

GSWS 822: Feminist Theory
An Intellectual History of Postwar Feminist Theory in North America (1960s-1980s)

Dr. Lara Campbell
Classes: Wednesdays, 9:30-1:20
AQ 5029

Often referred to as a period of 'second wave feminism' in North America, the period of time between the late 1950s and the early 1980s was one of rich, diverse, and dynamic conversations about gender, equality, liberation, and sexuality. Feminist activists and theorists grappled with the meanings of gender, sexual and gender expression, equality, social justice, and the intersections amongst gender, race, class, and sexuality.

This course will largely focus on this particular period of time, giving us the opportunity to explore a wide theoretical terrain of North American feminist theory, placing these theoretical developments within a rich historical context. We will: examine the relationship of feminism to the left, particularly the civil rights and student movements of the 60s and 70s; the relationship of feminist theory and women/feminism to the New Left; conflict and internal debates within feminist theory; the changing relationship between theory and activism; the intersection of theories about gender oppression with oppressions of race and sexuality.

After tracing the historical development of North American feminist theory from the mid 20th century forward, we end the course with a few examples of the ways in which current feminist theory is taking up, criticizing, challenging, and expanding the multiple theoretical strands of second wave North American feminism.

This course has a very heavy reading list and a great deal of complex, theoretical readings. It won't be easy, but we will all work together and help each other examine and analyze the texts to the best of our abilities. Remember, this course will give you a solid historical background in feminist theory, which will help you to further develop your scholarly interests. Some weeks we will read an entire book in full; other weeks, we will read selections from larger works, shorter articles, manifestos, or briefs. This will help vary the style of reading and lighten the reading load, but it is also a reflection of the differing styles of second wave feminist theorizing, and a reflection of the out of print status of several of the books we are studying.

Each week, groups of two will do brief presentations on:

- a) any biographical and historical aspect of the readings/authors
- b) an overview of the main text/s, and the main arguments of the author/s
- c) develop a list of at least four questions to help guide the class discussion

d) help guide the class discussion of the readings

Grading:

Attendance and Participation: 25%

Seminar Presentation: 15%

Essay Proposal / Annotated Bibliography: 20% (due midterm)

Final Paper: 40% (due the last week of class)

Books on Order (some will also be on library reserve):

Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

bell hooks, *Ain't I A Woman* (a few secondhand copies available)

Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (also available as an e-book)

Susan Wendell, *The Rejected Body*

Please note: you may use any edition of the above books.

All other Weekly Readings:

Available on the GSWS 822, WebCt site.

You will have access to this site once registered in the class.

Essay:

Choose one major feminist theorist we have studied in class, and write a critical biography of her/his work in theoretical and historical context. You may focus on the author's larger work by considering several books/articles or one seminal work. For example: you might look at Betty Friedan in the context of Cold War politics and baby-boom demographics, analyzing both her liberal feminist underpinnings and the limitation of her ideas; or you might read the collected works of Audre Lorde, placing her work in context of feminist theory; black feminism; and lesbian feminism, noting how her ideas intersected with major theoretical traditions, and perhaps changed over time and place. You might also frame your essay as a sustained critique of an influential author. For example, Susan Brownmiller's *Against Our Will* has been an extremely influential book in terms of understanding sexual violence as an expression of power, but it has been roundly criticized by third wave feminists and by black socialist feminists such as Angela Davis.

Week 1: 5 September

Introductions

Week 2: 12 September
Postwar Liberal Feminism

Reading:

Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*, all chapters except for 5, 6, & 7.

Historical Precedents:

Harriet Taylor Mill, 'The Enfranchisement of Women,' and John Stuart Mill, 'The Subjection of Women, 67-84,' in Estelle Freedman, *The Essential Feminist Reader*

Modern Interventions: Martha Nussbaum, film clip, *The Examined Life* (8 minutes)

Document:

RCSW, "Criteria and Principles," *The Status of Women in Canada*, 1-18.

Critique (skim, if time):

Anne Phillips, "Feminism and Liberalism Revisited: Has Martha Nussbaum Got it Right?" *Constellations* 8/2 (2001): 249-266.

