

WOST 201 Critical Perspectives in Women's Studies

Fall 2007

TuTh 9:30~10:45

Office Hours:

**Avakian 1:30~2:30 Thursdays and by appointment
208 Bartlett**

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This course asks the fundamental questions and introduces the basic concepts in women's studies. Who are the women in Women's Studies? How can we conceptualize the category **women** so that it is reflective of all the similarities among us as well as our very substantive differences? What are the relationships among gender, race, class, sexuality, in a global context? What do we mean when we say that gender is socially constructed? What theoretical frameworks have feminists developed to explain women's oppression and what strategies have they proposed for women's liberation? How has feminist activism addressed these issues in the past, and what are some contemporary approaches to change?

In addition to Andersen and Collins' anthology, *Race, Class and Gender* and Freedman's *No Turning Back: A History of Feminism*, we will be reading Cynthia Enloe's *Globalization and Militarism* as a case study in how to develop feminist questions for issues that seem to go beyond or are bigger than gender and Barbara Ehrenreich's *Nickel and Dimed* a first person account of trying to live on minimum wage.

We will be analyzing women's lives and theorizing about how to make change, but we will not be merely studying them/us from the outside. Everyone of us is part of the systems we are going to be studying, though our relationships to the power structure differs depending on the social categories we are occupy. Some assumptions about women and gender may be challenged by this approach. When we focus on race, for example, our discussion will not be limited to women of color. Since the beginning of Western colonialism and the African slave trade more than 500 years ago, the world has been organized around a racial hierarchy and race, therefore, is a significant factor in everyone's lives. Thinking about the ways white supremacy has constructed the culture of the United States might be difficult when we are raised to believe the U.S. represents freedom and equality. We need to probe ourselves to discover blocks to our ability to hear new information.

The focus on activism will help us to work through these issues by grounding us in the lived experiences of women and by addressing the ongoing question of what can we do to change the world to improve women's lives? Studying women's lives is vitally important, but it is only one part of what needs to be done. We must think about how we can make change, particularly in these times when so many of the gains of past struggles are being eroded. We *can* act, and we can make a difference.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. SOCIAL POSITIONALITY PAPER

This 2~3 page paper will not be graded, but *IS* required. Despite the lack of a grade, I consider this assignment to be vitally important and expect you to give it your very serious attention. You will be graded down if you do not complete this assignment. **Due: 9/13**

2. HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS (6 assignments 2 pages each)

I will be handing out a list of homework assignments that help to connect the class material to your lives. You must choose 6 from this list, **3 before the midterm, 20% OF GRADE.**

3. MIDTERM ESSAY (5 pages)-An analytic paper synthesizing and critiquing an article from a list I will provide, 20% OF GRADE. DUE 10/3

LATE PAPERS WILL BE GRADED DOWN

4. FINAL ANALYTIC ESSAY (5~7 pages). I will hand out the topics later in the semester. 20% OF GRADE. DUE: 12/6

LATE PAPERS WILL BE GRADED DOWN

5. GROUP ACTION PROJECT 20% OF GRADE. DUE: 12/11

After a brainstorming session to identify issues for women on and off campus, students will work in groups on an action project, on or off campus, to address those issues. While groups will have to meet outside of class, I will allow some class time for group meetings and for students to share their progress with and get feedback from each other. Each group will be required to:

- design and implement an action project
- do a class presentation on their project, and

- prepare a written description and evaluation of the project.

The last two classes of the semester are set aside for group presentations. If projects are done earlier than the end of the semester, we will make time for presentations if the groups decides they do not want to wait until the end of the semester. **THE GRADE WILL BE GIVEN TO THE GROUP AND WILL BE 20% OF THE GRADE FOR THE COURSE.**

THE WRITTEN PART OF THE ASSIGNMENT IS DUE ON 12/14 THE LAST DAY OF CLASS. I WILL HAND OUT GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATIONS LATER IN THE SEMESTER.

LATE PAPERS WILL BE GRADED DOWN

6. CLASS PARTICIPATION

The issues we will be discussing this semester have both academic and personal implications. In order to grapple with this material it is vital to read the assignments carefully and on time, come to class with questions, agreements, disagreements~~in other words to be prepared to participate in an intellectual debate. Regular and timely attendance will be factored in.

STUDENTS WILL LOSE POINTS FOR MORE THAN 3 UNEXCUSED ABSENCES. CLASS PARTICIPATION COUNTS FOR 10% OF THE GRADE.

7. EVENT ATTENDANCE

Students are expected to attend two events over the course of the semester lecture/panel discussion, art show, concert, theater, dance on or off campus that addresses issues of gender, race, class, and/or sexuality.

Students should choose events that are outside of the groups in which they feel most comfortable. Review/responses to these events should be handed in within a week of attendance. Papers should: 1. briefly describe the event, 2. discuss what new information or insight the event provided or did not provide, and 3. address what groups and issues were included in the performance and what pertinent issues or groups were missing. Papers should be 2~3 typewritten pages with 1 inch margins and 12 point font.

