**Feminist Texts and Theories**

WSCP 81001. **Feminist Texts and Theories**. Thursdays 11:45AM-1:45 PM. (Cross-listed with WSCP 72100). Room 3207.

Talia Schaffer

Office: 4408

talia.schaffer@qc.cuny.edu

office hours: Thurs 10-11

Victoria Pitts-Taylor

Office: 5116

vpitts@gc.cuny.edu

office hours: Thurs 2:30–3:30 (please make appointment in advance)

This course provides a selection of fundamental readings in feminist theory. It covers perspectives in the development of modern and contemporary feminist thought that anyone who teaches a Women’s Studies class should be familiar with. We have put major works of feminist theory in tension with literary and philosophical developments over the past two centuries, so that we can both read them in tandem and use each to parse the other. We have centered the course on the theme of “bodies” – racialized bodies, disabled bodies, gendered and sexed bodies –in the work of Wollstonecraft, Brontë, Woolf, Yonge, Rhys, Victorian journalism, along with Barad, Butler, Grosz, Harding, Hill Collins, Mohanty, Puar, and others. Our hope is to sustain a discussion about variant ways of writing, historicizing, and arguing bodies; to look at the political stakes of how bodies get written; and to understand how feminist thought is not a smooth progression but can overwrite, extend, or reverse its basic tenets in different eras. Requirements: Weekly blog, one presentation, research paper.

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Required books:

Buy your books through the Mina Rees Library’s amazon.com link and support our library: http://library.gc.cuny.edu/info/amazon.html

Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. (Routledge 2004)

 ISBN: 978-0415969239

Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre* (Penguin)

 ISBN: 978-0141441146

De Beauvoir, Simone, *The Second Sex*

 ISBN:

Rhys, Jean, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Norton)

 ISBN: 978-0393960129

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (Oxford UP)

 ISBN: 978-0199555468

Woolf, Virginia*. A Room of One’s Own* (Harcourt)

 ISBN: 978-0156030410

Yonge, Charlotte. *The Clever Woman of the Family* (Broadview Press)

 ISBN: 978-1551112213

optional/recommended reading

Hamilton, Susan (ed.) *Criminals, Idiots, Women, and Minors* (Broadview Press)

 ISBN: 978-1551116082

(or buy as ebook: https://www.broadviewpress.com/pages.php?pageid=33)

LeGates, Marlene. *In Their Time: A History of Feminism in Western Society* (Routledge)

 ISBN: 978-0415930987

Articles: \*Readings with an asterisk are available via Blackboard

Course Schedule

*Ways of Knowing*

Aug 30 [T,V] introduction to course

Sept 6 [V] Feminist epistemologies – thinking about voice

Harding, Sandra, “Standpoint Theories: Productively Controversial” *Hypatia* symposium on Standpoint theory, Fall 2009, Volume 24, Issue 4\*

Hill Collins, Patricia (1990) “Black Feminist Thought in the Matrix of Domination,” from *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (Unwin Hyman)

Narayan, Uma. 2004. (1989). “The project of a feminist epistemology: Perspectives from a non-western feminist.” In The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader. Routledge\*

Wylie, Alison. 2003. “Why Standpoint Matters” Science and Other Cultures: Issues in Philosophies of Science and Technology ed Figueroa and Harding (Routledge)\*

*Note: if possible, please attend the lecture “Why Standpoint (Still) Matters” by Alison Wylie, Co-Editor of Hypatia, Tues Sept 18 in room 9204*

*Historicizing Bodies*

Sept 13 [T, no V] Early modernity:

 \* Dabhiowala, Wollstonecraft

Sept 20 [T] Victorian feminism:

 \*Phegley, Cobbe and Oliphant articles from *Criminals, Idiots*

 *Jane Eyre* first half

*Racializing Bodies*

Sept 27 [V, no T] Postcolonial Perspectives

Collins, Patricia Hill. 1998. “It’s all in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race, Nation”Hypatia. Vol. 13 Issue 3\*

Mohanty, Chandra, 1984 “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses” Boundary 2; Vol. 12/13 Issue 3/1\*

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade (2003) "“Under Western Eyes” Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles." Signs 28.2 \*

Oct 4 [T] *Wide Sargasso Sea*

 *Jane Eyre* second half

*Disabling Bodies*

Oct 11 [T, no V] *Clever Woman*

 \*Wagner

Oct 18 [V] Theorizing Disability in/and Feminism

Susan Wendell (1989). “Toward a Feminist Theory of Disability.” *Hypatia* 4 (2):104 -124.\*

Rosemarie Garland Thompson (2002) “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory” *NWSA Journal*, 14: 3 \*

Jasbir Puar, “Prognosis Time: Towards a Geopolitics of Affect, Debility and Capacity” *Women and Performance\**

*Thinking Gender, Sex + Sexuality*

Oct 25 [T] *Room of One’s Own*

 \*LeGates

Nov 1 [V] De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (selection)

 Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women” (1975)\*

 Butler, Judith, and Gayle Rubin. "Sexual Traffic (an Interview with Gayle Rubin by Judith Butler)." *differences* 6.2-3 (1994): 62-99.\*

Nov 8 [V] Butler (2004) *Undoing Gender* (Chapters 1-4, 9)

*Materializing the Body*

Nov 15 [V]

 Barad, Karen (2003) “Posthumanist Performativity” *Signs* 28:3.\*

 Grosz, Elizabeth (2010) “The Untimeliness of Feminist Theory,” NORA Vol. 18, No. 1

Rosemarie Garland Thompson (2011) “Misfits: a Feminist Materialist Disability Concept,” Hypatia vol. 26: 3

Nov 22 THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS

Dec 6 Reading TBA

Learning goals:

In this course students should

1. learn about key texts in feminist writing over the past two centuries

2. learn the major contemporary schools of feminist theories of the body

3. interrogate assumptions of feminist criticism

Requirements and grading:

One presentation (about 20 min.) 30%

One long paper (about 20 pp.) 50%

Effort grade 20%

Presentations:

Everyone has to give one brief presentation. Aim to keep it no longer than 15 min., which means about 6 double-spaced typed pages. Please give us a copy of the presentation afterwards, and bring extra copies for anyone else in the class who might want it. If two people are scheduled for presentations on the same day, you need to meet or email with each other to coordinate your talks.

In the presentation, you should analyze the critical/theoretical reading for that day. *Do not summarize it.* Instead, briefly explain what the critic is arguing, isolate areas where you think the critic is wrong (or especially insightful), and suggest alternative ways of explicating the text. You must find one thing you admire about the article before you launch into your devastating critique.

Because this class occurs during lunchtime, you are welcome to bring your lunch and eat during class.

Writing:

It is fine to have the topic for the long paper grow out of the presentation. This often happens naturally; the presentation engages with issues that intrigue you and you want to pursue them further. However, you should feel free to write on something completely different for your long paper, should you so desire.

Blogging:

We’ve set up a blog on Blackboard. Since we meet on Thursdays, we’d like to have everyone post a comment on that week’s reading by Tuesday at 5pm. You don’t have to have finished the reading in order to blog. You can either write an independent post (it can be short) or a response to someone else’s. We’ll also be posting prompts, questions, and links to interesting stuff. The blog is your chance to talk to each other, try out presentation ideas, ask about confusing matters, and float crazy theories.

Those of you who are not Grad Center students need to see Vin DeLuca at the registrar’s office, room 7201 (registrar@gc.cuny.edu, (212) 817-7500). He’ll register you and then you can contact Achia Samuels to enroll in Blackboard: asamuels@gc.cuny.edu, or (212) 817-7314.