

**POLI 265: Feminism and Political Thought**  
**Spring 2013**  
**Phillips 206**  
**MW 2:00PM-3:15**

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Office hours: Tuesday 11 – 3PM (in Steele); Thursday 1 – 3PM; by appointment

This course is an introduction to feminist political theory. You will be introduced to a wide range of feminist theories and topics, as well as “doing theory” yourself.

Course goals:

- Become familiar with the different ways in which feminist theorists analyze social problems and conditions through the lens of gender.
- Examine and ask questions about the assumptions and expectations of contemporary feminist theories of oppression and agency, and their implications for political theory, as well as for politics.
- Learn to see theory as itself a political practice, and develop the ability to apply theoretical tools when analyzing politics, as well as to analyze the politics embedded in theory.
- Develop skills necessary to analyze processes of social change, and to imagine and evaluate alternative social and political practices.
- Learn to think of yourself and your classmates as “authoritative knowers” and engage in the process of collective theorizing with others.

Required Texts:

Patricia Hill Collins, Black Feminist Thought, SECOND EDITION

Catharine MacKinnon, Toward a Feminist Theory of the State

Articles on Sakai (SK) (there are a lot of these, so you need to budget accordingly)

**Always bring the assigned readings to class, as we will frequently refer to passages.**

A few words about the kind of space I seek to create each time we come together:

Mine is a classroom in which you will learn about feminist theory, but it is also a feminist classroom. By this, I mean several things. First, I adopt a feminist pedagogical practice in this course, one that emphasizes discussion more than lecture and attempts to create a safe and open environment in which we can learn from one another. Though I will occasionally lecture, I do not believe that we learn best when told how to interpret a text or how we should feel about it, but instead believe that we must learn to think critically for ourselves. My teaching style reflects this belief, and I will try to help you develop the necessary skills to think critically about material as we move through this course. There will certainly be moments when I attempt to directly transmit knowledge of feminist political theory to you, but there will be many more moments when I facilitate your own intellectual discoveries in the classroom. And these two things are, of course, not necessarily mutually exclusive. Second, this course requires you to reflect on the multiple and intersecting identities you assume and/or are ascribed to you, as well as how your own background, status, and experience might impact your approach to doing feminist political theory. We will need to ask ourselves, both as a class and as individuals: How is the personal political? We will also want to explore the way in which those things we usually think of as “political” are also relevant for us personally. This is difficult work and we might often find ourselves treading in uncomfortable and unfamiliar territory. Yet, I believe it to be critical in helping you make important connections between your own experiences in the world and the various theories we will

consider in this course. In addition to being an intellectual activity, theory is also a practice; your own practice is likely to be related to who you are and where you stand in the world relative to others. Finally, I follow feminist educator bell hooks in her attempt to help her students, “come to voice.”<sup>1</sup> This has several meanings, the first of which is quite literal. I want you to work on becoming more comfortable speaking out loud in the classroom and getting used to hearing the sound of your own voice in a room filled with others who are actively listening. I understand that some of you are nervous about this prospect, but I still expect you to challenge yourself to speak. For inspiration, I want to offer you the words of the late feminist writer and poet Audre Lorde:

“We can learn to work and speak when we are afraid in the same way we have learned to work and speak when we are tired. For we have been socialized to respect fear more than our own needs for language and definition, and while we wait in silence for the final luxury of fearlessness, the weight of that silence will choke us.”<sup>2</sup>

Beyond this, I hope to enable all of you, not just an assertive few, to feel empowered in the kinds of rigorous, critical discussions we will engage in every time class meets. Though I expect you to always be respectful and thoughtful in your exchanges with one another, coming to voice in this way necessarily involves taking risks, allowing yourself to be open to challenges and contestation by others, and daring to push your thinking farther than you might otherwise have done. The feminist classroom, as I understand it, provides us with a unique opportunity to learn the value of theorizing collectively, as we actively participate in the process of thinking and talking through theory in community with others.

