

## **WGS 353W: Feminist Theory(ies)**

Dr. Allison Hobgood (email: ahobgood@willamette.edu; office: 503-370-6211)

Class Meets: MW 2:30-4:00p, ETN 110

Office Hours: by email appointment in Eaton 214

### ***Course Description***

Our purpose in this course is to engage with a number of foundational and vibrantly contested conversations within feminist traditions and to realize the shape of feminist discourse as a history of ideas. We will examine, among many others, issues like gender difference and its relationship to women's subordination; the intersections of gender with other dimensions of social identity and power (e.g., class, race/ethnicity, sexuality, ability, nation); and the way gendered discourse shapes social reality. These issues will be discussed from a variety of feminist theoretical perspectives (e.g., those influenced by neoliberalism, Marxism/socialism, psychoanalysis, radical feminism, post-modernism, post-colonialism, transnationalism). The course is organized around central "keywords" (or conversations) within feminist theories. By focusing on the contradictions and confluences among these conversations, we can avoid balkanizing feminisms into competing and mutually exclusive categories or periodizing feminist thought into a progress narrative composed of "waves." The readings for each keyword challenge, support, augment, and contradict one another, illustrating that feminist theoretical ideas are part of a polyphonic, complex, and self-reflexive dialogue. We will read more than we can discuss; that said, be ready to talk about every one of the assignments each day. (Prereq: One course in WGS or consent of instructor)

*Trigger Warning:* This course covers material and ideas that are sensitive and sometimes distressing. We will work together to make our scholarly community a place for these important, productive, and difficult conversations.

### ***Required Texts***

1. Kolmar and Bartkowski, *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, fourth edition (McGraw-Hill 2013), 978-0073512358
2. hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody* (South End Press), 978-0896086289
3. All additional readings will be accessible via WISE Resources or supplementary handouts

### ***Required Assignments***

3 papers (5 pp each), weekly discussion questions and news postings, a final course syllabi and associated presentation, various writing assignments and/or reading quizzes both in and out of class, draft workshops for all papers

### ***Student Learning Outcomes***

1. You will demonstrate through paper writing and class discussion the ability to identify and analyze a diverse range of historical and contemporary "feminisms" as well as key concepts and theoretical strains in those theories.
2. You will demonstrate through paper writing, WISE postings, and class discussion the ability to articulate and apply theories of feminism and gender to a variety of social, political, and cultural issues and make connections between theoretical arguments advocated by feminist theorists and contemporary feminist issues in our world.

3. You will demonstrate through paper writing, WISE postings, class discussion, and syllabi creation the role of feminist theory in promoting activism and social change.
4. You will demonstrate through paper writing an understanding of the complexities of academic writing and be able to develop an innovative thesis, anticipate your reading audience, reason and argue convincingly, and support your claims with concrete, textual evidence.
5. You will demonstrate through paper writing and peer review the ability to practice writing as a process that entails brainstorming, research, outlining, and revision through multiple drafts.
6. You will demonstrate through WISE postings the ability to identify and evaluate (via annotated bibliography) useful research sources.

### ***Disability Statement***

Willamette University is sensitive to the needs of students with disabilities. The Disability and Learning Services Office strives to facilitate reasonable accommodations for those students with a qualifying disability or temporary medical condition and to provide academic assistance on an individual basis to any undergraduate or graduate student who requests it. Any student who requires these accommodations should contact the Disability and Learning Services Office directly at 503-370-6471.

### ***Course Policies***

#### ***Academic Integrity***

Students of Willamette University are members of a community that values excellence and integrity in every aspect of life. As such, we expect all community members to live up to the highest standards of personal, ethical, and moral conduct. Students are expected not to engage in any type of academic or intellectually dishonest practice and encouraged to display honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all they do. Plagiarism and cheating are especially offensive to the integrity of the courses in which they occur and against the College community as a whole. These acts involve intellectual dishonesty, deception, and fraud, which inhibit the honest exchange of ideas. Plagiarism and cheating may, therefore, be grounds for failure in the course and/or dismissal from the College.

