

Feminist Theory
LIT 4930-0849

Monday, 4:05 pm - 7:05 pm
Turlington 1101

Instructor: Lauren Pilcher
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Office Hours: M 2-3 pm, W 10-11 am, and by appointment.



Course Description

This course introduces students to major feminist theories in a contemporary US context, beginning with second-wave feminism through the present. We will survey these theories in relation to their socio-historical contexts and also consider how feminist thought has developed in relation to identity politics and changes in cultural and media production. Throughout, we will be attentive to feminism's intersections with discourses of race, class, and sexuality. We will learn how to apply theory to literature, film, and popular culture while also assessing how these texts theorize feminism. As the course develops, we will examine the history of feminist theory in relation to recent events, movements, and media, such as Black Lives Matter, the Women's March, and the Amazon series, *I Love Dick*.

Assignments & Grading Scale

Quizzes	150 points
Group Presentation	200 points
Short Paper, 2-3 pgs	200 points
Proposal for Final Paper, 1-2 paragraphs and bibliography (graded)	75 points
Final Paper, 6-8 pgs	275 points
Attendance and Participation	100 points

Grades will be evaluated on a 1000-point scale:

A	930-1000	4.0
A-	900-929	3.67
B+	870-899	3.33
B	830-869	3.0
B-	800-829	2.67
C+	770-799	2.33
C	730-769	2.0
C-	700-729	1.67
D+	670-699	1.33
D	630-669	1.0
D-	600-629	0.67
E	0-599	0.00

Quizzes

During each class, I will give a quiz to test your knowledge of the assigned readings.

Group Presentation

Throughout the course, small groups of students will break down selected texts from our weekly assigned materials in presentations for the rest of the class. At the beginning of the course, I will group students and together you will choose a text you would like to present on. In preparing presentations, groups should research the context, author, and content of the text thoroughly as well as analyze its style and contribution to feminist theory. Groups should organize these findings in a presentation that is detailed and creative. Visual aids and questions to guide class discussion are required.

Short Paper

In a 2-3 page paper, you will write a detailed summary of a central question or challenge in feminist theory by analyzing 1-2 texts that we have discussed in class.

Final paper

For the final assignment of the course, you will write a 6-8 page paper that analyzes or applies one or more the theories we discuss in the course. We will discuss how to choose a topic and to write a final paper in class. I will also provide a handout to help with this process.

Proposal for final paper

Prior to the final paper, you will write a proposal (1-2 paragraphs) that includes your topic and research question(s), your thesis statement, and your bibliography (3-5 sources). Writing a proposal requires that you begin researching for your paper so that you can assess available sources and effectively define a topic and research question.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance is required. If you miss more than 2 classes without a valid, documented excuse, a full letter grade will be deducted from your final grade for each additional absence. You are considered tardy if you are more than 15 minutes late to class, and 3 tardies count as one absence. Limited exceptions for sickness, death, extreme illness among family members, and natural and physical catastrophes are permitted at my consent. Written proof is required to excuse any absence.

I expect you to participate actively in our discussion and activities during each class period, which means you need to arrive prepared and on time. This class is discussion based, so please keep in mind that students come from diverse backgrounds. Be mindful of your own perspective as you listen and share in class and articulate your point of view respectfully. As you express your ideas, I also expect to engage and use the terminologies of feminist theory that we learn throughout the course.

Policies

- All written assignments should be submitted electronically to Canvas as a Microsoft Word document. Other file types will not be accepted.
- Each assignment should follow basic MLA formatting available here: [MLA General Format](#)
- Plagiarism will be reported and will result in an automatic zero for the assignment.
- Assignments that do not meet the length requirement will be failed.
- Late work will not be accepted, and quizzes cannot be taken at a later date.
- Requests for extensions will only be considered if made at least 48 hours before the assignment due date.
- Cell phones must be on silent and in your bag.
- Laptops are allowed unless they become a distraction. Inappropriate use of a laptop or any other device will affect your participation grade and may result in dismissal from class.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is extremely important and any kind of violation (cheating, plagiarism) will be handled according to UF's regulations regarding academic honesty.

Plagiarism is the use of the original works of others (friends, siblings, published authors, authors on the web, etc.) without acknowledging it through proper quotes and citations. Cheating includes receiving double credit for work, not handing in work and claiming to have handed it in, buying academic papers on the web and handing them in as original work, and so forth.

For more information about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcodes/honorcode.php>

Course Schedule

Week 1 – Introduction: What is/where is feminism?