### **Course expectations and information:**

#### Honor Code

All of your work in this course must comply with the UNC honor code, which can be accessed at <http://honor.unc.edu>. If I believe you to be in violation of the honor code, I will, as I must, prosecute in the University’s honor court.

#### Reading Assignments

##### Required Reading:

You are expected to prepare the readings by the day for which they are assigned. By “prepare” I do not mean simply giving them a cursory reading. Rather, I mean read them carefully, think about them, identify sections or parts of the readings that you think work well or that you have problems with, use whatever note-taking system works best for you, and be sure to come to class with any questions you may have. I will sometimes pass out reading questions or thoughts to help guide your reading; these are designed to help you think about the text, and you are to work through these questions before class as part of your preparation. Remember that these readings are not like textbooks, but are much more dense and complex; they will probably take you longer to read, and you may need to read tough sections a few times, so be sure to plan accordingly.

##### Reading Resources:

There are two different overviews of feminist theory that I have made available on Sakai, one from an academic book (Valerie Bryson, “Feminist Theories Today”) and one from Bitch Magazine (Rachel Fudge, “Everything you always wanted to know about feminist but were afraid to ask). These are not required and we will not discuss them in class directly. I make them available because students unfamiliar with feminist theory have in the past found it helpful to review these to see the variety of forms that feminist theorizing takes.

Occasionally, I will post recommended readings on SK. These are meant to supplement our recommended readings and to give you a bit more context and background. While you are not required to

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<sup>1</sup> bell hooks, *Talking Back*. (South End Press, 1989), p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> Audre Lorde, “The Transformation of Silence in to Language and Action,” in *Sister Outsider* (The Crossing Press, 1984), p.44.

complete these readings, I strongly recommend that you do. Also, if ever there is a particular subject that interests you and you'd like to do more reading on your own, don't hesitate to ask me for further readings suggestions.

Note on Sakai readings:

I suggest you set up a habit of printing out the Sakai readings one week before the day on which they are due. This way you can avoid getting in a jam because of printer or downloading problems. Please contact me immediately if there is a problem with the readings.

Feminist theory touches on issues that are the focus of contemporary political discussion. These topics are covered daily by the news media, with or without a feminist perspective. One way to get a condensed and editorialized summary of the coverage of these topics is through feminist blogs. Following these debates as the semester goes contributes to our class in several ways: (1) giving you more information to critically evaluate claims made in the articles that we read and in the class discussions, (2) illustrating that the subject of feminist theories is relevant for political argumentation. (3) making more salient the fact that there is a gender angle in most contemporary political discussions.

Below I include a list of blogs (also in Sakai), but you will find that as you navigate them you'll quickly get introduced to others, which you may find more interesting:

- . Feministing <<http://www.feministing.com/>>
- . Feministe <<http://www.feministe.us/blog/>>
- . The Angry Black Woman <<http://theangryblackwoman.wordpress.com/>>
- . Womanist Musings <<http://www.womanist-musings.com/>>
- . Muslimah Media Watch <<http://muslimahmediawatch.blogspot.com/>>
- . Economic Woman <<http://economicwoman.com/>>
- . Elle PhD <<http://elleabd.blogspot.com/>>
- . Mom's rising <<http://www.momsrising.org/>>
- . Broadsheet <<http://www.salon.com/mwt/broadsheet/>>
- . Jezebel <<http://jezebel.com/>>
- . XY: Men, Masculinities, and Gender Politics <<http://www.xyonline.net/>>
- . Our Bodies, Our Blog <http://www.ourbodiesourblog.org/>
- . Holla Back NYC <http://www.ihollaback.org/>
- . Bitch Magazine <<http://bitchmagazine.org/blogs>>

**Class participation:** This course requires a considerable amount of active and sustained participation. You will need to come to class ready to work actively on your understanding of feminist political theory, to analyze texts using critical thinking, and to consider complex social and political issues. Your work for this class will involve both autonomous and collaborative learning. The idea of *autonomy* stresses your personal responsibility for your own learning, while the idea of *collaboration* stresses your responsibility for teaching and learning from one another. It is my responsibility as the teacher to secure the necessary conditions in which both types of learning can occur, and to engage in analytic thinking with you. So this class is not like a theater, where you come and watch me perform for you. Instead, it is best thought of as a lab, where you come in to work with, examine, and enhance the knowledge gained from the readings and from your own experiences.

