

Women's Studies 4402:  
"Rebels, Radicals and Revolutionaries: (Deconstructing) The History of Western Feminism"  
Spring, 2004  
Instructor: Amy L. Brandzel

Course Description:

Welcome to 4402! While this course is originally titled, "Rebels, Radicals and Revolutionaries: The History of Western Feminism," in this class we will take this title as an object of debate and center our discussion around critiquing what this title implies. Rather than presuming that there is such a thing as the "history of western feminism," which tells the tale of rebels, radicals and revolutionaries who progress through the first and second waves in order to achieve the final and ultimate resolutions in the third wave, this course raises the question as to who benefits from such a narrative, who is left out, and why. In other words, we will deconstruct not only the wave narrative and the whiteness of western feminism, but we will also deconstruct the project of history itself. We will read primary and secondary texts (from the 19th through the late 20th centuries) that are often considered emblematic of this history of western feminism and place these readings within contexts of U.S. history and world events, particularly in regards to the histories of imperialism, colonialism, racism, heterosexism, and classism. We will also read primary and secondary texts that are not generally included within the canon of western feminism and ask how these works challenge, expose, and transform this body of work and our understandings of feminist theory.

Our goal, then, is to construct and weave together multiple narratives and histories of feminist thought in the U.S. from an intersectional analysis. This is not an easy task, since the canonization of the history of western feminism is deeply rooted within women's studies curriculum and within feminist theory itself. In fact, this course is organized around the premise that the task of exploring or examining the history of feminism is inherently flawed. No matter how we approach it, we will encounter problems, gaps, erasures and injustices – and while it is often suggested that we simply need to get better at "inclusion," in this class we will question what inclusion means. Therefore, we will be looking at a variety of materials, and will approach this material from a variety of angles, angles that are each incomplete and unacceptable by themselves. The goal of deploying these different angles is not so much to provide a "more complete" story, but, in fact, to construct alternative stories, ones that allow for a more thoughtful analysis and *deconstruction* of the history of western feminism.

Course Objectives:

- To think and read critically about the project of History, specifically feminist intellectual history.
- To analyze the disciplinary practices and nexus of history and feminist theory and how these fields take on and formulate their objects of study. Here, in particular, we will be looking at how feminist theorists and historians have formulated the objects and subjects of feminist intellectual history.
- To theorize and analyze the goal of "inclusion" in both history and feminist theory.
- To not only deconstruct the way feminist intellectual history has been approached, but also to begin constructing what we think a radical, critical feminist intellectual history could and should look like.

Course Warning:

This is a *reading intensive course*. The majority of the workload for this course will be in reading all of the assignments and preparing written comments on the readings on a weekly basis. Although some of the material in this course is theoretically dense, the major challenge in this course will actually be keeping up with the more lengthy reading assignments so I suggest you plan accordingly.

Course Materials:

Required Books

1. *Second Wave Reader*, ed. Linda Nicholson
2. *The Feminist Papers*, ed. Alice Rossi
3. *White Women's Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the U.S.*, by Louise Newman
4. *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol*, by Nell Irvin Painter
5. *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Writings*, by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
6. *Sex and Temperament*, by Margaret Mead

All required books are available at Williamson Bookstore. There are definitely ways to buy used and/or cheaper versions of most of these books, so please feel free to search through online sources, used bookstores, etc.

### Required Online Articles

Instead of a course packet, I've placed articles online. The majority of the online articles will be available through the Online Wilson Reserve, which you will access via <http://reserve.lib.umn.edu/cgi-bin/eres/> (marked as ONLINE RESERVE in your syllabus). Any other articles will have the website address listed in the course schedule.

### Class Attendance and Participation (15% of final grade):

I expect you to attend all class sessions, especially since we only meet once per week. You may miss one class session without having to discuss it with me and without having it impact your grade. An *excused* absence requires that you provide official, written verification of your absence (i.e. a doctor's note). For any other situations that may cause you to miss class, please talk to me as soon as possible.

One of the main goals for this course is to have an interactive classroom. This means that I expect, hope, and desire that you come to class with questions, opinions, and critical commentary. Please feel free to bring up your ideas and questions anytime during our course meetings. If for some reason you do not feel comfortable talking in class, please let me know what I can do to make the classroom atmosphere more comfortable. The topics we will be discussing can be politically charged, so I expect everyone to *actively* listen to others as well as be respectful of each other's ideas.

