

Feminist Political Thought
POS 4931 / WST 4930
Spring 2024
T 1:55-2:45pm / Th 1:55-3:50 pm
Flint Hall 0117

Dr. Stacey Liou (she/hers)
Office Hours: T/Th 5-6 pm (or by appointment)
[Calendly Link](#)

Email: staceyliou@ufl.edu
Office: Anderson 304
Tel: 352-273-2344

Description

This course introduces students to feminist political thought, with particular attention to contemporary debates animating feminist thought and practice. We will read and examine texts that critically engage liberal, Marxist, and other political theories, as well as actually existing forms of domination, from a variety of feminist perspectives. We will consider how feminist thinkers engage, extend, and challenge each other, as well as various approaches to political action and solidarity. Among the themes we will discuss are the boundaries of the category “woman,” the historical struggle and justifications for women’s political equality, the multiplicity of women’s experiences including along various axes of identity and difference, and the potential for emancipatory action. We will explore the extent to which these ideas are relevant to and visible in contemporary sociopolitical life.

Goals

You will be required to think critically and independently, and to learn how to support your arguments with logic and evidence. By the end of this class you will be able to speak intelligently about various strands of feminist political thought, key themes and issues of contention, the social and historical circumstances that have animated and reflected different ways of approaching feminist political thought, and how the problems and concepts discussed illuminate contemporary political life and envision feminist futures.

Requirements

1. Attendance & Participation (5%, 15%)

This is an advanced undergraduate seminar, and its success relies on your active participation. Attendance is mandatory, and unexcused absences will affect your final grade. Excused absences must be consistent with university policies and require appropriate documentation. Additional information can be found [here](#).

Participation includes in-class participation and weekly discussion posts on Canvas. Both forms of participation include analyzing assigned readings, bringing personal insight to them, using the texts to consider current events, referencing relevant outside materials, and responding thoughtfully to classmates. Discussion posts entail making two contributions to the weekly Canvas thread *before* we meet, one with your own reflections on a session’s assigned readings, and the other responding to a classmate’s post with a question and/or comment. A rubric for evaluating participation is posted online.

All readings should be completed prior to class on the dates listed below. Allow yourself enough time for these readings because they are complex and require close attention.

Many topics covered in the course can be controversial, difficult, and personally felt. You will undoubtedly disagree with some of the texts and theories that we read, just as they often disagree with each other. I encourage you to share your perspectives on them in contributing to an open and respectful discussion. Your respect and courtesy toward others are an integral part of our time together – they are key to making this course enjoyable and intellectually stimulating.

2. In-Class Exams (50%; 25% each)

You will take two in-class, essay-based exams on **February 8** and **April 9**. Exam material will be cumulative with a focus on recently discussed texts and themes.

Note that these exam dates cannot be changed. If you foresee a genuine emergency or conflict, speak to me as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate accommodation.

3. Take-Home Essay (30%)

You will submit a short (1,000 words) essay, due at **6pm on April 23**, in response to a prompt provided 48 hours in advance. Additional detail, including a rubric, will be provided in class.

Required Texts

All readings can be found as PDFs on the course's Canvas page. Course material and details in this syllabus are subject to change. I will announce any such changes in class and on the Canvas course page.

Grading Policy

Late assignment submissions will not be accepted, except in the case of documented illness, legal, or civic/university duty situations. If you miss an assignment and have a valid excuse, email me within the same week to discuss making up the work.

Requirements for class attendance and assignments are consistent with university policies that can be found at: catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/.

The following cutoffs will be used for grades:	A 94–100%	A- 90–94%	
	B+ 87–90%	B 84–87%	B- 80–84%
	C+ 77–80%	C 74–77%	C- 70–74%
	D+ 67–70%	D 64–67%	D- 60–64% E < 60%

Accommodations

Students requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, you will receive an accommodation letter to share with me. If you need accommodation, please follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/>. I take this feedback seriously and use your constructive feedback to improve the course for future offerings. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open.

Resources

Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, you will receive an accommodation letter to share with me. If you need accommodation please follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Health & Wellness Resources

If you or someone you know is struggling with any crisis including but not limited to gender, sexual, racial, or domestic violence, there are many community and University of Florida resources available. Some of these include:

- U Matter, We Care (umatter@ufl.edu, 352-392-1575, umatter.ufl.edu)
- RESPECT – UF Division of Student Affairs (respect.ufsa.ufl.edu)
- Counseling and Wellness Center – available 24/7 (352-392-1575, counseling.ufl.edu)
- Student Health Care Center (352-392-1161, shcc.ufl.edu)
- Multicultural & Diversity Affairs (352-392-1217, multicultural.ufl.edu)
- UFPD Office of Victim Services (352-392-1111, police.ufl.edu)
- UF Health Shands Emergency Room / Trauma Center (352-733-0111)

Academic Integrity

All students are required to abide by the University of Florida's Academic Honesty Guidelines, which may be viewed at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/honestybrochure.php>. Most obviously, this means cheating on exams and plagiarism on papers is completely unacceptable. Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to: submitting entire papers written by others, submitting portions of papers written by others, copying text without quotations and proper citation, or paraphrasing text without proper attribution in a footnote. In addition to harming your professional career, academic dishonesty will destroy your ability to learn from this class.

