

**Feminist Political Thought**  
POS 6933 – Special Topics  
Fall 2023  
T 11:45-2:45, Dauer Hall 342

Professor Stacey Liou  
Office Hours: T 3-5 p.m.

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Anderson 304

**Description**

In this course we will investigate contemporary feminist political thought and epistemologies. We will explore how feminist thinkers have challenged existing norms, social constructs, and structures of power, as well as key debates and points of contention in feminist political thought. We will also examine ways of knowing, obstacles to producing knowledge, and the systemic silencing of certain voices. In so doing, we will explore the ways that problems of exclusion came to be scripted in terms of identity and a focus on epistemological debates about foundations, as well as the possibilities and limits of these conceptualizations of feminist politics.

**Goals**

At the end of the course, students will be able to identify and critically evaluate key questions, debates and theoretical approaches in contemporary feminist political thought; and will be expected to direct this knowledge to pursue a research project that engages or is otherwise relevant to key debates in the scholarly literature.

**Requirements**

Participation (20%)

This is a reading and discussion-focused seminar. Attendance is mandatory and students are expected to attend every class session. You are expected to come to the seminar having completed all the readings and prepared to actively discuss the assigned material, including any questions you have in response.

Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and require appropriate documentation.

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. While class sessions will be held online, your respect and courtesy toward others continue to be an integral part of our time together – it is key to making this course enjoyable and intellectually stimulating.

Discussion Leader (30%: 15% each)

In addition to regular participation, you will be responsible for leading the discussions during two seminar sessions. You should introduce the session's readings by situating them in larger debates, questions and genealogies. In this 10-15 minute introduction, your goal is to articulate two or three key questions or themes to orient our discussion. Because this course is structured around the assumption that all members have completed all of the readings as assigned, you should not summarize or describe them. You will sign up for your weeks during our first session.

**Research Paper (50%: 5% prospectus, 45% paper)**

You will write an original research paper, of 20-25 pages (5,000-6,000 words), on a topic of your choice that is also central to the material and issues we discuss in our seminar. By **Friday, November 20**, you are required to submit a 750-word prospectus of your paper and an annotated bibliography of materials. The final paper is due by **Friday, December 18**. Submit both on Canvas Assignments.

**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–	90–93%			
B+	87–90%	B	84–86%	B–	80–83%	
C+	77–80%	C	74–76%	C–	70–73%	
D+	67–70%	D	64–66%	D–	60–63%	E < 60%

**Office Hours**

Office hours will be held on Zoom at the hours indicated above. Please make an appointment at [www.calendly.com/staceyliou](http://www.calendly.com/staceyliou), or email me if you need to meet outside these hours. You may email me at my UF address or message me on Canvas, though for FERPA reasons I encourage you to communicate via Canvas when discussing any confidential matter.

**Course Evaluation**

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."

If you have a family member whose financial situation was affected by the Covid-19 crisis, especially loss of work hours or job, you can submit a revision petition for consideration of having that income reevaluated. UF is encouraging these students to complete the Financial Aid Revision Petitions for 2019-20 and 2020-21.

### **Academic Integrity**

All students must abide by UF's Academic Honesty Guidelines, which you may view at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/honestybrochure.php>. Plagiarism of any sort will result in failure of the course and potential expulsion from the program.

### **Required Texts**

Readings, including those suggested, are provided as PDFs on the course's Canvas page. You are responsible for any readings that are not posted; these are available by searching UF's library website.

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.

## **Schedule**

### **1. August 29 Introduction**

Reading

- Mary Dietz, "Current Controversies in Feminist Theory"
- Sharon Krause, "Contested Questions, Current Trajectories"
- Linda Zerilli, "Feminist Theory and the Canon of Political Thought"

*Optional*

- Noëlle McAfee and Katie B. Howard, "Feminist Political Philosophy"

### **2. September 5 Historical, I**

Reading

- Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (dedicatory letter, introduction, chapters 1-4, 13)
- NOW Statement of Purpose
- Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (introduction, chapters 1-2, 5-6)

### **3. September 12 Historical, II**

Reading

- Catharine MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (chapters 1, 4, 5, 6, 8, 12)
- Silvia Federici, "Wages against Housework," "Why Sexuality is Work" and "The Reproduction of Labor Power in the Global Economy and Unfinished Feminist Revolution"

- Angela Davis, “Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves” and “Racism, Birth Control and Reproductive Rights”
- Evelyn Nakano Glenn, “Racial Ethnic Women’s Labor”

## Optional

- Heidi Hartmann, “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism”

