

Feminist Political Theory

POLI 366 Winter 2017 BRONF 002 M/W 10:05-11:25	Professor Yves Winter email: yves.winter@mcgill.ca twitter: @whywinter Office: 418 Ferrier Office hours: T/Th 2:00-3:00 or by appointment TA: TBA
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Description

This course introduces students to debates in feminist political theory. Feminist political theory challenges the inequality, subordination and oppression of women in politics and in theory. What constitutes feminism and what constitutes “political” and “theoretical” questions within feminism are subjects of controversy. Who is the proper subject of feminism? Is feminism a movement (or a collection of movements) aimed at equal rights? Emancipation? Recognition of sexual difference? Social transformation? This course will focus on key concepts such as sex, gender, and sexuality; feminist approaches to embodiment, disability, intersectionality, pornography, and the state.

Prerequisites & Restrictions

This is a 300-level course. In accordance with departmental regulations, this means that students must have taken a 200-level course in political theory or completed prior coursework in feminist theory or women and gender studies in other departments.

Required Texts

The following books are available for purchase from **The Word Bookstore, 469 Milton Street** (cash or cheque only). They are also widely available used and will be on reserve in the Humanities & Social Sciences Library.

Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, translated by Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (New York: Vintage, 2011)

Catharine A. MacKinnon, Toward a Feminist Theory of the State (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989)

All other readings will be made available on myCourses or linked directly in the syllabus.

Assignments and Grades

Written assignments for this course will consist of two 5-6 page **papers** and a **final examination**.

All assignments are due on the dates indicated in the syllabus. They are to be submitted in hard copy at the beginning of class. **Late papers** will be docked one third of a letter grade for every day late, including weekends. **Extensions** are available only for serious and documented reasons, and they must be requested

ahead of time. No extensions will be granted on (or after) an assignment's due date. Do not send assignments via email unless otherwise instructed.

Your written work will be graded on originality, reasoning and argument, organization, clarity of exposition, and style. Essays will be graded on the letter grade scale (A to F) where the individual letters correspond to the following grade points.

Grade	Grade Points
A	4.0
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3.0
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2.0
D	1.0
F	0

A detailed grading rubric will be posted on myCourses.

Final grades are calculated according to the following schedule. Students must receive a passing grade (D) in each of the following four grade categories to receive a passing grade for the course.

First paper	20%
Second paper	30%
Final examination	40%
Participation	10%

Evaluation is a central part of education, and much effort goes into ensuring the fairness of academic grades. Assessments, grading scales and rubrics are designed to measure how well students meet the course objectives. Students have a right to expect impartiality, consistency, respect, integrity, and feedback from their instructors.

Students may ask for a review of their grade and a re-read of any assessment for this course. The [Department of Political Science's Assessment and Re-Read Policy](#) applies. Requests for review and re-reads should normally be made within two weeks following the return of a graded assessment. If an assessment was graded by the TA, students should first discuss their request for a review with the TA. All requests for grade review must be accompanied by the **original assessment** including the grades, comments, and annotations made by the TA or the professor as well as by a **brief one-paragraph explanation** why the student deems the grade inappropriate.

Classroom Policies

Research shows that people learn more when they actively engage the material and the learning process, rather than passively listen to the instructor. Class meetings will involve various forms of active learning, including writing exercises. You are responsible for having read the assigned texts prior to the class meeting. Prepare for class by taking notes and by thinking about questions, ideas, or problems that arise in your reading. Be sure to bring books and hard copy printouts of readings to class.

Please let me and your fellow students know your preferred **pronoun**. Your preferred name should appear on the class list if you have entered it in Minerva ([more info](#)).

McGill University values **academic integrity**. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the [Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#). Please note that I take plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty seriously, and your work will be reviewed for potential plagiarism issues by means of text-matching software.

Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant-e a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté.

[Research](#) shows that students who take notes by hand significantly outperform students who take notes on mobile computing devices (even when the devices are offline and used exclusively for note-taking). While **laptops and tablets** are not prohibited in this class, for your own educational benefit, I strongly urge you to leave them at home or stowed away in your bags. Needless to say, any use of electronic equipment may only be used for note-taking. Any other use is distracting to fellow students and not permitted during class time.

As the instructor of this course I endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the [Office for Students with Disabilities/MyAccess](#) (514)398-6009.

Class Schedule

I. Gender, Feminism, and Equality

Jan 4	Introduction
Jan 9	Mary Wollstonecraft, <u>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman</u> , dedicatory letter, introduction, chapters 1-2, 65-108.
Jan 11	Mary Wollstonecraft, <u>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman</u> , chapters 3-4, 109-155.
Jan 16	Simone de Beauvoir, <u>The Second Sex</u> , 3-17, 38-48, 71-75, 159-213,
Jan 18	Simone de Beauvoir, <u>The Second Sex</u> , 266-274, 279-287, 341-349, 638-664.
Jan 23	Simone de Beauvoir, <u>The Second Sex</u> , 721-766.
Jan 25	bell hooks, "Black Women Shaping Feminist Theory" and "Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression" in <u>Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center</u> , 1-33. Iris M. Young, <u>Justice and the Politics of Difference</u> , chapter 2, 39-65

