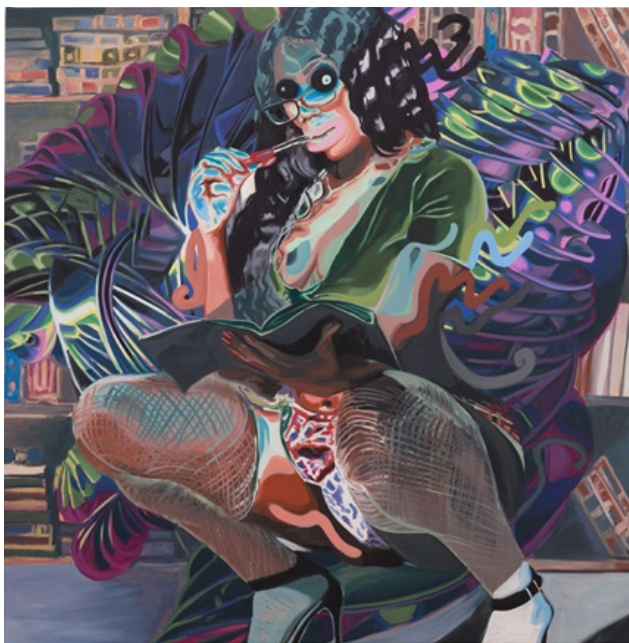


Feminist Theory: Spring 2020



Caitlin Cherry, *Sapiosexual Leviathan* (2018)

Instructor: Dr. Jillian Hernandez

E-mail: jillianhernandez@ufl.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays, 1:30-3:30pm and by appointment

Office Location: Ustler Hall 304

Course Meetings: Fridays, 12:50-3:50pm

MCDA Suite, Reitz Union, Room 2201

Course Overview:

Feminist theory is much more than an academic formation, it is the product of labor, life, and imagination. It is crafted in kitchens, libraries, sidewalks, forests, factories, and studios. Beyond providing insights into how oppressive systems work and reproduce themselves, feminist theory offers pathways for creating new visions, realities, and relations. The aim of this course is to provide a space for the study of feminist theory in its various incarnations, primarily textual, but also visual, performative, and sonic. The primary focus of the content will be on recent work in feminist theory, and contemporary debates around intersectionality and the place of trans studies within Women's Studies. We will trouble the boundaries between feminist, queer, and trans knowledge formations while accounting for their discrete theoretical interventions, genealogies, and politics. Black feminism is a locus of energy in feminist theory at the moment, and the course reflects this. My hope is that the work we engage invites you to develop your own theories, and to explore the linkages between feminist theory and Black, Native, Latinx, Postcolonial, Disability, and Ethnic Studies.

Required Texts

Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *M Archive: After the End of the World* (2018, Duke University Press)

Anne Anlin Cheng, *Ornamentalism* (2018, Oxford University Press)

Marquis Bey, *Them Goon Rules: Fugitive Essays on Radical Black Feminism* (2019, The University of Arizona Press)

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

Laboria Cuboniks, *The Xenofeminist Manifesto: Toward a Politics of Alienation* (2018, Verso Books)

All other texts available as PDFs on Canvas or via online link on syllabus.

Grading and Assignments

I calculate grades in this course using a point system. Participation and assignments have corresponding point values that add up to a maximum of 100. Point values for assignments are listed below. I use this scale in determining your final grade.

100-90 points A / 89-85 B+ / 84-80 points B

Participation (20 points): We learn best when we all show up and prepare ourselves to engage. Facilitating and participating in a 3-hour seminar discussion entails labor, and that labor should be respected and distributed with equity. Not completing the assigned reading and/or failing to participate places a greater burden on others to keep the conversation going. I understand that at times other commitments may keep you from being able to read everything that is assigned. When this occurs, I suggested skimming or reading selections from each of the assigned materials so that you can participate in seminar.

Class Provocation (10 points): Each student will offer a class provocation for one seminar meeting. Rather than a standard seminar facilitation, this is a short presentation of questions, commentary, or media at the beginning of class (no more than 10 minutes) that will aim to provoke conversation regarding the day's materials (you do not need to provide a summary of the material). The provocation should address all of the assigned materials, individually and/or thematically.

You can choose to provoke dialogue about; 1-the central argument(s) of the scholarship being engaged, 2-the theoretical and methodological approaches utilized and innovated by the scholars, 3-the potential social, cultural, and political stakes of the work, 4-how the work connects to other scholarship we have engaged in the class. Provocateurs can utilize media

(such as short video screenings), group activities (such as free writing or creative writing exercises), and other methods to create a dynamic space.