You will work in participatory learning groups for much of the semester. We will keep the same group for several class periods in a row before switching to new groups. (Please look at the instructions for learning group interaction in Appendix A.) In addition to small group work, the class as a whole will work together to discuss and analyze issues and questions in the readings. I expect everyone to participate in the larger discussions as well, in order to practice and develop your communicative abilities, or, in other words, in order to help you come to voice (Note: participation in the learning groups will not suffice to do well overall on participation.) If you find yourself struggling with this, refer to the above Audre Lorde quote, and please

feel free to come to my office hours so that we can discuss strategies to help you become more comfortable speaking aloud in class. The good news is that I have a very broad notion of participation, including active listening, asking questions of one another (including, “What do you mean? Can you say more about that?”), reading relevant passages aloud, helping another person find the right page, explaining why you agree or disagree with what someone else has said, taking detailed notes, and engaging in and facilitating discussion. Everyone must experiment with a variety of forms of participation, rather than always playing the same role.

**Important note about electronics:** Turn off all cell phones before class begins. I ask that you not take out phones at any point during class to check messages. Also, the use of laptops or e-readers will not be allowed. I find them distracting and unnecessary for the kind of work we will be doing together, which, as I hope I’ve made clear enough by now, relies heavily on your engagement with other classmates with whom you are working to create and sustain a stimulating and engaged learning environment. If you are someone who usually takes notes on your laptop, you will need to work on developing different listening and writing skills that work for this course. I am happy to work on developing alternative strategies with you.

Your participation grade will rely on both subjective and objective measures. Subjective measures include my evaluation of your labor in the classroom, including group work, class discussion, and in-class writing assignments. Objective measures include attendance, possession of readings, and the quality of group reports (see Attachment A).

**Attendance:** You are responsible for contributing to our learning in this class, and you cannot do this if you are not here. You will receive one attendance credit for each class you attend (we have 28 scheduled meetings following the first day). Regardless of the quality of your other participatory work, attendance credits will operate as a baseline for your overall participation grade. To be clear: Attendance credits are a “floor” for your overall participation grade, which includes a variety of components; it does not guarantee you a particular grade.

To be eligible for an A for your participation grade, you must have at least 28 attendance credits.

To be eligible for an A-, at least 27.

To be eligible for a B, at least 26.

To be eligible for a C, at least 25.

In order for an absence to be excused, you must: a) provide written documentation of a medical or family emergency AND, b) meet with another student in the class to replicate the participation that you missed, and affirm to me that you have done so. Excused absences will not count against your attendance credit total.

Tardiness, should it be a problem, will also be factored into your participation grade. Showing up late to class (or leaving early) is disruptive and disrespectful to your classmates (and to me). I will send an attendance sheet around at the beginning of each class. Should you need to sign it at the end of class because you came in late, you will need to note that you were late.

**Essay Assignments:** Another important skill I want you to work on in this course is analytic and imaginative writing—in other words, to perform clear, thoughtful written analyses of complex feminist political theory. During the course of the semester, there will be two 5-6 page analytic essay assignments. I will hand out essay prompts several days before the essays are due. **No late papers can be accepted.** Also, I do not accept electronic copies of papers; you must turn them in at the beginning of class on the day they are due. You are responsible for saving a copy of your essay electronically or having a back-up hard copy in your possession. **Do not give me your only copy of an essay.** I will not accept this as an excuse for an extension or a “pass” should I fail to find your paper in my mailbox. (See Attachment B for my grading policy on papers.)

Since the essays constitute a large part of your grade, I urge you to carefully read and consider the instructions I hand out and the expectations I outline, to allow yourself time to revise drafts, and to make use of the services of the Writing Center, which is located in Phillips Annex (962-7710), [www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb](http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb)).

