Course Objectives

This course serves as an introduction to feminism and feminist thought. Beginning with the question of “What is Feminism?” the course explores readings, films and other media that engage feminist politics and ideas. In particular, this course aims to understand feminism in an intersectional and anti-oppressive framework that looks at gender, race, sexuality, class, nationality, labour, ability, and other issues through a feminist lens. We will explore the ways that gender interacts with and impacts both personal experience and social structures. We will also work to understand how power is constituted in society and how non-normative communities have worked to change society in response to experiences of gender and inequality.

You do not have to identify as a feminist to take and enjoy this course. However, I do hope and expect that throughout this course you will engage the material with an open mind and that we will all be respectful of each other’s viewpoints during class discussion.

For the course readings, I chose readings that are available online, both because I understand that being a student is expensive, and also because for young feminists in particular, online blogs and other spaces are a key method of sharing and discussing information. The readings are a mix of scholarly articles, and articles from more popular sources such as blogs, newspapers, online discussion sites, etc. Most media material is also available online.

Rebecca West famously said that “Feminism is the radical notion that women are people.” I would take that further to add that I believe that feminism and feminist teaching is compassionate, humane and acknowledges the value, humanity and worth of each student. I hope you will all contribute your voices and experiences to the course so that we can all learn from each other through the term.

ACORN

The Course Syllabus and readings will be posted on Acorn. Please make sure you are familiar with this system and how to use it.

Course Policies

Plagiarism: Please familiarize yourself with the university policy on plagiarism. All papers must be submitted with a bibliography/works cited.
http://library.acadiau.ca/guides/plagiarism/student/

**Accommodations:** If you are a student with a documented disability who anticipates needing accommodations in this course, please inform me after you meet Jill Davies (jill.davies@acadiau.ca) (902-585-1127) or Kathy O'Rourke (902-585-1823) in Disability Access Services, Student Resource Centre, lower floor of the Old SUB (Old Student Union Building).

**Attendance policy:** Discussion and participation are important in this course. Attendance is mandatory. If you are unable to attend, please notify me (particularly if you are scheduled to present.)

**Lateness policy:** No late work will be accepted after a week past the final exam. If you have a legitimate reason (medical, emergency, tragedy,) please contact me so we can make alternate arrangements.

**Safe Space:** As we are discussing many sensitive topics, students are reminded to treat everyone in the space with respect. If a student finds a topic triggering or otherwise difficult, if you feel comfortable letting me know beforehand please try to do so. If you do not feel comfortable speaking with me or if you do not wish to explain your reasons, it is still ok to leave class for that discussion or reading. Please just let me know that you will not be able to be present.

**Food, etc.:** Eating in class is ok as long as it is not extraordinarily loud food. Clean up after yourselves!

**ASSIGNMENTS**

**Journals – 50%**

The journal is an opportunity for students to respond throughout the course to readings, films, and their own development of ideas and thoughts. While writing standards still apply (correct grammar, etc.) the journals provide an opportunity to respond freely and more personally to course materials. Journals may be written about the reading, or on class discussion, or on ideas related to the topics we talk about in class. Feel free to use your journals to explore the topics widely.

10 entries (one page maximum) are required. 10x5= 50!

**Final Paper – 25%**

**Proposal – 5%**

**Paper - 20%**
In your final project, you will apply concepts and theories explored in class to a critical reading of some element of media, current events, art, pop culture, etc. The object of this project is to perform a “feminist reading” of a subject. Possibilities for topics are extremely broad. If you are not sure what to write on, begin by asking yourself which ideas interested you throughout the course.

**You MUST submit a paper proposal briefly outlining your topic by March 14th.**

Possible Paper Topics Might Include:

- Women in Prison.
- Abortion Rights in Canada.
- Birth Control and the History of Eugenics.
- Race and Beauty.
- Barbie and Body Image
- “Teen Mom” and Motherhood.
- Disability and Sexuality.
- GLBTTIQ2SA (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Transsexual, Intersex, Queer, Questioning, Two-Spirited, Allies) issues.

The paper submitted is expected to be organized as a formal paper with a clear thesis statement.

The final length of your paper should be 4-5 pages.

**Final Exam – 25%**

The exam will be short answers and short essays and will cover readings from class. I promise, there will be no surprises. If you engaged thoughtfully with the readings and attended class, the exam will be straightforward for you. Your journal entries should help you in organizing your thoughts for this exam.

