



## Feminist Theory and Rhetorical Criticism—CMS 390R 06530

Meets Thursdays, 3:30-6:30  
CMA 3.128  
Office Hours CMA 7.220  
Tuesdays 2-5

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### Introduction:

The purpose of this course is to introduce the key tenets of a range of feminist political, critical, and cultural theories so that students may recognize the rhetorics of feminism in rhetorical texts and to use feminist theoretical concepts to expose the operation of gendered discourse in political and popular culture.

### Texts:

Angela Davis, *Women, Race, and Class* (Random House, 1983) ISBN 0394713516.  
Rosemary Hennessy and Chris Ingraham, *Materialist Feminism* (Routledge, 1997) ISBN 0415916348.  
Alison Jaggar, *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1998) ISBN 0847672549.  
Carole McCann, Ed., *Feminist Theory Reader* (Routledge 2003) ISBN 041593133.  
Sharon Smith, *Women and Socialism* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2005) ISBN 1931859116.  
Rosemarie Putnam Tong, *Feminist Thought* (Westview, 1998) ISBN 0813332958.  
Adrienne Katherine Wing, Ed., *Critical Race Feminism: A Reader* (NYU Press, 2003) ISBN 0814793940.

Occasional course packets will be available at Jenn's Copies, across Guadalupe from CMA.

### Requirements:

Regular attendance and participation in discussion (10%)  
One 30-minute presentation summarizing, explaining, and providing examples relevant to selected readings of importance to a research question of your own; provision of readings to students one week in advance (30%)  
Presentation of written responses to peer presentations (10%)  
One 15-minute presentation of seminar paper draft (10%)  
Seminar paper (40%)

| <u>Schedule:</u> | Topic  | Readings  |
|------------------|--|---|
| Week 1 (9/1)     | Course introduction                                      | none  |
| Week 2 (9/8)     | Liberal and radical Feminism                             | Jaggar Chs. 1, 3, 5, 7, 9,<br>Tong Chs. 1,2   |
| Week 3 (9/15)    | Marxist and socialist feminism<br>Research questions due | Jaggar Chs. 4, 6, 8, 10,<br>Smith all   |
| Week 4 (9/22)    | Materialist feminism<br>Bibliography for question due    | Hennessey Introduction,<br>essays by Barrett, Young,<br>Field, Delphy, Gimenez;<br>from McCann, Hartman   |
| Week 5 (9/29)    | Race and feminism<br>Copies of readings for class due    | Wing Intro., selected<br>Essays; Tong Ch. 7   |
| Week 6 (10/7)    | Multicultural & global feminisms                         | From Hennessey: Carby,<br>Smith, Brewer From<br>McCann, selected essays<br>including Alarcón,<br>Anzaldúa |
| Week 7 (10/14)   | Research presentations and workshop                      |   |
| Week 8 (10/21)   | Queering feminism  | Packet; From McCann,<br>"Sexuality" section; From<br>Hennessey, Feinberg, Field,<br>Ingraham              |
| Week 9 (10/28)   | Poststructuralist feminisms                              | Tong Ch. 6; from<br>Hennessey, Stabile; from<br>McCann, Butler; Packet                                    |
| Week 10 (11/3)   | Research presentations and workshop                      |   |
| Week 11 (11/10)  | Research presentations and workshop                      |   |
| Week 12(11/17)   | NO CLASS NCA   |   |
| Week 13 (11/24)  | NO CLASS THANKSGIVING                                    |   |
| Week 14 (12/1)   | Solidarity, identity, and movement                       | From McCann, Rich,<br>Hartsock; Packet  |
| Week 15 (12/8)   | Course wrap  |   |

We will set a special session for seminar presentations.  
Seminar papers due no later than 5 p.m. Thursday, December 15.

### Research Presentation Guidelines:

The purpose of this assignment is for us to read together as a class in an area of interest specifically to you. You will formulate a question about feminist theory and discourse that may, but does not have to, be the center of your seminar paper. You will select two or three readings of article length to copy for the class. For the day of your presentation, class members will read your selections. You should come prepared with a plan to summarize the ideas, raise key questions, and lead a discussion based on the shared reading.