<http://www.willamette.edu/cla/dean/policies/plagiarism.html>

#### ***Class Preparedness***

Your active engagement during *each and every class session* is essential to the success of our seminar. *Always come to class prepared and having read all of the assigned material for that day.* Your success in this course will depend not only on the quality of your papers and/or exams but also on your contribution to in-class and online discussions. Please bring your primary texts and all supplementary materials to class each day; it is impossible to perform adept close readings and analyses without a text in front of you. Lastly, note that preparation also includes the regular checking of your WU email account. Email is the primary form of direct communication on our campus after face-to-face interaction, so you will want to pay close attention to your email every day.

Willamette's Credit Hour Policy holds that for every hour of class time there is an expectation of 2-3 hours work outside of class. Thus, for a class meeting three days a week you should

anticipate spending 6-9 hours outside of class engaged in course-related activities. Examples include study time, reading and homework assignments, research projects, and group work.

### ***Attendance***

Attendance is crucial. Because this course relies upon collaborative discussion, *more than three unexcused absences will lower your participation grade by one full letter unless appropriate justification is given before the missed class session.* Your participation in in-class draft workshops will also be crucial to your grade, so these days are not to be missed.

### ***Tardiness***

I will close the classroom door at *precisely* 2:30 pm. If you come in after the door is closed, you will be considered tardy. *Three tardies translates into an unexcused absence that will affect your grade.* Please be on time.

### ***Classroom Etiquette***

All electronic messaging devices (cell phones, etc) must be off or in the silent position. Use of computers is strictly limited to note-taking; machines used for other purposes will be confiscated for the duration of the class period. Be respectful of each other and always listen to differing opinions and ideas with an open mind. Obviously, do not sleep in class.

### ***Writing Center and Peer Review***

Please use Willamette's Writing Center. It is a valuable resource that offers writing guidance, peer tutoring, paper feedback, and assignment advice and preparation. Find more info at: <http://www.willamette.edu/dept/wcenter/>

You will be expected to engage in stimulating, committed, and productive peer review of each others' papers. Review will take place in class on pre-determined days noted on the syllabus. Any absences, other than emergency, will not be tolerated on these especially important days.

### ***Text Notation***

I will spontaneously check your readings for evidence of careful annotation. You will receive participation credit for documenting skillful reading practices.

### ***Discussion Questions and Newspaper Postings***

You are expected to engage in class participation through 2 daily discussion questions about our reading, one of which should be answered in 150-200 words. **Bring your questions (and answer) typed on a sheet of paper.** I will often use these responses to facilitate discussion, and you will receive credit for turning them in. Questions are meant to help the class contemplate the reading we've done, practice our close-reading skills, expand and/or refine our intellectual ideas, and incite thought for future paper writing. Questions and answers should be original and provocative; please do not merely regurgitate premises we have already covered in class, repeat in different words your peers' ideas, or "borrow" your questions from elsewhere.

### **For newspaper postings:**

(FYI: *The New York Times* is available for free on-line and around WU's campus. Register at [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com).)

In these weekly, typed responses, you should briefly address (150-200 words) an article that has to do with a “feminist” issue and then connect your reading to ideas/topics we have discussed in class. The goal of this assignment is to help you make associations between feminist theory and your “real life.” You might consider the following questions: How do feminist issues in the news shed light on the theoretical ideas we are broaching in class? How do they complicate or enhance your understanding of academic theories? Were you surprised to find links/similarities between “theory” and “praxis”? What are those links? How does this conversation impact the way you operate in the world or who you imagine yourself to be?

**Group 1 will begin by bringing discussion questions, while Group 2 will begin with news postings. Be prepared to discuss your responses in class that day.**

### ***Final Syllabi***

Another component of this course will be creating a syllabus of your own design for a course that emphasizes feminist theory. You may wish to draw heavily from our course reading list and/or other parts of the texts from which we have read, or you may wish to find other sources that explicate the central concepts, questions, and architecture of your course. Your syllabus may be for a course of study at any level. It should include readings, assignments, goals, and a description that clarifies the outcomes and organization of the course. Our last 3 class periods will be devoted to sharing your syllabi via formal presentations. *When you turn in your final syllabus, you must submit a 2-3 page analysis that sharply and critically explains the purpose, goals, and logic of the course.* Be as creative as you like.

