THEORETICAL ISSUES IN WOMEN’S STUDIES

Women’s Studies 481 Fall 2015 [M]
TTh 10:35-11:50, CUE 114

Marian Sciachitano, Clinical Associate Professor of Women’s Studies    E-mail: sciach@wsu.edu
Office: Wilson-Short Hall 10J (Ground Flr)    Office Hrs: TTh 1-2 or by appt.
Mailbox: Wilson-Short Hall, Rm 111 (CCGRS Dept.)    Office Phone: (509) 335-5372

Required texts: The bolded abbreviations on the left will be used throughout the syllabus.


Course Description:

This seminar-style course is primarily designed for upper-level women’s studies majors and minors who have taken W St 101 previously or its equivalent. It is an introduction to the rich and growing field of feminist theorizing, local and global. The first half of the course will familiarize you with some of the classics of feminist theory (primarily mid-to-late twentieth century) that have emerged out of activist movements and from a variety of academic disciplines (i.e., anthropology, cultural studies, economics, history, literature, philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology, & women’s studies). We will examine these theories critically, analyzing their usefulness to our everyday lives and ongoing struggles for solidarity in an era of border imperialism. During the second half of the course you will have an opportunity to take a more active role in facilitating class discussion on selected conversations and debates emerging from feminist of color theory, transnational feminist theory, indigenous feminist theory, queer and trans feminisms which have posed serious challenges to U.S.-centric feminist theory and practice.

Learning Goals:

• To learn key terms, concepts, and definitions of feminist theory in context
• To analyze major approaches in contemporary feminist theories, discerning differences among explanations for inequality and strategies for social change
• To recognize the investigation of gendered experience in feminist theorizing as historically dynamic and ongoing, interdisciplinary and wide-ranging, or a project that takes many forms and reaches across different arenas (economic, political, cultural) of social life, rather than confined to philosophical inquiry
• To identify themes, assumptions, claims and various forms of evidence in primary debates emerging from feminist theorizing and activist movements
• To develop oral communication skills, reading expertise, and writing skills for critically analyzing theoretical arguments in current scholarship & research

Course Requirements: Reading and Discussion
Since the core of this class is the reading, it will be focused on your understanding and responses to them. Your participation is crucial. During the second half of the course I will ask you to take a more active role in creating questions and leading discussion on the readings. Because of the nature of the reading, I **strongly recommend** that you plan to allow more time to do the reading than the usual. Please bring them to class on the day we are discussing them.

**Quiz Response Cards**
Throughout the course I will be asking you to do approximately 10 quizzes based on the assigned readings. I expect well-thought out responses that reflect not only your understanding (or mere summary) of selected issues and debates, but which strive toward critical engagement with them. These will be used as a springboard for discussion. There are 10 points possible on each quiz, for a total of 100 points possible for all 10 quizzes. The quiz cards are worth 20% of your grade.

The first paper will be a brief autobiography focusing on your own development as a critical thinker/intellectual, student, and writer, including some reflection on how your social location (i.e., gender, race, class etc.) has influenced your personal history in these areas. It should be 3-4, typed, double-spaced pages. There 100 points possible on Paper #1 and it represents 10% of your grade. **Paper Due Thursday, September 10th.** I will handout a Rubric for Paper #1.

**Paper #2: Critical Journal Article Review**
The journal article review will run between 4-5 pages long, typed, double-spaced and will be a critical review of the article and its ideas. Select a current scholarly journal article (published in the last 3 years) that relates to the class readings, to issues raised in class, or a topic that you have cleared with me ahead of time. You could choose an article in the FTR that was not assigned or discussed much in class. You might also expand one of your quiz responses into a more in-depth critique of specific positions in one or more of the readings. If you are a graduate student, you have the option of a scholarly journal article, a book chapter, or a book review. **Critical Analysis of a Scholarly Journal Article Due Thursday, November 19th.** There are 100 points possible and the paper is worth 25% of your grade. There will be a Rubric handout for Paper #2. Please either e-mail me or come see me during office hours if you have any questions regarding this assignment or difficulties finding a scholarly article.