Often it is helpful to point up what is contentious or controversial in the theoretical ideas you are using, defending, and/or criticizing. Your presentation may feature examples for critical analysis, for example, an excerpt from television, film, political rhetoric, music, etc. You may be creative in how you structure your session, but make sure to provide clarity with regard to the stakes of the question you are asking and the content of the ideas.

### Seminar Paper Guidelines:

An ideal seminar paper is between 20 and 25 pages in length (double spaced, in 12-point type), with references. Seminar papers, like your research presentation, should be oriented toward a significant theoretical or critical question, such as, "How is this text gendered and what are the consequences of its constructions of gender?" or "What are the limitations of this theoretical perspective for understanding x?" The answer to this question, arrived at through research and examination of texts, will become your thesis statement for the paper.

For this class, papers should combine theory and criticism, so that you develop a theoretical position out of or in relation to some primary artifact or artifacts. For example, a former graduate student of mine wrote a dissertation examining the popular press reporting of the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century U.S. textile workers' strikes. These texts revealed the limitations of a feminist politics oriented toward popular culture and identity and the necessity of materialist feminist theory and practice to the cause of working women.

A strong seminar paper is well-organized, reviews the significant scholarly literature on both the theoretical topics covered and the kinds of primary texts you are working with, features clear writing and argument, and addresses a question of importance to our fields of study and society at large. You should read credible, published scholarly articles and books examining patterns of gender and feminism in popular culture and political discourse not only for the information and arguments they contain, but also as models for your scholarly writing.

Suggested Additional Bibliography (truly non-comprehensive; I'll look forward to what you bring to the table!)

Liberal Feminist Criticism

Karlyn Campbell, *Man Cannot Speak For Her* vol. 1 (Praeger, 1989).  
Gal Gerson, "Liberal Feminism: Individuality and Oppositions in Wollstonecraft and Mill," *Political Studies* 50 (2002): 794-811.

Radical Feminist

Karen Foss, Sonja Foss, and Cindy Griffin, *Feminist Rhetorical Theories* (Corwin Press, 1999)  
Barbara Crow, *Radical Feminism: A Documentary Reader* (Albany, NYU: 2000).

Marxist/Socialist Feminist

Mary Triece, *Protest and Popular Culture* (Boulder: Westview, 2001).  
Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

Multicultural/Critical Race Feminist

Lisa Flores and Dreama Moon, "Antiracism and the Abolition of Whiteness: Rhetorical Strategies of Domination Among 'Race Traitors'." *Communication Studies*, Summer 2000, Vol. 51 Issue 2, p97, 19p.  
Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought* (New York: Routledge, 2000).

Global Feminist

Trinh Min-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Indiana University Press, 1989).  
Rada Hegde, "Marking Bodies, Reproducing Violence A Feminist Reading of Female Infanticide in South India." *Violence Against Women*, May99, Vol. 5 Issue 5, p507, 18p  
Francesca Miller, "Feminisms and Transnationalism," *Gender and History* 10 (1998): 569-581.  
*Gayatri Spivak Reader* (London: Routledge, 1995).

Psychoanalytic/Postmodern

Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage, 1990).  
Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter* (New York: Routledge, 1993); also *Gender Trouble* (Routledge, 1999).  
Helene Shugart et al., "Mediating Third-Wave Feminism," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 18 (2001): 194-211.  
Nancy Hirschman, "Feminist Standpoint as Postmodern Strategy," *Women & Politics* (18: 1997): 73-93.  
John Sloop, *Disciplining Gender* (Amherst: U Mass, 2004).

Queer

Julie Thompson, *Mommy Queerest* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002).  
Scott Bravman, *Queer Fictions of the Past* (Cambridge University Press, 1997).  
Lauren Berlant, "Intimacy: A Special Issue," *Critical Inquiry* 24 (1998): 281-288.

Other

Bonnie Dow, *Prime-Time Feminism* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996)  
Melissa Deem and Bonnie Dow, "Scandal, Heteronormative Culture, and the Disciplining of Feminism," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 16 (1999): 86-94.