

Professor: Dayo Gore

Office Hours: Tues and Thurs 12:45-1:45 am & by appointment

Office: Bartlett 261

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Women's Studies 301
Theorizing Women's Issues: U.S. Feminisms in Theory and Practice
Tuesday and Thursday 11:15-12:30 pm, Bartlett 125

We have still to recognize that being a woman is, in fact, not extractable from the context in which one is a woman- that is race, class, time and place. We have still to recognize that all Women do not have the same gender."

-Elsa Barkley Brown, "What Has Happened Here"

It is not our differences that separate women, but our reluctance to recognize those differences and to deal effectively with the distortions that have resulted from the ignoring and misnaming of those differences.

- Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider*

This course provides a historical overview and critical analysis of feminist theories and politics as they have emerged within the United States. In particular the course will explore the ways the intersections of race, gender, class, nation and sexuality, as well as the politics of difference, have shaped feminist theory and activism. The course emphasizes understanding feminist theories through the political, historical and cultural contexts in which they developed. In addition, the course will take into account the ways such theories address practical questions and debates regarding gender relations, women's lived experiences and strategies for social change. Thus, we will also explore the ways feminist theories have engaged, emerged from and shaped different forms of political activism and debates from abolitionism and anti-imperialist struggles to the civil rights movement, queer politics and grassroots organizing.

Required Readings

Carole McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim editors, *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives* (2003)

Leslie Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues: A Novel* (2000)

Assata Shakur, *Assata* (1987)

E-reserve readings available online through the Library's webpage, **password:** theory

All books are available at **Food for Thought Books** at 106 N. Pleasant St. in downtown Amherst. All required books, are also available at the DuBois Library on reserve.

Assignments and Grades

This course is writing and reading intensive. Some week's assignments are more difficult than others and may include a number of dense theoretical readings. Therefore, to get the most out of each class it is imperative that you complete all readings and written assignments for the days they are due. **Late assignments when accepted will be marked down.** In addition, your grade will be based on your engagement with the material, specifically your ability to use written and oral skills to articulate your understanding and analysis of the readings, films, lectures and class conversations. You will have multiple opportunities to demonstrate your knowledge through written assignments, class exercises and discussions, including:

- Four short (2 pg. typed) response papers that provide a detailed response to your choice of a complete day's assigned readings (except Sept. 19th). Each paper should directly address the readings in a thoughtful manner and reflect a critical analysis of the material i.e. what are the common themes and differences, what theoretical insights do the articles provide, and what key issues do they raise. You should not attempt to summarize an entire set of readings but rather to pull out key points and examples that support your own argument and interpretations. Although creativity and making connections to broader issues is definitely welcomed, the majority of your essay should *critique* the day's readings, discussing both its strengths and weaknesses. Each response will count as 5% of your grade (20% total). Response papers are due **at the beginning of class on the day for which the readings were assigned.** You must complete two papers by the beginning of class on Tuesday, October 10th (week 6)) and the second two by the beginning of class on Thursday, November 30th (week 13). **Late papers will not be accepted.**
- Five in-class quizzes worth 2% each. These will be unannounced activities focused on the readings for that day and may take the form of short questions, multiple choice, written exercises etc.
- A 6-8 page (typed and double spaced) analytic essay that makes use of class readings to respond to a question handed out in-class. The essay will serve as a midterm and will count for 25% of your grade and is due at the start of class on October 24th.
- A 6-8 page cultural critique (typed and double spaced) that draws on class readings to provide a feminist analysis of a cultural product or event (i.e. a movie, TV show, magazine issue, mass public event etc). This will count for 25% of your grade and is due in the Women's Studies office by 5 pm Friday December 15th (more details forthcoming in handout).

The final 20% of your grade will rest on class participation. Your participation grade will be based on regular attendance and active engagement in class discussions, breakout session, and activities. Also once during the semester you will be required to provide at least 2 questions to frame class discussion. You will sign up for days to present discussion questions during the second week of class. **More than 3 unexcused absences will result in a lowering of your overall grade.**

Summary

Response papers (4)	5% each (20% total)
Class participation	20%
5 In-Class quizzes	10%
Analytic essay	25%
Cultural Critique	25%

Academic Honesty

It is expected that all assignments handed in for this class are your own original work. Please make sure in all essays assignments you make proper use of quotations and cite sources. Academic dishonesty, in any form, will not be tolerated and you are responsible for being knowledgeable of University's official policy on academic honesty. You can read it in full at http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/code_conduct/acad_honest.htm

Introduction and Overview

Thurs, Sept 7: Overview of Course: Why does theory matter? What are women's issues?
Readings: bell hooks in *Feminist Theory Reader*, p. 50-57

Tools for Building an Integrated Analysis

Tues, Sept 12: What are some relevant theories/tools for feminist scholars?
Readings: Amott and Matthaei, "Women, Race and Work " on *E-reserve*
Joan Scott, p. 378-389 in *Feminist Theory Reader*

Thurs, Sept 14: Social Constructionism and Identity.
Reading: Evelyn Higgenbotham, "The Metalanguage of Race" on *E-reserve*
M. Baca Zinn and B. Thornton Dill, p. 353-359 in *Feminist Theory Reader*

In Slavery and Freedom, Forging Early Feminists Debates

Tues, Sept 19: Feminist History - 1st wave, 2nd Wave and Beyond
Readings: "Declaration of Sentiments" on *E-reserve*