In other words, you must be the one producing all submitted assignments, and you must appropriately reference all source material, including the assigned texts. If you do not do both of these, you are committing academic dishonesty, which is grounds for a failing grade. If you're unsure, you should just cite it. If you have any questions about whether something counts as academic dishonesty, please contact me. I am happy to clarify these rules further.

In-Class Recording

While students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures, the ways these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only purposes allowed are for personal educational use, in connection with a complaint to the university, or as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Students may not publish recorded lectures without the instructor's written consent.

Schedule

January 9 (T) Introduction

January 11 (R) Equality

- Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (dedicatory letter, introduction, chs. 1-4)
- Olympe de Gouges, “Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen”
- Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Declaration of Sentiments”
- NOW Statement of Purpose

January 16 (T) Representation

- Jane Mansbridge, “Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women?”
- Margaret Marshment, “The Picture is Political”

January 18 (R) The State

- Catherine MacKinnon, “Reflections on Sex Equality Under the Law”
- Wendy Brown, “Finding the Man in the State” from *States of Injury*

January 23 (T) Public / Private

- Susan Moller Okin, “Gender, the Public, and the Private”
- Ananya Bhattacharjee, “The Public/Private Mirage”

January 25 (R) Reason / Emotion

- Mary Wollstonecraft, ch. 13 from *Vindication*
- Alison M. Jaggar, “Love and Knowledge”
- Audre Lorde, “The Uses of Anger” and “Uses of the Erotic”

January 30 (T) The Body

- Susan Bordo, “Introduction” to *Unbearable Weight*
- Rosemarie Garland-Thompson, “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory”

February 1 (R) Desire

- Amia Srinivasan, “Does Anyone Have The Right to Sex?” and “Coda: The Politics of Desire”

February 6 (T) Consent

- Carole Pateman, “Women and Consent”
- Melissa Febos, “I Spent My Life Consenting to Touch I Didn’t Want”

February 8 (R) **In-Class Exam**

February 13 (T) No Class

February 15 (R) Household & Reproductive Labors

- Silvia Federici, “Wages against Housework”
- Joan C. Tronto, “The ‘Nanny’ Question in Feminism”
- Angela Davis, “Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves”

February 20 (T) Work

- Betty Friedan, “The Problem that Has No Name”
- Anne-Marie Slaughter, “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All”
- bell hooks, “Rethinking the Nature of Work” and “Women at Work”

February 22 (R) Capitalism

- Catherine Rottenberg, “The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism”
- Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Women Workers and Capitalist Scripts”

February 27 (T) Sex and Gender

- Judith Butler, 1990 Preface, “Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions,”
Conclusion, 1999 Preface from *Gender Trouble*

February 29 (R) Queering Feminisms

- Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality & Lesbian Existence”
- Cathy J. Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens”

March 5 (T) Trans Politics

- Susan Stryker, “(De)Subjugated Knowledges”
- Cressida Heyes, “Feminist Solidarity after Queer Theory”

March 7 (R) Power & Freedom

- Iris Marion Young, “Five Faces of Oppression” from *Justice and the Politics of Difference*
- Nancy J. Hirschmann, “Toward a Feminist Theory of Freedom”

March 12, 14 Spring Break

March 19 (T) Who is Feminism For?

- Judith Butler, “Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire” from *Gender Trouble*

March 21 (R) Race

- Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement”
- Patricia Hill Collins, “The Politics of Black Feminist Thought”
- Gloria Anzaldúa, “La conciencia de la mestiza / Toward a New Consciousness”
- Mitsuye Yamada, “Invisibility is an Unnatural Disaster”
- Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”

March 26 (T) Intersectionality

- Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins”

March 28 (R) No Class (Dr. Liou at conference)

April 2 (T) Decolonizing Feminist Political Thought

- Celeste Liddle, “Intersectionality and Indigenous Feminism: An Aboriginal Woman’s Perspective”
- Andrea Smith, “American Studies without America”
- Mary Kathryn Nagle and Emma Lower, “What Will It Take to End Violence Against Native Women?”

April 4 (R) Feminism Across Borders

- Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes”

April 9 (T) **In-Class Exam**

April 11 (R) Feminist Futures: Abolition?

- Elizabeth Bernstein, “The Sexual Politics of the ‘New Abolitionism’”
- Mimi E. Kim, “Anti-Carceral Feminism”
- Jordie Davies, “Political Possibilities”

April 16 (T) Feminist Futures: Coalition-Building?

- Angela Davis & Elizabeth Martínez, “Coalition Building Among People of Color”
- bell hooks, “Sisterhood”
- Roxane Gay, “How to Be Friends With Another Woman”

April 18 (R) Feminist Futures: Re-Presentation?

- Alicia Garza, “A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement”
- Audre Lorde, “The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House” and “Poetry is Not a Luxury”

April 23 (T) Conclusion
Take-Home Essay Due 6pm