

WST 305

Feminist Theory

Kelly Oliver

Course Description: In this course we will survey the history of feminist theory from the 18th Century to 20th Century. Most generally feminist theory attempts to analyze women's experience and women's oppression. Many of the early debates in feminist theory have focused on issues of Equality versus Difference. Some feminists argue that women should be equal to men. Other feminists argue that there are important difference between women and men that are not recognized within the rhetoric of equality. Many contemporary debates in feminist theory focus on difference among women and the relationship between race, class, and gender. Some of the central questions that we will discuss are: "What do we mean by Equality?" "What does it mean to treat women as equals to men?" "Should Equality be our goal?" "How should women's difference from men be reflected in public policy?" "How do differences among women affect feminism?" "What is the relation between race and gender, between racism and sexism?"

Reading:

Feminist Theory: A Reader, edited by Wendy Kolmar and Frances Bartowski

Method of Evaluation:

Each participant will do a short presentation in class on one of the reading assignments. You will also be required to write two take-home essay exams (5-10 pages each). Class participation is very important and will affect your grade.

Schedule:

Week 1 What is Feminist Theory?

“‘Womanist’ from *In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens*, Alice Walker

“Not by Degrees: Feminist Theory and Education” Charlotte Bunch

“Have We Got a Theory for You!” Maria Lugones & Elizabeth Spelman

Week 2 The Vocabulary of Feminism

Chapter Two of textbook: “Lexicon of the Debates

Weeks 3 & 4 1792-1920

(1792) From *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, Mary Wollstonecraft

(1848) “Declaration of Sentiments” Elizabeth Cady Stanton

(1851) “Ain’t I a Woman?” (1867) “Keeping the Thing Going” Sojourner Truth

(1898) From *Women and Economics*, Charlotte Perkins Gilman

(1910) “The Traffic in Women,” Emma Goldman

(1911) From *Women and Labor*, Olive Schreiner

Weeks 4 & 5 1920-1963

(1920) From *Woman and the New Race*, Margaret Sanger

(1929) From *A Room of One’s Own*, Virginia Woolf

(1932) “The Dread of Woman,” Karen Horney

(1935) From *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, Margaret Mead

(1946) “Accentuating the Similarities of the Societal Position of Women and Negroes,” Florynce Kennedy

(1949) From *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir

Weeks 6 - 8 1963-1975

(1963) From *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan

(1966) Statement of Purpose, National Organization of Women

(1967) From *SCUM Manifesto*, Valerie Solanas

(1969) *Sexual Politics*, Kate Millett

(1969) Redstockings Manifesto, Redstockings

(1970) From *The Dialectic of Sex*, Shulamith Firestone

(1970) “The Woman Identified Woman” Radicalesbians

(1974) “The Older Woman” Ti Grace Atkinson

(1974) “Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?” Sherry Ortner

(1975) “The Laugh of the Medusa” Hélène Cixous

(1975) From *Words and Women*, Casey Miller and Kate Swift

(1975) “The Traffic in Women” Gayle Rubin

Weeks 9 - 11 1975-1985

- (1975) From *Against Our Will*, Susan Brownmiller
- (1976) *Color Me Flo*, Florynce Kennedy
- (1977) "A Black Feminist Statement" Combahee River Collective
- (1977) From *This Sex Which is Not One*, Luce Irigaray
- (1978) From *The Politics of Reality*, Marilyn Frye
- (1978) "Age, Race, Class, and Sex" Audre Lorde
- (1978) "The Straight Mind" Monique Wittig
- (1980) "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" Adrienne Rich
- (1982) From *In a Different Voice*, Carol Gilligan
- (1984) "Under Western Eyes" Chandra Talpade Mohanty
- (1984) From *Sister/Outsider*, Audre Lorde

Weeks 12 - 14 1985-1995

- (1985) "A Cyborg Manifesto" Donna Haraway
- (1986) "Jewish Memory From a Feminist Perspective" Judith Plaskow
- (1987) "La Conciencia de la Mestiza" Gloria Anzaldúa
- (1988) "Cultural Feminism Versus Post-Structuralism" Linda Alcoff
- (1988) "Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference" Joan Scott
- (1989) "The 'Risk' of Essence" Diana Fuss
- (1989) From *Talking Back: Thinking Black, Thinking Feminist*, bell hooks
- (1989) "Sexuality" Catherine MacKinnon
- (1990) From *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler
- (1990) From *Black Feminist Thought*, Patricia Hill Collins
- (1991) "Outcast Mothers and Surrogates" Angela Davis
- (1995) "The Unbearable Autonomy of Being" Patricia Williams
- (1995) The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action