

Contemporary Feminist Political Theory

WS 600/POLS 600

Fall 2007

Dr. Hannah E. Britton
Phone: X4-9016
Email: britton@ku.edu
Class Time: 9:30-10:45 TR
Class Location: Blake 207
Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-4 and by appointment
Office Location: Blake 504 E (inside the main office of POLS)

This course examines contemporary feminist political theory. During the semester, we will examine the challenges of second and third wave feminism by exploring issues of difference within the intersections of race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, social position, and geographic location. We will think about how these issues have become central to feminist theorizing and to the mobilization of gender activists. We will assess the impact of globalization and the importance of post-colonial theory for contemporary feminist thought, particularly by examining the voices and ideas of those who have been historically excluded from such discussions. We will also discuss questions about how women in the west and how western feminism may be part of the oppression of women around the world while conversely working for their emancipation. Finally, we will work toward an understanding of what these issues mean for the future of feminist thought, gender activists, and feminists.

Required Texts:

There are three required texts and a few electronic reserve readings through the KU library. You should complete the readings *before coming to class* the day they are discussed. I assure you that you will gain much more from this course if you do the readings before class.

Anne C. Herrman and Abigail J. Stewart. (2001). Theorizing Feminism: Parallel Trends in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Second Edition. Boulder: Westview Press. Readings from this text are referred to as HS.

Cynthia Enloe. (2007). Globalization and Militarism: Feminists Make the Link. Rowman and Littlefield.

Course Reader: The reader is available at the Department of Political Science, 504 Blake Hall.

IMPORTANT: To access the library electronic reserves, pull up my name (Britton) and hit go, then click on "POLS 600" and enter the password: women and then hit "accept."

Course Website: There is a Blackboard course website for this course. You can access Blackboard via <http://courseware.ku.edu> and follow the instructions. First time users will need to set a password; if you have used Blackboard before, just log in as usual. To successfully log in to Blackboard you need to have an Exchange account (i.e., a "ku.edu" account), and you need to use that when you log in. If you do not have an Exchange account you can get one for free from the Academic Computing website, which is linked to the www.ku.edu website. Feel free to contact me or to contact KU's Instructional Development and Support at www.ku.edu/~ids or (785) 864-2600 or ids@ku.edu

Expectations: There is no question that you will get into this course what you put into it. The success of this course depends on your preparation and participation. We will be covering a considerable amount of material through readings, films, discussions, and debates. *You are expected to come to class having read the assignments and prepared to discuss and debate the material. Participation is a significant portion of your grade.* This material is engaging but it will take several times through much of the reading to grasp fully the arguments and ideas of each of the authors. I highly recommend you read the material several times, before coming to class, and again after the days discussion. I would recommend active reading of the material – taking marginal notes, making outlines of the arguments, keeping a record of questions or ideas you have in response to the works. I would strongly encourage you to come to class familiar with the

main ideas of each reading, the perspectives and opinions of the author, the important facts from each of the readings, the main arguments/claims/supporting ideas of the author, and points for discussion.

I recognize that you have certain assumptions, beliefs, values, and hopefully passionate ideas about the world. I welcome your views, and I hope you share them with the class often. I also caution you to remember that opinions rooted in personal experience are not necessarily universal truths, so it is important that you ground your claims with ideas from the readings, texts, and other scholarly material. There will be readings with which you agree and those with which you disagree – the goal is to be able to read each author critically and have an informed opinion and understanding of all perspectives.

I challenge you to open yourselves up to other perspectives and to an honest examination of the theories we will study. This class works best if we listen to one another, share our own experiences openly, and struggle to see multiple viewpoints. This class is about opening our minds – not closing them. To diminish another person or group is not only an insult to that person/group but is also a limitation on your own intellectual development and is not part of academic integrity. Non-verbal communication is also very powerful, and I ask each of you to examine how your own gestures or facial expressions may inhibit or encourage other students. *In order to be respected, you must respect others.* The keys to academic integrity in this classroom are those of KU: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility (<http://www.ku.edu/~stlife/academics.shtml>).