### Show & Tell (5% of final grade):

During our first meeting you will sign up for two class meetings in which you will bring in something to "show" and "tell" the class. Your show and tells needs to be either a current or a historical representation of feminism and/or feminist theory and/or feminist politics (all broadly understood). The goal here is to provide examples for how feminism is portrayed, represented, claimed, and revised in the past as well as the present. Options include media items (newspaper or magazine articles, advertisements, internet sites, television or movies, etc), artistic works (poems, music lyrics, music videos, artwork, performance art, etc), academic or intellectual work (articles, books, etc). You will be asked to present your "show and tell" to the class by providing a description of it (you can bring it in to pass around, but you need to be able to describe it for the class), explaining its significance to the course material, and offering your very insightful and critical analysis of the object (i.e. say more than "I thought it was interesting"). Plan to spend 5 minutes for your "show and tell," and be ready to answer any questions students (or I) might have.

### Weekly Papers (50% of grade):

There will be a written assignment (2-3 pages) every week (so, 14 total) and you must complete 10 of them. There are FIVE REQUIRED assignments (weeks 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10) and you must complete them in order to pass this course, the remaining 5 are your choice. If you complete more than 10, I will simply throw out the lowest graded assignments. While the majority of the assignments are reading summaries (described below), some of the assignments are specifically designed for that week's reading, so be careful to review the syllabus carefully and follow the directions.

Grading: Your weekly papers will be graded according to how well you convey that you have read and thought about the material and whether or not you've addressed all the questions. They are graded on a 10-point system – 10/A, 9/A-, 8/B+, 7/B, and so on. You must include all of the articles or chapters assigned in order to get an "10" out of this assignment, but if (for some reason) you don't get a chance to complete the assignment, it is better to hand in as much as you can rather than not hand in anything at all.

Reading Summaries Format: When the assignment is to provide a reading summary, you need to basically answer 5 questions for each article or chapter. Please follow the following format for your reading summaries.

Include for each article or chapter:

- A. Author Name
- B. Article/Chapter Title
- C. Thesis (One Sentence in Argument Form – What is the main, overriding argument that this author is making? Too often folks do descriptive statements, which are not arguments. A trick is for you to start your sentence with the following, “The author argues that . . .” – usually this helps.
- D. The Main Points (in full sentence form – there will be at least 5 of them, if not more. Be thorough but also selective – ie include the points that are necessary for the thesis. One of the easiest ways to make sure you hit the main points in your reading summary is to assume you are writing to someone who hasn’t read the material – what do they need to know to understand what the article is about?)
- E. Your Comments/Questions/Concerns and Reasons for them. Don’t just say “I liked it” but say why exactly you liked it. Also, focus on the content of the argument not the superficial structure (ie I’m not interested in comments such as “I don’t like her writing style”; I’m interested in what you think about the information and arguments the author is providing.) If you have a question, try to offer an answer and I’ll help you with the rest in my response.

Final Assignment: (30% of grade): Take Home Essay, Due May 13th

For your final paper in this course you will be writing a 9-12 page essay on a topic I will provide during week 14 of this course. This essay topic will be dedicated to the major theoretical theme of the course (the problematic of “inclusion” in the projects of history and feminist theory) and will require you to access and use knowledge gained from throughout the course, from lectures, discussions, films, and course readings, so prepare accordingly throughout the semester (take notes, save assignments, etc).

“NO LATE PAPERS” POLICY:

NO LATE PAPERS will be accepted in this course. Your papers are due in the beginning of each class.

General Information Regarding Reading: You might find many of these articles difficult to read and get through. Since our reading styles vary, there are no easy rules on how to read these articles. The best way to improve reading skills is not only to keep reading, but also to notice the way you have read in the past and think about how you want to improve. Then, come in to my office hours and we can figure out some techniques that will suit your needs.

For better comprehension of reading, you should ask yourself the following questions (during and after you have read the piece):

- What are the author’s goals and objectives? (Who is the author’s audience? Who is the author writing against and why? What discipline or field is the author located in and how does this impact the argument?)
- What are the author’s arguments? (What is the central thesis and what are the smaller arguments needed to back up this thesis?)
- What is the author’s data or material they are analyzing and why?
- What is your own analysis of the essay/book/text? (What did you like or dislike and why? What questions do you have?)