ONE REVIEW SHOULD BE BEFORE MIDTERM AND ONE AFTER, EACH PAPER IS 5 POINTS. Extra credit will be awarded to students who attend and write response papers to more than one event with a limit of 10 points.

8. OCCASIONAL IN-CLASS WRITING

This writing is to help you think about the topics and will not be collected, nor will it impinge on your grade.

REQUIRED BOOKS:

Margaret L. Andersen & Patricia Hill Collins, *Race, Class, and Gender: An Anthology (fifth edition)*, 2004. Thomson/Wadsworth.

Barbara Ehrenreich, *Nickel and Dimed: on (Not) Getting-By in America*. 2001. Henry Holt.

Cynthia Enloe, *Globalizaion and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link*, 2007. Rowman and Littlefield

Estelle B. Freedman, *No Turning-Back: The History of Feminism and the Future of Women*. 2002. Ballantine Books

BOOKS ARE FOR SALE AT:

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT BOOKS ~ E. PLEASANT STREET, AMHERST
THEY ARE ALSO ON RESERVE IN THE LIBRARY**

E~RESERVE ARTICLES:

A few articles are on E~Reserve. You are **REQUIRED** to print out the articles so that you can bring them to class. If you do not have access to a printer OIT will print them for you, but this service is no longer free. It is, however, much less than what you would have to pay for the articles in a reader.

EReserve PASSWORD: WOMLIB

COURSE CALENDAR

9/4 INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

VIDEO: *War Zone*

INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS

9/6 GENDER EMBEDDED IN RACE/ETHNICITY, CLASS, SEXUALITY I

READING:

June Jordan, Report From the Bahamas ER
Andersen & Collins (A & C), Why Race, Class, and Gender Still Matter
pp. 1~16

9/11 GENDER EMBEDDED IN RACE/ETHNICITY, CLASS, SEXUALITY II THE-BIG PICTURE

READING:

Andersen and Collins, Systems of Power and Inequality pp. 61~90
Cherrie Moraga, La Guera in-A & C pp. 22~28
Haunai-Kay Trask, From a Native Daughter in-A & C pp. 45~51

9/13 GLOBALIZATION AND MILITARISM IS THIS REALLY A WOMEN'S STUDIES COURSE?

READING:

Enloe, Crafting a Globalized Feminist Curiosity and Tracking the Militarized
Global Sneaker pp. 1~39
Freeman, The Historical Case for Feminism pp. 1~13

SOCIAL POSITIONALITY PAPER DUE

9/18 PATRIARCHY A USEFUL CONCEPT??

READING:

Freedman, Gender and Power pp. 17~42
Enloe, Paying Close Attention to Women Inside Militaries pp. 63~92

SOCIAL POSITIONS

10/11 - 10/16 SOCIAL CLASS II
READING:

9/20 RACE AND RACISM I

VIDEO: *Ethnic Notions*

READING:

Freedman, Race and the Politics of Identity in U.S. Feminism, pp. 73~94 and

The Global Stage and the Politics of Location pp. 95~111

9/25 RACE AND RACISM II

READING:

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Racism Without Racists in A & C pp. 91~97

Patricia J. Williams, Of Race and Risk in A & C, pp. 103~105

Ronald Takaki, A Different Mirror in A & C, pp. 32~44

Elizabeth Martinez, Seeing More Than Black and White in A & C, pp. 105~111

C. Matthew Snipp, The First Americans: American Indians in A & C, pp. 442~449

Ward Churchill, Crimes Against Humanity in A & C, pp. 376~383

9/27 RACE AND RACISM III WHITENESS

READING:

Peggy McIntosh, White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack in A & C, pp. 98~102

Abby L. Ferber, What White Supremacists Taught a Jewish Scholar About Identity in A & C, pp. 111~115

Julia Alvarez, A White Woman of Color in A & C, pp. 166~172

Mary C. Waters, Optional Ethnicities: For Whites Only? in A & C, pp. 198~207

Lillian Rubin, Is This is White Country, or What? in A & C, pp. 190~198

Paul Kivel, What Does an Ally Do? In A & C, pp. 550~557

10/4 SOCIAL CLASS I

READING:

Holly Sklar, The Growing Gulf Between the Rich and the Rest of US in A & C, pp. 116~118

Donna Langston, Tired of Playing Monopoly? in A & C pp. 118~127

Gregory Mantsios, Media Magic: Making Class Invisible in-A & C, pp. 384~392
Thomas M. Shapiro, The Hidden Cost of Being African-American in-A & C, pp. 127~136
Jason De Parle, Broken Levees, Unbroken Barriers in-A & C, pp. 143~146
Shaila Dewan, Road to New Life-After Katrina is Closed to Many (Handout)

