

Feminist Political Thought
POS 6933 / WGS 6935
T 11:45-2:45, Dauer Hall 342
Fall 2023

Dr. Stacey Liou (she/hers)
Office Hours: T 3-5 p.m.

Email: staceyliou@ufl.edu
Anderson 304

Description

This course examines contemporary feminist political thought and epistemologies. We will explore key debates and theoretical approaches as well as central points of contention in feminist political thought, focusing on its production and practice in the U.S. We will also examine ways of knowing, obstacles to producing knowledge, and the systemic silencing of certain voices. In so doing, we will explore the ways that problems of exclusion came to be scripted in terms of identity and a focus on epistemological debates about foundations, as well as the possibilities and limits of these conceptualizations of feminist politics.

Required Texts

Readings are provided on the course's Canvas page or through the library's course reserves. Any readings that are not posted are generally available online or by searching UF's library website (log in to UF's VPN for gated materials).

Course material and details in this syllabus are subject to change. I will announce any such changes in class and on the Canvas course page.

Evaluation

1. Participation (20%)

This is a reading and discussion-focused seminar. Attendance is mandatory. You are expected to arrive on time, having completed all the readings and prepared to actively discuss the assigned material. If for some reason you will be unable to attend or prepare for class on a given day, email me beforehand. Excused absences must be consistent with university policies in the [Graduate Catalog](#) and require appropriate documentation.

Many topics covered in the course can be controversial, difficult and personally felt. You will undoubtedly disagree with some of the texts and theories that we read, just as they often disagree with each other. I encourage you to share your perspectives on them in contributing to an open and respectful discussion. Your respect and courtesy toward others continue to be an integral part of our time together – it is key to making this course enjoyable and intellectually stimulating.

2. Presentation (20%)

In addition to regular participation, you will be responsible for introducing the readings for one seminar session. This is a 12-15 minute presentation that will do three things: 1) summarize the readings *briefly*, including noting central lines of argument and themes that they raise collectively; 2) critically analyze the readings, examining arguments that you find convincing or unconvincing, points of agreement or disagreement amongst them, problematic oversights, and your own stance relative to them; and 3) pose 1-2 questions or problems that the readings raise

for you and/or leave unaddressed and articulate why these questions or problems are worth consideration. Do not simply summarize the assigned readings.

3. Research Paper (60%: 10% abstract + annotated bibliography; 10% presentation; 40% paper)

You will write an original research paper, of 20-25 pages (5,000-6,000 words) on a topic of your choice that is also central to the material and issues we discuss in our seminar. By **Tuesday, October 31**, you are required to submit a 500-word abstract of your paper and an annotated bibliography of materials. You will present your research paper during the last seminar session, **December 5**. The final paper is due **Tuesday, December 12**. I encourage you to meet with me to discuss your topic early in the semester.

Grading Policy

I expect assignments to be submitted on time, and late papers will be penalized a 1/2 letter grade for each day late. Any requests for accommodations should be made in advance of an assignment's deadline.

The following cutoffs will be used for grades:

A	94–100%	A-	90–94%				
B+	87–90%	B	84–87%	B-	80–84%		
C+	77–80%	C	74–77%	C-	70–74%		
D+	67–70%	D	64–67%	D-	60–64%	E	< 60%

Accommodations

Students requesting academic accommodations should first connect with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) and provide them with appropriate documentation. Once registered, you will receive an accommodation letter to share with me. If you need accommodation, please follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/>. I take this feedback seriously and use your constructive feedback to improve the course for future offerings. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester; check your email for additional details. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at the link provided above.

Academic Integrity

All students are required to abide by the University of Florida's Academic Honesty Guidelines, which may be viewed at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/honestybrochure.php>. Most obviously, this means cheating on exams and plagiarism on papers is completely unacceptable. Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to: submitting entire papers written by others, submitting portions of papers written by others, copying text without quotations and proper citation, or paraphrasing text without proper attribution in a footnote. In addition to harming your professional career, academic dishonesty will destroy your ability to learn from this class. Consequences for academic punishment can range up to automatically failing the course. If you have any questions about whether something counts as academic dishonesty, please contact me. I am happy to clarify these rules further.