No Response Papers Accepted for this Reading

Thurs, Sept 21: Discussion: First Wave Feminism and the Debates Over Inclusion
Readings: Paula Giddings, "To Choose Again Freely" on *E-reserve*
Sojourner Truth and Francis Harper in *Words of Fire* on *E-reserve*

Immigration, Colonization and U.S. Imperialism

Tues, Sept. 26: Understanding the Connections Between Gender, Race and Nation

Readings: "Situating Postcolonial Studies," and Lisa Lowe, "Immigration, Citizenship, Racialization" on *E-reserve*

Thurs, Sept. 28: Discussion -Theorizing Women's Experiences Under U.S. Imperialism

Readings: Andrea Smith, "Sexual Violence as a Tool..." in *Conquest* on *E-reserve*
June Jordan, Adrienne Rich p. 438-460 in *Feminist Theory Reader*

Framing the Second Wave

Tues, Oct. 3: Exploring Women's Politics in the 1940s and 1950s

Reading: Daniel Horowitz, "Introduction" to *Betty Freidan* on *E-reserve*
Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues*, chp. 1-5

Thurs, Oct. 5: Discussion: How has race, gender, class and sexuality shaped debates over women's oppression?

Readings: Kimberley Springer, selections from "The Soul of Women's Lib" on *E-reserve*
Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues*, chp. 6-12

Second Wave Feminisms

Tues, Oct. 10: Discussion: Feinberg

Readings: Feinberg, *Stone Butch Blues*, chp. 13-end

Thurs, Oct. 12: Defining Women's Oppression and Differences: cultural feminism, radical feminists and lesbian feminists critiques.

Reading: Elizabeth Martinez & Bonnie Kreps, p. 41-49; Charlotte Bunch, p. 80-87; The Combahee River Collective and Donna Rushin, p. 164 -172 all in *Feminist Theory Reader*. **(subject to revision)**

Feminist Theory and "Post" Theories

Tues, Oct. 17: Poststructuralist Theories and Their Usefulness

Readings: Donna Haraway, p. 391-403 in *Feminist Theory Reader*
Anne Snitow, "A Gender Diary," on *E-reserve*

Thurs, Oct. 19: Discussion: Difference and Post structuralism

Readings: Norma Alarcon, p. 404-414 in *Feminist Theory Reader*

Marxism, Economics and Feminist Politics

Tues, Oct. 24: Analyzing the Relationship Between Capitalism and Gender Oppression

Readings: Heidi Hartmann and Linda Lim, p. 206 -221 in *Feminist Theory Reader*

1st Analytic Essay Due at beginning of Class on Tuesday

Thurs, Oct. 26: What does it mean to be a woman worker?

Readings: Judith Halberstam, "Temporalities and Postmodern Geographies" on *E-reserve*

Regulating Sex and Sexuality

Tues, Oct. 31: Feminist Defining Gender and Sexuality

Readings: Gayle Rubin, selection from "The Traffic in Women" on *E-reserve*
Christine Delphy, p. 57-67 in *Feminist Theory Reader*

Thurs, Nov. 2: Discussion: Sexuality and the State

Readings: Contextualizing the Sexuality debates on *E-reserve*
Judith Butler interview with Gayle Rubin on *E-reserve*

Constructing Genders....

Tues, Nov. 7: Is woman a useful category? Why does gender matter?

Readings: Judith Butler, p. 415-227 in *Feminist Theory Reader*

Thurs, Nov. 9: The Politics and Meanings of Gender, Sexuality and Sex in Feminist Theory

Readings: Chesaire Calhoun, p. 334-352; Audre Lorde and Gayatri Gopinanth, p. 254-266 in *Feminist Theory Reader*

Some Legislative and Cultural Strategies for Change

Tues, Nov. 14: Battles Waged From Culture to Politics

Readings: Ann duCille, "Toy Theory" on *E-reserve*

Thurs, Nov. 16: Lessons Learned

Readings: Sonia Correa and Rosalind Petchesky, p. 88-102 in *Feminist Theory Reader*

Some Strategies for Inclusion and Resistance

Tues, Nov. 21: Discussion: Identity and Politics: Can Feminists build at the intersections?

Readings: Cathy Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens," on *E-reserve*
R. Kim and L. Duggan, "Beyond Gay Marriage," on *E-reserve*
Jee Yeun Lee, "Beyond Bean Counting," p. 472-76 in *Feminist Theory Reader*

Thurs, Nov. 23: No Class, start reading *Assata*,

Feminist Perspectives on Violence and the State

Tues, Nov. 28: "Domestic" Violence and Antiviolence Organizing

Readings: Anannya Bhattacharjee, "The Public/Private Mirage" on *E-reserve*
Shakur, *Assata*, p. forward - 70

Thurs, Nov. 30: Feminisms and Policing/Prisons: The Politics and The Problems

Readings: Kathleen Daly, "Crime and Justice," on *E-reserve*
Shakur, *Assata*, p. 71-140

Tues, Dec. 5: Discussion: *Assata*

Readings: Shakur, *Assata*, p. 141-end [handout]

The Mainstreaming of Feminist Politics and The Post Feminist Backlash

Thurs, Dec. 7: Culture Wars: From Feminist to Post-Feminist

Readings: Carolyn Sicro, p. 428-436 in *Feminist Theory Reader*
Martinez LaFrance, "Colonizing Feminism" on *E-reserve*

Tues, Dec. 12: Theory and Practice in the Current Climate

**Final Paper Due in Women's Studies Office 208 Bartlett
by 5 pm Friday, December 15th**