

## FEMINIST THEORY

This is an introduction, designed for graduate students, to the theoretical literature on gender inequality and difference. The scope is interdisciplinary, but with an emphasis on feminist theories that have influenced sociological research. In this seminar, we will study a selection of influential texts across the historical arc of feminist thought – starting with a few key classical and “second wave” theorists, then examining the postmodern turn, “difference” theories, selected literature on “intersectionality” (among race, class, and gender) and post-colonial perspectives, and ending with an assessment of the current challenges facing feminist theory. Throughout we will seek to understand both the shared project of feminist theorists and the internal debates that have divided them. In ten weeks it is impossible to cover this subject comprehensively, but the course seeks to provide an overview of the main contours of feminist theorizing and debate over recent decades.

A number of critical questions animate the literature and will be central to the course: How and to what extent is gender socially constructed? How and why do gender arrangements vary over time and space? What is the relationship between gender difference and gender inequality? To what extent is gender a “universal” category, and to what extent do race, class, sexual orientation and other differences that cross-cut gender divisions problematize such notions of gender? How are gender differences and inequalities reproduced in modern societies? How have postmodern and poststructuralist theories challenged previous modes of feminist thought? How has traditional feminist theory been transformed by the interventions of women of color and post-colonial perspectives? What are the challenges facing feminist theory in the 21<sup>st</sup> century?

This is a reading course, in which all students will be required to read the assigned texts closely and then share written reactions to them with all seminar members. These “reaction papers” will be limited to 500 words and due 48 hours before each class meeting. Other course requirements will be discussed in class.

Most of the journal articles listed below are available on JSTOR (marked \* below) or elsewhere on the UCLA Library website (marked \*\* below). Other readings will be made available to the class in electronic form (arrangements to be discussed in class).

### Course Outline and Schedule of Readings

#### **Week 1** (September 24) *Introduction*

This initial class meeting will review the seminar logistics and requirements as well as offering an initial overview of the historical development of feminist theory, to serve as background to the readings for week 2.

**Week 2 (October 1)** *Classical Feminist Theory and the Problem of Feminist Sociology*

Required Reading:

Simone de Beauvoir; *The Second Sex* (1949, English translation 1953): Introduction, chapter XII, and Conclusion (pp. xxxvi-lv, 281-344, 751-767 of Knopf edition)

\*Jessie Bernard, "My Four Revolutions: An Autobiographical History of the ASA" *The American Journal of Sociology*, 78: 4 (1973), pp. 773-791.

\*Judith Stacey and Barrie Thorne, "The Missing Feminist Revolution in Sociology," *Social Problems*, 32: 4 (1985), pp. 301-316.

**Week 3 (October 8)** *Second-Wave Feminist Theory: Foundational Debates*

Required Reading:

Alison M. Jaggar, "Liberal Feminism and Human Nature," chapter 3 of her *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (1983), pp. 27-50.

Heidi Hartmann, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism," and Iris Young: "Beyond the Unhappy Marriage: A Critique of the Dual Systems Theory," both in Lydia Sargent, ed., *Women and Revolution* (1981), pp. 2-69.

\*Catherine A. MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: An Agenda for Theory," *Signs* 7: 3 (1982), pp. 515-544

\*Catherine A. MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method and the State: Toward Feminist Jurisprudence," *Signs* 8: 4 (1983), pp. 635-58.

**Week 4 (October 15)** *The Reproduction of Gender: Microsociological Perspectives*

Required Reading:

\*Candace West and Don Zimmerman, "Doing Gender," *Gender & Society*, vol. 1 (1987), pp. 125-151.

Dorothy Smith, "The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Methodology," chapter 3 of her book *The Everyday World As Problematic: A Feminist Sociology* (1987), pp. 105-145.

\*Nancy Chodorow, "Oedipal Asymmetries and Heterosexual Knots," *Social Problems* 23: 4 (1976), pp. 454-468.

\*Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Signs* 5 (1980), pp. 741-61.

**Week 5** (October 22) No Class Meeting.

**Week 6** (October 29) "*Difference*" *Feminism and Its Discontents*

Required Reading:

Alice Kessler-Harris, "The Debate over Equality for Women in the Workplace: Recognizing Differences" (1975) reprinted in her book, *Gendering Labor History* (2007), pp. 191-207.

Carol Gilligan, *In A Different Voice* (1982), chapters 1 and 2, pp. 5-63.

\*Temma Kaplan, "Female Consciousness and Collective Action: The Case of Barcelona, 1910-1918," *Signs* 7: 3 (1982), pp. 545-560.

Ann Snitow, "A Gender Diary" in *Conflicts in Feminism*, eds. Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller (1990), pp. 9-43.

**Week 7** (November 5) *Feminism and The Postmodern Turn*

Required Reading:

Donna Haraway, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s," *Socialist Review* 15: 2 (1985), pp. 65-107.

\*Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91: 5 (1986), pp. 1053-1075.

"Interview with Joan Scott," *Radical History Review* 45 (1989), pp. 41-59.

Judith Butler, "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire," chapter one of her book, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), pp. 1-34.

"Gender as Performance: An Interview with Judith Butler," *Radical Philosophy* 67 (Summer 1994), pp. 32-39.

**Week 8** (November 12). *Intersectionality: Race, Class and Gender*

Required Reading:

- \*Patricia Hill Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought," *Social Problems* 33: 6 (1986), pp. 14-32
- \*Kimberley W. Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review*. 43:6 (1991), pp. 1241-1299.
- \*Yen Le Espiritu, "We Don't Sleep Around Like White Girls Do." *Signs* 26: 2 (1998), pp. 415-440.
- \*\*Leslie McCall, "The Complexity of Intersectionality," *Signs* 30:3 (2005), pp. 1771-1880.

**Week 9** (November 19) *Feminism and Post-Colonialism*

Required Reading:

- Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," and "Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism," in her book *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (2003), pp. 17-84.
- \*Lila Abu-Lughod, "Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others," *American Anthropologist* 104:3 (2002), pp. 783-90.
- \*Valentine M. Moghadam, "Islamic Feminism and Its Discontents," *Signs* 27:4 (2002), pp. 1135-1171

**Week 10** (December 3) *NeoLiberalism and Feminism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*

Required Reading:

- \*\*Hester Eisenstein, "A Dangerous Liaison? Feminism and Corporate Globalization," *Science and Society* 69:3 (2005), pp. 487-518.
- \*\*Nancy Fraser, "From Redistribution to Recognition? Dilemmas of Justice in a Post-Socialist Age," *New Left Review* I/212 (July-August 1995), pp. 68-93.
- \*\*Nancy Fraser, "Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History," *New Left Review* 56 (March-April 2009), pp. 97-117.