

The University of British Columbia
Sociology 414 Section 102
Feminist Theory: Theorizing Gendered and Sexualized Subjects
Course Syllabus

Class: September 10 - November 26 , Tuesdays, 2-5 pm

Location: Math 102

Instructor: Dr. Brandy Wiebe

E-mail: brandy.wiebe@ubc.ca

Assignments will not be accepted by email. Please don't contact me via Canvas

Office: ANSO 156

Office Hours: Tuesdays 12:30-1:30 pm or by appointment

Simply put, feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression.
- bell hooks, 2000

Course Description:

The purpose of this course is to engage students in an exploration of foundational feminist texts. We will examine these texts in relation to sociological theory exploring the ways that feminist-informed theoretical works have productively mined historical silences around gendered and sexualized ways of being. We will focus specifically on feminist explorations of social experiences of sexuality and gender. Sexuality and gender in this course are never assumed to be things that are 'natural' or essential to a person, rather we will explore these as things that are socially and historically constructed, a range of practices and identities that are differently privileged and excluded in various power relations and discourses. We will familiarize ourselves with 'the cannon' of feminist works but will not remain uncritical of it. Through its lectures and readings this course serves as an introduction to a range of feminist perspectives. Our aim is to critically engage with and use the texts read in this class to motivate our own interrogations of our everyday social worlds because feminism is most importantly not simply a range of theoretical perspectives but also a political commitment.

Course Format:

The course materials will indeed be challenging and you will be expected to stretch your theoretical and critical engagement with the topics we cover. Assigned readings will not be summarized in a lecture. The goal of the lecture is to explicate and elaborate on key issues in the assigned readings. Thus student facilitated seminars, class participation and discussion, all with the support of the lectures, will be central to this course. Student lead seminars are meant to critically engage the readings rather than summarize them. Students will explore what the readings accomplish, how they do this, how they are problematic, and within what discursive fields the works position themselves. Certainly differences of opinion encouraged through debate. Detailed guidelines for the seminars will be provided. Seminars will not replace individual students' independent reading but will deepen their understandings of the works and their applicability to our everyday lives. I encourage you to make the most of this valuable learning experience! I strive to

encourage a space where everyone's input can be respectfully heard and actively encouraged. Paramount in this classroom is the respect and dignity of all people involved. You will have multiple opportunities and ways to contribute to class discussion.

In most classes we will begin with approximately an hour lecture period followed by approximately 40 minutes of student presentation/facilitation on two of the day's class readings then we will have a break followed by another 40 minute student presentation/facilitation. OR TBA.

Course Readings:

Some readings are available online through UBC libraries on Canvas

In addition there is a:

Custom Course Pack: *Sociology 414: Feminist Theory*

Sold at the UBC Bookstore

Course Evaluation, Due Dates and Description:

Two Seminar Presentations: each one = **15%**, **Total = 30%**

Reflection: **5%**

Due in class **Tuesday, Nov 26**

Theory Paper Proposal: **5%**

Due in class **Tuesday, Oct 22**

Theory Paper: **40%**

Due in class **Tuesday, Nov 12**

Weekly Responses and Participation: **20%**

Due in class **beginning in Class Three, Sept 24**

Weekly Responses, 20%

Starting in **Class Three, Sept 24**, students will be responsible to submit a 1 page, double-spaced, 12 pt font engagement with any one concept or theoretical tool (ex: patriarchy, intersectionality, abjection) used in your assigned readings. Choose one concept and provide a working definition based on the authors work and explain how they use it to better understand and theorize the gendered and sexualized social world.

Students presenting on that day need not hand in a response. These responses will primarily be graded on completeness and then on quality of engagement.

Responses will ONLY be collected at the end of class and will not be accepted after this time. Emailed responses will not be accepted. There is one 'vacation/sick' day that each student is given wherein not getting a Response in will have no negative impact. Also, if you must leave class early talk to Dr. Wiebe and on that one day you may hand it in early. After that first day additional early departure Responses will not be accepted.