Read: [Dave Sheinin, Krissah Thompson, Soria Nadia McDonald, and Scott Clement, “Betty Friedan to Beyoncé: Today’s Generation Embraces Feminism on Its Own Terms” *Washington Post* 27 January 2016](#)
[Susan Chira, “Feminism Lost. Now what?” *New York Times* 30 December 2016.](#)

Week 2 – Early Frustrations

Read: Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (1949) (excerpt)
Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) (excerpt)
Sylvia Plath, selected poems

Week 3 – Labor Day – NO CLASS

Week 4 – Theoretical Foundations

Read: Kate Millet, “Theory of Sexual Politics,” *Sexual Politics* (1969)
Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women” (1975)
Monique Wittig, *Les Guerilleres* (1969), (excerpt)

Week 5 – Radical Revolution

Read: Shulamith Firestone, “The Dialectic of Sex” (1970)
[Carol Hanisch, “The Personal is Political” \(1970\)](#)
[Charlotte Bunch, “Lesbians in Revolt” \(1972\)](#)

Week 6 – Re-vision

Read: Adrienne Rich, “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision” (1972) & selected poems
Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gunbar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) (excerpt)
Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” (1984), “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference”

Week 7 – Patriarchy’s Gaze

Read: Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” (1975)
bell hooks, “The Oppositional Gaze: Black Female Spectators” (1992)

Watch: *Born in Flames* (1983)
[in-class: film clips TBD]

Week 8 – Mapping Intersectionality

Read: Patricia Hill-Collins, “The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought” (1989)
Kimberle Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity

Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color” (1991)
Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” (1984)

Week 9 – Gender Trouble

|Short Paper Due|

Read: Teresa de Lauretis, “The Technology of Gender” (1987)
Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay on Phenomenology and Feminist Theory” (1988)

Listen: Riot Grrl mixtape (also Google information on Riot Grrl and its main figures, bands, and zines)
OR

Watch: *The Punk Singer* (2013)

Week 10 – Queer Identities

Read: Leslie Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues* (1993) (excerpt)
Cathy Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens” (1997)

Watch: *Watermelon Woman* (1996)

Week 11 – Trans Futures

|Proposal for Final Paper Due|

Read: Sandy Stone, “The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto” (1987)
Jack Halberstam, “An Introduction to Female Masculinity: Masculinity without Men,” *Female Masculinity* (1998)

Watch: *Boys Don’t Cry* (1999)

Week 12 – Rethinking Academia

Read: Sarah Ahmed, “Introduction: Bringing Feminist Theory Home,” *Living a Feminist Life* and explore her [blog](#) (link also on Canvas)
Brittney C. Cooper, Susana M. Morris, and Robin M. Boylon, “Introduction,” *The Crunk Feminist Collection* (2017) & explore [The Crunk Feminist Collective website](#) and Twitter handle [@crunkfeminists](#) (links also on Canvas)

Listen: [Jack Halberstam speech and Q&A, “Trans* Bodies and Power in the Age of Transgenderism” \(2016\)](#) (link also on Canvas)

Week 13 – Unruly Intersections

Read: Roxanne Gay, “Introduction: Feminism (n.): Plural” and “Feel me. See me. Hear me. Reach me,” *Bad Feminist* (2014) (and her Twitter handle [@rgay](#))

Anne Helen Peterson, "Introduction," *Too Fat, Too Slutty, Too Loud: On the Rise and Reign of the Unruly Women* (2017)
Jessa Crispin, "The Problem with Universal Feminism," *Why I Am Not a Feminist: A Feminist Manifesto* (2017)

Week 14 – Get in Formation

Read: Aisha Durham "'Check on It': Beyoncé, Southern Booty, and Black Femininities in Music Video" *Feminist Media Studies* 12.1 (2012) 35-49.

OR

Jennifer DeClue, "To Visualize the Queen Dival: Toward Black Feminist Trans Inclusivity in Beyoncé's 'Formation'" *Transgender Studies Quarterly* 4.2 (2017): 219-225.

Rachel E. Dubrofsky, "A Vernacular of Surveillance: Taylor Swift and Miley Cyrus Perform White Authenticity" *Surveillance and Society* 14.2 (2016): 184-196.

[Buzzfeed article on Nicki Minaj and Taylor Swift tweets about 2015 VMAs](#)

Watch: [Beyoncé, "Formation" video](#) (link also on Canvas)
[Taylor Swift, "Bad Blood" video](#) (link also on Canvas)

Week 15 – Marketing a Female Gaze

Read: [Kristopher Tapley, "Jill Soloway's 'I Love Dick' Brings the 'Female Gaze' to Emmy Voters" Variety 20 April 2017.](#)

[Meredith Blake, "From 'The Handmaid's Tale' to 'I Love Dick,' the Female Gaze is Thriving on Television" LA Times 5 May 2017.](#)

Watch: [Episode 5, I Love Dick \(2016\)](#) (link also on Canvas)
[Video, TIFF 2016: Jill Soloway on the Female Gaze](#) (link also on Canvas)

Week 16 – Feminist Theory Today?

Read: [Amy Alexander, "Today's Feminism: Too Much Marketing, Not Enough Reality" NPR Code Switch, 21 February 2017](#)

[Alanna Vagianos, "Black Woman in Viral March Photo Has Important Words for White Women," Huffington Post 24 January 2017](#)

Explore: [Women's March website](#) (link also on Canvas)

|Final Paper Due: Dec 11|