



SOC/GENWS 904: Feminist Theory and Practice

Wednesdays 3:30PM - 6:00PM

Classroom Van Hise 582

Instructor

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Description and Goal of the Course

This is a graduate seminar that aims to create a space where graduate students can practice feminist theorizing. While being aware of the trans-disciplinary nature of feminist theory, this course will focus on how sociologists have been building and applying feminist theories in their empirical research.

The substantial contents of this course are divided into three parts. I will call these parts and sub-sections *Seasons* and *Episodes* (in this Netflix era). Season 1 focuses on building informative knowledge on feminist theories. This season has episodes that cover several concepts and -isms. In particular, we aim to draw conceptual maps based on contemporary feminist theories and on debates about categorization of sex/gender. Season 2 uses feminist theories to understand the knowledge production, reproduction, and disruptions. Episodes include readings and discussions on standpoint theory, realism, colonialism, intersectionality, and Black feminist thoughts. Season 3 covers new studies conducted by feminist scholars with an aim to learn the art of practicing feminist theories.

In addition to the three-season structure, we will practice feminist theorizing in a four-stage structured workshop format to develop individual projects through peer and instructor support. Throughout the semester, we will use our class time to have workshops that are directly related to developing each student's own project. I encourage students to come with their own research or field statement projects. This can be a) a term paper that they would like to develop during the semester; b) a dissertation or master's thesis proposal; c) a field statement for the prelim; d) a part of their dissertation that they would like to publish in peer-reviewed journals. Please use this class to develop your project with the insights that feminist theory offer.

Format of the Course

The general format of each class is as follows: We will have a weekly check-in (10 mins) followed by a student-led presentation and discussion of the assigned readings (60 mins). After a short break, we will have a session that covers students' weekly questions posted online (20 mins) followed by clarification and discussion time facilitated by the student leader of that week (30 mins). The rest of 20 mins of class will be led by the instructor to clarify some of the issues and to provide a brief lecture on the key takeaways. For the classes that we have workshops, we are going to reserve the last 25 or more minutes of the class (thus, shorten the second part of the course) for our individual research projects which will give you a space to write, outline, and do conceptual mapping.

In-person attendance of the class is expected as of now. However, the instructor will be carefully watching the situation related to Corona and will be mindful about the fact that students have been going through a challenging time due to the pandemic in their academic journey.

Announcements, topics, readings, and assignments for the course are detailed on the course Canvas site. Please email the instructor if you have difficulty accessing the site.

Assignments and Grades

1	Two weekly assignments: Complete/Incomplete One pre-class question that is due at noon on the Tuesday before class is on one issue that emerged after reading the assigned contents and one post-class reflection memo is due at noon on the Friday after class.	12*20 240
2	Class discussion leading: Points Once or twice, per term (we will have a discussion on whether we would like to have more than one person lead the discussion).	2*80 160
3	Workshops: Complete/Incomplete There will be four workshops and assignments to each one. Deadlines vary, please refer to the Canvas announcements and emails.	4*100 400
4	Final paper: Points 20-25 double-spaced pages paper that is due at noon on May 10 th	200
		1000 pts

Submission Instructions

Written assignments are turned into the Canvas site. Specific guidelines will be outlined and uploaded in Canva. Most of the time, the instructor will create a space in the Discussion part of Canvas. There will be weeks when the Assignment par of Canvas will be used. Because student work needs to be read by the class before discussions, extensions will not be available, except in extreme circumstances.

OUTLINE OF THE COURSE

Readings: [Mandatory](#) [Supplementary/optional](#)

January 26th Trailer

Feminist Theory and Practice

[hooks, bell. 1991. "Theory as Liberatory Practice," *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* 4\(1\): 1-12.](#)

[Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Demarginalizing the intersection of race and sex: A black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory and antiracist politics." *U. Chi. Legal F.* \(1989\): 139-167.](#)

[McMillan Cottom, Tressie. 2018. "Thick," Pp. 1-31. In *Thick*. The New Press.](#)

[Lorde, Audre. 1984. "Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," Pp. 40-44. In *Sister/Outsider*. Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press.](#)

Note: Please come to class knowing the 2-3 weeks that you are interested in leading the discussion and class.