10/9 HOLIDAY NO CLASS

-Barbara Ehrenreich, Nickel and Dimed pp. 1 ~ 119 by 10/11; pp. 120 ~ 221 by 10/16

10/18 SEXUALITY/SEXUAL ORIENTATION I

READING:

-Freedman, Sexualities, Identities, and Self-Determination: pp. 253~275
Gluckman & Reed, Where Has Gay Liberation Gone? pp. 234~238
Jonathan Ned Katz, The Invention of Homosexuality in-A & C, pp. 252~264
Currah, et. al., Introduction *Transgender Rights* ER
Dorothy Allison, A Question of Class ER

10/23 SEXUALITY/SEXUAL ORIENTATION II

VIDEO: Toilet Training

READING:

Sharon Price Minter, Do Transsexuals Dream of Gay Rights? ER
Ann Fausto Sterling, Five Sexes Revisited ER
Leslie Feinberg, We Are All Works in Progress ER

10/25 GENDER REVISITED MASCULINITY

READING:

-Enloe, Wielding Masculinity Inside Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo pp. 93~115
Michael Messner, Masculinities and Athletic Careers in-A & C, pp. 172~185
Yen Le-Espiritu, Ideological Racism and Cultural Resistance in-A & C, pp.

156~163

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

10/30 **STRUCTURAL ANALYSES**

READING:

Andersen & Collins, *The Structure of Social Institutions* pp. 267~282

MIDTERM ESSAY DUE

11/1 **WE NEED BREAD BUT WE NEED ROSES TOO THE ARTS**

VIDEO: *Guerrillas in Our Midst*

READING:

Freedman, *New Words and Images: Women's Creativity as Feminist Practice* pp. 305~326

Shani Jamila, *Can I Get a Witness?* in A & C, pp. 557~564

11/6 **COLLECTIVE ACTION**

VIDEO: *Women Organize*

READING:

Andersen and Collins, *Making a Difference* 511~519

Freedman, *No Turning Back: Women and Politics* pp. 327~347

Baumgardner and Richards, *Manifesta* in A & C, pp. 547~550

Nanci Zane, *Interrupting Historical Patterns* in A & C, pp. 499~511

11/8 **THE POLITICS OF WOMEN'S WORK**

READING:

Freedman, *Never Done: Women's Domestic Labor: pp. 123~144 and Industrialization,*

Wage Labor, and the Economic Gap pp. 145~160

11/13 THE POLITICS OF FAMILY I

READING:

- Linda Burnham, Welfare Reform, Family Hardship, and Women of Color in A & C, pp. 413~422
Bonnie Thornton Dill, Our Mother's Grief in A & C, pp. 321~335

11/15 THE POLITICS OF FAMILY II

READING:

- Reverend Howard Moody, Sacred Rite or Civil Right: Gay Marriage Shows Why We Need to Separate Church and State. *The Nation*, 7/5/04, 28~31. ER
Esther Kaplan, Onward Christian Soldiers: The Religious Right's Sense of Siege is Fueling a Resurgence *The Nation*, 7/5/04, 33~36. ER
Kath Weston, Straight is to Gay as Family is to No-Family in A & C, pp. 343~348
Gary David Comstock, Whosoever is Welcome Here in A & C, pp. 522~530

11/20 COMMODIFICATION OF WOMEN'S BODIES

VIDEO: *Dreamworlds III*

READING:

- Freedman, The Politics of Representation pp. 222~228.
Jean Kilbourne, You Talkin to Me? in A & C, pp. 228~237

**THANKSGIVING IS A NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING
FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLE
YOU CAN JOIN THEIR COMMEMORATION OF THIS DAY
AT PLYMOUTH, MA**

READING:

- Estelle Freedman, Medicine, Markets, and the Female Body pp. 203~229

11/29 THE WOMEN'S HEALTH MOVEMENT AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

READING:

11/27 THE POLITICS OF WOMEN'S HEALTH

~~Freedman, Reproduction: The Politics of Choice pp. 229~252~~
~~Ross, et. al., Just Choices . . . in-A & C, pp. 433~441~~
~~Charon-Asetoyer, From the Ground Up in-A & C, pp. 543~547~~

12/4 ~~VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN I~~

~~VIDEO: NO▲~~

~~READING:~~

~~Freedman, Gender and Violence, pp. 276~302~~
~~Jael Stillman, Policing the National Body in-A & C, pp. 450~459~~
~~Jennifer Wriggins, Rape, Racism, and the Law in-A & C, pp. 468~475~~
~~June Jordan, A Poem About My Rights Handout~~

12/6 ~~ORGANIZING AROUND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN~~

~~VIDEO: V~Day~~

~~ANALYTIC PAPER DUE~~

12/11~

~~ACTION GROUP REPORTS AND CLASS CONCLUSION~~

12/13