This material is intellectually challenging. You will have varied skills and experiences with this material. The best part of an upper-division course is that we will be able to work together to understand this material. I see each of you as valuable members and voices in this course, and I will rely on your knowledge, analysis, research, and leadership throughout the semester. Bring in your ideas, relevant articles/websites, and - as always - your questions and ideas.

Attendance and etiquette: Attendance is important for this class. In addition to the consistent findings that attendance and performance are positively correlated, I rely upon each of you to be actively engaged in the course. Therefore, I will take attendance daily. Coming to class is as important as going to a job. *If you come to class after attendance is taken, you are considered absent for that day. Early departures will be counted as absences. You must be awake in class to receive credit for attendance.* I also ask that you observe proper etiquette for class behavior and conduct. For example, I ask that you refrain from the use of tobacco products during the class period, that you turn off your cell phones before entering the class, and that you refrain from talking with your classmates privately during class. Each of these behaviors detracts from the course and discussion.

Students with Disabilities: The KU office of Disability Resources coordinates accommodations and services for all students who are eligible. If you have a disability for which you wish to request accommodations and have not contacted DR, please do so as soon as possible. Their office is located in 22 Strong Hall; their phone number is 785-864-2620 (V/TTY). Information about their services can be found at <http://disability.ku.edu>. Please also contact me privately in regard to your needs in this course.

Quizzes: There are no make-up quizzes.

Academic Integrity, Academic Misconduct and Intellectual Property: Using the work of another and claiming it as your own is inexcusable and will not be tolerated. If you are found to be using another person's work (that means any form of another person's work), you will automatically receive a grade of "F" for the assignment and in most cases for the course. Academic misconduct is a serious offense that could possibly lead to your suspension or expulsion from the University and permanently scar your academic record. All cases of plagiarism and academic misconduct will be reported to the proper University authorities. Please refer to the web resources from the Dean of Students if you have questions (<http://www.ku.edu/~stlife/academics.shtml>).

The issue of digital plagiarism has raised concerns about ethics, student writing experiences, and academic integrity. KU subscribes to a digital plagiarism detection program called Turnitin.com, which may be used to check papers submitted in this course. You may be asked to submit your papers in a digital format (e-mail attachment, BlackBoard™ digital drop box or on disk) so that your paper can be checked against web pages and databases of existing papers. Information on avoiding plagiarism can be found at the KU Writing Center in their on-line guides for writers: (<http://www.writing.ku.edu/students/guides.shtml>).

Course materials prepared by the instructor, together with the content of all lectures and review sessions presented by the instructor are the property of the instructor. Video and audio recording of lectures and review sessions without the consent of the instructor is prohibited. On request, I will usually grant permission for students to audio tape lectures, on the condition that these audio tapes are only used as a study aid by the individual making the recording. Unless explicit permission is obtained from the instructor, recordings of lectures and review sessions may not be modified and must not be transferred or transmitted to any other person, whether or not that individual is enrolled in the course. The University authorizes enrolled students to take careful notes for the purpose of mastering the course material. No university authorization exists for an enrolled student to take notes for the purpose of selling them for profit. Permission is withheld for commercial note takers based on two existing university regulations: Article V, section 5, paragraph 2 of the Faculty Senate Rules and Regulations and Article 22, section B, paragraph 2 of the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct.