SEASON 1_WE ARE CONCEPTHOLICS

February 2nd Episode 1

Landscaping Feminism (I): Feminist Theory in Sociology

DeVault, Marjorie L. "Talking back to sociology: Distinctive contributions of feminist methodology." *Annual review of sociology* 22, no. 1 (1996): 29-50.

Chafetz, Janet Saltzman. "Feminist theory and sociology: Underutilized contributions for mainstream theory." *Annual review of sociology* 23, no. 1 (1997): 97-120

Ferguson, Kathy E. "Feminist theory today." *Annual Review of Political Science* 20 (2017): 269-286.

Huber, Joan. "Lenski effects on sex stratification theory." *Sociological theory* 22, no. 2 (2004): 258-268.

Chafetz, Janet Saltzman. "The varieties of gender theory in sociology." In *Handbook of the sociology of gender*, pp. 3-23. Springer, Boston, MA, 2006.

Note: Another way to structure landscaping weeks is by dividing (Neo)Liberal, Radical/Care, Material, and Socialist Feminism. However, I have decided to focus on contemporary sociologists' and hooks's ways of feminist theory mapping.

February 9th Episode 2

Landscaping Feminism (II): Contemporary Feminist Theory

hooks, bell. *Feminist theory: From margin to center*. Pluto Press, 2000.

February 16th Episode 3

The Category Problem (I): Sex, Gender, and Trans

Garland-Thomson, Rosemarie. "Integrating disability, transforming feminist theory." *NWSA journal* (2002): 1-32.

Butler, Judith. 1993. *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*. New York: Routledge. p1-16.

Bettcher, Talia Mae and Ann Garry, 2009, *Transgender studies and feminism: Theory, politics, and gender realities* (special issue), *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*, 24 (3).

Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory" *Theatre Journal* 40(4): 1998, pp. 519-531.

Butler, Judith. 1999. *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. 10th Anniversary Edition. New York: Routledge. Chapter 1 and Conclusion

Davis, Heath Fogg. "Sex-classification policies as transgender discrimination: An intersectional critique." *Perspectives on Politics* 12, no. 1 (2014): 45-60.

February 23rd Episode 4

The Category Problem (II): Performance and the Hegemony of Hegemonic Femininity and Masculinity

Connell, Robert W., and James W. Messerschmidt. "Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept." *Gender & society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 829-859.

Yang, Yuchen. "What's hegemonic about hegemonic masculinity? Legitimation and beyond." *Sociological Theory* 38, no. 4 (2020): 318-333.

Laura Hamilton, Elizabeth A. Armstrong, J. Lotus Seeley, Elizabeth M. Armstrong. "Hegemonic Femininities and Intersectional Domination," *Sociological Theory*, 2019. Vol. 37(4): 315-341.

Workshop ONE: Narrowing down the Research Question and the Case—What is your research question, and why is it an important one? What is your empirical case, if you have one? Why is it a good case to answer your research question? Write as if you are writing an introduction without a paragraph that addresses your findings. This should be roughly 1.5 single-spaced pages and be submitted by 6pm on Tuesday (February 22nd) in preparation for the in-class workshop.

SEASON_2 FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGISTS

March 2nd Episode 1

Standpoint Theory, Realism, and Constructionism

Haraway, Donna. 1988. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective," *Feminist Studies* 14: 575-599.

Harding, Sandra. "Rethinking standpoint epistemology: What is 'strong objectivity?'" *The Centennial Review* 36.3 (1992): 437-470.

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

Sweet, Paige L. "The feminist question in realism." *Sociological Theory* 36, no. 3 (2018): 221-243.

Sweet, Paige L. "Who Knows? Reflexivity in Feminist Standpoint Theory and Bourdieu." *Gender & Society* 34, no. 6 (2020): 922-950.

Albert, Katelin, Jonah Stuart Brundage, Paige Sweet, and Frédéric Vandenberghe. "Towards a critical realist epistemology?" *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 50, no. 3 (2020): 357-372.

March 9th Episode 2

Politics and Ethics of Representation

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" *Feminist Review* 30(1), (1988): 61-88.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 2003. "Under western eyes" revisited: Feminist solidarity through anticapitalist struggles." *Signs* (2): 499-535.

