

**Feminist Political Thought**  
POS 4931 / WST 4930  
Spring 2022  
Tu 1:55-2:45 pm / Th 1:55-3:50 pm  
Fine Arts C 120

Professor Stacey Liou  
Office Hours: F 3-5pm

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**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**

Participation (20%)

This is an advanced undergraduate seminar, and its success relies on your active in-class participation. Attendance is mandatory and you should attend class ready to discuss the reading material assigned for that class meeting. Allow yourself enough time for these readings because the assigned texts are complex and require close attention. In-class participation includes bringing personal insight to the readings, using them to consider current events referencing relevant outside articles, and responding thoughtfully to classmates.

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.

Excused absences must be consistent with university policies and require appropriate documentation. Additional information can be found [here](#).

### Response Papers (40%; 20% each)

You will write two 4-5 page (1,000-1,250 words) response papers. Each paper should engage the readings from one class session of your choice (i.e., reading assignments from one Tuesday or Thursday). These papers are an opportunity for you to analyze, apply, and critique the concepts and themes presented in the readings and discussed in class.

Instead of merely summarizing the readings, you should critically engage their themes, assumptions, and arguments, noting parallels and points of agreement and difference. Present your stance in relation to them, making a persuasive and reasoned case for this stance by referencing previous material discussed in class and/or contemporary political events.

Submit the first paper by **Friday, February 4** and the second by **Thursday, March 3**, both on Canvas.

### Final Research Paper (25%)

You will write a research paper of 8-10 pages (2,000-2,500 words) on a topic of your choice that engages the thinkers and themes we discuss in our class. I will provide more detail on this assignment during the semester. Submit your final research paper on Canvas by **Thursday, April 21**.

### Final Research Paper Draft & Peer Review (15%)

On **Tuesday, April 5**, you will participate in an in-class peer review session with a pre-assigned partner. This will require that you submit your 4-5 page (1,250-1,500 words) draft on Canvas in advance, by **Thursday, March 31**.

In advance of the peer review session, you will review your partner's draft and prepare a 1-page (single-spaced) response to it. Please be respectful and provide constructive feedback so that they can strengthen their paper.

### **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. Requirements for class attendance and assignments are consistent with university policies that can be found at: [catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/](http://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/attendance-policies/).

The following cutoffs will be used for grades:

A 93–100%	A- 90–92%
B+ 87–89%	B 84–86%
C+ 77–79%	B- 80–83%
D+ 67–69%	C 74–76%
	C- 70–73%
	D 64–66%
	D- 60–63%
	E < 60%

**Office Hours**

I will hold office hours on Fridays from 3-5pm. Please take advantage of this time. I enjoy talking to students and look forward to getting to know you. It is especially important to contact me if you feel confused or that you're falling behind. You may also email me with concerns or questions you have or if you need to meet outside of designated office hours.

**Course Evaluations**

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://gatorevals.aa.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. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at the link provided above.

**Resources**Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, [www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/](http://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.

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

Financial and Covid-Related Services

In case of emergency financial need, UF's Aid-a-Gator program that provides students with emergency funding: <https://www.sfa.ufl.edu/aidagator/>. The program is intended to "help our students need to cover costs related to unanticipated travel, additional technology requirements, or other needs related to an emergency situation."

**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. Consequences for academic punishment can range up to automatically failing the course. If you have any questions about whether something counts as academic dishonesty, please contact me. I am happy to clarify these rules further.

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.