Problem Resolution: No special problems are anticipated, but if they do arise please see me first. Most conflicts are the result of miscommunication, misunderstanding, and/or confusion that can be resolved by calmly speaking or writing to me. If I am unable to resolve your problem to your satisfaction, you may contact Dr. Elaine Sharp, Chair of the Department of Political Science. Her phone number is ext. 4-9025. You may also contact Dr. Ann Cudd, Director of the Women's Studies Program. Her phone number is ext. 4-2311.

| | | |
|-----------------|--|-----|
| Grading: | Deliberative Essays (2 at 20% each) | 40% |
| | Participation, attendance, quizzes | 15% |
| | Fishbowl Panel or Blackboard Discussions | 5% |
| | Critical Reading Journals | 40% |

Your grade at the end of the semester will be determined on a ten-point straight percentage scale. 90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; 59 or below=F

Assignments:

Deliberative Essays: These out-of-class papers will be deliberative essays that critically respond to the readings and that are guided by a question or questions I provide in advance. You will have about 6 days to complete the out of paper. Papers will be graded both on content and form. All assignments are due at the *beginning* of class on the date it is due, or it will be considered a late paper. Late assignments will be penalized 10% for each day late. This means, if you turn it in after I collect them at the beginning of class, they will be a 10% deduction. Please come see me immediately if you are having problems with the course material or assignments. I strongly recommend that you familiarize yourself with the resources available to you at the KU Writing Center, (<http://www.ku.edu/~writing/>). The Writing Center has several invaluable on-line resources such as writing guides, on-line consultations, and individual consultation time, and "Writers Roost" where you can meet consultants around campus. No matter your skill level, there are things here that can help you advance to the next level of successful writing.

Participation, in class assignments, quizzes: As this is an upper-division course, participation features as a significant portion of your grade, and of course you must be present to participate. You will earn your participation grade based on frequent quality participation. I do not expect you to participate in every single class, but to earn an A you must provide quality responses and contributions to the discussion and lectures on a regular basis. By quality, I mean you must demonstrate that you have read and thought about the material for the day's discussion. Merely debating your classmates for the sake of debating may not substantially add to your grade. Students who participate less frequently but with more substance often earn higher participation grades than those who speak every day and do not substantially contribute to the class. If discussion slows, I may likely call on you for your input. Asking questions of me and of your classmates counts as valuable participation. Part of participation is also listening – to what others are saying and to what I am saying. If your behavior during class is distracting or inappropriate (this means laughing inappropriately, talking, making noises, writing homework for another class, reading, etc.) your participating grade will suffer. Please be considerate of others, and you may expect consideration from them. We will also have occasional assignments based on the class material – short response papers, quizzes, and discussion questions.

Fishbowl Panel Discussion or Blackboard Discussion: In this assignment, you will be the experts for the day on a particular topic and reading. You will form a panel in front of the class, and we will collectively discuss your opinions, thoughts, reflections on the readings for the day and how they connect to the other theories we have been discussing. You also have the option of participating in a Blackboard Discussion group if you choose not to be in the fishbowl for the day. We will discuss the details of this assignment in class.

Reading Journals: These journals will include entries for each of the class readings, and should be completed before coming to class the day the reading is discussed, although you may add to your thoughts on the readings following class discussion for the day. The objective of these entries is to help prepare you for class discussion as well as to enhance your critical reading skills. Questions for the readings are posted on BlackBoard. I will take up the journals four times during the semester. The entries will be evaluated for their content, form, analytical depth, and comprehensiveness. All journal entries should be word processed. You may omit one reading for each journal period. All other missing entries above those will be counted against your overall grade. There are only 10 readings for the final journal period, and you may still omit one, for a total of nine entries.

Graduate Students

Graduate students will meet with me during the first week of classes to discuss your role in the course and your assignments. Graduate students should be prepared to meet regularly with as a group or individually to discuss your papers and the class.

Graduate Student Grading:

| | |
|---|-------|
| Participation | 12.5% |
| Leading Class Discussion or Review essay on Gender Seminar | 12.5% |
| 3 Deliberative Essays (25% each) | 75% |

Your grade at the end of the semester will be determined on a ten-point straight percentage scale.
90-100=A; 80-89=B; 70-79=C; 60-69=D; 59 or below=F

Deliberative Essays (Three at 25% each)

These take-home essays are to serve as a way to demonstrate your understanding and critical analysis of the readings, ideas, and theories of the course. These essays should not simply be summaries of the readings, but you should strive for original analysis and deep critiques of the works we are using. The actual text of these papers is to be between 7-9 pages in length. Late papers will be penalized.