Grading Information: My grading criteria for this course adheres to the official CLA guidelines: The University mandated "+" and "-" grading symbols will be used with the A-F grading system. A -- achievement *outstanding* relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements; B -- achievement *significantly above* that level necessary to meet course requirements; C -- achievement meeting the *basic* course requirements in every respects; D -- achievement *worthy of credit* even though it does not meet the basic requirements; F -- performance *failing* to meet the basic course requirements; S -- equivalent to a grade of C or better.

Policy Regarding Incompletes: I will not give any “incompletes” in the course (grade I) except in cases of documented and severe circumstances.

## Weekly Schedule:

### Module I: Changing the Frame of Reference: Tools for Deconstructing the History of Western Feminism

#### Jan. 22 - Week 1: Who Am I, Who Are You? What are we doing here anyway?

Introductions to the course. Bonding, Bonding, and more Bonding.

#### Jan. 29 - Week 2: Knowledge Production, Disciplinarity and the History of Western Feminism

Online Syllabi from around the U.S. on the History of Western Feminism and “Fundamentals” of Feminist Theory

1. <http://www.u.arizona.edu/ic/mcbride/theory/ws305.htm>
2. <http://www2.kenyon.edu/Depts/WMNS/Courses/Syllabus/wmns30.htm>
3. [http://www.gwu.edu/~wstu/125/fund\\_syl.html](http://www.gwu.edu/~wstu/125/fund_syl.html)
4. [http://www.gwu.edu/~wstu/125/syl\\_125\\_03.html](http://www.gwu.edu/~wstu/125/syl_125_03.html)
5. [http://www.fas.harvard.edu/womenstudy/syllabi/FL03\\_97.htm](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/womenstudy/syllabi/FL03_97.htm)
6. <http://www.richmond.edu/~lmcwhort/PHIL258.html>
7. This syllabus (not online but in your hands)

#### **\*\*Assignment: Syllabi Analysis\*\* REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT**

Your assignment is to read critically, analyze, and compare the above example syllabi and to think critically about the role of this course in Women’s Studies curriculum. Read the syllabi (don’t forget to include this current syllabus in your analysis!) and approach them as if they are texts (they are) and answer the following questions in 2-3 pages (for each of these questions I want to hear your observations, but I’m most interested in your analysis): What are the stated goals of these courses and what do you think of them? Are there any common themes of intellectual feminist history and if so, what are they and what do you think of them? Who are the intellectuals and makers of feminist history, according to these texts and what do you think? Where are race, class, gender, sexuality, and nation and where should they be? When do these topics come up, when are they assumed, etc? The point of this exercise is to think about our own placement here in this course and how this position connects to the institutionalization of women’s studies.

#### Feb. 5 - Week 3: Welcome to the Canon

During the previous week we will divide up into 5 groups. Each group will be assigned one of the following anthologies to read, review and compare to Rossi. The anthologies are on two-hour reserve at Wilson Library.

ALL: *The Feminist Papers*, Rossi. READ all Section Introductions (pp 3-6; 241-281; 472-477; 614-621) and skim the rest of the book (pay close attention to TOC). Then, compare to your assigned Anthology (read introductions and skim the rest)

1. *Feminism: The Essential Historical Writings*, ed. Miriam Schneir
2. *Feminism in Our Time: The Essential Writings, WW II to the Present*, ed. Miriam Schneir
3. *Second to None Volume One*, ed. Moynihan, Russett and Crumpacker
4. *Second to None Volume Two*, ed. Moynihan, Russett and Crumpacker
5. *Public Women, Public Words*, ed. Keetley and Pettegrew

#### **\*\*Assignment: Anthology Comparison\*\* REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT**

Your goal here is to read and skim your assigned anthology to see what types of narratives this anthology is telling about the history of intellectual feminism and how it compares to *The Feminist Papers* (2-3 pages). In this assignment I want you to approach the editor(s) as authors and as producers of knowledge – and your job here is to figure out what is the story or narrative they want you to know about the history of western feminism. *The way the anthology is organized, how topics are introduced, and who and what is included and excluded reveal this story or narrative.* Again, I want your observations but I’m most invested in your analysis. Answer the following questions: When was this collection published, what do you know about the editors, etc? What do the editors say their

objectives are and what do you think of them? Who and what do they include, why and what do you think of this? Where are race, class, gender, sexuality and nation in this anthology? What time period do they cover and why? How is the text organized and why? What are the major achievements and moments of intellectual feminism, according to this text, and what do you think of this? Who gets to speak here for feminism, what counts as intellectual and why?