Seminar Presentation, 15% x 2 = 30%

Classes 3-12,

The first day of class you will have the opportunity to sign up for **two** seminar presentations on the assigned readings. You will be working with 2 or 3 other people in preparing a presentation including the following:

NOTE *Focus on the theoretical reading assigned (reading ‘a’) and use the ‘applied’ reading (reading ‘b’) to supplement your presentation*****

Part One: A brief **5 minute** engagement with any one concept or theoretical tool (ex: patriarchy, intersectionality, abjection) used in your assigned readings. Choose one concept and provide a working definition based on the author(s) work and explain how they use it to better understand and theorize the gendered and sexualized social world.

Part Two: The next **5 minute portion** seminar will allow the facilitators to present on a hypothetical **future research project** that was motivated by the theoretical work you are interrogating. In other words, what everyday social experience can be examined from the perspective of the readings theoretical arguments?

Part Three: In the remaining **30 minutes** your group will provide questions that can foster the class’ interrogation of the reading and *facilitate* class discussion and debate. Thoughtful questions will engage the key theoretical ideas directly.

You will be evaluated on the clarity of your overview of the concept you chose, the depth of your critical engagement with the readings, presentation quality, *collaboration* with your group, and most importantly your group’s ability to facilitate class discussion.

Reflection, 5%, Due in class Tuesday, Nov 26

After completing the Seminars you must hand in a **1 double spaced page reflection** (12 pt Times New Roman) on your role and on your colleagues’ role in the preparation and presentation of both seminar and how you would alter your approach next time around.

Theory Paper Proposal, 5%, Due in class on Tuesday, Oct 22

Theory Paper, 40%, Due in class on Tuesday, Nov 12

Proposal Length: **No more** than 1 page double spaced plus bibliography. 12 pt Times New Roman font.

Paper Length: **No more** than 7 pages double spaced plus bibliography. 12 pt Times New Roman font.

Proposal: Your proposal should describe your intended paper in a way that shows its relevance to the course, how it will address all of the assignment’s requirements, and it should include a bibliography of at least 6 references (excluding articles from the course package).The more detail you can provide on your outline, the more useful my feedback!

Paper: One goal of this course is for you to practice your ability to create critically engaged papers. Your final paper may address any theoretical concept, issue or debate you choose, such as differences in various feminist perspectives, the strengths and weaknesses of various approaches, class biases in theorizing sexuality, and so on. You are free to write on a theoretical issue related to your seminar presentations but must rely primarily on texts not assigned in the course package. **This paper is an exploration of feminist theory.** As a critically-engaged paper your work must interrogate some problematic of the texts you explore and highlight some of the texts’ weaknesses and strengths. Conclude your paper with a **1-ish page** discussion of a hypothetical research

project that was inspired by your research, which we also did in the seminar presentations. Here is an overview of the considerations I will make when grading your papers:

Introduction (5 marks)

- Introduce the topic (why is it important?)
- Clarify why you choose this topic
- Provide a clear thesis statement (what is the purpose of your essay?)

Synthesis and critique of relevant theoretical material (20 marks)

- Discuss the relevant theoretical background to the topic
- Provide an *integrated* discussion of the texts you cover (do not just summarize)
- Develop a critically engaged interrogation of your topic, including highlighting its strengths and weaknesses

Conclusions (10 marks)

- Discuss a hypothetical future research project that uses the texts you have engaged to shed light on an everyday social experience
- How do these texts offer new perspectives and questions about our everyday lives?

Style (5 marks)

- Reference in any style you are comfortable with but you must be **CONSISTENT** and thorough in its usage and include **year and page** references within the text for both direct quotes and paraphrased ideas.
- Writing skills (spelling, grammar, readability, etc.)
- Presented in a professional manner

Be sure to proofread your paper before handing it in!