GRAD PAPER ONE Due Oct. 2 for Units One and Two

GRAD PAPER TWO Due Nov. 13 for Units Three and Four

GRAD PAPER THREE Due Dec. 6 for Unit Five

Gender Seminar Review Essay (12.5%)

There are four Gender Lectures this fall at the Hall Center. These lectures are designed specifically for graduate students and faculty, and they are intended to be places where leading scholars present works in progress for constructive critique and suggestions. I expect that you will attend as many of these as possible, and you should read the presenter's paper before the seminar and go prepared to ask questions. You should pick one of the lectures/papers and write a short review essay, as if you were a reviewer for a journal where this paper was submitted for publication. The review should be between 2-3 pages long, should be a constructive critique of the paper, with ideas for improvement, suggested works or theories for the author, and overall analysis of the paper. The review will be due 8 days following the presentation at the Hall Center.

**One exception is the final gender seminar, which falls during finals week. I will need that paper by Friday, Dec. 14.

Please submit them in class or in my mailbox in the **Political Science Department on the 5th Floor of Blake Hall**. Please see me if you cannot attend any of these lectures.

TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS

August 16

Introductions

We will discuss how does this course fit into your major, into your college career, and into your long-term plans. We will cover the expectations and requirements of the course, as well as your responsibilities for the success of this course.

UNIT ONE:

Introduction to Contemporary Feminist Political Theory

August 21

1. *Virginia Sapiro: "Feminist Studies and Political Science – and Vice Versa"
2. *Susan Moller Okin: "Gender, the Public, and the Private"

August 23

3. *Anne Sisson Runyan "The 'State' of Nature: A Garden Unfit for Women and Other Living Things"
4. *Jill Steans: "Gender, Feminism, and International Relations"

August 28

5. HS: The Combahee River Collective: "The Combahee River Collective Statement"
6. *Patricia Hill Collins: "What's in a name? Womanism, black feminism, and beyond. *Black Scholar* (Black World Foundation), Winter/Spring96, Vol. 26 Issue 1, p9-18.

August 30

7. HS: Cherrie Moraga: "From a Long Line of Vendidas: Chicanas and Feminism"

September 4

8. *Cheryl Johnson-Odom: "Who's to Navigate and Who's to Steer? A Consideration of The Role of Theory in Feminist Studies"

UNIT TWO:

Constructions of Gender and The Politics of Sexual Identity

September 6

9. *Judith Butler: "Doing Justice to Someone: Sex Reassignment and Allegories of Transsexuality" Undoing Gender. Routledge, 2004.
10. HS: Suzanne Kessler: "The Medical Construction of Gender: Case Management of Intersexed Infants."

September 11

11. HS: Judith Halberstam: "Automating Gender: Postmodern Feminism in the Age of the Intelligent Machine."

September 13

Reading Journals Due for readings 1-11

12. *Library Electronic Reserve*: Rich, Adrienne Cecile. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (1980) Journal of Women's History. Volume 15, Number 3, Autumn 2003.
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_womens_history/toc/jowh15.3.html

September 18

13. *Library Electronic Reserve*: Nestle, Joan, "Wars and Thinking" Journal of Women's History. Volume 15, Number 3, Autumn 2003. http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_womens_history/toc/jowh15.3.html

14. *Library Electronic Reserve*: Wu, Judy Tzu-Chun. "Asian American History and Racialized Compulsory Deviance" Journal of Women's History. Volume 15, Number 3, Autumn 2003. http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_womens_history/toc/jowh15.3.html

September 20

15. *Library Electronic Reserve*: Richardson, Mattie Udora. "No More Secrets, No More Lies: African American History and Compulsory Heterosexuality" Journal of Women's History. Volume 15, Number 3, Autumn 2003. http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_womens_history/toc/jowh15.3.html

16. *Library Electronic Reserve*: Kafer, Alison. "Compulsory Bodies: Reflections on Heterosexuality and Able-bodiedness" Journal of Women's History. Volume 15, Number 3, Autumn 2003. http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_womens_history/toc/jowh15.3.html

September 25

17. *Judith Halberstam, "The Brandon Archive." *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subculture Lives*. New York University Press, 2005.

