

Graduate Seminar in Feminist Theory (Fall 2015)
Political Science 565/Women's Studies 599

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Tuesdays 2:45 – 5:35
Husted 15
Office hours: By Appt.

Course Description

Feminist political thought challenges the core concepts of political thought, but its history is also intertwined with the major strains of political theory: the liberal, republican, Marxist and radical traditions. 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. Feminism, however, is not unified nor are its intellectual contributions short-lived. The tradition of feminist political thought continually raises questions with regard to the boundaries, agendas and subjects of exclusionary political ideologies and practices. In turn, it poses these questions itself – its own identity and power relations. 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

The following books are required for this course and are available at the University Bookstore. Please get these editions/translations, especially of Beauvoir. Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Penguin, 2004)

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex: new translation by Borde and Malovany-Chevallier* (Vintage)

Sara Evans, *Tidal Wave* (Free Press)

Joan Scott, *Parité* (University of Chicago, 2005)

Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work* (Duke University Press, 2011) – not yet available in bookstore

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 discourage the use of laptops in class because they obstruct discussion and distract others.

Assignments

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. You must meet with me, as early as possible, to discuss paper topics and additional related readings. At least one month before the deadline, you should present your ideas to me in a short write-up of your topic and sources you will consult.

2) **Presentations (20%)** on assigned reading for the week, (15-20 min) and on your final paper topic (10-15 min). 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). The final paper presentation will cover the main topic and questions of your final research paper, exploring briefly your ideas for a thesis as well as challenges.

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.

Sept. 1 Film: *She's Beautiful When She's Angry* (2014)

Sept. 8 Sara Evans, *Tidal Wave*, chs. 1-4
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?"**
Joan Scott, "Rereading the History of Feminism,"**
Only Paradoxes to Offer: French Feminists and the Rights of Man

Recommended:

Documents of Second Wave Feminism:

"Consciousness-Raising" The Women's Collective**

"The Woman Identified Woman" Radicalesbians (1970)**

"Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female" Francis Beal, SNCC (1969)**

"Abortion: A Woman's Decision, A Woman's Right" Jane pamphlet**

"Why I Want a Wife," Judy Syfers (1971)**

"Funeral Oration for the Burial of Traditional Womanhood," The Jeanette Rankin Brigade (1968)**

"National Organization of Women (NOW) Statement of Purpose" (1966)**

"Homemakers' Bill of Rights" (1979)**

"The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm" Anne Koedt (1970)**

"The Politics of Housework" Pat Mainardi, Redstockings (1970)**

"Hyde Park Voices Series on Jane" (1973)**

Many available here: <http://www.cwluherstory.org/Classic-Feminist-Writings/>

And here: <http://www.feminist.org/research/chronicles/chronic1.html>

*Declaration of the Rights of Man***

*Declaration of Independence***

Lori Marso, "Feminism," *Encyclopedia of Political Thought*

Susan Okin, *Women in Western Political Thought*

Carole Pateman, *The Disorder of Women*

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*

I. The Universal Subject of Rights

Sept. 15 Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, introduction, chs. 1-2
John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, ch. 1

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. 22 Classes Suspended

II. Feminism's Claim to Experience

Sept. 29 Friedrich Engels: *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* **
Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body, and Primitive Accumulation***
Silvia Federici, "Wages Against Housework"**

Recommended:

Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1
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
Kathy Ferguson, *Emma Goldman: Political Thinking in the Streets*
Don Herzog, "Romantic Anarchism and Pedestrian Liberalism"
Political Theory 35, 3 (313-333); Response from Marso (Feb 2008)

Oct. 6 Emma Goldman, "Woman Suffrage" **
Emma Goldman, "The Traffic in Women"**
Lori Marso, "A Feminist Search for Love," *Feminist Interpretations of Emma Goldman***
Kathy Ferguson, *Emma Goldman: Political Thinking in the Streets***

Oct. 13 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (selections) **

Recommended:

Toril Moi, "While We Wait: The English Translation of *The Second Sex*"
Signs 27, 4 (2002): 1005-1035
Moi, "The Adulteress Wife," Review of the *Second Sex* (new translation)
London Review of Books 32, 3 (2010): 3-6. See also responses by
Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany and others (online version)
Sonia Kruks, "Gender and Subjectivity: Simone de Beauvoir and Contemporary
Feminism" *Signs* (Autumn 1992): 89-110
Linda Zerilli, "A Process without a Subject: Simone de Beauvoir and Julia
Kristeva on Maternity" *Signs* (Autumn 1992): 111-135
Lori Marso and Patricia Moynagh, eds. *Simone de Beauvoir's Political Thinking*

Oct. 20 Kathi Weeks, *The Problem with Work*

III. Uprooting the Subject of Feminism

- Oct. 27 Combahee River Collective: A Black Feminist Statement **
Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction and the Meaning of Liberty* (excerpt)
Gloria Anzaldúa, "La Conciencia de La Mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness"
Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza **
Monique Wittig, "One is Not Born a Woman," *The Straight Mind and Other Essays***

Recommended:

- Sandra Harding, "The Instability of the Analytic Categories of Feminist Theory,"
Signs 11, 4 (Summer 1986): 645-664.
Susan Hekman, "Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited"
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*
Joan Scott, "Experience," *Feminists Theorize the Political* **
Donna Haraway, "Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*

- Nov. 3 Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender*, chs. Introduction, 2, 9, and 10 **
Wendy Brown, *States of Injury*, ch. 3 and 5 **

Recommended:

- Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*
Kirstie McClure, "The Issue of Foundations: Scientized Politics, Politicized Science, and Feminist Critical Practice," in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott, eds.
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. 10 Susan Okin, et al. *Is Multiculturalism Bad for Women?* (selections)
Martha Nussbaum, *Sex and Social Justice*, 3-54 **

Recommended:

- Brooke Ackerly, *Universal Human Rights in a World of Difference*
Seyla Benhabib, *The Claim of Culture*, "Introduction: On the Use and Abuse of Culture" and "Multiculturalism and Gendered Citizenship," 1-23, 82-104 **
Amartya Sen, "More Than 100 Million Women Are Missing,"
The New York Review of Books, Dec. 20, 1990
Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, *Half the Sky* (New York: Vintage, 2009)

- Nov. 17 Chandra Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Review* 30 (Autumn, 1988): 61-88 **
 Uma Narayan, "Restoring History and Politics to 'Third World Traditions,'" *Dislocating Cultures*, 43-80**
 Linda Zerilli, "Toward a Feminist Theory of Judgment," *Signs* 34, 2 (Winter, 2009): 295-317 **

Recommended:

- Chandra Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, esp. chapter 3: "What's Home Got to Do with It?" (with Bidy 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*
 Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Nelson and Grossberg, eds, *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*

- Nov. 24 Joan Scott, *Parité*
 Dec. 1 Review and Paper Consultations
 Dec. 8 Paper Presentations and Feedback