

GWS-539B
FEMINIST THEORIES II
Professor Monica J. Casper
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Spring 2014
Monday 3:30 – 6 PM, TBA
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Office hours: TBA or by appointment
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“All this gnawing at the existence of the colonized tends to make of life something resembling an incomplete death.”—Frantz Fanon, 1965 [1959]

“The ‘abnormal’ individual that so many institutions, discourses, and knowledges have been concerned with since the end of the nineteenth century derives from the juridico-natural exception of the monster, the multitude of incorrigible individuals caught in the apparatus of rectification, and the universal secret of childhood sexuality...Each is inscribed within autonomous systems of scientific reference.”—Michel Foucault, 1975

“As it has imputed African American culture with hegemonic meanings, canonical sociology is part of the genealogy of African American nonheteronormativity. It has constructed African American racial difference as the exemplar of social pathologies that suggest gender and sexual disorders.”—Roderick Ferguson, 2004

“Not all of us can say, with any degree of certainty, that we have always been human, or that we are only that. Some of us are not even considered fully human now, let alone at previous moments of Western social, political, and scientific history.”—Rosi Braidotti, 2013

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is the second part of a two-semester survey of feminist theories, and it is a core requirement for the Ph.D. in Gender and Women’s Studies. The course covers major issues, debates, and texts of relevance to feminist theorizing and epistemologies. Here, we explore feminist approaches to theories that expand the work some of you began in the first part of the survey, in GWS-539A. Different faculty will teach this course in different ways, but theoretical frameworks might include psychoanalysis, Foucault, feminist biopolitics, cultural studies, transnationalism, and/or queer, trans, and critical race theories. The course assumes that feminist theorists have used, critiqued, and developed ideas drawn from a wide variety of intellectual traditions and social movements while also generating new theory. This seminar can only begin to introduce these often overlapping areas; each theoretical tradition could easily support a course of its own. There will doubtless be continuities as well as contestations and contradictions between the two semesters.

Given my own intellectual expertise and scholarly interests, I’ve organized this course largely around questions of “normal” and “pathological” as they relate to feminist theorizing. Core concepts in our field—woman, gender, race, sexuality, embodiment, citizen, and human—are deeply interwoven into historical configurations of the normative. From Freud to Canguilhem to Foucault and well beyond, feminist epistemologies have excavated, analyzed, and reframed questions of “the normal,” recasting what and how we think of standard bodies, persons, and systems, and the ways in which “difference” is considered as not only “abnormal” but also as unequal, less than, marginal, and

Other. The course readings take up, in diverse ways and at different historical moments, these central questions, while also relating them to broader concerns in feminist theory and praxis.

At the risk of stating the obvious, no one theory (or set of theories) can support or represent what we are broadly calling "feminist theories," nor is there *any* theoretical paradigm that works across culture and history (despite some "objective" claims to the contrary). Theory is not a stagnant object but rather an ongoing, non-linear, and often highly contested achievement. Theory is a conversation, a provocation, a performance, a doing, and sometimes a means of survival. It mutates and shifts according to historical, political, economic, transnational, and discursive contexts. Our task will be to explore some of the theories with which feminist / gender scholars have interacted, to appreciate their specific historical and cultural articulations, and to identify and pursue their critical possibilities beyond these initial historical articulations.

The goal of this course is not to vote thumbs up or down on particular theories, though some perspectives in the class will certainly speak to you more than others. Rather, our aim is to understand their basic tenets, their methodological strengths and limitations, and to grasp their influences over different historical moments and across cultural, political, and national traditions. In this, too, you will hopefully benefit as you carve out your own positions and interventions in the field of gender and women's studies. The point is to develop your own theorizing and intellectual positions, to refine them, and most importantly, to continue to debate, even and perhaps especially with the theoretical traditions with which you are already most familiar.

REQUIRED COURSE READINGS

All articles and materials not in the required texts will be posted on D2L. You will be reading the following required books, which have been ordered from the [UA Bookstores](#) and [Antigone Books](#) (a local bookstore on 4th Avenue):

Rosi Braidotti. 2013. *The Posthuman*. Cambridge: Polity.

Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, eds. 2010. *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Kafer, Alison. 2013. *Feminist Queer Crip*. Indiana University Press.

Roderick A. Ferguson. 2004. *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Michel Foucault. 2004. *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-1975*. Picador.

Michelle Murphy. 2012. *Seizing the Means of Reproduction: Entanglements of Feminism, Health, and Technoscience*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Class participation.** As you might expect, the fact that we meet only once per week makes it imperative that you attend all class meetings. (Indeed, because of the university schedule, we lose a session due to MLK Day.) We will be covering a great deal of intellectually

demanding material and attempting to engage it as fully as possible; therefore your committed participation is crucial. Active participation—that is, not just showing up, but being prepared to discuss the readings and ideas and actually discussing them—will be worth 15% of your final grade.

