

Introduction to Women's Studies

ID 26, Spring 2005

T-Th 1:15-2:30, Old Music 100

Prof. Susan Seizer

Office: "Vita Nova" 113

Office Hours: T/Th, 2:30 – 4 (and by appointment)

Office Phone: ext. 7-3547

Email: sseizer@scrippscollege.edu

[insert Hothead Paisan "FEH-MUH-NIST!" graphic]

This introductory course in Women's Studies is designed to help students develop a feminist framework for thinking about gender and sexuality in society. The course is organized around two primary goals: 1) learning about the history of feminism in the U.S. by reading key feminist theoretical texts and understanding their changing contexts, and 2) appreciating the variety of forms feminist scholarship and activism may take. Throughout the course we will read across a range of written genres, and view both feature and documentary films. Several of our texts will have a particular focus on feminist struggles in India to broaden our cultural perspective.

Books for purchase at Huntley:

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*

bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: from margin to center*

Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*

Audre Lorde, *Zami: A New Spelling of My Name*

Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine*

Barbara Findlen, *Listen up! voices from the next feminist generation*

Electronic Reserve Readings:

Readings with an *asterisk before the author's name on the syllabus are on Electronic Reserve (ERES) through Honnold Library. ERES materials can be downloaded free©. The password for this course is sseizer26 (the password is case sensitive: use all lower case letters). These are required readings. Here is the list of readings on ERES:

- **Cott, Nancy** .198?. “The Birth of Feminism,” Ch 1 in *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, pp. 11-50.
- **Scott, Joan**. 1988. “Women’s History,” in *Gender and the Politics of History*, NY: Columbia U. Press, pp. 15-27
- **Milkman, Ruth**. 1987. “Introduction” to *Gender at Work: the Dynamics of Job Segregation During World War II*, pp. 1-11.
- **Beauvoir, Simone de**. 1952 [1949]. “Introduction,” *The Second Sex*, pp. xv-xxxiv.
- **Freud, Sigmund**. 1909. “Femininity,” trans. J. Strachey, pp. 112-135.
- **Betty Friedan**, 1963. “The Problem that Has No Name,” in *The Feminine Mystique*, NY: W. W. Norton & Co., pp. 15-32
- **Rubin, Gayle**. 1975. “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex,” in R. Reiter, ed., *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, NY: Monthly Review Press, pp. 157-210.
- **Lorde, Audre**. 1984[1979]. “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” *Sister Outsider*, The Crossing Press, pp. 110-114.
- **Rich, Adrienne**. 1993[1980]. “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence,” reprinted in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, NY: Routledge, pp. 227-254.
- **Wittig, Monique**. 1993[1981]. “One is Not Born a Woman,” reprinted in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, NY: Routledge, pp. 103-109
- **Wittig, Monique**. 1969, 1975. Selected excerpts from *Les Guerilleres* and *The Lesbian Body*.
- **Haraway, Donna**. 1991[1985]. “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century,” in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women*, NY: Routledge, pp. 149-181 (and notes pp. 243-248).
- **Butler, Judith**. 1993[1991]. “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” reprinted in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, Routledge, pp. 307-320.
- **Seizer, Susan**. 1995. “Paradoxes of Visibility in the Field: Rites of Queer Passage in Anthropology.” *Public Culture* V.8, N.1, pp. 73-100
- **Shrage, Laurie**. 2005. “Is Female to Male as Black is to White?: Sex and Miscibility.” Paper presented at the American Philosophical Association meetings, 2005.

Course requirements and grading:

Grading:

Participation = 15%

Journal = 25%

Midterm exam = 25%

Research Presentation = 10%

Research Paper = 25%

- **Participation and attendance:** The format for this course involves both lectures and discussions. Students are required to do all the readings for the course, to attend all course meetings, and to participate in class discussions. If you miss more than 3 classes, you will be asked to drop the class. Class attendance and participation in class discussion count for 15% of the final grade.
- **Journal:** All students are required to keep a course journal, intended to be a record of your reactions to the materials you encounter and learn about in this course. I am interested in what you learn from both readings and discussions, and how these affect you. You are responsible for recording your reactions to the readings prior to class discussion. Each journal entry should be approximately one page long and should specifically address the readings for that class. Include in each journal entry your assessment of what is important in each reading, as well as the further questions raised by it. Writing these journal entries prior to class meetings will help you prepare for participation in class discussions.
Keep your journal on loose-leaf pages, and bring them with you to every class. I will collect these pages from randomly selected students at each class. If your handwriting is difficult to read please type your journal entries (double-spaced). The journal accounts for 25% of the course grade.
- **Midterm exam:** There will be an in-class mid-term exam consisting of 10-15 identification questions and 2 essay questions. The midterm comprises 25% of the course grade.
- **Research Project:** Each student is responsible for working on a research project throughout the semester, culminating in an **8 page paper**. The research project may be done either individually or in a group. In either case, the project should have both an archival and an ethnographic component, as follows:

Individual research project: Identify a person whose work you find to be feminist. This person can be a contemporary or a historical subject. Your method should be two-fold: 1) Describe this work, argue for its feminist import, and situate it historically within the history of feminist work and strategies that we have studied in this course; 2) Identify several people in a position to comment on this person's work, and interview or otherwise correspond with at least two such people regarding your subject. Include what you have learned from their opinions in your research project. Write your findings in an 8 page paper.

Group research project: The goals and methods here are similar to the individual research project, but instead of an individual project on the work of an individual, a group of students together will focus on the work of a group that does feminist work. Reflecting on the group dynamics of both your subject and your own method is very welcome. The final paper should also be a group effort: calculate total final page numbers at 5 pages per individual.

The research project accounts for 25% of your course grade.

- **Presentation of research project**: Each student will have ten minutes to present to the class on the subject of their research, demonstrating the ways in which the subject's work is feminist, and contextualizing this work within the historical debates in feminism that we have studied in the course.

Week One: 19th century Historical Groundings

Tues. 1/18: **Introduction to course goals, organization, and syllabus**

- In-class viewing of 1st third (30 min) of "One Woman, One Vote" (Ruth Pollak, 1995) a documentary film on the the suffrage movement (a.k.a. the first wave of U.S. feminism).

Th. 1/20: **The first wave of U.S. feminism, 1840-1920**

- *Nancy Cott, "The Birth of Feminism," Ch 1 of *The Grounding of Modern Feminism*, pp. 11-50
- In-class viewing of 2nd third (30 min) of "One Woman, One Vote"
(You are encouraged to view the remaining 40 minutes of "One Woman, One Vote" on your own. The video is available to view at the IWS library. The film's final 40 minutes focus on the strategies employed by the movement from 1900-1920, when women finally won the right to vote.)

Week Two: The 1920s, and a call to begin studying women

Tues. 1/25: **Radical feminist in the twenties:**

- Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (1929)

Th. 1/27: **Who writes women?**

- Continue discussing Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*
- *Joan Scott, "Women's History" in *Gender and the Politics of History*, Columbia U Press, 1988 pp. 15-27.

Week Three: the 1940s and 50s – what is “woman”?

Tues 2/1: Radical Rosies?

- *Milkman, Ruth. 1987. “Introduction,” *Gender at Work: the Dynamics of Job Segregation During World War II*, pp. 1-11.
- In-class viewing of “The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter,” (dir. Connie Field, 1980; 65 min.)

Th. 2/3: Radical feminist in the fifties:

- *Simone de Beauvoir, 1952 [1949]. “Introduction,” *The Second Sex*, pp. xv-xxxiv.
- *Sigmund Freud, 1909. “Femininity,” *New Introductory Lectures in Psychoanalysis*, trans. James Strachey, NY: W.W. Norton, pp. 112-135.

Week Four: Women Weilding Tools

Tues 2/8: Radical feminist in the sixties:

- *Betty Friedan, 1963. “The Problem that Has No Name,” in *The Feminine Mystique*, NY: W. W. Norton & Co., pp. 15-32
- bell hooks, 1984. Ch. 1, “Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory” in *Feminist Theory from margin to center*, South End Press, pp. 1-15.

Th. 2/10: The sixties situated:

- Marge Piercy, 1969. “Grand Coolie Damn.” Read at <http://www.cwluherstory.com/CWLUArchive/damn.html>
- Sara M. Evans, “Decade of Discovery: ‘The personal is political’” in *Global Feminisms Since 1945*, ed. Bonnie G. Smith (Routledge 2000) pp. 141-163

Week Five: Key Literary Texts -- childhood

Tues 2/15: Socialization begins early: Toni Morrison’s first novel

- Toni Morrison, 1970. *The Bluest Eye*, pp. 1-93 (up to “Spring”)

Th. 2/17: (cont’d)

- Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*, pp. 97-end

***Michelle Tea and other spoken word feminist artists at the Motley Thursday night, and leading workshops on Friday day – don’t miss this!!!