## Short Assignments:

### Microthemes

A microtheme is a written response to the reading. There are two different types: summary and thesis-supported (see Appendix C on microthemes for further explanation). You will complete a total of four microthemes for this course, two summary and two thesis supported.

### Quizzes

In order to factor in formal course credit for preparing the readings carefully, there will be periodic quizzes. Quizzes will always be announced in advance, and quiz questions will always draw from reading questions, other handouts, or verbal comments from me in class about what to focus on in your reading. In other words, quizzes are not designed to surprise you, but rather to let you demonstrate your understanding of the readings. Missed quizzes cannot be made up. No make-up quizzes will be given.

### Miscellaneous

This includes in-class writing assignments, out-of-class short writing assignments, such as the autobiography paper described below, and the “final exam” assignment.<sup>3</sup>

**Syllabus Statement:** On **Monday, August 26**, please bring to class a written or typed statement (signed and dated) that confirms that you have re-read the entire syllabus carefully. I do this because I want to ensure that you studied the information and requirements for this course, including the attachments, so you understand my expectations of you. It’s important that you understand all of the requirements, have a general sense of the topics we’ll cover, and just know what you’re getting into! Further, reading the syllabus carefully will help you figure out what your expectations should be of me.

**Autobiography/feminism paper:** For this assignment, you will write a short autobiography of yourself in which you describe your understanding of feminism and/or feminists. Trace, if you can, events in your past that have influenced your views of feminism and feminists. Do you consider yourself a feminist? Why or why not? What about your life may have led you to this class?

This personal essay is due on **Monday, August 26**, at the beginning of class. It should be 1½ to 2 pages, single-spaced, with a blank line between paragraphs, standard margins (1-inch) and fonts (11-12pt). I will compile anonymous excerpts for distribution to the class.

**Honor and Honesty:** All work done in this class must be carried out within the letter and spirit of the Honor Code (<http://honor.unc.edu/honor/index.html>). You are also responsible for consulting with me if you are unclear about the meaning of academic dishonesty, plagiarism, or adverse conduct, or about whether any particular act on your part constitutes such a violation of the University’s honor code.

Your course grade will be based on the following assignments:

Class Participation (including group work and attendance)	25%
Short Assignments	20%
First essay assignment	25%
Second essay assignment	30%

## SECTION I. DOING THEORY: Feminist politics and feminist education

In this section we will explore what exactly “theory” is, as well as its relationship to ordinary thinking. What do we mean when we talk about something being “abstract”? The authors consider the issue of who decides what counts as theory, and where and by whom it can

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<sup>3</sup> The university requires that we actually meet during the final exam period scheduled for this class, which is **Friday, December 6 at 4PM in Phillips 206**. There will be an in-class assignment during this period. In order to pass this class, you must be present to complete this assignment

legitimately be produced. Why is it important to contest narrow definitions of theory and why is this fundamentally the work of feminist theorists? What is theory good for, and, more importantly, why is it necessary for feminism? Finally, we will analyze these readings to help us think about how theory helps us make connections between individual experience and broad social structures.

- Wed Aug 21 Introduction. Course requirements, procedures, and expectations will be reviewed. *All students are responsible for having the information given during the first day of class.*
- Mon Aug 26 Charlotte Bunch, "Not By Degrees" SK 240-253  
bell hooks, "feminist theory: a radical agenda" SK 35-41  
Adrienne Rich, "Claiming an Education" SK 231-5  
**\*\*Autobiography/feminism papers due**  
POLI 265 syllabus and attachment (read these thoroughly)  
**\*\*Syllabus Statement Due**
- Wed Aug 28 Deborah L. Rhode, "The No Problem Problem" and "The Ideology and Biology of Gender Difference)" SK 1-21  
Cordelia Fine, Delusions of Gender SK
- Mon Sept 2 No Class, Labor Day

Recommended Reading: Valerie Bryson, "Feminist Theories Today" (SK) and Rachel Fudge, "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Feminism But Were Afraid to Ask," (SK). These are useful overviews of the variety of forms that feminist theorizing takes. I encourage you to read it sometime during the first week or two of class. This would also be a good time to read the Writing Center handout "Reading Toward Writing," available at [www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts](http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts).