2. **Critical Responses.** Each response is worth 15% of your final grade, for a total of 45%. By “critical response,” I mean a 2-3 page engagement with a reading, a set of readings, or a concept/idea from the readings. I’m not looking here for a summary of a theorist’s ideas, but rather your critical assessment, engagement, and interrogation of the material. What and who you choose to focus on is up to you, but if you need some guidance in selecting and/or organizing your thoughts, I’m happy to help. The critical responses will be due on D2L or via email (no hard copies, please) on the following days: **#1 due February 24, #2 due March 24, and #3 due April 21**. The responses should be typed, double-spaced, and submitted in MS-Word (for ease of in-text editing/grading). I’m indifferent to what formatting style you use (e.g., Chicago Manual, APA, MLA, etc.), but whatever you choose please be consistent throughout.

3. **Final Paper:** Each student will be required to submit a final paper in this course, which is worth 40% of your grade. The paper should be 12-15 pages, and it’s meant to take up, in greater detail than the critical responses, a theory, set of theories, or theorist covered in class. You will analyze the theory/theories, generate new theories from them, critique them from another theoretical position, and/or apply them to your own substantive work. Whichever avenue you choose, you should offer a *critical* intervention, not merely a rehash of the work. The final project should be typed, double-spaced, and submitted in MS-Word (for ease of in-text editing/grading). I’m indifferent to what formatting style you use (e.g., Chicago Manual, APA, MLA, etc.), but whatever you choose please be consistent throughout. The paper will be **due May 9**.

GRADING AND ASSIGNMENT STANDARDS

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| Class Participation | 15% |
| Critical Response #1 | 15% |
| Critical Response #2 | 15% |
| Critical Response #3 | 15% |
| <u>Final Project</u> | <u>40%</u> |
| Total | 100% |

Grading scale:

- A = 90% and higher
- B = 80-89.9%
- C = 70-79.9%
- D = 60-69.9%
- E = less than 60%

Also see: <http://catalog.arizona.edu/policies/984/grade.htm>

“PATHOLOGY”

January 27

Introductions • Administrative Business • Course Overview

Read:

Sigmund Freud and Josef Breuer. 1895. *Studies in Hysteria*. Read “Fräulein Anna O.”

Frantz Fanon. 1965. *A Dying Colonialism*. New York: Grove Press. Read Chapter 4, “Medicine and Colonialism.”

Georges Canguilhem. 1978. *The Normal and the Pathological*. Trans. Carolyn Fawcett and Robert Cohen. D. Reidel Publishing Company. Read “Preface” and “Intro” to Section I (pp. 3-8); and Part Two, pp. 63- 138.

February 3

Read:

Michel Foucault. 2004. *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-1975*. Picador.

“EXPERIENCE”

February 10

Read:

Dorothy Smith. 1974. “Women’s Perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology.” *Sociological Inquiry* 44(1): 7-13.

The Combahee River Collective. 1977. “The Combahee River Collective Statement.” Reprinted in *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*, edited by Barbara Smith. Rutgers University Press, 2000.

Patricia Hill Collins. 1986. “Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought.” *Social Problems* 33(6): S14-S32.

Donna Haraway. 1988. “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective.” *Feminist Studies* 14(3): 575-599.

Joan W. Scott. 1991. “The Evidence of Experience.” *Critical Inquiry* 17(4): 773-797.

“NATURE”

February 17

Read:

Sherry B. Ortner. 1972. “Is Female to Male As Nature Is to Culture?” *Feminist Studies* 1(2): 5-31.

Donna Haraway. 1985. “A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s.” *Socialist Review* 80.

Ludamilla Jordanova. 1989. *Sexual Visions: Images of Gender in Science and Medicine between the Eighteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press. Read “Introduction.”

Nancy Leys Stepan. 1998. “Race, Gender, Science and Citizenship.” *Gender and History* 10(1): 26-52.

Kristen Schilt and Laurel Westbrook. 2009. “Doing Gender, Doing Heteronormativity: ‘Gender Normals,’ Transgender People, and the Social Maintenance of Heterosexuality.” *Gender and Society* 23(4): 440-464.

Sophia Roosth. 2012. “Evolutionary Yarns in Seahorse Valley: Living Tissues, Woolly Textiles, Theoretical Biologies.” *differences* 23(3): 941.

“HUMAN”

February 24

Read:

Rosi Braidotti. 2013. *The Posthuman*. Cambridge: Polity.

Karan Barad. 2012. “On Touching—The Inhuman That Therefore I Am.” *differences* 23(3): 206-223.

Due: Critical Response #1

“REVOLUTION”

March 3

(Professor Casper out of town)

Read:

[The Feminist Wire's](#) “Race, Racism, and Anti-Racism Within Feminisms” Forum. All essays are available following the concluding essay, [here](#).

