This graduate seminar provides an overview of past and present contributions to feminist theory, with an emphasis on how contemporary writings build on or depart from classic writings in the field. To this end, we will read works that develop theoretical frameworks for understanding gender differences across societies and gain greater familiarity with the political landscape of feminist theory. Readings will include such authors as Simone de Beauvoir, Audre Lorde, Nancy Hartsock, Donna Haraway, Judith Butler, bell hooks, Aihwa Ong, Amrita Basu, Gayle Rubin, Chandra Mohanty, and Gloria Anzaldúa. We will work against notions of a fixed and established canon by including the important contributions of lesser-known writers, not only from the US and Europe but from a host of world regions. Our objective will be to develop a multicultural and transnational perspective on the active production of feminist theory and on the relationship of this scholarship to feminist politics. We will consider fruitful analytical frameworks for understanding gender relations as they intersect with race, class, sexuality, and nationality over the course of history. Students will participate in leading seminar discussion and will have several writing assignments including a final paper for the course.

While this course is required for Women’s Studies MA students and those graduate students in other departments earning the Women’s Studies Certificate or Concentration, it is open to all graduate students with an interest in gaining a stronger background in feminist theory. Some background in women’s and gender studies is recommended. Please contact the instructor, Professor Florence Babb, for more information (fbabb@ufl.edu).

Florence E. Babb is the Vada Allen Yeomans Professor of Women’s Studies and the Graduate Coordinator for the Center for Women’s Studies and Gender Research. Her personal website may be found at http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/fbabb/.

Spring office hours: Fridays 1-3pm, 204 Ustler Hall, and by appointment.
Required books to purchase:


Heather Love, Ann Cvetkovich, and Annamarie Jagose (eds.), special issue of *GLQ* on Rethinking Sex (17:1 November 2010)


Course requirements and policies:

Participation

Because the course meets just once each week, full attendance in all classes is essential. Students are expected to come to class having done all the reading and to be ready to participate meaningfully in discussion. Everyone will have an opportunity to play a part in facilitating the weekly discussion. [25% of course grade]

Précis

Three-four page précis based on the readings are assigned three times during the semester to ensure that you are giving thoughtful attention to the reading. This written work is not a summary of the material but it should show a strong grasp of the reading; you are expected to develop a key point or two in each précis with ample support from the reading, giving page citations. Précis should be well written and well organized. [25% of course grade]

Paper and presentation

There will be a course paper of approximately 18-20pp based on additional reading, due at the end of the semester. I will expect to receive proposals for these papers by or before the end of February, including short bibliographies of material to be used and referenced. These papers may focus on a single work in feminist theory to be examined closely in connection with other works, or they may draw on multiple works on a specific question of relevance to the course. Students will give oral presentations of their subject matter during the final week of the semester. [50% of course grade]
Academic Honesty

The University of Florida's honor code requires all students to be honest in their academic work. University policies on cheating, plagiarism, and related issues are available at: http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/academicguide.html

Accommodations

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to me when requesting accommodation.

Grading

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See the following website on current grading policies: http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html

Reading assignments

January 5  Introduction: What is feminist and what is theory?

January 12  I. Groundings and Movements

Groundings
M & K, pp 1-77

January 19  Movements
M & K, pp 80-143

January 26  II. Theorizing Intersecting Identities

Social Processes / Configuring Differences
M & K, pp 147-249
Précis 1 due

February 2  Boundaries and Belongings
M & K, pp 252-299

February 9  III. Theorizing Feminist Knowledge, Agency, and Politics

Standpoint Epistemologies / Situational Knowledges
M & K, pp 303-381

February 16  Poststructural Epistemologies
M & K, pp 384-444
February 23  Imagine Otherwise:  Solidarity Reconsidered  
M & K, pp 446-522  
Précis 2 due

March 2  IV. bell hooks, Feminist Theory:  From Margin to Center (all)

March 9  Spring break

March 16  V. Judith Butler, Gender Trouble

March 23  Finish reading Butler

March 30  VI. Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Feminism Without Borders

April 6  Finish reading Mohanty  
Précis 3 due

April 13  VII. Heather Love, Ann Cvetkovich, and Annamarie Jagose (eds.),  
GLQ issue on Rethinking Sex (all)

April 20  Final presentations

Mon April 25 Final papers due