**Paper #3: Final Paper and Class Presentation**
For the third & final paper, you are required to write 8-10 pages typed and double-spaced, if an undergraduate, and 10-12 pages if you are a graduate student. I will expect you to draw on one or more of the contemporary theoretical frameworks discussed in the required texts (exceptions may include material from your journal article). No other exceptions will be made unless you clear it with me first. Drawing extensively on material that was not assigned in this course or without my approval could result in a lower grade for the entire paper. You may choose any of the theoretical frameworks which strikes your interest and that you would like to explore more fully in your final paper. There will be a Rubric handout for Paper #3. During the last two weeks of the course, you will be asked to give a short 10-minute presentation of your final paper/project to the class. **Final Paper is due either in-class on Thursday, December 10th or in my mailbox on Monday, December 14th.** Your paper will then be penalized 5 points for every day it is late. If you need extra time on the final paper, you must contact me with your request for an extension. There are 100 points possible and it'll be worth 35%. Short Class Presentation will be worth 10%.

**Course Policies:**

**Attendance & Absences**
Because this is an upper-level women's studies course, informed, thoughtful, and engaged discussion about the reading and the issues of the class is crucial. Obviously, in order to be engaged, you must attend the class. If you know in advance that you will have to miss class for a legitimate reason, contact me before class. Even if you haven’t finished the reading, attend class anyway to avoid missing class discussions. You may miss 2 classes without any consequences to your grade. If you have more than 2 unexcused absences, it will be lowered at my discretion.

**Academic Etiquette**

Class will begin promptly at 10:35 and end at 11:50. Arriving late and leaving early on a habitual basis is unacceptable; if you find that you have class, lab, work, childcare, or other conflicts, please make arrangements early in the semester. Most importantly, recognizing that diverse beliefs and positions will be voiced in this class is essential. Everyone should treat all members of this class and the instructor with respect. If needed, we can develop ground rules for discussion and respectful participation. Please be sure your cell phones are turned off before class starts.

**Disability Accommodations**

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. Please notify me during the first 2 weeks of class for any accommodations needed for the course. Late notification may result in the request being unavailable. All accommodations are made through the Disability Resource Center [DRC] located in the Washington Bldg, Rm 217 or visit DRC’s website for more information [www.drc.wsu.edu](http://www.drc.wsu.edu).

**Academic Integrity**

Plagiarism or Cheating of any form on any assignment will not be tolerated and could result in a failing grade for the course (see [http://academicintegrity.wsu.edu](http://academicintegrity.wsu.edu) and review definitions for plagiarism, WAC 504-26-010, check out resources to prevent plagiarism, as well as reporting procedures, WAC 504-26-404). In all instances you must do your own work and arrive at your own thought. Submitting the same assignment for different classes is also considered a breach of academic integrity without instructors’ approval. Should there be any suspicion of plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty, I will discuss the situation with you before any penalties are enforced and then reported to the Office of Student Standards and Accountability (see website: [http://conduct.wsu.edu](http://conduct.wsu.edu)).

**Campus Safety and University Emergencies**

In the event of campus safety concerns and university emergencies check out the safety plans, alert notices, and procedures at the following: [http://safetyplan.wsu.edu](http://safetyplan.wsu.edu), [http://alert.wsu.edu](http://alert.wsu.edu), and [http://oem.wsu.edu/emergencies](http://oem.wsu.edu/emergencies).