Take notes to keep track of the information you gather so as not to plagiarize.

Course Policies:

Plagiarism is a serious, punishable offense and will not be tolerated.

Submission of assignments: Papers assignments will be submitted as a *hard copy* in class. E-mails will not be accepted. Papers not given to me in person **MUST** be date and time stamped and submitted to the Main Office in ANSO. Assignments slipped under my door will not be accepted.

All due dates are firmly set and can only be negotiated in the case of unforeseen events (illness, funerals, etc). Documentation is required in the case of a late assignment. With documentation alternative arraignments will be discussed with the student. Without documentation late assignments will receive a deduction of **10% per day late (Saturday and Sunday 10% each)**.

Late submission will not allow time for comprehensive feedback to be given.

Late assignments will not be accepted more than 7 days after their due date.

'Early Alert': During the term, I will do my best to reach out and offer support If I am concerned about your academic performance or wellbeing. I also encourage you to come and speak with me if you need assistance. In addition, I may identify my concerns using Early Alert. The program allows academic, financial, or mental health concerns to be

identified sooner and responded to in a more coordinated way. This provides you with the earliest possible connection to resources like academic advising, financial advising, counselling, or other resources and support to help you get back on track. The information is treated confidentially and is sent because I care about your academic success and wellbeing. For more information, please visit earlyalert.ubc.ca.

Student Needs:

This course welcomes folks with physical and learning disabilities. If you require any assistance please speak with Dr. Wiebe early in the semester, so that efforts can be made. The Disability Resource Centre in Brock Hall is available for further consultation and resource provision.

Course Overview and Readings:

Class One

Sept 10 – Introduction and Community Creation

Class Two

Sept 17 – Theorizing Gendered and Sexualized Subjects

Required Readings:

bell hooks, “Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression” in Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (eds.) *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. 2nd Edition. New York and London: Routledge. 2010. p 51-57.

Sigmund Freud, “Anatomical Differences between the Sexes” in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey. New York: Basic Books. 1962. p331-343.

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*. New York: Vintage Books. 1980. p17-49.

Class Three

Sept 24 – Talking Back

Seminars and Responses Begin

Required Readings:

Luce Irigaray, “The Sex Which is Not One” in Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (eds.) *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. 2nd Edition. New York and London: Routledge. 2010. p384-389.

Sandra Lee Bartkey, “Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power” in Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (eds.) *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. 2nd Edition. New York and London: Routledge. 2010. p404-418.

Yen Le Espiritu, “We Don’t Sleep Around Like White Girls Do: Family, Culture and Gender in Filipina American Lives,” *Signs* 26:2 (2001): 415-440.

Class Four

Oct 1 - Further Foundations

Required Readings:

Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43:6 (1991): 1241-1299.

Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" in Sandra Kemp and Judith Squires (eds.) *Feminisms*. Oxford: Oxford university Press. 1998. p320-325.

The Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement" in Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (eds.) *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. New York and London: Routledge. 2003. p164-171.

OR include TransTheory

Leslie Feinberg, "Transgendered Liberation: A Movement Whose Time Has Come" in Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (eds.) *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. 2nd Edition. New York and London: Routledge. 2010. p133-143.

Class Five

Oct 8 - Abjection

Required Readings:

Judith Butler. Selected Readings from:

1993. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York: Routledge. p1-16.

1999. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. 10th Anniversary Edition. New York: Routledge. p163-180.

Brandy Wiebe, "Beyond Slut Shaming: Abjection and Female Heterosexual Subjectivity" Currently under review for publication.

Susan Wendell, "Feminism, Disability, and Transcendence of the Body" in Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick (eds.) *Feminist Theory and the Body*. New York: Routledge. 1999. p324-333.

Class Six

Oct 15 - Pro Sex Feminism

Required Readings:

Anne Koedt, "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm" in Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (eds.) *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. New York and London: Routledge. 2003. p242-248.