Feminist Object Share (10 points): What objects (communities, ideas, people, things) orient your feminism? If possible, bring it to class and share it with us. If not, create a surrogate object that embodies/symbolizes it. You will share the object during the course meeting of your choosing following (or during) the Object Relations/Desire unit of the course. The object can be something un-real, from alternate world. It can be directly inspired by course material, or not. This assignment is about creating or presenting a material manifestation of your relationship to feminist theory.

Fem Theory Playlist (10 points): You will create a list of songs or videos (as in a YouTube mix) inspired by what you are learning in class and share it via the Tumblr page. You will briefly discuss the playlist and share a song/video from it in the class session following the posting. You must post your playlist before our last meeting of the semester so that you can share it.

(4) Response Papers (5 points each): You will submit four 2-3 page response papers on Canvas during the course of the seminar on the weeks of your choice. **Response papers are due on Canvas before our class meeting time on the date we are discussing the readings.** Response papers **are not summaries**, they are tools for working through the material and thinking about how the work can expand (or not) your scholarly, artistic, and social justice interests. These thinking papers can be critical, open-ended, and/or personal. What I am looking for is an earnest engagement with the work. Make sure that your papers engage with all of the readings assigned for the week you choose, although more emphasis on one or two within that context is acceptable. This assignment is intended for critical reflection, extensive summary of the main arguments of the texts is not needed and should be avoided.

(2) Response Blogs (5 points each): Response blogs are short (350 word max), informal responses to the course material, written for a broad audience. You are welcome to use the post creatively and augment it with audio and/or visual media. They can also be written in poetic or experimental prose. They can be submitted for any readings of your choice but must be submitted by our last seminar meeting. (You cannot submit a Tumblr post and response paper on the same material.)

Final Paper: Feminist Theory in Process (20 points): You will craft a paper that explores your own interests in feminist theory. This could be the presentation of your own theory that is supported by other scholarship, an analysis of a particular strand or strands of feminist theory, a draft chapter of your thesis/dissertation or other project that utilizes feminist theory, or a critical paper that applies analytical pressure to some of the concepts we engaged. We can consider alternative approaches as well. The paper should be between 12-15 double spaced pages (12pt font). I expect for you to utilize some course material in addition to relevant scholarship you find on your own. **We should meet to discuss your final paper topic by March 20th. You will then submit the paper on Canvas by noon on April 29th.** A works cited page in the format you are most familiar with in your field is required.

Course Policies

• Attendance

Since we only meet once a week and have a discussion-based class, attendance is extremely important. You may miss 2 class meetings without influencing your grade. Think of these as “personal days” at work. I do not need to be informed of why you are not in class. If you will miss several seminars in a row or will go beyond this limit please do contact me. Every unexcused or undocumented absence thereafter will affect your final grade, 10 points will be deducted for each absence past this limit. In order to be counted as present you must arrive on time and stay until class concludes.

• Participation and Discussion Guidelines

You are required to bring course texts to class in either hard copy form, or on your laptop/tablet, as we will often read extensive excerpts of texts together. Failure to come to class with the reading will decrease your participation grade.

You are required to bring a notebook and writing utensil to class, as we will sometimes conduct writing and other creative exercises during lecture and discussion section time.

We will collectively determine additional community guidelines for seminar discussions.

• Correspondence

I can answer questions during office hours or via e-mail. Please be aware that I receive a high volume of e-mails, if your query is time sensitive please indicate that in the subject line. Questions that require substantive engagement, such as commentary on an assignment, would be best addressed during office hours. I will expect for you to check your UF e-mail once a day in the event that there is a schedule change or if I need to send you important information. Class alerts will be sent via the Canvas system.

• Academic Integrity

Whether intentional or inadvertent, plagiarism is a serious violation. All work submitted in this course must be your own. The use of sources such as ideas, quotations, paraphrases, or anything written by someone else must be properly acknowledged and cited. If you have questions about the proper citation of sources, please ask me. Students who plagiarize, or who cheat on an exam, will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with University policy.

- **Electronic Devices and Laptops**

Cell phones must be turned off or set to silent in the classroom. If you must take an urgent call or send an important message please quietly exit the room. Excessive disruption of class for use of cell phones will negatively impact your participation grade.

Laptops and tablets can be utilized solely for the purpose of taking notes. This privilege is contingent upon responsible use of these devices. If I notice or am informed that students are being distracted by improper use of such technology they will no longer be allowed in class.

- **Late Submission of Assignments**

Please contact me in advance if you foresee an issue with turning an assignment in on time so that we can come up with an alternative arrangement.

Accessibility:

I am committed to making learning in this course accessible to all. Please contact me to discuss any learning needs that you may have. You can also access the resources listed below.

UF Disability Resource Center celebrates disability identity as a valued aspect of diversity. We champion a universally accessible community that supports the holistic advancement of individuals with disabilities.