Marian Sciachitano
W ST 481: Theoretical Issues in Women’s Studies
Meeting Place: CUE 114, TTH 10:35-11:50

**Fall 2015 Syllabus:** (May be Subject to Changes)

**Week 1**

**T AUG 25:** Review Course Requirements & Policies. Brief Introductions.
View: TED 2012 Talk by Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche

**TH AUG 27:** Why Theory? What Is It? What’s the F-Word? What does it Mean to You?
**Quiz #1**-will cover talk and take home assignment (bring index card)
Paper #1 assigned (see Rubric Handout)

**Week 2**
T SEPT 1: What is Feminist Theory? What's the Point? How Do I Know What I Know? 
FTR Read McCann & Kim, Introduction to 5 Key Theoretical Concepts (1-7) 
FTR Reading 11 Pateman, “Introduction: The Theoretical Subversiveness of Feminism” (107-112) 
FTR Reading 18 Thornton Dill and Zambrana, “Critical Thinking about Inequality: An Emerging Lens” (176-186) 
FTR Reading 28 Pratt, “IDENTITY: SKIN, BLOOD, HEART” (285-291) 
FTR Reading 36 Narayan, “The Project of Feminist Epistemology: Perspectives from a Nonwestern Feminist” (370-378) 
FTR Reading 37 Hill Collins, “Defining Black Feminist Thought” (379-394)

TH SEPT 3: Why Do We Need Feminist Theory? Who Gets to Do It? On Whose Terms? 
Quiz #2 will cover this week’s readings 
FTR Reading 1 Akiko, “The Day the Mountains Move” (1911); Reading 8 Muriel Rukeyser, “The Poem as Mask” (1968); Reading 9 T.V. Reed, “The Poetical is Political: Feminist Poetry and the Poetics of Women’s Rights” (85-96) 
TB Read Gloria Anzaldúa, “Acts of Healing” (xxvii-viii) and Audre Lorde’s “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” (94-97) 
FTR or TB Reading 25-Kate Rushin’s “The Bridge Poem” (or TB xxxiii-iv) 
bh Read bell hooks’ “Preface to the First Edition”(xvi-xvii)

Week 3
T SEPT 8: Legacies of U.S. Women’s Liberation Movement: “A Slogan is Born” 
FTR Read Intro to Section I – Theorizing Feminist Times and Spaces (11-27) 
Online Read excerpt from Betty Friedan’s Feminine Mystique (1963) online document http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/ows/seminars/tcentury/FeminineMstique.pdf

TH SEPT 10: Sex/Gender, Culture, and Power: Essentialisms vs Social Constructionisms 
FTR Reading 3-an excerpt from Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex (40-48) 
FTR Reading 14 Shulamith Firestone, “The Culture of Romance” (123-128) 
FTR Reading 10-Kandiyoti, “Bargaining with Patriarchy” (98-106) 


Week 4
T SEPT 15: Competing Histories, Theories, & Politics in U.S. Social Movements 
FTR Reading 12 Elizabeth Martinez, “La Chicana” (113-115) 
FTR or TB Reading 13 CR Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement” (TB 210-18) 
TB Read Cherríe Moraga’s “La Güera” (22-29) 
TB Read M. Yamada, “Asian Pacific American Women and Feminism” (68-72) 
TB Read Barbara Cameron, “Gee, You Don’t Seem Like an Indian from the Reservation” (41-47)

TH SEPT 17: Identity Politics and Politics of Identity: Redefining Sexualities and Genders 
FTR Reading 15 Charlotte Bunch, “Lesbians in Revolt” (129-133) 
TB Read “Across the Kitchen Table—A Sister-to-Sister Dialogue” (111-125) 
TB Read Cheryl Clarke, “Lesbianism: An Act of Resistance” (126-135) 
FTR Reading 29 Audre Lorde, “I Am Your Sister: Black Women Organizing Across Sexualities” (292-295) 
FTR Reading 17 Leslie Feinberg, “Transgender Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come” (148-158) 
Read Julia Serrano, “Trans Feminism: No Conundrum About It”
http://msmagazine.com/blog/2012/04/18/trans-feminism-theres-no-conundrum-about-it/

Quiz #3—covers all of this week’s readings

**Week 5**
T SEPT 22: Read bh Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center, Chapters 1-4 (1-67)
TH SEPT 24: Read bh, Chapters 5-9 (68-132)

