

GS/GP 290 – INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES ON GENDER
Caplan (History; BMC Thomas 222; 526-5066)
Zwarg (English; HC Hall 10; 896-1053 or 1075)

Bryn Mawr, TAY 6

Weds. 4-6 p.m.

This course is an introduction to feminist and gender studies. It is intended primarily for juniors and seniors enrolled in the bi-college minor/concentration in gender studies; sophomores planning enrollment, and other interested students will be admitted as space allows. Prerequisite is at least one approved introductory course in gender studies (see Bryn Mawr catalog p 222); there will be no exceptions to this.

The course will examine gender as a marker of social and cultural differentiation, hierarchy, and division, drawing largely on the feminist scholarship of the past 25 years. We will focus on critiques and subversions of dominant constructions of femininity and sexuality, and explore issues that have become central to feminist scholarship and politics: the heterogeneity encompassed by the category 'woman'; the pressures generated by this heterogeneity on feminist intellectual practice; the feminist questioning of the divisions between the personal and the political, the emotional and the rational, the scholarly and the activist, feminist scholarship on the problematics of identity and difference. The course aims to introduce you to some of the ways in which feminist scholarship has challenged existing academic and disciplinary conventions.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. Regular class attendance, completion of readings before each class, active participation in class discussion.
2. Weekly participation in small self-organized pre-discussion groups, in which you will prepare themes for class discussion. Groups will be assigned to lead discussion week by week.
2. Two 5pp. papers. the first should address the question 'Is Theory versus Practice?'; due on 10 February, in class. The second should be a discussion of any other week's reading; due 31 March, in class.
3. A final, 10pp. paper, on a theme that is generated by more than one week's reading, or that takes a theme further through additional reading, or that addresses an issue pertinent to the course but not covered in class; due end of exam period (& NB earlier deadline for seniors).

It is your responsibility to ensure that both instructors receive copies of your papers. Unexcused late papers will be penalized.

Texts marked * in the syllabus below are available at Bryn Mawr bookstore; other readings will be available as a course pack, at cost. Readings will also be on reserve in Canaday Library.

STARTING POINTS

20 Jan.: Introduction

Phyllis Schlafly, 'The Power of the Positive Woman'; Audre Lorde, 'The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House'

27 Jan.: Feminist Sources

Alice Rossi, 'Social Roots of the Women's Movement in America'; Seneca Falls Convention (1848); Redstockings Manifesto (1969); The Woman-Identified Woman (1970); NOW Manifesto (1972); Combahee River Collective Manifesto (1974),

3 Feb.: Becoming a Woman:

* S. de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, Intro; Part I; III, 'Myth and Reality'; IV, any ch., V, any ch.; VII

10 Feb.: Is Theory vs. Practice?

J. Scott, "'Experience'", in J. Scott & J. Butler, eds., Feminists Theorize the Political; M. Lugones & E. Spelman, 'Have We Got a Theory for You?', Women's Studies International Forum; B. Martin & C. Mohanty, 'Feminist Politics: What's Home got to do with it?', in T. de Lauretis, ed., Feminist Studies/Critical Studies

* FIRST PAPER DUE *

THEORIZING OPPRESSION, IMAGINING LIBERATION

17 Feb.: Sex/Gender, Nature/Culture

G. Rubin, 'The Traffic in Women', S. Ortner, 'Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?', in M. Rosaldo & S. Lamphere, eds., Women, Culture & Society; D. Haraway, "'Gender" for a Marxist Dictionary', in Simians, Cyborgs & Women

24 Feb. The Female Body

* F. Haug, ed., Female Sexualization, selections; L. Irigaray, 'When Our Lips Speak Together', in This Sex Which Is Not One

3 Mar.: Patriarchy

K. Millett, Sexual Politics, ch. 2: Theory of Sexual Politics; H. Hartmann, 'The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism'; Gerda Lerner, The Creation of Patriarchy, ch. 11

BREAK

WRITING WOMEN

17 Mar.: The Risk of Essentialism

* D. Fuss, Essentially Speaking

24 Mar.: French Feminism

* H. Cixous & C. Clément, The Newly Born Woman

31 Mar.: The Gendered Subaltern

M. Devi, 'Breast-Giver' & G. Spivak, 'A Literary Representation of the Subaltern', in Spivak, In Other Worlds

* 2ND PAPER DUE *

GOING ON FROM HERE

7 April: Feminist Epistemologies

Readings TBA

14 April: Race/ing Gender

C. Moraga, 'From a Long Line of Vendidas'; K. Crenshaw, 'Whose Story Is It Anyway? Feminist and Antiracist Appropriations of Anita Hill'; C. Mohanty, 'Introduction' to Cartographies of Struggle. Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism

21 April: Postmodernist Feminism?

J. Butler, 'Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of "Postmodernism"'; D. Haraway, 'Cyborg Manifesto'

28 April: Final Class