<https://disability.ufl.edu/>
001 Building 0020 (Reid Hall). For information, call 352-392-8565 or email accessUF@ufsa.ufl.edu

UF Counseling and Wellness Center offers individual counseling, wellness counseling, couples counseling, problem solving help, CERC crisis services, and other assistance:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/>
3190 Radio Road; (352) 392-1575 (8am-5pm, Monday through Friday)

Sexual Harassment:

Sexual Harassment is unacceptable anywhere on UF's campus. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see:

http://www.ufsa.ufl.edu/faculty_staff/fees_resources_policies/sexual_harassment/

Sexual Content Notice:

Some of the required materials in this class include explicit depictions and/or descriptions of nudity and sexual acts. Some materials describe or depict experiences of sexual trauma. I have assigned these works to facilitate learning in girls' studies. If you believe engagement with these materials would likely cause you significant discomfort it may be in your interest to drop the course.

CONSIDER ADDING A CERTIFICATE IN WOMEN'S STUDIES

If you are taking this course, you are likely only 9 credits away from earning a Certificate (12 credits total) that will appear on your transcript and can be listed on your CV. The *Certificate in Women's Studies* (WST) is designed for graduate students from any discipline who wish to focus on interdisciplinary issues related to feminist theory and practice. All graduate students in an MA or PhD program from all colleges at UF are eligible to enroll in this program. You can also do a Certificate in *Gender and Development*. For more information see: <http://wst.ufl.edu/graduate-studies/graduate-certificates/graduate-certificate-in-womens-studies/> And contact Dr. Broad (klbroad@ufl.edu) with any questions.

Course Schedule: *Subject to Change*

January 10th: Introduction

Feminist Work/Feminist Orientations

January 17th: bell hooks, "Theory as Liberatory Practice," Gloria Anzaldúa, "Gestures of the Body: Escribiendo Para Idear" and "Let us be the healing of the wound; The Coyolxauhqui Imperative—La Sombra y el sueño"; Sarah Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, pages 1-20; "A Killjoy Survival Kit" and "A Killjoy Manifesto"

January 24th: Luce Irigaray "When Our Lips Speak Together"; Leo Bersani "Is the Rectum a Grave?"; Lynne Huffer "Are the Lips a Grave?"; Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence"

Theories of Gender Variance

January 31st: Judith Butler, excerpt from *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, "Phantasmatic Identification and the Assumption of Sex," Kara Keeling, "Looking for M-: Queer Temporality, Black Political Possibility, and Poetry from the Future", Gayle Salamon, "The Boys of the Lex: Transgender and Social Construction"; In-class screening of *The Aggressives*

February 7th: C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*, Introduction and Chapters 1, 2, and 4; Cael M. Keegan, "Getting Disciplined: What's Trans* About Queer Studies Now"

February 14th: No class, presenting at College Art Association conference

Race, Colonialism, Slavery, and the Impossibility of Representation

February 21st: Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book"; Samantha Pinto, "Black Feminist Literacies: Ungendering Flesh, and Post-Spillers Epistemologies of Embodied and Emotional Justice"; Saidiya Hartman "Venus in Two Acts"; Gayatri Spivak "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

February 28th: Marquis Bey, *Them Goon Rules: Fugitive Essays on Radical Black Feminism*

Spring Break week of March 2nd

Intersectionality

March 13th: Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," "Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality 'I wanted to come up with an everyday metaphor that anyone could use'" <https://www.newstatesman.com/lifestyle/2014/04/kimberl-crenshaw-intersectionality-i-wanted-come-everyday-metaphor-anyone-could> ; Vivian May, "Intersectionality", Jasbir K. Puar, "I Would Rather Be a Cyborg than a Goddess: Becoming-Intersectional in Assemblage Theory."

(Recommended: Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto")

March 20th : Selections from Jennifer Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality*, Introduction and chapters 1, 3, 4

Object Relations/Desire

March 27th: Juana María Rodríguez, "Latina Sexual Fantasies: The Remix", Katherine Behar, Introduction: *Object Oriented Feminism*, Amber Jamilla Musser, *Sensual Excess: Queer Femininity and Brown Jouissance*," chapters 2 and 3

April 3rd: Anne Anlin Cheng, *Ornamentalism*

Disability

April 10th: Alison Kafer, "Time for Disability Studies and a Future for Crips" from *Feminist, Queer, Crip*; Selection from Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's *Dreaming Disability Justice*; Jasbir K. Puar, Introduction and "Disabled Diaspora, Rehabilitating State: The Queer Politics of Reproduction in Palestine/Israel" from *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability*

Feminism at the End of the World

April 17th: Alexis Pauline Gumbs, *M Archive: After the End of the World*; and *The Xenofeminist Manifesto* by Laboria Cuboniks (Black Feminist Walk)

Final papers due by noon on April 29th