### ***Grading Policies***

#### ***Assignment Punctuality***

All papers must be turned in to the instructor **in person on the date they are due**. Email submissions and late assignments will **NOT** be accepted unless otherwise discussed. If you are going to miss class, your paper is due **beforehand**, and you must notify me of your absence or it will go unexcused. **No make-up exams** will be allowed without prior arrangement. Make-up exams **MUST** be taken when rescheduled.

#### ***Paper Requirements***

All papers must meet the following requirements in order to be graded:

1. Times New Roman font, size 12
2. MLA format
3. Double-spaced
4. A strong title
5. Some papers may have citation requirements. In these cases, you must have a works cited page and proper citation rules must be followed in the essay.
6. Electronic websites **DO NOT** count as legitimate sources.

### ***Grading System***

**Participation**, including discussion, other writing, and peer review: 15%

**Weekly discussion questions and news postings**: 10%

**3 Papers** (5pp each): 60%

**Syllabus and presentation**: 15%

### ***Paper Criteria***

An **“A” paper** offers a persuasive, eloquent, stylistically sophisticated argument. It presents a compelling thesis, which is then developed into a well-structured, coherent essay. An “A” paper uses evidence effectively. Such a paper thoughtfully considers and analyzes other viewpoints, including the views of the paper’s intended audience. An “A” paper’s style is distinctive, and this style helps further the writer’s argument.

A **“B” paper** also offers a convincing argument. It has an interesting thesis and is, on the whole, well-structured. Like an A paper, it too considers alternative positions and does so in a thoughtful manner. A “B” paper’s style is clear and relatively free of errors that could hinder its readability and/or persuasiveness. A “B” paper grasps the significance of style in making an effective argument.

A **“C” paper** makes an argument but does not do so effectively. It may fail to present evidence in support of its thesis or it may present evidence in a haphazard and hence unconvincing manner. In addition, a paper will receive a “C” if it is stylistically unsophisticated, replete with digressions, lacks a sense of audience, or ignores opposing opinions.

A **“D” paper** fails to present an argument. The paper lacks a thesis and is merely a string of ideas, some of which may be very interesting but none of which are developed into a clear, rational, coherent essay. Additionally, a plethora of typos, stylistic problems, or grammatical flaws may turn any paper into a “D” paper if such lapses significantly affect the essay’s readability.

An **“F” paper** results when the writer neglects to hand in the assignment; refuses to address the paper topic; or violates common standards of decency. Additionally, plagiarism also will result in a paper grade of “F.”

### ***Numerical Grading Criteria***

**A 4.0** Performance at this level is exceptional. The student consistently demonstrates excellent command over the content and methods of the course as well as originality, depth, and distinctive insights.

**A- 3.7** Performance at this level is of very high quality. The student demonstrates well above average command over the content and methods of the course as well as significant originality, depth, and distinctive insights.

**B+ 3.3** Performance at this level is very good. The student demonstrates a strong command over the content and methods of the course, reflects clear comprehension, and achieves all the stated objectives.

**B 3.0** Performance at this level is good. The student demonstrates an adept command over the content and methods of the course, reflects comprehension, and achieves the stated objectives.

**B- 2.7** Performance at this level is above average. The student demonstrates general command over the content and methods of the course and reflects and achieves the stated objectives.

**C+ 2.3** Performance at this level is slightly above average. The student demonstrates fair competence over the content and methods of the course and achieves nearly all the stated objectives.

**C 2.0** Performance at this level is average. The student demonstrates average competence over the content and methods of the course and achieves most of the stated objectives.

**C- 1.7** Performance at this level is below average. The student demonstrates less than average competence in the content and methods of the course. Clear comprehension and mastery of course objectives is not apparent.

**D+ 1.3** Performance at this level is less than satisfactory. The student demonstrates inadequate knowledge of the content and methods of the course and minimal engagement with course objectives.

**D 1.0** Performance at this level is marginal. The student demonstrates insufficient knowledge of the content and methods of the course and fails to meet the course objectives.

