

Feminist Theory  
WAGS 200  
Fall 2011  
Chapin 103

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30E Johnson Chapel  
x5464  
Office hours: Mon. & Wed.: 10am-11am

**Course Description:**

In this course we will investigate contemporary feminist thought from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. We will focus on key issues in feminist theory such as the sex/gender debate, sexual desire and the body, the political economy of gender, the creation of the “queer” as subject, and the construction of masculinity among others. This course aims also to think through the ways in which these concerns intersect with issues of race, class, the environment and the nation. Texts include feminist philosopher Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble*, anthropologist Kamala Visweswaran’s *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* and feminist economist Bina Agarwal’s *The Structure of Patriarchy*.

**Course Materials:**

Books for purchase are marked P on the syllabus and can be found at Amherst Books, 8 Main Street, 413.256.1547. All Other Required Readings for this course can be found on E-Reserve (E).

Required Texts:

J.M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*, Penguin Books: 2000  
Shani Mootoo, *Cereus Blooms at Night*, Grove Press: 2009  
Anais Nin, *Little Birds*, Mariner Books: 2004  
Patricia Powell, *A Small Gathering of Bones*, Beacon Press: 2003 (Available only through the WAGS department, 14 Grosvenor House. \$14)  
Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, Tribeca Books: 2011  
Carole McCann, Seung-Kyung Kim (ed.), *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*, Routledge: 2009

Films are marked (F). We will be discussing the following films over the course of the semester:

Madhur Bhandarkar, *Fashion* (2008)  
Jane Campion, *The Piano* (1993)  
Madhur Bhandarkar, *Chandni Bar* (2001)  
Claire Denis, *White Material* (2010)

## Course Requirements

1. I expect you to attend class regularly and inform me by email if you miss a class.
2. Read the readings *before* class, *not* during or after class or right before the papers are due.
3. There will be three papers. The *approximate* weighting is as follows:

Paper 1:	(4-5 pages) 20% of base grade
Paper 2:	(4-5pages) 25% of base grade
Paper 3:	(6-7 pages) 30% of base grade
Speaker Report :	(4-5 pages) 10%
Class Attendance:	15%

Due dates for Papers:            Paper 1: Friday Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>  
   Paper 2: Friday Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>  
   Speaker Report: Friday Dec. 2nd  
   Paper 3: Friday Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>

### WEEK 1

Wed. Sept. 7<sup>th</sup>  
Introduction

### WEEK 2:

#### FEMINIST THEORIES?

Mon. Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>: **Feminisms**

Uma Narayan, "The Project of Feminist Epistemology: Perspective from a Nonwestern Feminist" *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*

Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Feminist Encounters: Locating the Politics of Experience" *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives* (P)

Wed. Sept 14<sup>th</sup>: **Why Theory?**

bell hooks, "Theory as Liberatory Practice" *Yale Journal of Law & Feminism* 4:1, 1991-1992.

Maria C. Lugones and Elizabeth V. Spelman, "Have We Got a Theory for You!" *Women's Studies International Forum*, 1983

### WEEK 3

#### THE CATEGORY OF ANALYSES: THE SEX/GENDER DEBATE

Mon. Sept. 19<sup>th</sup>: **The Category of Woman**

Sandra Harding, "The Instability of the Analytical Categories of Feminist Theory" *Signs* Vol. 11, No. 4 (Summer, 1986), pp. 645-664

Donna Haraway "Situated knowledges: The science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective" *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives* Shani Motoo, *Cereus Blooms at Night* (P) Chapters 1-6

Wed. Sept 21<sup>st</sup>: **Being a Woman/Becoming a Woman**

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Chapter 1, Vintage: 1989.

Shani Motoo, *Cereus Blooms at Night* Chapters 7-11

WEEK 4

Mon. Sept.26<sup>th</sup>: **Between Woman and Man**

Shani Motoo, *Cereus Blooms at Night* Chapters 12-19

Judith Butler, "Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's Second Sex"

Yale French Studies No. 72, Simone de Beauvoir: Witness to a Century (1986), pp. 35-49

Christine Delphy, "Rethinking Sex and Gender" *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*

DESIRE: PSYCHOANALYSIS AND FEMINISM

Wed. Sept. 28<sup>th</sup>: **Sexuality**

Sigmund Freud, "Female Sexuality" *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love*, Touchstone: 1997, 184-201.