Carole S. Vance, "Pleasure and Danger: Towards a Politics of Sexuality" in Carole S. Vance (ed.) *Pleasure and Danger: Exploring Female Sexuality*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul. 1984. p1-27.

Fahs, Breanne, "'Freedom to' and 'freedom from': A new vision for sex positive politics," *Sexualities* 17(3), (2014): 267-290.

Class Seven

Theory Paper Proposal Due IN CLASS

October 22 – Racialized Bodies within Feminist Theory

Required Readings:

Emily S Lee, “The Ambiguous Practices of the Inauthentic Asian American Woman,”
Hypatia 29(1), (2014): 146-163.

Chandra Talpade Mohanty “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” in *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. North Carolina: Duke University Press. 2003. p17-42.

Almas Syeed, “Chappals and Gym Shorts: An Indian Muslim Woman in the Land of Oz” in Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (eds.) *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. 2nd Edition. New York and London: Routledge. 2010. p270-275.

Class Eight

Oct 29 - Paper Workshop and (if time) a documentary to reflect on the question: Why does subjectivity matter?

Class Nine

Nov 5 - Poststructuralism

Required Readings:

Chris Weedon (1987). *Feminist Practice and Poststructural Theory*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers. p12-42.

Sharon Marcus, “Fighting Bodies, Fighting Words: A Theory and Politics of Rape Prevention” in Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (eds.) *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. 2nd Edition. New York and London: Routledge. 2010. p431-444.

Zine Magubane, “Which Bodies Matter? Feminism, Poststructuralism, Race, and the Curious Theoretical Odyssey of the ‘Hottentot Venus’,” *Gender & Society* 15:6 (December 2001): 816-834.

Class Ten

Theory Paper Due IN CLASS

November 12 – Sexualized Violence

Required Readings:

Joey L Mogul, Andrea J Richie and Kay Whitlock, “False Promises: Criminal Responses to Violence against LGBT People” in L. Ayu Saraswati, Barbara L. Shaw and Heather Rellihan (Eds.) *Introduction to Women’s, Gender and Sexuality Studies: Interdisciplinary and Intersectional Approaches*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 2018. p313-323.

Andrea Smith, “Rape and the War Against Native Women” in Abby L. Ferber, Kimberly

- Holcomb and Tre Wentling (eds) *Sex, Gender & Sexuality: The New Basics – An Anthology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. p363-371.
- Wendy Hollway and Tony Jefferson, “‘A Kiss is Just a Kiss’: Date Rape, Gender and Subjectivity,” *Sexualities* 1:4 (1998): 405-423.

Class Eleven

Nov 19 – Masculinities

Required Readings:

- R.W. Connell, “The Social Organization of Masculinity” in Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim (eds.) *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. 2nd Edition. New York and London: Routledge. 2010. p232-243.
- C.J. Pascoe, “‘Dude, You’re a Fag’: Adolescent Male Homophobia,” in *Dude, You’re a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. NJ: University of California Press, 2007. p52-83.
- Robert G. Lee, “The Third Sex: Asian-American Men in Popular Culture” in Abby L. Ferber, Kimberly Holcomb and Tre Wentling (eds) *Sex, Gender & Sexuality: The New Basics – An Anthology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. p322-343.

Class Twelve

Reflections Due IN CLASS

November 26 – Third Wave Feminism and Beyond

Required Readings:

- Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck and Angie Morrill, “Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Challenging Connections between Settle Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy,” *Feminist Formations* 25(1), 2013: 8-34.
- Bunch, Mary, “The unbecoming subject of sex: Performativity, interpellation, and the politics of queer theory,” *Feminist Theory* 14(1), (2013): 39-55.
- Kaitlynn Mendes, Jessica Ringrose and Jessalynn Keller, “#MeToo and the Promise and Pitfalls of Challenging Rape Culture through Digital Feminist Activism,” *European Journal of Women’s Studies* 25(2), (2018): 236-246.