**F 0.0** Performance at this level is unacceptable. The student fails to demonstrate any knowledge of the methods and content of the course or to engage in any way with course objectives.

### *Course Schedule*

**(schedule is subject to change; please pay attention to your WU email)**

**M Jan 18      Course Introduction: Who Needs Feminism, Anyway?**

**W Jan 20      Feminism**

Lugones and Spelman, "Have We Got a Theory for You!," 17-24 (*FT*)

Moi, "I Am Not a Feminist But..." (WISE Resources)

hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody*, vii-24

**M Jan 25      Power (Group 1 brings discussion questions)**

Kolmar and Bartkowski, "Epistemologies," 54-56; and "Power," 63-64 (*FT*)

Halberstam, from *The Queer Art of Failure* (WISE Resources)

Ngọc Loan Trần, "Calling IN: A Less Disposable Way of Holding Each Other Accountable" (WISE Resources)

Gutting and Fraser, "A Feminism Where 'Lean In' Means Leaning On Others" (WISE Resources)

**W Jan 27      Patriarchy                      (Group 2 brings news postings)**

Johnson, "Patriarchy, the System: An It, Not a He, Them, or an Us" (WISE Resources)

Mann, "Doing Feminist Theory" (WISE Resources)

Kimmel, "Masculinity as Homophobia" (WISE Resources)

hooks, "Understanding Patriarchy" (WISE Resources)

**M Feb 1      Sex & Gender      (Group 1 brings news postings)**

Kolmar and Bartkowski, "Sexualities," 68-70 (FT)

Fausto-Sterling, "Should There Be Only Two Sexes," 507-513 (FT)

Lorber, "Believing Is Seeing: Biology as Ideology" (WISE Resources)

**W Feb 3      (Group 2 brings discussion questions)**

MacKinnon, "Sexuality," 415-428 (FT)

Koedt, "The Myth of the Vaginal Orgasm," 196-200 (FT)

Spade, "Purportedly Gendered Body Parts" (WISE Resources)

**M Feb 8      Essentialism & Social Construction (Group 1 brings discussion questions)**

Kolmar and Bartkowski, "Essentialism/Social Construction/Difference," 57-59 (FT)

Alcoff, "Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism," 376-386 (FT)

Fuss, "The 'Risk' of Essence" (WISE Resources)

**W Feb 10      (Group 2 brings news postings)**

Wendell, "The Social Construction of Disability" (WISE Resources)

Haney-Lopez, "The Social Construction of Race" (WISE Resources)

**Bring a working thesis statement to class as possibility for paper 1**

**M Feb 15      In class peer review paper 1 (bring a full draft to share)**

**W Feb 17      paper 1 due in class**

**M Feb 22      Maternity & Mothering**

Kolmar and Bartkowski, "Sexual Division of Labor," 67-68 (FT)

Hubbard, "Who Should and Who Should Not Inhabit the World?" (WISE Resources)

Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking" (WISE Resources)

**W Feb 24      out of class group discussions of hooks, *Feminism is for Everybody***

**M Feb 29      Intersectionality      (Group 1 brings news postings)**

Mann, from "Intersectionality Theories" (WISE Resources)

Crenshaw, "Intersectionality and Identity Politics," 484-492 (FT)

Luft, "Intersectionality and the Risk of Flattening Difference: Gender and Race Logics, and the Strategic Use of Antiracist Singularity" (WISE Resources)

**W Mar 2      (Group 2 brings discussion questions)**

Anzaldúa, "La Conciencia de la Mestiza," 370-375 (FT)

Yamada, "Asian Pacific American Women and Feminism," 316-318 (FT)

Smith, "Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change," 543-547 (FT)

**M Mar 7      Gender Performativity & Oppositional Sexism**

Butler, from *Gender Trouble*, 436-444 (FT)

Halberstam, "Introduction to Female Masculinity," 493-498 (FT) and "Transgender Butch" (WISE Resources)

Serano, "Trans Woman Manifesto," 547-551 (FT)