II. Sexuality and the State

- Jan 30 Catharine A. MacKinnon, Toward a Feminist Theory of the State, chapters 5-6, 83-125.
- Feb 1 Catharine A. MacKinnon, Toward a Feminist Theory of the State, chapters 7-9, 126-183.
- Feb 6 Catharine A. MacKinnon, Toward a Feminist Theory of the State, chapters 10-12, 184-236.
- Feb 8 Wendy Brown, States of Injury, chapter 4, 77-95.
- Feb 13 Ann Ferguson, "[Sex War: The Debate between Radical and Libertarian Feminists](#)," Signs 10(1) (1984): 106-112.
Sandra Bartky, "Feminine Masochism, and the Politics of Personal Transformation," in Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression, 45-62.
Michael L. Ferguson, [Choice Feminism's Honey Trap](#), The Contemporary Condition, March 19, 2014.

III. Race and Intersectionality

- Feb 15 Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," in Kimberlé Crenshaw et. al. (eds.) Critical Race Theory: The Key Writings That Formed the Movement, 357-383.
- Feb 20 No class
- Feb 22 Hortense Spillers, "[Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book](#)" Diacritics 17(2) (1987): 64-81.

First Paper DUE

- Feb 27-Mar 3 Reading Week
- Mar 6 Sherene Razack, "Gendered racial violence and spatialized justice: the murder of Pamela George," in [Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society](#), chapter 5, 123-156.
Toni Irving, "[Borders of the Body: Black Women, Sexual Assault, and Citizenship](#)," Women's Studies Quarterly 35 (1/2) (2007), 67-92.

IV. Queer and Trans* Politics

- Mar 8 Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," in The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader, 307-320.
Keywords "[Abjection](#)" (Robert Phillips), "[Normal](#)" (Elizabeth Stephens) in Transgender Studies Quarterly 1(1-2) (2014): 19-21, 141-145.

- Mar 13 Cathy Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies 3 (4) (1997): 437-65.
Susan Stryker, "[Transgender History, Homonormativity, and Disciplinarity](#)." Radical History Review 100 (2008): 145-57.
Keywords "[Asterisk](#)" (Avery Tompkins), "[Cisgender](#)" (B. Aultman), "[Intersex](#)" (Iain Morland), Transgender Studies Quarterly 1(1-2) (2014): 26-27, 61-62, 111-115.
- Mar 15 Susan Stryker, "(De)Subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies," in The Transgender Studies Reader, 1-18.
Vivane K. Namaste, "Genderbashing: Sexuality, Gender, and the Regulations of Public Space," The Transgender Studies Reader, 584-600.
- Mar 20 Sandy Stone, "[The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto](#)." Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies 10(2) (1992): 150-76.
Judith Butler, Undoing Gender, 1-16.
Keywords "[International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems](#)" (Justus Einfeld), "[Transition](#)" (Julian Carter), "[Wrong Body](#)" (Ulrica Engdahl), Transgender Studies Quarterly 1(1-2) (2014): 107-110, 235-237, 267-269.

V. Embodiment, Disability, and Regimes of Femininity

- Mar 22 Douglas Baynton, "Disability and the Justification of Inequality in American History," in Paul K. Longmore and Lauri Umansky (eds.), The New Disability History: American Perspectives, 33-57.
Alison Kafer, "Debating Feminist Futures: Slippery Slopes, Cultural Anxiety, and the Case of the Deaf Lesbians" in Kim Q. Hall (ed.), Feminist Disability Studies, 218-242.
- Mar 27 Alison Kafer, "At the same time, Out of Time: Ashley X" in Feminist Queer Crip, chapter 2, 47-68.
Abby Wilkerson, "Disability, Sex Radicalism, and Political Agency" in Kim Q. Hall (ed.), Feminist Disability Studies, 193-217.
Genevieve Field, "[Should Parents of Children with Severe Disabilities Be Allowed to Stop Their Growth?](#)" The New York Times Magazine (March 22, 2016)
- Mar 29 Iris M. Young, "Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment, Motility, and Spatiality" in On Female Body Experience, 27-45.
Sandra Bartky, "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power" in Femininity and Domination, 63-82.

VI. The Sexual Division of Labor

- Apr 3 Arlie R. Hochschild, The Second Shift, introduction, chapters 1-3, 1-34.
Silvia Federici, "The reproduction of labor power in the global economy and the unfinished feminist revolution," in Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle, 91-114.

Apr 5	<p>Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie Hochschild "Introduction," in Ehrenreich and Hochschild (eds.) <u>Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy</u>, 1-13.</p> <p>Barbara Ehrenreich, "Maid to Order" in Ehrenreich and Hochschild (eds.) <u>Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy</u>, 85-103.</p> <p>Silvia Federici, "Reproduction and Feminist Struggle in the NIDL," in Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle, 65-75.</p> <p>Silvia Federici, "Women, Globalization, and the International Women's Movement," in Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle, 85-90.</p>
Apr 10	<p>Review</p> <p>Second Paper DUE</p>
TBA	Final Exam