

Issues in Feminist Research
Mondays 2:30-5
Bartlett 131 or SCAF W465

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Office hours: Tuesday 3-5 or by appointment

This is a graduate seminar in feminist research, and constitutes a core course for students enrolled in the Graduate Certificate Program in Advance Feminist Research. Feminism has long been interested in a foundational way in questions of epistemology (how we know what we know) and research methodology (how we go about developing original research), because in its most recent incarnations, post-1968, it emerged as an academic formation that asked basic questions about disciplines: how did they invent a world without women? How was systemic bias built into its knowledge systems such that they made women, people of color, working class people, people outside the US and Europe (“the West,” as it came to be called, through an Orientalist bit of geographic folly), peasants, slaves, indigenous people, colonized people, (most) queers, trans folk and a great many others invisible? Obviously, in this endeavor feminists had help from many other fields and activist movements, which worked together across disciplines and movements to transform knowledge. In many ways, they won—no discipline or field of study is unchanged or untouched by these inquiries, although some are obviously more resistant than others.

This course proceeds in the spirit of that ongoing revolution. We will make no assumptions about what “feminism” means or what “feminist research” is (much less “feminist methodology” or “feminist epistemology”), but let that emerge through a reading of recent scholarly work that calls itself feminist (or is written by people who work in WGSS departments, whether they use the “feminist” word or not). It presumes a fairly extensive background in feminist scholarship; this is a “current problems” not a “basic concepts” course. We will read the books in this course less for what they are saying (although of course it’s impossible not to be interested in that, so we will give that some attention), than for how their arguments are constructed. We will read footnotes, assess archives, discuss sources, and look at the epistemology through which the arguments are framed. We will use this work to consider how we are doing our own scholarly writing, and how we can use interdisciplinary feminist scholarship to shake the foundations of the world as it is.

REQUIRED BOOKS

1. Brittany Cooper, Susana Morris, and Robin Boylorn, eds., *The Crunk Feminist Collection* (New York: Feminist Press at CUNY, Jan. 10, 2017).
2. Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 2008)

3. Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality* (Polity, 2016) [with J Nash and J Puar articles]
4. Clare Hemmings *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory* (Duke, 2010).
5. C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* (Minnesota, 2017)
6. Angela Willey, *Undoing Monogamy: The Politics of Science and the Possibilities of Biology* (Duke, 2016).
7. Jennifer Terry, *Attachments to War: Biomedical Logics and Violence in 21st c. America* (Duke, 2017)
8. Lisa Lowe, *Intimacies of Four Continents* (Duke, 2015)
9. Macarena Gomez-Barris, *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives* (Duke, 2017)
10. Joanne Barker, ed., *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies* (Duke, 2017)
11. Jasbir Puar, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (Duke, 2017)
12. Dan Berger, *Captive Nation: Black Prison Organizing in the Civil Rights Era* (2014)
13. Emily Hobson, *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left* (UC Press, 2016)

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENTS

There are two grading options for this class, depending on how you are using it. You can either use it to develop a framework for thinking about feminist research problems (option 1) or use it to solve problems in your own scholarly writing (option 2).

Option 1: All papers should be dropped in Moodle; all comments will be found there

class participation: 15%

papers: Four 2pp reading response 5% each

Two 5-7pp papers 20% each

Final paper: 25%

1. Write four 2 pp. reading response papers. These will be frontloaded in the beginning of the semester to help you get quick feedback and help on your reading and writing, and correspondingly less pressure to speak up in class. Due Jan. 29, Feb. 5, Feb. 12, Feb. 19.

2. Write two 5-7 pp reading-response papers bringing together at least two of the readings in the weeks prior to the paper. Due March 19, April 17.

3. Write a 10 pp. conference paper that includes original research on a subject of your choosing developing methodology related to the course material. Subject matter might include historical research (relying on an archive of published or unpublished sources), a reading of a novel or a play, a reading of public policy problem or feminist issue using fresh sources (that is, tell us something new that we did not already know, based on your own research). This list is meant to be suggestive rather than inclusive. DUE May 7

Option 2: All papers should be dropped in Moodle; all comments will be found there

30% class participation
70% article-length (~25pp) final paper DUE May 7

ATTENDANCE POLICY

You're expected to come to class with the reading done. If you must miss a class, (1) email the instructor, and (2) submit a 2-3 pp paper on methodology in the missed reading by the following week. Two absences are a cause for concern. If you miss three or more classes, plan on meeting with me to discuss options related to making up the work, taking a grade reduction, or repeating the course.

WEEK-BY-WEEK SCHEDULE

Jan. 22. Week 1— From Pop Culture to Contemporary Politics

Brittany Cooper, Susana Morris, and Robin Boylorn, eds., *The Crunk Feminist Collection* (New York: Feminist Press at CUNY, Jan. 10, 2017).