Fauzia Husain. 2021. "Halal Dating, Purdah, and Postfeminism: What the Sexual Projects of Pakistani Women Can Tell Us About Agency." *Signs* 45(3).

March 23rd Episode 3

Black Feminist Thoughts

Collins, Patricia Hill. 1986. "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought," *Social Problems* 33 (6): 14-32.

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment*. Routledge, 2002. (Chapters 1, 2, 3, 8, and 11)

Workshop TWO: Engaging the Literature—Choose one journal article or a book that is the most important to your project and write 1 single-spaced memo about how your project builds upon, extends, or critiques this article theoretically and/or empirically. Submit this short memo by 6pm on Tuesday, March 22nd in preparation for the in-class workshop.

March 30th Episode 4

Multiracial Feminism and Intersectionality

Crenshaw, Kimberlé. 1991. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color" *Stanford Law Review* 43 (6): 1241-1299.

McCall, Leslie. "The complexity of intersectionality." *Signs: Journal of women in culture and society* 30.3 (2005): 1771-1800.

Choo, Hae Yeon and Myra Marx Ferree. 2010. "Practicing Intersectionality in Sociological Research: A Critical Analysis of Inclusions, Interactions and Institutions in the Study of Inequalities," *Sociological Theory* 28 (2): 129-149.

Alexander-Floyd, Nikol G. "Disappearing acts: Reclaiming intersectionality in the social sciences in a post-Black feminist era." *Feminist Formations* 24.1 (2012): 1-25.

SEASON_3 FEMINIST PRACTITIONERS

April 6th Episode 1

Demography

Nash, Jennifer C. *Birthing Black Mothers*. Duke University Press, 2021.

Dow, Dawn Marie. "Integrated motherhood: Beyond hegemonic ideologies of motherhood." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 78, no. 1 (2016): 180-196.

Littlejohn, Krystale E. *Just Get on the Pill: The Uneven Burden of Reproductive Politics*. Univ of California Press, 2021.

April 13th Episode 2

Economics

Goldin, Claudia. *Career and Family: Women's Century-Long Journey toward Equity*. Princeton University Press, 2021.

Rottenberg, Catherine. "Neoliberal feminism and the future of human capital." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 42, no. 2 (2017): 329-348.

Luke, Nancy. "Gender and Social Mobility." (2019). UN World Institute for Development Economics Research.

Workshop THREE: Finding a Model Article and Reverse Outlining —This exercise is for you to familiarize yourself with the structure of a journal article including its component, style, and length. Choose a model article from a journal, to which you would like to send your manuscript in the future, and bring an outline (write in detail what each paragraph is doing) of the article to class, taking note of the structure and the length of each section of the article. If your final paper is a different format—proposal, field statement, etc.—please consult the instructor for alternate suggestions.

April 20th Episode 3

Trans Theories

Meadow, Tey. *Trans kids: Being gendered in the twenty-first century*. University of California Press, 2018.

Mason, Karen Oppenheim. 1986. "The status of women: Conceptual and methodological issues in demographic studies." In *Sociological forum*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 284-300.

Carla A. Pfeffer, Purdue University, "Normative Resistance and Inventive Pragmatism: Negotiating Structure and Agency in Transgender Families," *Gender & Society* 26(4):574-602. 2012.

Laurel Westbrook and Kristen Schilt, "Doing Gender, Determining Gender: Transgender People, Gender Panics, and the Maintenance of the Sex/Gender/Sexuality System," *Gender & Society* 28(1):32-57. 2014.

April 27th Episode 4

Post-Colonial Theories

Moussawi, Ghassan. *Disruptive Situations: Fractal Orientalism and Queer Strategies in Beirut*, Temple University Press, 2021.

Kimberly Hoang, "Competing Technologies of Embodiment: Pan-Asian Modernity and Third World Dependency in Vietnam's Contemporary Sex Industry," *Gender & Society* 28(4):513-536. 2014.

EPILOGUE

May 4th Epilogue

Practicing Feminist Theorizing

Students will be grouped based on their specific research interest. Each student will read 2-3 drafts of their peers and write a comment/review memo (2 pages single spaced max).