Franz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*, Grove Pres: 2008, Chapter 2 and Chapter 3

WEEK 5

Mon. Oct. 3<sup>rd</sup>: **Writing Desire: L'écriture Feminine**

Hélène Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa" *Signs*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Summer, 1976), pp. 875-893

Luce Irigaray, "When Our Lips Speak Together" *Signs*, Vol. 6, No. 1, *Women: Sex and Sexuality*, Part 2 (Autumn, 1980), pp. 69-79

Anais Nin, *Little Birds* (P) (selections)

Wed. Oct. 5<sup>th</sup>: **The Gaze and Desire**

Laura Mulvey "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" *Feminist film Theory* (ed.) Susan Thornham, pp. 58-69.

Vanita Reddy, "The Nationalization of the Global Indian Woman: Geographies of Beauty in Femina" *South Asian Popular Culture* Volume 4, Issue 1 April 2006, pp. 61-85.

Madhur Bhandarkar, *Fashion* (film)

WEEK 6

Mon Oct. 10<sup>th</sup>: FALL BREAK

Wed. Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>: **Desire and Power**

Ranjana Khanna, "The Ethical Ambiguities of Transnational Feminisms" *Dark Continents: Psychoanalysis and Colonialism*, Duke University Press Books: 2003, 207-230

Jane Campion, *The Piano* (1993) (film)

**Friday Oct. 13<sup>th</sup>: Paper 1 Due**

WEEK 7

THE BODY: POST-STRUCTURALISM, BIOPOWER AND FEMINISM

Mon. Oct. 17<sup>th</sup>: **Biopower**

Michel Foucault, "The Body of the Condemned" *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, Vintage: 1995, pp. 3-31

Michel Foucault, "We 'Other Victorians'" *History of Sexuality: Vol. 1*, Vintage: 1990, pp. 1-14

Wed. Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>: **Bodies and Power**

Judith Butler, "Bodies and Power Revisited" *Feminism and the final Foucault* (ed.)

Dianna Taylor, Karen Vintges, University of Illinois Press: 2004, pp. 183-196

J.M. Coetzee, *Disgrace* (P) Chapters 1-6

WEEK 8

Mon. Oct. 24<sup>th</sup>: **Politics of the Body I**

Susan Bordo, "Feminism Foucault and the Politics of the Body" *Feminist theory and the body: A Reader*, (ed.) Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick, Routledge: 1999, pp. 246-257

J.M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*, Chapters 7-20

Wed. Oct. 26<sup>th</sup> : **Politics of the Body II**

J.M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*, Chapters 21-23

Lucy Valerie Graham, "Reading the Unspeakable: Rape in J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*" *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Jun., 2003), pp. 433-444

Elleke Boehmer, "Not Saying Sorry, Not Speaking Pain: Gender Implications in *Disgrace*" *Interventions: international journal of postcolonial studies*, Volume 4, Number 3, 1 November 2002 , pp. 342-351

WEEK 9

GENDER AND LABOUR: MARXISM, SOCIALISM AND FEMINISM

Mon. Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>: **Marx and Feminism**

Friedrich Engels, "Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State," *The Essential Feminist Reader* (ed.) Estelle Freedman, Modern Library: 2007, 104-111.

Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (P)

Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism" *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*

Wed. Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>: **The Gendered Division of Labour**

Bina Agarwal, "Bargaining and Gender Relations: Within and Beyond the Household" *Feminist Economics*, 1997, vol. 3, issue 1, pp. 1-51

Heidi I. Hartmann, "The Family as the Locus of Gender, Class, and Political Struggle: The Example of Housework" *Signs*, Vol. 6, No. 3 (Spring, 1981), pp. 366-394

WEEK 10

Mon. Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>: **The Political Economy of Gender**

Iris Young, "Socialist Feminism and The Limits Of Dual System Theory" *Socialist Review* 10.2-3 (1980), 169-188.

Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex" in Rayna Reiter, ed., *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, 157-210.

