus provides an important vantage point from which to think critically about the nature and limitations of key political concepts such as rights, equality, identity, and agency as well as the nature of politics itself. Feminist politics and theory pose deep challenges to some of the major commitments of modern political thought, particularly to those of liberalism, e.g. freedom as free choice and equality as formal and gender-neutral. But feminism is not as unified as its challenge to liberalism might suggest. It continually faces questions with regard to its boundaries, agendas, and even the subjects of feminism itself – what is a woman? How does the category of gender illuminate or eclipse power relations involving other categories of difference, such as those of culture, race, class, and sexual orientation? Finally, how might feminist critique be understood and enacted in a global order?

This course will explore the variety of feminisms emerging out of women’s struggles for political inclusion (liberal, Marxist and radical feminisms) as well as more recent feminist theoretical challenges to the category of woman, identity politics, and rights-centered political discourse. The final section of the course explores ongoing debates at the intersection of democratic theory, post-colonial studies, and feminist theory as to the critical value and limits of universalism in political critique.

Required Texts
Three books are required for this course: Mary Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (Penguin, 2004), bell hooks, Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center (South End Press, 2000), and Joan Scott, Parité (University of Chicago, 2005). Both can be purchased at MaryJane Books (at the corner of Quail Street and Western Avenue). Readings marked with ** in the schedule of readings are on-line through Blackboard. Please bring hard copies of all readings with you to class. I generally discourage the use of laptops in class because they can be an obstructive and distracting presence between you and the conversation among other members of the class. If you feel that you have exceptional, educational reasons for using such technology in class, please discuss it with me in advance.
**Assignments and Evaluation**

There will be three requirements for this course:

1) **Research Paper (60%)** of 20-25 pages will be due at the end of the term. The paper should develop themes from course readings and discussions. You should expect to conduct additional research on the specific topic of your choosing. A prospectus for this paper (3-5) pages and a working bibliography will be due four weeks before the final class meeting. You must meet with me, preferably as early as possible, to discuss paper topics and additional related readings. You are encouraged to develop topics that intersect with interests and questions you may bring from other classes or future research plans.

2) **In-class oral presentation (20%)** on assigned reading for the week, lasting 15-20 minutes. The number of presentations for each student will depend on the number of students enrolled in the class. Each presentation should: (1) **briefly** describe the most important and interesting argument(s); (2) connect the argument(s) to each other (if more than one) and to past readings and discussions; (3) raise questions and critical points (positive or negative) about the reading(s).

3) **Class participation (20%)** is essential. Regular attendance and thoughtful contributions to class discussions are vital to the success of the seminar. Seminar discussion should be student-driven. Therefore, any absence will be keenly felt. You must keep up with the reading and come to class with questions and comments. An ‘A’ grade assumes, at minimum, that you have consistently played an active role in shaping seminar discussions.
Weekly Schedule of Readings  
This schedule is subject to change.  
All changes will be announced by email and/or in class.

August 30 Introduction

I. The Universal Subject of Rights

Sept. 6      Lori Marso, “Feminism,” *Encyclopedia of Political Thought* (MS, forthcoming)  **
            Olympe de Gouges, *Declaration of the Rights of Woman and Citizen(ess)*  **
            Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Declaration of Sentiments* (Seneca Fall Convention)  **
            Sojourner Truth, “Aren’t I a Woman?”*  
            Emma Goldman, “A New Declaration of Independence”*

Recommended:
            Susan Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*
            Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*
            Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*
            Linda Zerilli, *Signifying Woman: Culture and Chaos in Rousseau, Burke, and Mill*
            Nancy Cott, *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*
            Sara Evans, *Born for Liberty: A History of Women in America*
            Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason*

Sept. 13:     Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

Recommended:
            Wendy Gunther-Canada, *Rebel Writer: Mary Wollstonecraft and Enlightenment Politics*
            Elizabeth Wingrove, “Getting Intimate with Wollstonecraft,”  
            *Political Theory* 33, 3 (June 2005): 344-369
            Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Emile*
            Jean Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract and Discourses*
            John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*

Sept. 20:     John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, ch. 1  **
            Joan Scott, “Rereading the History of Feminism,”**  
            *Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man*