UNIT THREE: Difference, Subjectivity, and the Politics of Pornography

September 27

18. HS: Catherine MacKinnon: "On Difference and Dominance"

19. HS: Joan Scott "Deconstructing Equality-Versus Difference: Or, The Uses Of Post-structuralist Theory for Feminism"

October 2

20. *Kimberle Crenshaw: "Demarginalizing the Intersections of Race and Sex: Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics"

October 4

21. *Andrea Dworkin: "Against the Male Flood: Censorship, Pornography, and Equality"

22. *Catherine MacKinnon: "Only Words" (1993).

Film: Frontline: American Porn

October 9

Reading Journals Due for readings 12-22

23. *Wendy Brown: "The Mirror of Pornography"

October 11

Fall Break

Unit Four: Conceptualizations of Gender, Globalization, and Militarism

October 16

24. HS: Sara Ruddick: "Notes Toward a Feminist Peace Politics"

October 18

No Class - work on Essay

25. *Library Electronic Reserve*: Sara Ahmed

October 22, MONDAY:

Special Event: Sara Ahmed Lecture, 7:30 p.m. Woodruff Auditorium

October 23

Special Class Event - CLASS WILL MEET IN THE HALL CENTER

Sara Ahmed Question and Answer Session: Tuesday, October 23, 10-11:30

Hall Center Conference Hall

UNDERGRAD PAPER ONE Due Oct. 25 at the beginning of class

October 25

26. Enloe, "Crafting a Global 'Feminist Curiosity'"

27. Enloe, "How Does National Security Become Militarized"

October 30

28. Enloe, "Paying Close Attention to Women inside Militaries"

29. Enloe, "Wielding Masculinities inside Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo"

November 6

30. Enloe, "Demilitarizing a Society in a Globalized World"

31. Enloe, "The Diverse Lives of Militarized and Demilitarized Women"

November 8

32. *Carla Corroto: "The Politics of Masculinity and Sacred Space." [Journal of Architectural Education](#); Nov2001, Vol. 55 Issue 2, p113, 5p

33. *Robin Riley: "Hidden Soldiers" [Women's Review of Books](#); Sep2004, Vol. 21 Issue 12, p22, 2p

UNIT FIVE: Ethnicity, Class, Postcoloniality, and the Second Wave the International Feminism

November 13

Reading Journals Due for Readings 23-33

34. HS: Patricia J. Williams, "On Being the Object of Property"

November 15

35. *Audre Lorde "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House,"

36. *Bell Hooks: "Learning in the Shadow of Race and Class. Chronicle of Higher Education, 11/17/2000, Vol. 47 Issue 12, pB14, 3p;

November 20

37. HS: Amy Kaminsky, "Gender, Race, Raza"

November 22

University Holiday

November 27

38. *M. Jacqui Alexander and Chandra Mohanty "Genealogies, Legacies, Movements"

39. *Ien Ang: "I'm a Feminist But... 'Other' Women and Postnational Feminism"

November 29

40. HS: Marnia Lazreg: "Feminism and Difference: The Perils of Writing as a Woman On Women in Algeria"

41. HS: Rey Chow: "Violence in the Other Country: China as Crisis, Spectacle, and Woman"

December 4

42. *Haleh Afshar: "Women and the Politics of Fundamentalism in Iran"

43. *Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva: "People or Population: Toward a New Ecology Of Reproduction"

December 6

Conclusions

We will end our semester with a discussion of the class, discussing the major theories and themes of the year, and how they relate to your major and your long-term plans.

Reading Journals Due Dec. 6 for Readings 34-43 at the beginning of class

Undergrad Paper Two Due Dec. 6 at the beginning of class