Optional Lecture: Brittnay Proctor, Northwestern University

I'm Every Woman: Blackness, Gender, Funk

Thursday, January 25, 5:00 p.m., South College E241

Jan. 29-Week 2— Race, memory, slavery

Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 2008)

Option 1—2pp paper due.

For additional reading

Robyn Spencer, *The Revolution Has Come: Black Power, Gender, and the Black Panther Party in Oakland* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016)

Omise'eke Natasha Tinsley, "Black Atlantic, Queer Atlantic-Queer imaginings of the Middle Passage." *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* 14: 2-3 (2008): 191-215.

Optional Lectures: Fumi Okiji, Northwestern University

Mourning Mother: Listening to Saidiya Hartman's Deep Song

Monday, January 29, 5:00 p.m., Herter Hall 301

Emily Owens, Harvard University

On Women Who Said 'Yes': Old and New Methodologies in Black Feminist History

Thursday, February 1, 5:00 p.m., South College E241

Feb. 5. Week 3— Trans Studies, Race, Desire

C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity* (Minnesota, 2017)

Andrea Long Chu, "On Liking Women: The Society for Cutting Up Men is a rather fabulous name for a transsexual book club" *N+1 Magazine* (Winter 2018). Available at <https://nplusonemag.com/issue-30/essays/on-liking-women/>

Option 1—2pp paper due.

Optional Lectures: Cameron Awkward-Rich, Duke University
Feeling Strange: Toward a Theory of Trans Maladjustment
 Monday, February 5, 5:00 p.m., Herter Hall 601

Jasmine Syedullah, Vassar College
Moving Harriet Jacobs: Beyond the Slavery of Freedom
 Thursday, February 8, 5:00 p.m., South College E241

Feb. 12. Week 4-- Queer/Left Politics

Emily Hobson, *Lavender and Red: Liberation and Solidarity in the Gay and Lesbian Left* (UC Press, 2016)

For additional reading

Christina Hanhardt, *Safe Space: Gay Neighborhood History and the Politics of Violence* (Duke, 2013).

Option 1—2pp paper due.

Optional Lecture: Sam Tenorio, Northwestern University
Practices of Black Anarchism
 Thursday, February 15, 5:00 p.m., South College E241

Feb. 19 No class, President's Day

FEBRUARY 23-24: Finding the Queer Radical Past: Scholars and Activists on the Legacies of the 1987 March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. UMass Student Union Ballroom. Register at <http://www.queerradicalpast.net/>. Keynoted by Emily Hobson and Dean Spade.

Feb. 26. Week 5— Intersectionality

Patricia Hill Collins and Sirma Bilge, *Intersectionality (Key Concepts)* (New York: Polity, 2016).

Jennifer Nash, "Re-thinking intersectionality." *Feminist review* 89, no. 1 (2008): 1-15.

For additional reading

Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *How We Get Free: Black Feminism and the Combahee River Collective* (Haymarket Books, 2017)

March 5. Week 6— Call Off Your Tired Old Chronologies

Clare Hemmings *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory* (Duke, 2010).

Spring Break (no class 3/12)

March 19. Week 7— Science

Angela Willey, *Undoing Monogamy: The Politics of Science and the Possibilities of Biology* (Duke, 2016).

For additional reading:

Banu Subramaniam, *Ghost Stories for Darwin* (University of Illinois Press, 2014).

Option 1—5-7pp paper due

March 26. Week 8—War and Imperialism

Jennifer Terry, *Attachments to War: Biomedical Logics and Violence in 21st c. America* (Duke, 2017)

April 2. Week 9— Settler Colonialism and the Problems of Citizenship

Joanne Barker, ed. *Critically Sovereign: Indigenous Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies* (Duke, April 28, 2017)

For additional reading

Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus: Political Life Across the Borders of Settler States*

Mishuana Goeman, *Mark My Words: Native Women Mapping Our Nations*

Joanne Barker, *Native Acts: Law, Recognition, and Cultural Authenticity*

J. Kehaulani Kauanui, *Hawaiian Blood: Colonialism and the Politics of Sovereignty* (Duke, 2008)

Sarah Deer, *The Beginning and End of Rape: Confronting Sexual Violence in Native America* (2015).

Scott Morgansen, *The Spaces Between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization* (University of Minnesota, 2011).

April 9. Week 10— Natural Resource Extraction in Decolonial Perspective

Macarena Gomez-Barris, *The Extractive Zone: Social Ecologies and Decolonial Perspectives* (Duke, 2017)

For additional reading

Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Duke, 2016).

April 17. Week 11— Capitalism and Unfreedom

Lisa Lowe, *Intimacies of Four Continents* (Duke, 2015)

Option 1—5-7pp paper due

April 23. Week 12--Disability, Race, War

Jasbir Puar, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* (Duke, 2017)

April 25. Week 13—Prison Studies and Feminism

Dan Berger, *Captive Nation: Black Prison Organizing in the Civil Rights Era* (2014)

May 7—Final papers due