View:

“On Revolution: Grace Lee Boggs and Angela Davis,” at UC Berkeley, March 2, 2013

<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/20837771>

“Black Female Voices: Who is Listening? A public dialogue between bell hooks and Melissa Harris-Perry,” at New School, November 8, 2013

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/11/08/melissa-harris-perry-bell-hooks_n_4242909.html

“RACE”

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| March 10 |
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Read:

Roderick A. Ferguson. 2004. *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

NO CLASS

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| March 17 |
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Spring Break—No class.

“MATTER”

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| March 24 |
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Read:

Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, eds. 2010. *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Read pp. ix-136.

Due: Critical Response #2

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| March 31 |
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Read:

Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, eds. 2010. *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Read pp. 137-298.

“PRAXIS”

April 7

Read:

Michelle Murphy. 2012. *Seizing the Means of Reproduction: Entanglements of Feminism, Health, and Technoscience*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Read pp. vii-102.

April 14

Read:

Michelle Murphy. 2012. *Seizing the Means of Reproduction: Entanglements of Feminism, Health, and Technoscience*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press. Read pp. 103-181.

“NORMAL”

April 21

Read:

Erving Goffman. 1963. *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Prentice-Hall. Read FIX.

Alison Kafer. 2013. *Feminist Queer Crip*. Indiana University Press. Read pp. xiii-85.

Due: Critical Response #3

April 28

Read:

Alison Kafer. 2013. *Feminist Queer Crip*. Indiana University Press. Read pp. 86-169.

“CRISIS”

May 5

Read:

Melvin Rader. 1947. “Toward a Definition of Cultural Crisis.” *The Kenyon Review* 9(2): 262-278.

Lauren Berlant. 2007. “Slow Death (Sovereignty, Obesity, Lateral Agency).” *Critical Inquiry* 33(4): 754-780.

Charlotte Biltekoff. 2007. “The Terror Within: Obesity Within Post 9/11 U.S. Life.” *American Studies* 48(3): 29-48.

In-class presentations

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

You are bound to observe the UA Student Code of Conduct. You are also bound by university policy regarding disruptive behavior in an instructional setting, and policy that prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the university community, including oneself. These codes and policies may be read here:

<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/policiesandcodes/studentcodeofconduct>

<http://policy.web.arizona.edu/disruptive-behavior-instructional>

<http://policy.web.arizona.edu/threatening-behavior-students>

USE OF PERSONAL ELECTRONICS

You may not text, chat, make phone calls, play games, or surf the web during lecture or discussion section because these activities distract the instructor and disrupt the learning experience of your classmates. The same goes for disruptive conversations with people sitting around you, and for other distracting activities such as snoring, loud inappropriate remarks, taking up more than your fair share of space, giggling, whispering, or passing notes. If you are observed engaging in this activity, you will be asked, first, to cease this behavior; should you persist in it, you will be asked to leave lecture or discussion.

That said, some learning styles are best served by using personal electronics with keyboards or recorders. If you plan to record any part of the seminar, you must obtain permission from all participants.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES FOR COURSE PARTICIPATION

You are expected to “show up”—physically, emotionally, and intellectually—and to be prepared to participate in the seminar. You should attend class regularly, do the assigned reading when it is assigned, turn your written work in on time, and actively join in discussions.

For some students, participating verbally in semi-public discussions with your peers and instructors may feel difficult. Nevertheless, you are expected to conscientiously engage with assigned course materials, to express your positions and reactions to the best of your ability, to be respectful of

others who might differ with you, and to trust that you are entitled to the same respect from others. Use the space of the university classroom to think freely and deeply, and to practice your skills for addressing the substantive issues involved in things you learn about and perhaps feel passionately about.

SPECIAL NEEDS AND ACCOMMODATION

Students who need special accommodation or services should contact the Disability Resources Center, 1224 East Lowell Street, Tucson, AZ 85721, (520) 621-3268, FAX (520) 621-9423, email: uadrc@email.arizona.edu, <http://drc.arizona.edu/>. You must register and request that the Center or DRC send me official notification of your accommodations needs as soon as possible. Please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate. The need for accommodations must be documented by the appropriate office.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Students are encouraged to share intellectual views and freely discuss the principles and applications of course materials. However, graded work/exercises must be the product of independent effort unless otherwise instructed. Students are expected to adhere to the UA Code of Academic Integrity as described in the UA General Catalog. This code may be accessed here:

<http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity/>

CONFIDENTIALITY OF STUDENT RECORDS

As required by law under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), student records are confidential. This law and its applicability to your educational records may be accessed here: <http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/default.htm>

SUBJECT TO CHANGE STATEMENT

Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policy, may be subject to change with advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.