**Quiz #4**

**Week 6**
T SEPT 29: Read bh, Chapters 10-12 (133-166)

TH OCT 1: Rethinking Histories of U.S. Feminist Movements, Local and Global
FTR Reading 4 Nicholson, “Feminism in ‘Waves’”: Useful Metaphor? (49-55)
FTR Reading 5 Becky Thompson, “Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism” (56-67)

Quiz #5—over readings 4 & 5


**Week 7**
T OCT 6: Theorizing Intersecting Identities: Social Processes and Differences
FTR Reading 19 Heidi Hartmann, “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union” (187-201)
FTR Reading 35 Nancy Hartsock, “The Feminist Standpoint: Toward a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism” (354-369)

**Week 7 Cont’d**
TH OCT 8: Compulsory Heterosexuality
FTR Reading 23 Monique Wittig, “One is Not Born a Woman”
FTR Reading 38 Cheshire Calhoun, “Separating Lesbian Theory From Feminist Theory” (395-411)

Quiz #6—just over readings 19, 23 & 35

**Week 8**
T OCT 13: Femininities, Feelings, and other Bodily Concerns
FTR Reading 42 Sandra Bartky, “Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power” (447-461)

TH OCT 15: New Epistemologies: On Bodies and Emotions
FTR Read Intro to Section IV — (especially 479-481)
FTR Reading 45 Kathy Davis, “Reclaiming Women’s Bodies: Colonialist Trope or Critical Epistemology?” (502-516)
FTR Reading 47 Lucille Clifton, “lumpectomy eve”

T OCT 20: Towards a New Mestiza Consciousness:
FTR Reading 27 Gloria Anzaldúa, “The New Mestiza Nation: A Multicultural Movement” (277-291)

TH OCT 22: FTR Reading 46 Sara Ahmed, “Multiculturalism and the Promise of Happiness”
Week 10
T OCT 27: Building New Solidarity Movements in an Era of Neoliberalism
FTR
Reading 48 Chandra Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes Revisited: Feminist Solidarity Through Anticapitalist Struggles” (536-552)

TH OCT 29: Recognizing Diverse Feminisms and Diverse Feminist Projects
Reading 32 Obioma Nnaemeka, “Foreword: Locating Feminisms/Feminists” (317-320)
Reading 33 Andrea Smith, “Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change” (321-331)
Quiz #7—just over readings 45 & 46

Week 11
T NOV 3: This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color
TB
Read Cherríe Moraga, “Catching Fire: Preface to the Fourth Edition”
TB
Additional readings TBA

TH NOV 5: Readings TBA

Week 12
T NOV 10: A Case Study in Intersectional Feminist Theory & Praxis
UBI
Read Undoing Border Imperialism (TBA)
Quiz #9


Week 13
T NOV 17: Read Undoing Border Imperialism (TBA)

TH NOV 19: Read Undoing Border Imperialism (TBA)
Critical Journal Article Review Paper Due Today

Week 14
NOV 22-27: No Class. Thanksgiving Vacation.

Week 15
T DEC 1: Finish Undoing Border Imperialism (TBA)
Last Quiz #10 over UBI

TH DEC 3: Begin Presentations

Week 16
T DEC 8: Presentations

TH DEC 10: Presentations
Course Evaluation. Last Day of Class!
Final Paper Due in class today or by 4:30 on Monday in mailbox located in Wilson-Short Hall, Room 101. Any electronic versions of your final paper should be followed up with a hard copy. If you need a paper extension, you must request it. No incompletes will be assigned in this class except for
dire circumstances. A request for an incomplete must be made in writing to me before the end of finals week. Congrats to December 2015 Grads!

December 14-18: Final Exam Week. No W St 481 Final. All your work must be submitted.

Keeping Track of Your Grade
Quizzes (100 points possible): _________  x .20= __________
Paper #1 (100 points): __________  x .15= __________
Paper #2 (100 points): __________  x .25= __________
Paper #3 (100 points): __________  x .30= __________
Class Presentation (100 points): __________  x .10= __________
Subtract 1 point for every unexcused absence over 2 __________

Letter Grade Equivalencies

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