**4. September 19 Subject(s) of Feminism, I**

## Reading

- Sandra Harding, “The Instability of the Analytical Categories of Feminist Theory”
- Anne Fausto-Sterling, “The Five Sexes” and “The Five Sexes Revisited”
- Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (1990 + 1999 prefaces, sections 1 + 3, conclusion)
- Jack Halberstam, *Female Masculinity* (introduction)
- Barbara Smith, “Toward a Black Feminist Criticism”

## Optional

- Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (introduction + conclusion, chapter 12)
- Joan W. Scott, “Deconstructing Equality-versus-Difference”

**5. September 26 Production of Knowledge**

## Readings

- Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges”
- Susan Hekman, “Truth and Method”
- Joan W. Scott, “The Evidence of Experience”
- Patricia Hill Collins, “Comment on Hekman’s ‘Truth and Method’” and “Black Feminist Epistemology”
- Kristie Dotson, “Inheriting Patricia Hill Collins’s Black Feminist Epistemology”

## Optional

- Sandra Harding, “The Woman Question in Science to the Science Question in Feminism” and “Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology”

**6. October 3 Epistemological Silences, Violences**

## Readings

- Gayatri Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”
- Uma Narayan, “The Project of Feminist Epistemology”
- Saidiya Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts”
- Miranda Fricker, “Epistemic Oppression and Epistemic Privilege”
- Linda Martín Alcoff, “Epistemic Identities”

**7. October 10 Women of Color Feminisms**

## Readings

- Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement”
- Hortense Spillers, “Mama’s Baby, Papa’s Maybe”
- bell hooks, “Postmodern Blackness” and “Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness”
- Patricia Hill Collins, “Learning from the Outsider Within”
- Gloria Anzaldúa, “La conciencia de la mestiza / Toward a New Consciousness”

- Paula M. L. Moya, "Postmodernism, 'Realism,' and the Politics of Identity"
- Trinh Minh Ha, "Difference" and "Not You/Like You"

### 8. October 17 Intersectionalities

#### Readings

- Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins"
- Sumi Cho, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Leslie McCall, "Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies"
- Jennifer C. Nash, "Feminist Originalism" OR "Rethinking Intersectionality"
- Patricia Hill Collins, "Intersectionality's definitional dilemmas"
- Jasbir K. Puar, "'I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess'"
- Ange-Marie Hancock, "When Multiplication Doesn't Equal Quick Addition"

### 9. October 24 Queering+ Feminist Theories

#### Readings

- Cathy J. Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens"
- Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality & Lesbian Existence"
- Roderick A. Ferguson, "Queer of Color Critique" and "Of Our Normative Strivings"
- José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications* (introduction, chapters 6-8)
- Cressida Heyes, "Feminist Solidarity after Queer Theory"

#### Optional

- Lisa Duggan, "Queering the State"
- Andrea Smith, "Queer Theory and Native Studies"

### 10. October 31 No Class (Dr. Liou at conference)

### 11. November 7 Decolonizing Feminist Theory

#### Readings

- Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes" and "'Under Western Eyes' Revisited"
- Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety* (chapter 1)
- Lila Abu-Lughod, "The Romance of Resistance"
- Paula Gunn Allen, "Who Is Your Mother?" and "Kochinnenako in Academe"
- Andrea Smith, "Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change"
- María Lugones, "Toward a Decolonial Feminism"

#### Optional

- Sylvia Wynter, "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom"
- Anne McClintock, "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term 'Post-Colonialism'"

### 12. November 14 Subject(s) of Feminism, II

#### Readings

- Wendy Brown, *States of Injury* (introduction, chapters 1-3)
- Linda Zerilli, *Feminism & The Abyss of Freedom* (introduction, chapter 1, conclusion)
- Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto"

### 13. November 21 No Class (Thanksgiving) \*Prospectus + Annotated Bibliography Due

**14. November 28      Feminist Logics + Possibilities**

Readings

- Hélène Cixous, "Laugh of the Medusa"
- María Lugones, "Playfulness, 'World'-Travelling, and Loving Perception"
- Audre Lorde, "Uses of the Erotic," "The Uses of Anger" and "Poetry is Not a Luxury"
- Alicia Garza, "A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement"
- Adelyn Lim, "Transnational Organizing and Feminist Politics of Difference and Solidarity"

**15. December 5      Feminisms in Scholarship & Practice**

Readings

- Iris Marion Young, "Lived Body vs. Gender"
- Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* (A Note on Method, 1-42)
- Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (introduction, chapters 4+7, conclusions 1+2)

**\*Tuesday, December 12 – Research Paper Due\***