## SECTION II: THE "MALENESS" OF POLITICAL THEORY: FEMINIST REVISIONS

Feminist political theory is comprised of several related intellectual projects. One focus has been on critiquing and expanding mainstream political thought. Feminists working in this area began by analyzing the misogyny and sexism in the traditional historical texts of political theory. Now they also focus on examining concepts and thinkers not generally part of mainstream political theory, and on rethinking important political concepts in light of feminist perspectives (concepts like justice, power, knowledge); essentially, they help us to rethink "the political." The first focuses on the public/private dichotomy that has been so central for Western thought, the second on knowledge, and the third on identity and the political subject.

### 1) Knowledge and experience

When we ask how we "know" things, for instance, how we know that oppression and inequality exist, we're asking how we comprehend reality, how we decide what counts as true or what something means. Such discussions are central to doing theory since part of what theory does is redescribe, analyze, and explain "the real world." Feminist theories have often challenged male accounts of that world by arguing for a different way of knowing, one that places "experience" in a central role. We will learn about feminist theories of knowledge and how they differ from traditional theories of knowledge, and evaluate what problems and possibilities arise from using these feminist theories.

- Wed Sept 4 MacKinnon, Toward A Feminist Theory of the State, Ch. 5, "Consciousness Raising" (83-105)  
Kathie Sarachild, "Consciousness-Raising: A Radical Weapon," 144-149, SK

Mon Sept 9 MacKinnon, Toward A Feminist Theory of the State, Ch. 6, “Method and Politics” (106-125)  
Collins, Black Feminist Thought, Prefaces and Ch. 1 (vi-ix, 1-19)  
**Lock and Key Assignment for MacKinnon Due**

Wed Sept 11 Collins, Black Feminist Thought, pp. 21-28 of Ch.2, and Ch. 11 (251-271)

## 2) Some general approaches to theorizing gender and oppression

As feminist theory has developed, classifications like “liberal feminism,” “radical feminism,” “socialist feminism, etc., have become less helpful and reflective of the multiple and intersecting modes of analysis in much contemporary work. We will now explore and evaluate some general approaches to theorizing gender and oppression. We then investigate the way diverse feminist theorists analyze specific issues and problems (e.g., public and private, sexual violence, sexual identity, the body). As part of these investigations, we will be examining theorists’ treatment of differences among women, and the political/theoretical meanings of these differences. We will also tease out the implicit or explicit strategies for change that these theories offer.

### Humanist and “Women-Centered”

Mon Sept 16 Martha C. Nussbaum, “Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings (SK)  
Iris M. Young, “Humanism, Gynocentrism, and Feminist Politics” (SK) 73 - 91  
**Mircotheme 1 Due (summary, choose either Nussbaum OR Young)**

### Intersectionality:

Wed Sept 18 Kimberle Crenshaw, “Intersectionality and Identity Politics: Learning from Violence against Women of Color” (SK) 178 - 193  
Mazine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill, “Theorizing Difference from Multiracial Feminism” (SK) 321 – 331

### Thinking about Privilege:

Mon Sept 23 Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege and Male Privilege” (SK) 7 - 18  
Andrea Ayzavian, “Interrupting the Cycle of Oppression: The Role of Allies” (SK) 1 - 6  
Diane Finnerty, “An Open Letter to My LGBT Sisters and Brothers” (SK) 1 - 11

**Public and Private:** Traditional non-feminist social and political theory has made (or assumed) a sharp distinction between the private (as a realm of family, domesticity, and loving relationships) and the public (as a realm of politics, work, and the state). We will examine feminist challenges to this distinction and feminist arguments about the significance of recognizing the variety of connections between public and private, and the politics of drawing boundaries between the two.