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

**Week 1: INTRODUCTION**
**Tuesday, January 8:**

Introduction to course/Syllabus

Assignment (Journal 1!): Tell someone (not in the class) that you are enrolled in Women’s Studies. Ask them to define “feminism” and describe what they think is a “typical feminist.” Record their responses!

**Thursday, January 10:**


**Week 2: “WHAT THE F?” WHAT IS FEMINISM?**

**Tues. Jan. 15**

Discussion: What does feminism mean to you?


[http://mediamatters.org/research/2012/03/12/feminazi-the-history-of-limbaughs-trademark-slu/186336](http://mediamatters.org/research/2012/03/12/feminazi-the-history-of-limbaughs-trademark-slu/186336)


[http://www.alternet.org/we-never-said-we-wanted-it-all-how-media-distorts-goals-feminism](http://www.alternet.org/we-never-said-we-wanted-it-all-how-media-distorts-goals-feminism)

Resource: Who Needs Feminism?


**Thurs. Jan. 17**


**Week 3: SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF FEMINISM**

**Tues. Jan. 22**


http://www.academicroom.com/article/women-1920s-ku-klux-klan-movement

**Thurs. Jan. 24**


http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/sojtruth-woman.asp

Reading: Emmeline Pankhurst. “Freedom or Death.” Delivered in Hartford, Connecticut on November 13 1913

http://www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2007/apr/27/greatspeeches1

Reading: Marge Bruchac. “Reclaiming the Word Squaw in the Name of the Ancestors.” Northampton, Massachusetts (November, 1999)


https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U7bZ08RNUyM

**Week 4: ABORIGINAL WOMEN, ACTIVISM, AND SETTLER COLONIALISM**

**Tues. Jan. 29**

**SPEAKER:** Alana Lee. Sisters in Spirit.

**Thurs. Jan. 31**


[http://artsweb.uwaterloo.ca/~smaitra/Andrea_Smith.pdf](http://artsweb.uwaterloo.ca/~smaitra/Andrea_Smith.pdf)

**Week 5: “MULE OF THE WORLD:” BLACK FEMINISM AND WOMANISM**

**Tues. Feb. 5**


[http://circuitous.org/scrapes/combahee.html](http://circuitous.org/scrapes/combahee.html)


Watch: “Hottentot to Hip Hop: The Exploitation of the Black Female.”

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lswe1kJjKmQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lswe1kJjKmQ)

**Thurs. Feb. 7**


**Week 6: THIRD WORLD AND TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISM**

**Tues. Feb. 12**

http://www.countercurrents.org/shiva041110.htm


http://rightlivelihood.org/shiva_speech.html


Thurs. Feb. 14

**SPEAKER:** Dr. Valeri Mason-John.

***READING WEEK Feb. 18-22.***

**Week 7: GENDER, SEXUALITY and QUEER THEORY**

Tues. Feb. 26


Thurs. Feb. 28


http://bitchmagazine.org/article/female-bonding


**Week 8: BIRTH CONTROL, ABORTION, AND REPRODUCTIVE JUSTICE**

Tues. March 5


**Thurs. March 7**

Watch: George Carlin. “Pro-Life is Anti-Woman.”


**Week 9: FAT, FOOD and THE BODY**

**Tues. March 12**


**Thurs. March 14**

***PAPER PROPOSALS DUE!***


**Week 10: MEN AND MASCULINITY**
**Tues. March 19**


**Thurs. March 21**


http://bostonreview.net/BR16.6/crenshaw.html

**Week 11: MOTHERHOOD AND DOMESTICITY**

**Tues. March 26**


http://www.feministezine.com/feminist/books/The-Problem-that-Has-No-Name.html


http://www.inthesetimes.com/article/723/


http://themommyquad.com/2012/12/04/princess-kate-joins-the-celebrity-moms-hooray/

**Thurs. March 28**


http://escholarship.org/uc/item/17m7r1rq#page-1

**Week 12: WOMEN AND THE WORKPLACE**

**Tues. April 2**


http://www.guardian.co.uk/theobserver/2000/aug/20/features.magazine37


http://pi.library.yorku.ca/ojs/index.php/cws/article/viewFile/6426/5614

**Thurs. April 4**

EXAM REVIEW!

**CLASSES END: APRIL 8.**

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**FINAL PAPER: DUE APRIL 11.**