Week 3: 19 September

Existentialism and the Human Condition

Reading:

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Introduction; Book 1, Part 1; and all of Book II)

Historical Precedents:

Jean-Paul Sartre, Others, from Jean-Paul Sartre: Basic Writings, *Being and Nothingness*, p.224-

Modern Interventions:

Elizabeth Spelman, "Simone de Beauvoir and Women: Just Who Does She Think 'We' Is?" in Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought*, 57-79.

Week 4: 26 September

Thinking About Class and Gender: Socialist and Marxist Feminism

Readings:

- Maggie Benston, "The Political Economy of Women's Liberation, in *Voices from Women's Liberation*, ed Leslie B. Tanner . New York: Mentor, 1970. Pp279-89.
- Dorothy Smith, *Feminism and Marxism: A Place to Begin, A Way to Go*. Vancouver: New Star, 1977, 9-52.

Historical Precedents:

- Friedrich Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," 104-111, in Freedman, *The Essential Feminist Reader*

Documents:

- Kathy McAfee and Myrna Wood, "Bread and Roses," in *Voices from Women's Liberation*, 414-33.
- Judi Bernstein, Peggy Morton, Linda Seese, Myrna Wood. Student Union for Peace Action, "Sisters, Lovers, Brothers...Listen," 1967.
- Bread and Roses, "Declaration of Women's Independence," *Dear Sisters*, 45-47.

Week 5: 3 October**Radical Feminism I: The Oppression of Women, and the Relationship between feminism and the New Left****Reading:**

Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* (all chapters except 2 & 3)

Historical Documents:

- Anne Koedt, "Women and the Radical Movement," *Notes from the First Year* (1968), 26-7.
- New York Radical Women, "Principles," in *Dear Sisters*, p.34
- Burriss et al, Detroit women, "The Fourth World Manifesto," in *Dear Sisters*, 101-103.
- Robin Morgan, "Goodbye to All That," in *Dear Sisters*, 53-57.

Week 6: 10 October**Radical Feminism II: Sexuality and Its Discontents****Readings:**

- Susan Brownmiller, *Against our Will* (read: Personal statement; chapters 1, 7, 8, 10, & 11)
- Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," in *Powers of Desire*, ed. Ann Snitow et al, p.p.177-205
- Charlotte Bunch, "Lesbians in Revolt" *The Furies* (1972, online)

Critique:

Angela Davis, "The Myth of the Black Rapist," from *Women, Race, and Class*, 172-201.

Documents:

- Dana Densmore, "On Celibacy," in *Voices from Women's Liberation*, 264-68.
- Radicalesbians, "Woman-Identified Woman," *Notes from the Third Year* (1971), 81-84.
- Sue Katz, "Smash Phallic Imperialism," *Dear Sisters*, 169-171.

Modern Interventions:

Lisa Duggan, "Making It Perfectly Queer," in Duggan and Hunter, eds., *Sex Wars*, 149-63.

Week 7: 17 October**Feminism in Conflict: The Story of the 'Sex Wars'****Readings:**

- Carole Vance, "Pleasure and Danger: Toward a Politics of Sexuality" (1-24); "Epilogue" (431-36); "Call for Papers," (443-46) in Vance, ed., *Pleasure and Danger*
- Ellen Willis. "Feminism, Moralism, and Pornography," *Powers of Desire*, 460-67.
- Catharine MacKinnon, "Sexuality, Pornography, and Method: Pleasure Under Patriarchy," in Tuana and Tong, eds. *Feminism and Philosophy*, 134-52.
- Lisa Duggan, Nan D. Hunter and Carole S. Vance, "False Promises: Feminist Antipornography Legislation," in Lisa Duggan and Nan Hunter, *Sex Wars: Sexual Dissent and Political Culture*, 43-61.

Week 8: 24 October**Thinking Through Race I: Black and 'Third World Feminism'****Reading:**

- bell hooks, *Ain't I A Woman: Black Women and Feminism* Boston: South End Press, 1981 (chapters 1; 3; 5).
- Audre Lourde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *the Essential Feminist Reader*, 331-35.
- Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," in *Sister Outsider* (1984), 114-23.

Documents:

- Patricia Haden et al, "A Historical and Critical Essay for Black Women," *Dear Sisters*, 93-95.
- Third World Women's Alliance, "Statement," in *Dear Sisters*, p.65
- Combahee River Collective. "A Black Feminist Statement." In *The Feminist History Reader*, 325-330.