Wed Sept 25 Susan Okin, “Gender, the Public, and the Private” (SK) 67 - 90  
MacKinnon, Toward a Feminist Theory of the State, Ch. 10 (184-194)

Mon Sept 30 Collins, Black Feminist Thought, Chapter 3  
Susan Moller Okin, “Vulnerability by Marriage,” (SK)

Wed Oct 2 Linda Hirschman, “Homeward Bound” (SK)  
E.J. Graff, “The Opt-Out Myth” (SK)

Mon Oct 7 Michael L. Ferguson, “Choice Feminism and the Fear of Politics,” (SK)

Nancy Hirschmann, "Toward a Feminist Theory of Freedom," (SK)  
\*\*Essay prompts will be handed out and discussed. Begin asking questions and setting up a time to meet with me this week.

**\*\*Microtheme 2 Due (Thesis-supported)**

Wed Oct 9 Joan C. Tronto, "The 'Nanny' Question in Feminism" (SK) 34 - 49  
Gwendolyn Mink, "Why Should Poor Mothers have to Work Outside the Home?" (SK) 41 – 66

Mon Oct 14 **First Essay Due**  
**Required Peer Review** (I will give out a handout before your first peer review that thoroughly explains this exercise.)

Wed Oct 16 No Class

**\*\*Revised essay due Thursday, October 17, by noon.**

**SECTION III. CONCEPTUALIZATIONS AND WORKINGS OF OPPRESSION: Theoretical perspectives and political strategies for change**

In this section, we will use the knowledge we gained in Section I about feminist epistemologies and methodologies to help us as we explore a diverse group of feminist theorists and investigate the way they analyze specific issues and problems (e.g. sexual violence, oppression, identity, etc.). We will take up dominance as a key analytical concept through which we understand women's oppression. At the same time, we will be examining theorists' treatment of difference among women, and the political/theoretical meanings of these differences. We will also tease out the implicit or explicit strategies of change these theorists offer.

1. The Law and Culture of Gender Domination: rape and sexual violence: In what ways is oppression closely related to dominance? These readings will help us to think about and struggle with the particular legal and political structures and systems in place that serve to perpetuate sexual/gender dominance. Specifically, how is one's identity shaped by, or implicated in the production of, relationships of domination and oppression? What are the disconnects between our conceptions of domination and the realities of sexual violence, and what accounts for such disconnects? Further, how do we distinguish what is "real" when it comes to domination and what is not? What is the difference between sex and rape, for example, and how do we arrive at such a distinction? What is the relationship between consciousness, experience, and law?

Mon Oct 21 MacKinnon, Toward a Feminist Theory of the State, Ch. 7, "Sexuality"  
MacKinnon, "Reflections on Sex Equality Under Law," in Women's Bodies, Men's Laws, pp. 116-150 (SK)

Wed Oct 23 MacKinnon, Toward a Feminist Theory of the State, Ch. 8 and 9

Mon Oct 28 MacKinnon, "Unequal Sex: A Sex Equality Approach to Sexual Assault," in Women's Bodies, Men's Laws, pp. 240-248, SK  
Sharon Marcus, "Fighting Bodies, Fighting Words: A Theory and Politics of Rape Prevention" SK 385-403

Wed Oct 30 Dorothy Roberts, excerpts from Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the meaning of Liberty (SK) 1 - 7, 294 – 312

**SECTION V. EXPANDING/COMPLICATING CONCEPTIONS OF OPPRESSION AND AGENCY: Multiplicity in identity and experience**

When feminist theorists revised feminist theory to complicate and expand the political subject, new emphasis was placed on difference among women and the political relevance of such differences. These readings will continue our exploration of the structural, interlocking character of oppression, as it relates to both gender and other identities, and will allow us to look at the political and theoretical differences among women as itself a major issue in feminist political theory. Why does identity matter, and in what ways does identity matter for these particular theorists? What is gained and what is lost when we focus on difference rather than domination as conceived by MacKinnon and earlier feminist theorists? Is there a way to do both? What are the implications of theoretical and political differences among women for the future of feminist political theory?