Schedule

Week 1 August 29 Introduction

- Mary Dietz, "Current Controversies in Feminist Theory"
- Sharon Krause, "Contested Questions, Current Trajectories"
- Linda Zerilli, "Feminist Theory and the Canon of Political Thought"

Week 2 September 5 Historical, I

- Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (dedicatory letter, introduction, chs. 1-4, 7-9, 13)
- Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract* (introduction, chs. 1-2, 5-6) and "Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy"

Week 3 September 12 Historical, II

- Catharine MacKinnon, *Toward a Feminist Theory of the State* (chs. 1-4, 6-8)
- Nancy Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint"
- Wendy Brown, *States of Injury* (ch. 7)
- Saidiya Hartman, "The Belly of the World: A Note on Black Women's Labors"
- bell hooks, "Rethinking the Nature of Work"

Week 4 September 19 Subject(s) of Feminism

- Sandra Harding, "The Instability of the Analytical Categories of Feminist Theory"
- Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (1990 + 1999 prefaces, sections 1 + 3, conclusion)
- Iris Marion Young, "Lived Body vs. Gender"

Week 5 September 26 Production of Knowledge

- Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges"
- Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience"
- Susan Hekman, "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology" and "Truth and Method"
- Patricia Hill Collins, "Comment on Hekman's 'Truth and Method'" and "Black Feminist Epistemology"
- Kristie Dotson, "Inheriting Patricia Hill Collins's Black Feminist Epistemology"

Week 6 October 3 Epistemological Silences, Violences

- Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"
- Uma Narayan, "The Project of Feminist Epistemology"
- Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts"
- Miranda Fricker, "Epistemic Oppression and Epistemic Privilege"
- Linda Martín Alcoff, "Epistemic Identities"

Week 7 October 10 Women of Color Feminisms

- Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement"
- Hortense Spillers, "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe"
- Patricia Hill Collins, "The Politics of Black Feminist Thought"
- bell hooks, "Postmodern Blackness"
- Gloria Anzaldúa, "La conciencia de la mestiza / Toward a New Consciousness"

- Paula M. L. Moya, "Postmodernism, 'Realism,' and the Politics of Identity"
- Mitsuye Yamada, "Invisibility is an Unnatural Disaster"
- Shireen Roshanravan, "The Coalitional Imperative of Asian American Feminist Visibility"

Week 8 October 17 Intersectionalities

- Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins"
- Sumi Cho, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Leslie McCall, "Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies"
- Jennifer C. Nash, "Feminist Originalism" OR "Rethinking Intersectionality"
- Patricia Hill Collins, "Intersectionality's definitional dilemmas"
- Jasbir K. Puar, "I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess"
- Ange-Marie Hancock, "When Multiplication Doesn't Equal Quick Addition"

Week 9 October 24 Queering+ Feminist Thought

- Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality & Lesbian Existence"
- Cathy J. Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens"
- Lisa Duggan, "Queering the State"
- Roderick A. Ferguson, "Queer of Color Critique"
- Susan Stryker, "Transgender Studies: Queer Theory's Evil Twin" and "(De)Subjugated Knowledges"
- Cressida Heyes, "Feminist Solidarity after Queer Theory"

Week 10 October 31 No Class (Prospectus + Annotated Bibliography Due)

Week 11 November 7 Decolonizing Feminist Thought

- María Lugones, "Toward a Decolonial Feminism"
- Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes" and "'Under Western Eyes' Revisited"
- Smith, "American Studies without America"
- Audra Simpson, *Mohawk Interruptus* (ch. 6)

Week 12 November 14 Identity + its Limits?

- Wendy Brown, *States of Injury* (ch. 3)
- Linda Zerilli, *Feminism & the Abyss of Freedom* (chs. 1+2)
- Linda Martín Alcoff, *Visible Identities* (chs. 1-4)
- Susan Bickford, "Anti-Anti-Identity Politics: Feminism, Democracy and the Complexities of Citizenship"

Week 13 November 21 Feminist Freedoms

- Nancy Hirschman, "Toward a Feminist Theory of Freedom"
- Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety* (ch. 1)
- Linda Zerilli, *Feminism & The Abyss of Freedom* (rest of)
- Cristina Beltrán, "Freedom's Ambivalent Pleasures"
- Sharon Krause, "Plural Freedom"

Week 14 November 28 Feminist Possibilities

- Hélène Cixous, “Laugh of the Medusa”
- Audre Lorde, “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House,” “Uses of the Erotic,” “The Uses of Anger” and “Poetry is Not a Luxury”
- María Lugones, “Playfulness, ‘World’-Travelling, and Loving Perception”
- Saidiya Hartman, *Wayward Lives, Beautiful Experiments* (A Note on Method, 1-42)
- Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (introduction, ch. 8+9, conclusions 1+2)

Week 15 December 5 Research Paper Presentations

Tuesday, December 12 – Research Paper Due