Historical Precedents:

Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I A Woman," 1851.

Modern Interventions:

Enakshi Dua, "Canadian Anti-Racist Thought: Scratching the Surface," in *Open Boundaries*, 60-67.

Week 9: 31 October**Multiethnic, Multiracial, and Indigenous Feminism****Reading:**

Gloria Anzaldua, "La Prieta (1979)," *The Gloria Anzaldua Reader*, 38-50.

Documents:

- Maracle, Lee. *Bobbi lee: Indian Rebel* (selections, ebook through SFU library, 1977)
- Jo Carrillo, "And When You Leave, Take Your Pictures With you," in Anzaldua, *This Bridge Called my Back*

Modern Interpretations:

- Joyce Green, ed. *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism* (read: Joyce Green, "taking Account of Aboriginal Feminism, 20-32; Emma LaRocque, "Métis and Feminist: Ethical Reflections on Feminism, Human Rights, and Decolonization, 53-71.")

Week 10: 7 November**What is Feminist Epistemology? The Emergence of Standpoint Theory****Readings:**

- Patricia Hill Collins, "Black Feminist Epistemology," in Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 251-71.
- Nancy Harstock, "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism," in Sandra Harding, ed., *Feminism and Methodology*, 157-180
- Dorothy E. Smith, "Women's Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology," in Harding, *Feminism and Methodology*, 84-96.

Week 11: 14 November**Current Issues in Feminist Theory I: Intersections with Disability Studies**

Susan Wendell, *The Rejected Body: Feminist Philosophical Reflections on Disability* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

Week 12: 21 November

Current Issues in Feminist Theory II: The Future of Gender and Feminism

Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender*. Routledge, 2004. (read introduction, 1, 3-5.)

Week 13: 28 November

Week off

General Further Readings

Breines, Wini. *The Trouble Between Us: An Uneasy History of the White and Black Women in the Feminist Movement*. Oxford University Press, 2006.

Horowitz, Daniel. *Betty Friedan and the Making of the Feminist Mystique: The American Left, the Cold War, and Modern Feminism* (1998)

Linda Nicholson, ed. *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory* (Routledge)
The Cambridge Companion to Simone de Beauvoir

Roth, Benita. *Separate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in America's Second Wave* (2004)

Taylor, Barbara. *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination* (2003)

Rosen, Ruth. *The World Split Open: How the Modern Women's Movement Changed America* (2000)

Theory

Atkinson, Ti-Grace. *Amazon Odyssey* (1974)

Bannerji, Himabi. *Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism and Racism* (Canadian Scholars Press)

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*.

Chodorow, Nancy. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (1978)

Daly, Mary. *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (1973)

Dworkin, Andrea. *Woman Hating*, (1974).

Eisenstein, Zillah. *Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism* (1979)

Gilligan, Carole. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Harvard University Press, 1982.

Harding, Sandra. *Sciences From Below: Feminisms, Postcolonialities, and Modernities*, 2008.

- and Uma Narayan (ed.), *Decentering the Center: Philosophy for a Multicultural, Postcolonial, and Feminist World*, 2000.
- Harstock, Nancy. *Money, Sex, and Power: Toward A Feminist Historical Materialism* (1983)
- Hartmann, Heidi. "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Toward a More Progressive Union," *Capital & Class* (Summer 1979), vol. 3 no. 2 **1-33**.
- Jaggar, Allison. *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (1983)
- Millett, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. (1970)
- Narayan, Uma. "Contesting Cultures: Westernization, Respect for Cultures, and Third World Feminists," in *Feminist Theory*, ed Wendy Kolmar, 542-49.
- Nicholson, Linda. ed. *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*. Routledge, 1997.
- Oullette, Grace. *The Fourth World: An Indigenous Perspective on Feminism and Aboriginal Women's Activism*. Fernwood, 2002.
- Rich, Adrienne. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution*. (1976)
- Rowbotham, Sheila. *Woman's Consciousness, Man's World* (1973)
- Thobani, Sunera et al, eds. *States of Race: Critical Race Feminism for the 21st Century*. Toronto: Between the Lines Press, 2010.