Week Six: Key literary texts-- adolescence & sexual awakening

Tues 2/22: **Identity can exceed socialization too**

- Audre Lorde, 1982. *Zami*, pp. 3-153 (up to section 21)

Th. 2/24: (cont'd)

- Lorde, *Zami*, pp. 154-253 (end)

Week Seven: the seventies

Tues. 3/1 **Radical feminist in the seventies:**

- *Gayle Rubin, 1975. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the 'Political Economy' of Sex," in R. Reiter, ed., *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, NY: Monthly Review Press, pp. 157-210.
- bell hooks, 1984. Ch. 2, "Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression," in *Feminist Theory*, pp. 16-32.
- *Audre Lorde, 1984[1979]. "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," *Sister Outsider*, The Crossing Press, pp. 110-114.

Th. 3/3: **Radical feminist in the early eighties (1)**

- *Adrienne Rich, 1980. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," reprinted in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, 1993, NY: Routledge, pp. 227-254.

Week Eight: the eighties

Tues. 3/8: **Radical french feminist in the early eighties (2)**

- *Monique Wittig, 1993[1981]. "One is Not Born a Woman," reprinted in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, NY: Routledge, pp. 103-109
- *excerpts from Monique Wittig, *Les Guerilleres* and *The Lesbian Body*

Th. 3/10: **In-class midterm exam**

[Spring Break 3/13-3/20]

Week Nine: key literary texts -- adulthood

Tues. 3/22:

- Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine*, pp. 1-108

Th. 3/24:

- finish *Jasmine*, pp. 109-214

Week Ten: not assuming globality

Tues. 3/29:

- In-class screening of “Fire” (Deepa Mehta, 199?; min.?)

Th. 3/31:

- Susan Seizer, 1995. “Paradoxes of Visibility in the Field: Rites of Queer Passage in Anthropology”

*Saturday APRIL 2, 2005 is the Annual Pacific Southwest Women’s Studies Association Conference (PSWSA) to be held this year at Scripps. The theme of the conference is “Globalization, Activism, & the Academy: Resisting Complicity, Challenging Backlash. The PSWSA conference brings together students, faculty, and community members interested in Women’s Studies from throughout Southern California. This is your chance to give your first public paper or presentation at an academic conference should you so desire; you will get extra-credit for this course for doing so too! It’s a good way to learn about what is happening in terms of GWS at other campuses and to meet others who share your interests. If you think you might be interested in presenting at the conference let me know by Thursday FEB. 5th, as proposals are due on Thursday Feb. 12th. A preliminary or experimental version of your final research project, or a group project of your choosing, would both make appropriate presentations.

Week Eleven: the nineties

Tues. 4/5: **Radical feminist in the mid-eighties (3):**

- *Donna Haraway, “A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s” (in *Feminism/ Postmodernism*, ed. Linda J. Nicholson, Routledge 1990 [1985], pp. 190-233)

Recommended supplementary reading in the manifesto genre:

- Valerie Solanas, 1970. *The SCUM Manifesto*, NY: Olympia Press. (In Denison, special non-circulating collection)
- early feminist manifestos – for suffrage movement, see proceedings of 1848 Women’s Rights Convention in Seneca Falls 1848 (Denison call number: JK 1885 1848)

Th. 4/7: **Radical feminist in the nineties:**

- *Judith Butler, 1993[1991]. “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” reprinted in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*, Routledge, pp. 307-320.

Week Twelve: gender

Tues. 4/12: Embodiment

- In-class screening of “Paris is Burning” (dir. Jennie Livingston, 1991)

Th. 4/14:

- Butler, Judith. 1993. “Gender is Burning: Questions of Appropriation and Subversion.” In *Bodies that Matter*, pp. 121-140.
- hooks, bell. 1991. “Is Paris Burning?”

Week Thirteen: recent U.S. third-wave voices

Tues. 4/19: **Activism in the U.S. mid-nineties (1):**

- Barbara Findlen, ed., 1995. Selected 10 essays in *Listen Up! Voices from the Next Feminist Generation*
- Zines? students: bring in what you’ve got!

Th. 4/21: **Activism in the U.S. mid-nineties (2):**

- Selected ten essays in *Listen Up!*

Week Fourteen: feminists in our midst...

Tues. 4/26: Student presentations

Th. 4/28: Student presentations

Week Fifteen

Tues. 5/3: Student presentations

(exam week)

Monday May 9, 2:00-5:00: Student presentations