Final Workshop: Moving Forward Together —This exercise is for you to familiarize yourself with the peer review process and to learn that developing your ideas and answering what this is a case of involves a collective endeavor. By 6pm Monday, please upload and share your reviews to your peers. In

class, we will have 1) group discussion; 2) writing time; and 3) one-on-one meeting with the instructor (5mins per student).

Note: Final papers are due at noon on May 10th

IMPORTANT MATTERS

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

The University of Wisconsin-Madison supports the right of all enrolled students to a full and equal educational opportunity. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Wisconsin State Statute (36.12), and UW-Madison policy (Faculty Document 1071) require that students with disabilities be reasonably accommodated in instruction and campus life. Reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities is a shared faculty and student responsibility. Students are expected to inform faculty [me] of their need for instructional accommodations by the end of the third week of the semester, or as soon as possible after a disability has been incurred or recognized. Faculty [I], will work either directly with the student [you] or in coordination with the McBurney Center to identify and provide reasonable instructional accommodations. Disability information, including instructional accommodations as part of a student's educational record, is confidential and protected under FERPA.

Respect

All are welcome in this course regardless of your age, sex, gender, race, national origin, disability, background, political affiliation, sexual orientation, or other identified or protected status. Class members are expected to respect others' backgrounds and to contribute to a healthy learning environment in all course activities. This course is based on respect; any willful disrespect of the beliefs, opinions, or actions of others will not be tolerated. We are all, including the teaching team, both learners and teachers in this class. Your ideas will be received with the utmost respect even when in conflict with others' opinions. We want you to feel comfortable in sharing your thoughts, comments, and questions, even if they turn out to be misconceptions. If you ever feel you are not being respected by anyone that is part of this class, please contact us via phone, email, letter, or in person. Furthermore, the policy of UW-Madison states: Diversity is a source of strength, creativity, and innovation for UW-Madison. We value the contributions of each person and respect the profound ways their identity, culture, background, experience, status, abilities, and opinion enrich the university community. We commit ourselves to the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, outreach, and diversity as inextricably linked goals. The University of Wisconsin-Madison fulfills its public mission by creating a welcoming and inclusive community for people from every background.

Academic Integrity

By virtue of enrollment, each student agrees to uphold the high academic standards of the University of Wisconsin-Madison; academic misconduct is behavior that negatively impacts the integrity of the institution. Cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, and helping others commit these previously listed acts are examples of misconduct which may result in disciplinary action. Examples of disciplinary action include, but is not limited to, failure on the assignment/course, written reprimand, disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion. For further information on these policies, students may consult this website: <https://www.students.wisc.edu/doso/academic-integrity/> as well as this website: <https://conduct.students.wisc.edu/academic-misconduct/#avoid>

Usage of Audio Recorded Lectures Statement

Lecture materials and recordings for Soc904 are protected intellectual property at UW-Madison. Students in this course may use the materials and recordings for their personal use related to participation in this class. Students may also take notes solely for their personal use. If a lecture is not already recorded, you are not authorized to record my lectures without my permission unless you are considered by the university to be a qualified student with a disability requiring accommodation. [Regent Policy Document 4-1] Students may not copy or have lecture materials and recordings outside of class, including posting on internet sites or selling to commercial entities. Students are also prohibited from providing or selling their personal notes to anyone else or being paid for taking notes by any person or commercial firm without the instructor's express written permission. Unauthorized use of these copyrighted lecture materials and recordings constitutes copyright infringement and may be addressed under the university's policies, UWS Chapters 14 and 17, governing student academic and nonacademic misconduct.

Support

If you are experiencing personal challenges that are affecting your participation and performance in this class, please seek assistance through the resources below. You may also approach me confidentially if you are comfortable, and I will seek to direct you to appropriate resources.

Mental and Physical Health & Safety

Mental Health: <https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/mental-health/>

Prevention: <https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/prevention/>

Violence Prevention & Survivor Services: <https://www.uhs.wisc.edu/vpss/>

Assistance

Dean of Students Office: <https://doso.students.wisc.edu/student-assistance/>

Office of Student Financial Aid: <https://financialaid.wisc.edu/types-ofaid/institutional-loans/>

Office of Child Care and Family Resources: <https://occfr.wisc.edu>

Hate & Bias

Hate & Bias Reporting Process: www.students.wisc.edu/repothate