U.S. and Third World Feminisms

This course explores the variety of feminisms developed by women of color and non-western women to critique the racism and ethnocentrism of white-dominated systems and practices, including feminism. Its overall concern is with the intersection of gender, race, sexuality and social class, an analytical feminist perspective developed by women of color. We begin by examining the dominant approaches to feminist theory that emerged in the United States and Europe, such as liberal, Marxist, radical feminism, and standpoint feminism. We will then focus on the critiques of these traditions developed by U.S. women of color and third world feminists. We will also examine debates regarding the politics of sexuality, the role of men in feminism, feminist re-conceptualizations of politics, veiling and Arab feminism, etc. This course carries both the Cultural Diversity in the United States and Writing flags. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work and from assignments covering the practices, beliefs, and histories of at least one U.S. cultural group that has experienced persistent marginalization.

Course Requirements: This course is a discussion seminar. Students are expected to attend class, complete the readings prior to class, and actively participate in class discussion. The emphasis of this course is on critical thinking and analytical writing. Students are expected to read thoroughly and carefully, as the quality of discussion depends on the extent of your preparation and participation.

Completion of all assignments is required. Students who fail to complete ANY of the following assignments will fail the course. Students will write two short (5 pages) papers, and one revised paper (7 pages). The final paper will be a revised, expanded version of the short paper on which the student received the lowest grade. Papers should be sent via email, by 5:00pm, on the due dates listed in the course schedule. Late papers will NOT be accepted.

I strongly encourage you to use the Undergraduate Writing Center (UWC), FAC 211, 471-6222, http://www.uwc.utexas.edu/. The UWC offers free, individualized, expert help with writing for any UT undergraduate, by appointment or on a drop-in basis.

Final grades will be assessed based on class participation (15%), short papers (25% each for a total of 50%), and final paper (35%). There will be no grading curve. Class participation grades will be based on participation in class discussions and attendance.

Students who are found guilty of academic dishonesty will fail the course and be recommended for suspension from the university. Plagiarism occurs if you represent as your own work any material that was obtained from another source, regardless of how or where you acquired it. For examples of plagiarism, see http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/scholdis_plagiarism.php

Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities, 471-6259, http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssl/.

By UT-Austin policy, you must notify me of a pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Required Texts

The following books are available for purchase at the Co-op bookstore:

1. bell hooks, Feminism is for Everybody (South End Press, 2000).

In addition, a course reader is available at Abel’s Copies (715-D W. 23rd St). Readings marked with an asterisk are in the reader.

Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

Weeks 1-2. Defining Key Terms: Feminism, Gender, and Race

Aug. 25: Introduction

Week 3. Liberal and Marxist Feminism

Week 4. The Women’s Movement in the United States
Sept. 13: Film to be shown in class, Iron Jawed Angels (HBO, 2004).

Week 5. Standpoint and Radical Feminism

Drafts of Essay # 1 Due Oct. 3 by 5pm

Week 6. Black Feminism

Week 7. Racialized Patriarchy
Oct. 6: Caryl Phillips, Cambridge, Part II.

Essay # 1 Due Oct. 10 by 5pm

Week 8. Latina Feminism

Week 9. Feminist Politics
Oct. 20: Joan Tronto, “Care as a Political Concept,” Revisioning the Political, p. 139-156.*

Week 10. The Politics of Sexuality

Week 11. Race, Gender, and Sexuality
Nov. 3: Film to be shown in class, Tongues Untied, by Marlon Riggs (1989).

Week 12. Men and Feminism

Essay # 2 Due Nov. 11 by 5pm

Weeks 13-14. Arab Feminism
Nov. 15: Nawal El Saadawi, Woman at Point Zero, p. i-54. Film to be shown in class, Beyond Borders: Arab Feminists Talk About Their Lives (2000).
Nov. 17: Nawal El Saadawi, Woman at Point Zero, p. 54-108.
Nov. 24: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week 15. Feminist Horizons
Dec. 1: bell hooks, Feminism is for Everybody, p. 44-47, 100-104, 110-118.

Final Paper Due Dec. 9 by 5pm