

Feminist Political Theory

POLI 366 Winter 2014 Leacock 14 T / TH 10.05-11.25	Professor Yves Winter email: yves.winter@mcgill.ca twitter: @whywinter Office: 418 Ferrier Office hours: T 4:30-5:30 pm TH 2:00-3:00 pm
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Description

This course introduces students to feminist political theory. What constitutes feminism and what constitutes “political” and “theoretical” questions within feminism are subject to debate and contestation. Who is the subject of feminism? Is feminism a movement (or a collection of movements) aimed at equal rights? Emancipation? Recognition of sexual difference? Social transformation? In this course, we will discuss questions of identity and representation; patriarchy and oppression; sex, gender, and sexuality; feminist approaches to labor and the state; pornography; the body; care; and multiculturalism.

Prerequisites

This is a 300-level course. In accordance with departmental regulations, this means that students must have taken a 200-level course in the same field (i.e. POLI 231 or 232).

Learning Outcomes

The pedagogical objective is that by the end of this course students will be able to (or will have improved their ability to):

- define, identify, and discuss the themes, preoccupations, and limits of feminist political theory
- interpret and explain challenging theoretical and philosophical texts
- recognize, distinguish, analyze, and evaluate theoretical arguments
- communicate effectively about philosophical questions
- construct coherent and sound arguments

Required Texts

The texts below are available at the McGill bookstore for purchase. All other readings are included in a **course pack**, also available from the McGill bookstore.

Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995)

Assignments and Grades

Assignments for this course will consist of **ONE** group project and **TWO** (5-6 page) papers. The group project has two components: (1) a 45-minute class presentation on the date indicated on the schedule below; and (2) a 15-20 page research paper due on the same date. Detailed instructions for both the group project and the papers will be posted on myCourses.

All writing 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 (5 percentage points) for every day late, including weekends. Extensions are available only for serious and documented reasons, but 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.

There will be **FOUR** quizzes on the dates noted in the schedule below. Quizzes will be based on assigned readings and lectures.

Your written work will be graded on originality, reasoning and argument, organization, clarity of exposition, and style. Papers and quizzes will be graded out of 100; a detailed grading rubric for papers will be posted on myCourses. The group project will be graded on the letter scale (A-F) where A=85; B=70; C=55; D=50; and F=40.

Final grades are calculated according to the following schedule:

First Paper	25%
Second Paper	25%
Quizzes	25%
Group Project	25%

Classroom Policies

Attendance is mandatory. You will not be able to get a passing grade on quizzes if you do not attend the lectures.

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 print-outs of readings to class.

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 (see www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information). Please note that I take plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty seriously, and your work may 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.

Mobile computing devices (but not cell phones) are permitted in class for note-taking only and only insofar as their use does not disrupt the teaching and learning process. Any other use of electronic equipment (including e-mail, web surfing, games, chat, messaging, and so on) is distracting and disruptive to fellow students and is 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](#) (514)398-6009.

Class Schedule

Woman

- Jan 7 Introduction: Sex/Gender and Sameness/Difference
- Jan 9 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, pp. 3-17; 21-26; 44-48; 71-75; 159-163; 266-274; 753-766
- Jan 14 Denise Riley, *Am I That Name: Feminism And The Category Of Women In History*, pp. 1-17; 96-114
- Jan 16 bell hooks, "Black Women Shaping Feminist Theory" and "Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression" in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, pp. 1-33

Identity and representation

- Jan 21 Chandra T. Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," in *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*, pp. 17-42
- Jan 23 Joan W. Scott, "Experience," in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, pp. 22-40
- Iris M. Young, "Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment, Motility, and Spatiality" in *On Female Body Experience*, pp. 27-45

Patriarchy

- Jan 28 Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics*, pp. 23-58
- Jan 30 Iris M. Young, *Justice and the Politics of Difference*, pp. 39-65

FIRST QUIZ

The heterosexual matrix

- Feb 4 Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Signs* (1980), 631-660.
Cathy Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 3 (4) (1997): pp. 437-65
- Feb 6 Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, pp. 307-320
Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender*, pp. 1-16

Labor

- Feb 11 Arlie R. Hochschild, *The Second Shift*, pp. 1-22
Arlie R. Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*, pp. 3-23 (recommended: 89-136)
- Feb 13 Barbara Ehrenreich and Arlie R. Hochschild (eds) *Global Woman: Nannies, Maids, and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, pp. 1-30; 85-103

The State

- Feb 18 Catharine A. MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory" in *Signs*, 7(3) (1982), pp. 515-544

FIRST PAPER DUE

- Feb 20 Wendy Brown, *States of Injury*, pp. 3-29; 52-76
- Feb 25 Wendy Brown, *States of Injury*, pp. 96-165
- Feb 27 Wendy Brown, *States of Injury*, pp. 166-196

SECOND QUIZ

Mar 3-Mar 7 Reading Week

Pornography

- Mar 11 Catharine A. MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State*, pp. 172-183; 195-214
- Mar 13 Wendy Brown, *States of Injury*, pp. 77-95

Lisa Duggan, Nan D. Hunter, and Carole S. Vance, "False Promises: Feminist Anti-pornography Legislation," in *Sex Wars: Sexual Dissent and Political Culture*, pp. 43-63

The Body

Mar 18 Anne Phillips, *Our Bodies, Whose Property?* pp. 42-96

THIRD QUIZ

Mar 20 Susan Bordo, "Hunger as Ideology" and "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity" in *Unbearable Weight*, pp. 99-134; 165-184

Toni Irving, "Borders of the Body: Black Women, Sexual Assault, and Citizenship," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 35 (1/2) (2007), pp. 67-92

Group presentations

Mar 25 Group presentation: Suffragettes

Group presentation: Standpoint theory

Mar 27 Group presentation: Third World feminisms

Group presentation: Feminism & science studies

Apr 1 Group presentation: Feminism & psychoanalysis

Group presentation: *Écriture féminine*

Apr 3 Group presentation: *Parité*

Group presentation: Ecofeminism

Democracy and Universalism

Apr 8 Joan Tronto, *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice*, pp. 17-45

FOURTH QUIZ

Apr 10 Susan Okin, "*Is Multiculturalism Bad For Women?*", pp. 7-24; 41-46; 79-84

Review

Apr 15 **SECOND PAPER DUE** by 2:00 pm in 418 Ferrier