### Schedule

January 6 (R)            **Introduction**

January 11 (T)        **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"

January 13 (R)        **Rights and the State**

- NOW Statement of Purpose
- Catherine MacKinnon, "Reflections on Sex Equality Under the Law"
- Wendy Brown, "Finding the Man in the State" from *States of Injury*

January 18 (T)        **Representation**

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

January 20 (R)        **Public / Private**

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

January 25 (T)        **Reason / Emotion**

- Mary Wollstonecraft, ch. 13 and review ch. 1 from *Vindication*
- Alison M. Jaggar, "Love and Knowledge"

January 27 (R)        **The Body**

- Susan Bordo, "Introduction" and "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity" in *Unbearable Weight*
- Rosemarie Garland-Thompson, "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory"

February 1 (T)                    **Sex, Desire and Consent**

- Amia Srinivasan, “Does Anyone Have The Right to Sex?” and “Coda: The Politics of Desire”
- Carole Pateman, “Women and Consent”
- Melissa Febos, “I Spent My Life Consenting to Touch I Didn’t Want”

February 3 (R)                    **Work**

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

**\*Friday, February 4 – Response Paper #1 Due\***

Submit on Canvas

February 8 (T)                    **Household and Reproductive Labors**

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

February 10 (R)                    **Capitalism**

- Zillah Eisenstein, “Constructing a Theory of Capitalist Patriarchy and Socialist Feminism”
- Silvia Federici, “Wages against Housework”
- Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Women Workers and Capitalist Scripts”

February 15 (T)                    **Who is Feminism For?**

- Sandra Harding, “The Instability of the Analytical Categories of Feminist Theory”
- Judith Butler, “Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire” from *Gender Trouble*

February 17 (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, “Asian Pacific American Women and Feminism”
- Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”

February 22 (T)                    **Intersectionality**

- Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins”

February 24 (R)                    **Transnational Feminisms**

- Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes” and “Under Western Eyes Revisited”
- Saba Mahmood, “Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent”

March 1 (T)                    **Decolonizing Feminist Political Thought**

- Celeste Liddle, “Intersectionality and Indigenous Feminism: An Aboriginal Woman’s Perspective”
- Audra Simpson, “The Ruse of Consent and the Anatomy of Refusal”
- María Lugones, “Toward a Decolonial Feminism”

March 3 (R)                    **No Class**

**\*Thursday, March 3 – Response Paper #2 Due\***

Submit on Canvas

March 8, 10                    **Spring Break**

March 15 (T)                    **Sex and Gender**

- Judith Butler, selections from *Gender Trouble*

March 17 (R)                    **Queer Theories and Sexualities**

- Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality & Lesbian Existence”
- Cathy J. Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens”
- Cressida Heyes, “Feminist Solidarity after Queer Theory”

March 22 (T)                    **Between Man / Woman**

- Jack Halberstam, Introduction to *Female Masculinity*
- Ann Fausto Sterling, “The Five Sexes” and “The Five Sexes Revisited”
- Amia Srinivasan, “He, She, One, They, Ho, Hus, Hum, Ita”

March 24 (R)                    **Freedom**

- Hagar Kotef, “Little Chinese Feet Encased in Iron Shoes”
- Nancy J. Hirschmann, “Toward a Feminist Theory of Freedom”
- Angela Davis, speech at University of London’s Birkbeck School of Law

March 29 (T)                    **Feminism Beyond “Woman”**

- Donna Haraway, “A Cyborg Manifesto”

March 31 (R)                    **Redistribution or Recognition?**

- Nancy Fraser, “Social Justice in the Age of Identity Politics”

**\*Thursday, March 31 – Peer Review Draft Due\***

Submit on Canvas

April 5 (T)                    **Peer Review Session**

April 7 (R)                    **Feminist Solidarities?**

- Roxane Gay, “How to Be Friends With Another Woman”
- bell hooks, “Sisterhood”
- Alicia Garza, “A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement”
- Angela Davis & Elizabeth Martínez, “Coalition Building Among People of Color”

April 12 (T)                    **Feminist Commitments?**

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

April 14 (R)                    **Feminist Possibilities?**

- Sara Ahmed, “A Killjoy Manifesto” (from *Living a Feminist Life*)
- Audre Lorde, selections from *Sister Outsider*
- Hélène Cixous, “Laugh of the Medusa”

April 19 (T)                    **Conclusion**

- bell hooks, “Theory as Liberatory Practice”

**\*Thursday, April 21 – Research Paper Due\***  
Submit on Canvas Assignments