Recommended:
            J. S. Mill, *On Liberty*
            Karen Zivi, “Cultivating Character: John Stuart Mill and the Subject of Rights”  
            *AJPS* 50, 1 (January 2006): 49-61
II. Feminism’s Claim to Experience

Emma Goldman, “Woman Suffrage” **
Emma Goldman, “The Traffic in Women” **

Recommended:
Emma Goldman Papers, UC Berkeley: http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman/
Kathy Ferguson, Discourses of Danger: Locating Emma Goldman”
*Political Theory* 36, 5 (October 2008): 735-61
Don Herzog, “Romantic Anarchism and Pedestrian Liberalism”
*Political Theory* 35, 3 (313-333)
Responses to Herzog by Lori Marso and Herzog: *Political Theory* Feb 2008

Oct. 4: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (selections) **
Jo-Ann Pilardi, “Feminists Read the Second Sex,” *Feminist Interpretations of Simone de Beauvoir* **

Recommended:
Toril Moi, “While We Wait: The English Translation of *The Second Sex*”
Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany and others (online version)
Lori Marso and Patricia Moynagh, eds. *Simone de Beauvoir’s Political Thinking*

Oct. 11: Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* (excerpt) **
bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, chs. 1-4
Combahee River Collective: A Black Feminist Statement **
Sara Evans, *Tidal Wave*, chs. 2-3 **

Recommended:
Alice Echols, *Daring to be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975*
Sara Evans, *Personal Politics*
Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” *Sister Outsider*
Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality and the Lesbian Continuum,”
*Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose, 1979-1985*
Oct. 18:  Gloria Anzaldúa, “La Conciencia de La Mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness”  
*Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* **  
Cheshire Calhoun, “Constructing Lesbians and Gay Men as Family’s Outlaws”  
*Feminism, the Family, and the Politics of the Closet* **  
Monique Wittig, “One is Not Born a Woman,” *The Straight Mind and Other Essays* **  
Sara Evans, *Tidal Wave*, ch. 4

Recommended:  
Heidi Hartmann, “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism”  
Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, eds., *This Bridge Called My Back*  
Patricia Hill Collins, “  
Norma Alarcon, “The Theoretical Subjects of *This Bridge Called My Back*”  
Minnie Bruce Pratt, “Identity: Skin, Blood, Heart,” *Yours in Struggle*

**III. Uprooting the Subject of Feminism**

Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*, pp. 171-190 **  
Butler *Undoing Gender*, Introduction, ch. 10

Recommended:  
Sandra Harding, “The Instability of the Analytic Categories of Feminist Theory,”  
*Signs* 22, 2 (Winter 1997): 341-365  
Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: An Introduction  
Michel Foucault, *Herculine Barbin Being the Recently Discovered Memoirs of a Nineteenth Century Hermaphrodite*  
Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble*  
Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of ’Sex’*  
Donna Haraway, “Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” *Simians, Cyborns and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*

Nov. 1:  Butler, *Undoing Gender*, chs. 2 and 9  
Wendy Brown, *States of Injury*, ch. 3 and 5 **

Recommended:  
Clare Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory*  
Linda Zerilli, *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom*
IV. The Politics of Universalism

Nov. 8: Susan Okin, “Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?” **
Martha Nussbaum, *Sex and Social Justice*, 3-54 **
Seyla Benhabib, *The Claim of Culture*, “Introduction: On the Use and Abuse of Culture” and “Multiculturalism and Gendered Citizenship,” 1-23, 82-104 **

Recommended:
Brooke Ackerly, *Universal Human Rights in a World of Difference*

Uma Narayan, “Restoring History and Politics to 'Third World Traditions,'” *Dislocating Cultures*, 43-80**

Recommended:
Chandra Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, esp. chapter 3: “What’s Home Got to Do with It?” (with Biddy Martin); and chapter 9: “‘Under Western Eyes’ Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles”
Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*
Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*


Recommended:
Joan Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*
Joan Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History*

Nov 29: Joan Scott, *Parité*, chs. 4-6 and Conclusion

Dec 7: Conclusion and Research Paper Consultations