Feb. 12 - Week 4: The (Problematics of the) Project of History I

Brown, Elsa Barkley. “‘What Has Happened Here’: The Politics of Difference in Women’s History and Feminist Politics.” (Second Wave Reader)

Foucault, Michel. “Introduction” from *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Online Reserve)

Scott, Joan. “Women’s History,” from *Gender and the Politics of History* (Online Reserve)

**\*\*Assignment: Reading Summary\*\* REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT** Follow the directions for the reading summaries listed above in the syllabus – you are responsible for 3 summaries here. Please note that Foucault might be difficult – give yourself time to work through it at a reasonable pace and/or read it twice.

Feb. 19 - Week 5: The (Problematics of the) Project of History II

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for ‘Indian’ Pasts?” (Online Reserve)

Kang, Laura Hyun Yi. “Historical Reconfigurations: Delineating Asian Women as/not American Citizens” (Online Reserve)

Foucault, Michel. “Introduction” from *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (Online Reserve) (Yes, Read it again)

**\*\*Assignment: Reading Summary\*\* REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT** Follow the directions for the reading summaries listed above in the syllabus – you are responsible for 3 summaries here. Please note that Kang has two parts to her article – the last half critiques and completely rewrites the first half so make sure you read the whole thing thoroughly.

Module II: Mediating History, Historicizing Feminist Thought

Feb. 26 - Week 6: Imperialist Roots, Racist Legacies I

Newman, *White Women’s Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* – Introduction and Chapters 1, 2 and 4.

**\*\*Assignment: Reading Summary\*\*** Follow the directions for the reading summaries listed above in the syllabus – you are responsible for 4 summaries here (1 per chapter).

Mar. 4 - Week 7: Imperialist Roots, Racist Legacies II

Newman, *White Women’s Rights: The Racial Origins of Feminism in the United States* – Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Lanser, Susan. “Feminist Criticism, ‘The Yellow Wallpaper,’ and the Politics of Color in America” (Online Reserve) or <http://www.dac.neu.edu/womens.studies/lanser.htm>

**\*\*Assignment: Reading Summary\*\*** Follow the directions for the reading summaries listed above in the syllabus – you are responsible for 4 summaries here (3 chapters + article).

Mar. 11 - Week 8: Applying Critique I– Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper and Other Writings*. Read: the Introduction, The Yellow Wallpaper (1-21), Selections from *Herland* (97-134), Selections from *Women and Economics* (134-201), and Selections from *The Man-Made World* (201-240)

Rossi introduction to Gilman, “The ‘Militant Madonna,’” Feminist Papers (566-572)

**\*\*Assignment: Applying Critique\*\*** You've read Newman's and Lanser's discussions and contextualizations of Gilman, now I want to hear what you think about her and whether or not you find their analysis helpful or not. What did you think of Gilman's analysis as revealed in her stories and essays? What are Gilman's main themes, arguments, and issues of contention? How are these themes, arguments, and issues mediated by her experiences, by the time period, by her politics, by her position, and by her (intersectional) identity?

----- SPRING BREAK MARCH 15 – 19<sup>th</sup>. ENJOY. -----

Mar. 25 - Week 9: Applying Critique II – Margaret Mead

Margaret Mead, Selections from *Sex and Temperament* (Prefaces, Introduction, Chapters VII & VIII in Part One; XII & XIII in Part Two; XV & XVI in Part Three; and ALL of Part Four (most important).  
Rossi introduction to Mead, "Cultural Sketch: Margaret Mead," Feminist Papers (653-657)

**\*\*Assignment: Applying Critique\*\*** You've read Newman's discussion and contextualization of Mead, now I want to hear what you think about her and whether or not you find Newman's analysis helpful or not. What did you think of Mead's work and analysis? What are Mead's main themes, arguments, and issues of contention? How are these themes, arguments, and issues mediated by her experiences, by the time period, and by her politics, by her position, and by her (intersectional) identity?

Apr. 1 - Week 10: The Politics of Iconography in Fem. History: Speaking For, About and With Sojourner Truth

Nell Irvin Painter, Selections from *Sojourner Truth: A Life, A Symbol* (feel free to read whole book, but I want you to focus on the following chapters: 1,2, 13, 14, 17-26 and the Coda)  
Skim (Recommended to read) *The Feminist Papers* – selections on Sojourner Truth and Kansas Campaign on the vote (pp 413-470)

**\*\*Assignment: Reading Response \*\* REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT** I want to hear what you think about this very complicated issue in regards to Painter's amazing and rich analysis. Sojourner Truth has come to symbolize the demand for an attention to intersectionality, a demand that has yet to be met as far as many feminists are concerned. BUT as Painter demonstrates, white women have deployed Truth in very, very harmful ways. What does Painter suggest we do and how do you think feminist theorists and historians should approach this problem of relegating "race" and "difference" into symbolic gestures and icons?

