

Feminist Theory: Spring 2021



City Girls

Instructor: Dr. Jillian Hernandez

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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 10am-12pm via Zoom Room and by appointment

Zoom Room: <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/7897322769>

Course Meetings: Mondays, Period 6-8 via Canvas Zoom

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. 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

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)

Daphne V. Taylor-Garcia, *The Existence of the Mixed Race Damnés: Decolonialism, Class, Gender, Race* (2018, Rowan and Littlefield)

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 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.

- **Zoom Participation Policy:** *The participation portion of your grade for this class will be calculated on the basis of your attendance and your participation in class activities. Since the pedagogical approach of this course depends heavily on student engagement and interaction, you are required, at a minimum, to participate in class activities through the audio function of Zoom. Your video presence is invited as well.*
- **Zoom Recording Policy:** *Our class sessions may be audio visually recorded for students in the class to refer back and for enrolled students who are unable to attend live. Students who participate with their camera engaged or utilize a profile image are agreeing to have their video or image recorded. If you are unwilling to consent to have your profile or video image recorded, be sure to keep your camera off and do not use a profile image. Likewise, students who un-mute during class and participate orally are agreeing to have their voices recorded. If you are not willing to consent to have your voice recorded*

during class, you will need to keep your mute button activated and communicate exclusively using the "chat" feature, which allows students to type questions and comments live. The chat will not be recorded or shared. As in all courses, unauthorized recording and unauthorized sharing of recorded materials is prohibited.

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.

(6) 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.

Race/Labor/Sex/Money Collaborative Analysis (10 points): You will partner with a fellow student to present an analysis of how contemporary women hip hop artists engage and theorize issues of racialized gender, labor, value (as symbolized via money), and sexuality. Your analysis will draw on relevant material that we have engaged in class. Artists will include City Girls, Megan Thee Stallion, Nicki Minaj, and Cardi B. You and your partner will conduct an in-depth analysis of how a song or several songs address these questions, and share your presentation via Zoom. There is no written component.

Final Paper: Feminist Theory in Process (30 points/10 points presentation/20 points for paper): 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**

28th. A works cited page in the format you are most familiar with in your field is required. You will conduct a 7 minute presentation on the subject of your paper on the final day of class.

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.

• 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.

• 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 feminist theory. 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 11th: Introduction

January 18th: No class/MLK Holiday

Feminist Work/Feminist Orientations

January 25th: 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”

Theorizing the Production Gender and Racialized Difference

February 1st: 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”; C. Riley Snorton, *Black on Both Sides: A Racial History of Trans Identity*, Chapter 1

February 8th: “Theorising Gender, Sexuality, and Settler Colonialism: An Introduction” Scott Lauria Mogensen; “Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections Between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy,” Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, Anjie Morriel; “Securing Navajo National Boundaries: War, Patriotism, Tradition and the Diné Marriage Act of 2005” Jennifer Nez Dentedale.

February 15th: “Orientalism and Middle East Feminist Studies” Lila Abu-Lughod, *Ornamentalism*, Anne Anlin Cheng, Introduction and Chapter 1

February 22nd: *The Existence of the Mixed Race Damnés: Decolonialism, Class, Gender, Race*, Daphne V. Taylor-Garcia

Erotics/Labor/Value

March 1st: “Uses of the Erotic, The Erotic as Power” Audre Lorde; “Latina Sexual Fantasies: The Remix” Juana Maria Rodriguez, “From the Freaks of Freaknik to the Freaks of Magic City: Black Women, Androgyny, Dance, and Profane Sites of Memory” from L.H. Stallings’s *Funk the Erotic: Transaesthetics and Black Sexual Cultures*

March 8th: Introduction, *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*, Roderick A. Ferguson; Introduction, *In the Break: The Aesthetics of the Black Radical Tradition*, Fred Moten; “On Being Wrong and Feeling Right: Cherrie Moraga and Audre Lorde” from *Death Beyond Disavowal: The Impossible Politics of Difference*, Grace Kwungwon Hong, Instagram TV @Kenya9 video “Don’t Be Pu\$\$y Whipped, Whip that Pussy! (or “Pay Me, Fuck You!) Nov. 6, 2020

March 15th: Erotics/Labor/Value collaborative analysis presentations

March 22nd: Self-care day, no class

Intersectionality

March 29th: : 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”; “A Love Letter from a Critic, or Notes on the Intersectionality Wars” Jennifer C. Nash, from *Black Feminism Reimagined: After Intersectionality*

Disability

April 5th: “DeVine's Cut: Public Memory and the Politics of Martydom” from C. Riley Snorton’s *Black on Both Sides*, 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, “Disabled Diaspora, Rehabilitating State: The Queer Politics of Reproduction in Palestine/Israel” from *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability*

Fugitivity as Future Orientation

April 12th: “Trans Capable: Fungibility, Fugitivity, and the Matter of Being” from C. Riley Snorton’s *Black on Both Sides*; Marquis Bey, *Them Goon Rules* (sections Preface, Unruly, Three Theses)

April 19th: Presentations on final projects

Final papers due by noon on April 28th