Madhur Bhandarkar, *Chandni Bar* (2001) (film)

Wed. Nov. 9<sup>th</sup>: **Theorizing Women's Labour**

Gayatri Spivak, "Introduction", *Breast Stories* Seagull Books: 1997

Mahasveta Devi, "The Breast Giver" *Breast Stories*, Seagull Books: 1997

**Friday Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>: Paper 2 due**

WEEK 11

RACE AND NATION: CRITICAL RACE THEORY, POSTCOLONIAL THEORY AND FEMINISM

Mon. Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>: **Race as a Critical Category for Feminist Thought**

Uttal, Lynet. "Inclusion Without Influence: The Continuing Tokenism of Women of Color," in Gloria Anzaldúa, ed., *Making Face, Making Soul/ Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color*, pp. 42-45.

Grillo, Trina and Stephanie Wildman. "Sexism, Racism, and the Analogy Problem in Feminist Thought," in Jeanne Adleman and Gloria M. Enguidanos, (eds.) *Racism in the Lives of Women*

The Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement" *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*

Claire Denis, *White Material* (2010) (F)

Wed. Nov. 16<sup>th</sup>: **The Politics of Race**

Gwendolyn Mikell, "African Feminism: Toward a new Politics of Representation" *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*

Mitsuye Yamada, "Invisibility is an Unnatural Disaster: Reflections of an Asian American Woman" *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*

Patricia Hill Collins, "The Politics of Black Feminist Thought" *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*

## WEEK 12: THANKSGIVING BREAK

## WEEK 13:

### Mon. Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>: **Race, Nationalism and Gender**

Anne McClintock, "Massa and Maids: Power and Desire in the Imperial Metropolis" *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, pp. 75-131

Anne McClintock, "'No Longer in a future Heaven': Gender Race and Nationalism" *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives* (ed.) Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti and Ella Shohat, Univ. of Minnesota Press: 1997, pp. 89-112

### Wed. Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>: **Woman and Nation**

Lata Mani, "Multiple Mediations: Feminist Scholarship in the Age of Multinational Reception" *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*

Saba Mahmood, "Feminism, Democracy, and Empire: Islam and the War of Terror," in *Women Studies on the Edge*, ed., Joan W. Scott, Duke University Press, 2008

## Friday Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>: **Speaker Report Due**

## DECENTERING THE SUBJECT: QUEER THEORY AND MASCULINITY STUDIES

## WEEK 14:

### Mon. Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>: **Queer Theory**

Eve Sedgwick, "Epistemology of the Closet" *Epistemology of the Closet*, 67-90

Judith Halberstam, "Introduction: What's Queer About Queer Studies Now?" Special Issue of *Social Text*, co-edited with David Eng and Jose Munoz (Vol. 84-85 Fall/Winter 2005), pp. 1-17

Gayatri Gopinath, "Funny Boys and Girls: Notes on a Queer South Asian Planet" *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*

### Wed. Dec. 7<sup>th</sup>: **Desiring Women**

Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality & Lesbian Existence" *Journal of Women's History*, Volume 15, Number 3, Autumn 2003, pp. 11-48

Audre Lorde, *The Black Unicorn* (selections)

Audre Lorde, "An Interview: Audre Lorde and Adrienne Rich," *Sister Outsider*

## WEEK 15

### Mon. Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>: **Desiring Men**

Marlon Ross, "Beyond the Closet as Raceless Paradigm," *Black queer studies: a critical anthology* (ed.) E. Patrick Johnson, Mae Henderson, Duke University Press: 2005, 161-189

Anthony Lemelle, Jr., "Black Masculinity as Sexual Politics" *Black Masculinity and Sexual Politics*, Routledge: 2009, 1-35  
Patricia Powell, *A Small Gathering of Bones* (P) Chapters 1-4

Wed. Dec. 14<sup>th</sup>: **Masculinity**

Judith Halberstam, "Shame and White Gay Masculinity" *Social Text* 2005 23(3-4 84-85):219-233

Patricia Powell, *A Small Gathering of Bones* Chapters 5-7

**Friday Dec. 16<sup>th</sup>: Paper 3 Due**