**W Mar 9**      **NO CLASS—aim to attend the Lewis and Clark College Gender Studies Symposium** [http://college.lclark.edu/departments/gender\\_studies/symposium/](http://college.lclark.edu/departments/gender_studies/symposium/)

**M Mar 14**      **Transnationalism (Group 1 brings discussion questions)**

Mann, from “Feminism and Imperialism in Postmodernity” (WISE Resources)

Narayan, “Contesting Cultures,” 42-50 (*FT*)

Alexander and Mohanty, “Cartographies of Knowledge and Power,” 560-570 (*FT*)

Mahmood, “The Subject of Freedom,” 533-542 (*FT*)

**W Mar 16**      **(Group 2 brings news postings)**

Soldatic and Grech, “Transnationalising Disability Studies: Rights, Justice and Impairment” (WISE Resources)

Tuck and Yang, “Decolonization is Not a Metaphor” (WISE Resources)

**Mar 21-25**      **Spring Break!**

**M Mar 28**

Sandoval, “US Third World Feminism” (WISE Resources)

Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes Revisited” (WISE Resources)

**In class peer review paper 2 (bring a thesis and working outline)**

**W Mar 30**      **out of class writing day**

**Su Apr 3**      **Paper 2 due at ETN 214 by NOON (include reflection); post to DropBox as well**

**M Apr 4**      **Beauty (Group 1 brings news postings)**

Bordo, “The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity,” 460-66 (*FT*)

Kaw, “Medicalization of Racial Features: Asian American Women and Cosmetic Surgery” (WISE Resources)

Chase, “‘Cultural Practice’ or ‘Reconstructive Surgery’? US Genital Cutting, the Intersex Movement, and Medical Double Standards” (WISE Resources)

Centrefold, <http://www.thecentrefoldproject.org/> (link on WISE Resources)

**W Apr 6**      **(Group 2 brings discussion questions)**

Aguhar, Blogging for Brown Girls, <http://calloutqueen.tumblr.com/> (WISE Resources)

Peralta and Pérez, Call Out Queen Zine, based on Aguhar’s work (WISE Resources)

Mingus, “Moving Toward the Ugly: A Politic Beyond Desirability” (WISE Resources)

**M Apr 11**      **Privilege (Group 1 brings discussion questions)**

Hill Collins, “The Politics of Black Feminist Thought” (WISE Resources)

Lorde, “Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference,” 289-293 (*FT*)

Scherrer, “Coming to an Asexual Identity,” (handout/WISE Resources)

[Suggested reading: McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege” (WISE Resources)]

**W Apr 13**      **Resistance (Group 2 brings new postings)**

Handelman, “Feminism and Orthodoxy,” (handout/WISE Resources)

Muñoz, Preface and Intro from *Disidentifications* (WISE Resources)

[Suggested reading: Bunch, “Not for Lesbians Only,” 220-223 (*FT*)]



**M Apr 18 Compulsory Able-bodiedness (Group 1 brings news postings)**  
Garland-Thomson, "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory," 515-525 (*FT*)  
Erevelles, "Thinking with Disability Studies" (WISE Resources)

**Tu Apr 19 Sister Outsider poetry duo; Cat Cavern, 7:30p (attendance required)**

**W Apr 20 no class; SSRD!**

**M Apr 25 (Group 2 brings discussion questions)**

**ELI CLARE COMES TO CLASS!**

Clare, "Stones in My Heart, Stones in My Pockets" (WISE Resources)

listening exercise: Mattlin, "Spinal Muscular Atrophy Doesn't Define Me" (WISE Resources)

M Apr 25 Clare lecture, "The Price of Defectiveness," ETN 209, 4:15p  
Class participation bonus opportunity!

**W Apr 27**

Presentation of syllabi: Austen, Blaugher, Clarendon, Coy, Delacy, Hendricks-Key, Kasler, Masei

**M May 2**

Presentation of syllabi: McKenna, Moreno, Moy, Murata, Okazaki, Pearson, Peterson, Smith, Williams

**\*\*\*Paper 3 and Syllabus (with revisions and accompanying 2-3 page critical analysis)  
due Tuesday May 10 NOON in ETN 214.  
Please also post to WISE DropBox.\*\*\***