

Feminist Political Thought
POS 4931 / WST 4930
Spring 2026
T 3-4:55pm / Th 4:05-4:55 pm
Anderson Hall 034

Dr. Stacey Liou (she/hers)
Office Hours: W 2-4 pm, or by appointment
Appointments via Calendly

Email: staceyliou@ufl.edu
Office: Anderson 304
Tel: 352-273-2344

Description

This course introduces students to feminist political thought, with particular attention to contemporary debates animating feminist thought and practice. We will read and examine texts that critically engage liberal, Marxist, and other political theories, as well as gendered forms of domination, from a variety of feminist perspectives. We will consider how feminist thinkers engage, extend, and challenge each other, in addition to various approaches to theorizing and practicing political action and solidarity. Among the themes we will discuss are the boundaries of the category “woman,” the historical struggle and justifications for women’s political equality, the multiplicity of women’s experiences along various axes of identity and difference, and the potential for emancipatory action. We will explore the extent to which these ideas are relevant to and visible in contemporary sociopolitical life.

Goals

You will be required to think critically and independently, and to learn how to support your arguments with logic and evidence. By the end of this class you will be able to speak intelligently about various strands of feminist political thought, key themes and issues of contention, the social and historical circumstances that have animated and reflected different ways of approaching feminist political thought, and how the problems and concepts discussed illuminate contemporary political life and envision feminist futures.

Assessment

1. In-Class Activities (20%)

This is an advanced undergraduate seminar, and its success relies on your active engagement. There will be different in-class individual and small group activities during the semester. Since these activities will take place during class times, there will be no make-up opportunities for them. Completing these activities successfully will require that you complete the readings before class on the dates listed below. Allow yourself enough time to do so, because they are complex and require close attention.

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 are an integral part of our time together – they are key to making this course enjoyable and intellectually stimulating.

Excused absences must be consistent with university policies and require appropriate documentation. Additional information can be found [here](#).

2. In-Class Exams (50%)

There will be two in-class exams, on **February 10** and **April 21**. These are cumulative exams, each worth 25% of your final grade. They will focus on recently discussed texts and themes, which you may be asked to consider alongside earlier course material. Questions may include a combination of essay-based, short-answer, and multiple-choice questions.

These exam dates cannot be changed. For documented conflicts, speak to me as soon as possible so that we can make appropriate accommodation.

3. Response Essays (30%)

Students will write two short 3-4 page (750-1,000 words) essays responding to a prompt provided one week in advance. Each essay is worth 15% of your final grade. Additional detail will be provided during class sessions. These papers will be due **March 3** and **March 31**.

Required Texts

All readings can be found online or as PDFs on the course's Canvas page. There are no anticipated materials or supplies fees.

Note: Course material and details in this syllabus are subject to change. I will announce any such changes in class.

Grading Policy

Late assignment submissions will not be accepted, except in the case of documented illness, legal, or civic/university duty situations. If you miss an assignment and have a documented excuse, email me within the same week to discuss making up the work.

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| The following cutoffs will be used for letter grades: | A 94-100% | A- 90-94% |
| | B+ 87-90% | B 84-87% |
| | C+ 77-80% | C 74-77% |
| | D+ 67-70% | D 64-67% |
| | | A- 90-94% |
| | | B- 80-84% |
| | | C- 70-74% |
| | | D- 60-64% |
| | | E < 60% |

Accommodations

Students requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing 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 Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful 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; you

will be notified when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at the link provided above.

Resources

Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing 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.

Additional policies and resources are available online at <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>.

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.

In other words, you must be the one producing all submitted assignments, and you must appropriately reference all source material, including the assigned texts. If you do not do both of these, you are committing academic dishonesty, which is grounds for a failing grade. If you're unsure, you should just cite it. If you have any questions about whether something counts as academic dishonesty, please contact me. I am happy to clarify these rules further.

In-Class Recording

While students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures, the ways these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only purposes allowed are for personal educational use, in connection with a complaint to the university, or as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Students may not publish recorded lectures without the instructor's written consent.

Schedule

January 13 (T) Introduction

January 15 (R) Equality

- Olympe de Gouges, “Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen”
- Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (dedicatory letter, introduction, chs. 1-4, 13)

January 20 (T) Equality (cont.)

- Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Declaration of Sentiments”
- NOW Statement of Purpose

January 24 (R) Representation

- Jane Mansbridge, “Should Blacks Represent Blacks and Women Represent Women?”

January 27 (T) The State

- Catharine MacKinnon, “Reflections on Sex Equality Under the Law”
- Wendy Brown, “Finding the Man in the State” from *States of Injury*

January 29 (R) Public-Private

- Susan Moller Okin, “Gender, the Public, and the Private”
- Ananya Bhattacharjee, “The Public/Private Mirage”

February 3 (T) Reason-Emotion

- Alison M. Jaggar, “Love and Knowledge”

February 5 (R) The Body

- Susan Bordo, *Unbearable Weight* (Introduction)

February 10 (T) **In-Class Exam**

February 12 (R) Freedom & Consent

- Carole Pateman, “Women and Consent”
- Nancy J. Hirschmann, “Toward a Feminist Theory of Freedom”

February 17 (T) Gender

- Judith Butler, 1990 Preface, “Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions,” Conclusion, 1999 Preface from *Gender Trouble*

February 19 (R) Sex & Desire

- Amia Srinivasan, “Does Anyone Have The Right to Sex?” and “Coda: The Politics of Desire”

February 24 (T) Work

- Silvia Federici, “Wages against Housework”
- Joan C. Tronto, “The ‘Nanny’ Question in Feminism”

February 26 (R) Work (cont.)

- Anne-Marie Slaughter, “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All”
- Catherine Rottenberg, “The Rise of Neoliberal Feminism”

March 3 (T) Capitalism **Response Essay #1 Due**

- Zillah Eisenstein, “Constructing a Theory of Capitalist Patriarchy and Socialist Feminism”
- bell hooks, “Rethinking the Nature of Work”

March 5 (R) Reproductive Labor

- Angela Davis, “Reflections on the Black Woman’s Role in the Community of Slaves”

March 10 (T) Abolitionism

- Elizabeth Bernstein, “The Sexual Politics of the ‘New Abolitionism’”
- Mimi E. Kim, “Anti-Carceral Feminism”

March 12 (R) Intersectionality

- Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement”
- Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins”

March 17, 19 Spring Break

March 24 (T) Race

- Gloria Anzaldúa, “La conciencia de la mestiza / Toward a New Consciousness”
- Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack”

March 26 (R) Queering Feminisms

- Adrienne Rich, “Compulsory Heterosexuality & Lesbian Existence”
- Cathy J. Cohen, “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens”

March 31 (T) Trans Politics **Response Essay #2 Due**

- Susan Stryker, “(De)Subjugated Knowledges”
- Cressida Heyes, “Feminist Solidarity after Queer Theory”

April 2 (R) Feminism Across Borders

- Chandra Talpade Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes”
- Adelyn Lim, “Transnational Organizing and Feminist Politics of Difference and Solidarity”

April 7 (T) Decolonizing Feminist Political Thought

- María Lugones, “Toward a Decolonial Feminism”

- Mary Kathryn Nagle and Emma Lower, “What Will It Take to End Violence Against Native Women?”

April 9 (R) Feminist Futures?

- Alicia Garza, “A Herstory of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement”
- Elizabeth Corredor, “Unpacking ‘Gender Ideology’ and the Global Right’s Antigender Countermovement”
- Michelle V. Rowley, “Anything but Reactionary: Exploring the Mechanics of Backlash”

April 21 (T) **In-Class Exam**