- Mon Nov 4 Marilyn Frye, “Oppression” 1-16, SK  
Deborah K. King, “Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness,” 220-242, SK
- Wed Nov 6 Gloria Anzaldua, “La conciencia de la mestiza/Toward a New Consciousness,” pp. 77-91, SK  
**\*\*Microtheme 3 (Option 1) Due, Summary on Anzaldua**
- Mon Nov 11 Collins, Black Feminist Thought, Ch. 5 and 6  
**\*\*Microtheme 3 (Option 2) Due, Summary on Collins, Ch. 5 ONLY**
- Wed Nov 13 Uma Narayan, “Through the Looking Glass Darkly: Emissaries, Mirrors, and Authentic Insiders as Preoccupations,” pp. 121-157, In Dislocation Cultures, SK  
Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses,” pp. 17-42, in Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity, SK

**SECTION V. “WOMEN,” SEXUALITY, AND BODIES: Sources of oppression and potential sites of resistance**

This section will consider two fundamental issues in feminist political theory: sexuality and the body. We will consider a multiplicity of perspectives on each topic, some of which view sexuality and the body as a source of oppression, while others view them as a potentially positive force in “women’s” lives. (Note: I put women in quotation marks to emphasize the idea that some of the theorists we will cover view women as the product of powerful discourses and forces that create women’s sexuality and particular kinds of bodies.) Most of these theorists, however, do not see sexuality and bodies in either/or terms, but instead complicate traditional notions of both. Finally, we will read and think about the ways in which sexuality and the body intersect and “act on” one another.

1) (Hetero)sexuality and Power: (re)conceptualizing oppression and agency: These readings consider the power of sex and sexuality—each conceived in a variety of ways by this group of authors—as both sources of oppression and agency. What IS sexuality and how is it best conceived, as a choice or as an essential part of one’s identity? Is there a way to maintain both simultaneously? What IS queer theory, or is it many things? What perceived theoretical and political need(s) are “queer theorists”

responding to? What opposing perspectives? What sort of politics result from a queer theoretical perspective?

Mon Nov 18 Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality" SK 35-68  
Christine Overall, "Heterosexuality and Choice" SK 499-504  
**\*\*Microtheme 4 Due (thesis-supported for Overall)**

Wed Nov 20 Marilyn Frye, "Willful Virgin or Do You Have to Be a Lesbian to be a Feminist?" (SK) 124 - 137  
Anastasia Higginbotham, "Chicks Goin' At It," (SK) 11 - 18

2) Gendered Bodies and Other Practices: (re)conceptionalizing oppression and agency: These readings frame a diverse yet interrelated set of questions about bodies, oppression, and agency. Feminists view the body in a variety of ways, including conceptualizing it as a natural given that is prior to the social construction of gender, a site of cultural inscriptions acted upon by dominating discourses of power, a potential site of empowerment and resistance, a cultural text, and the site of particular practices we engage in. What forces act upon the body to shape our identity? How can we understand the body as a site of resistance? What are the theoretical and political implications of viewing the (sexed) body as artificiality? As a (sometimes playful) choice? What are the potential theoretical and political advantages/disadvantages of taking seriously the locatedness and limitations of embodied experience?

Mon Nov 25 Sandra Bartky, "Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power," in Femininity and Domination (SK) 63 - 82  
Kathy Davis, "Cultural Dopes and She-Devils: Cosmetic surgery as ideological dilemma," 23-47, SK

Wed Nov 27 Thanksgiving Recess. No Class.  
Elizabeth Cole and Natalie Sabik, "Repairing a Broken Mirror" (SK) 173 - 192  
Shira Tarrant. 2008. "The Great Cover-Up. Can High Necklines Cure Low Morals?" in Bitch Magazine, Winter, Issue No. 38.

Mon Dec 2 Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution" (SK) and  
"Undiagnosing Gender (SK)  
**Beauty Ritual Assignment Due**

Wed Dec 4 Cathy Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" (SK)

**\*\*Your final analytic essay is due Friday, December 6, at 4:00PM in our regular classroom.** (For official university purposes, this essay is a "take-home exam," and will be due at the time of our scheduled final exam.) There will also be an in-class assignment on this day. With the exception of other exam conflicts, for which you will need written proof from Academic Advising, your failure to be present for this period and to complete the in-class assignment will result in your failure of this class.