Module III: The Subjects and Objects of Feminist Theorizing

Apr. 8 - Week 11: The "Other" in Feminist Theorizing

Simone de Beauvoir, Selections from *The Second Sex*. Read "Introduction" to *The Second Sex* in Second Wave Reader and then read the excerpt from the Conclusion in The Feminist Papers (689-705) and Rossi's intro to Beauvoir (672-674).

Monique Wittig, "One is Not Born a Woman" in Second Wave Reader.

Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" in Second Wave Reader.

**\*\*Assignment: Reading Summary\*\*** Follow the directions for the reading summaries listed above in the syllabus – you are responsible for 3 summaries here. Focus on what their arguments are about "The Other."

Apr. 15 - Week 12: Voice and Inclusion in Feminist Practices

Gayatri Spivak with Ellen Rooney, "In a Word" Interview in Second Wave Reader

Norma Alarcón, "The Theoretical Subject(s) of This Bridge Called My Back," in Second Wave Reader

Donna Kate Rushin, "The Bridge Poem" (Online Reserve)

Audre Lorde, "'An Open Letter to Mary Daly," (Online Reserve)

Jo Carillo, "And When You Leave, Take Your Pictures With You" (Online Reserve)  
Gloria Anzaldúa, "Speaking In Tongues" (Online Reserve)

**\*\*Assignment: Reading Synthesis and Analysis\*\*** Throughout these writings there is a specific tension between authors arguing that women of color's voices must be heard, but also a very sharp criticisms of the way in which white women and white feminism have "listened" and/or "used" these voices as token representatives of inclusion in the women's movement. I want you to write a 2-3-page paper explaining this tension and where these various authors come down on it and, most importantly, I want you to tell me what the possible solutions are that are listed in these works. Close reading will be necessary for this assignment and I want to see all of the authors represented in your discussion.☺

#### Apr. 22 - Week 13: Citizenship

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Selections from The Feminist Papers:

Abigail Adams – correspondence to John Adams, pp. 7-15

Mary Wollstonecraft, "A Vindication on the Rights of Woman," pp. 40-85

Wendy Williams, "The Equality Crisis" in Second Wave Reader

Wendy Brown, "Suffering the Paradoxes of Rights," (Online Reserve)

**\*\*Assignment: Reading Summary\*\*** Follow the directions for the reading summaries listed above in the syllabus – you are responsible for 4 summaries here.

#### Apr. 29 - Week 14: Sex, Work and Marriage (or The Traffic in Women)

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Selections from The Feminist Papers:

Friedrich Engels, "The Origin of the Family," pp. 480-495

Suzanne Lafollette, "Concerning Women," 541-565

Emma Goldman, "The Traffic In Women" available online:

[http://womenshistory.about.com/library/etext/bl\\_eg\\_an8\\_traffic\\_in\\_women.htm](http://womenshistory.about.com/library/etext/bl_eg_an8_traffic_in_women.htm) or

[http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist\\_archives/goldman/aando/traffic.html](http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/anarchist_archives/goldman/aando/traffic.html)

Gayle Rubin, "The Traffic in Women," in Second Wave Reader

Catherine MacKinnon, "Sexuality," in Second Wave Reader

**\*\*Assignment: Reading Synthesis and Analysis\*\*** Write a 2-3 page paper comparing these authors and their views on the following questions: What is sexuality? What is power? What is the relationship between sexuality, gender, race and class? What is the relationship between sex, work and marriage?

#### May 6 - Week 15: Identity in Theory/Practice

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McDowell, Deborah. "Transferences: Black Feminist 'Practice' in the Age of 'Theory,'" (Online Reserve)

Paula Moya, "Postmodernism, 'Realism,' and the Politics of Identity" (Online Reserve)

Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools" (Online Reserve)

Donna Haraway, "The Cyborg Manifesto" available online:

<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/Haraway/CyborgManifesto.html>

**\*\*Assignment: Reading Summary\*\*** Follow the directions for the reading summaries listed above in the syllabus – you are responsible for 4 summaries here.

#### May 13 – FINAL DUE

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**\*\*\*Take Home Final Essay Due\*\*\***