

POL 330: Development of Feminist Thought
Spring 2014
MWF 10:55 am – 12:05 pm
Ryan Learning Center room 112

Dr. Linda Beail

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Office Hours: Monday 1-4 pm, Wednesday 1 – 3 pm, and by appointment

Re-vision -- the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction -- is for women more than a chapter in cultural history: it is an act of survival. Unless we can understand the assumptions in which we are drenched we cannot know ourselves.

--Adrienne Rich, "When we Dead Awaken"

Course overview: This course attempts to acquaint you with the variety and complexity of feminist theorizing in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. It introduces many of the key concepts of feminist theory, as well as the controversies that have arise within & surrounding feminism, and briefly examines the historical and cultural context of the feminist movement in the United States. As well, we will discuss the challenges and possibilities feminism poses for us in light of our Christian faith. As scholars, you will be asked to read and think critically about these issues from a variety of perspectives, and to sharpen you analytical abilities and rhetorical skills as you speak and write in response to them.

Student Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, you will be able to

- Define “feminism,” and explain its development as a theoretical & social movement in the United States from the 19th century to the present.
- Compare and contrast various types of feminist thought & action, understanding how they differ and interpreting how they would respond to a variety of social, political and economic gender issues.
- Assess the current state of gender relations and feminism as a social movement in the US, recognizing both historical progress and the problems that still remain for women to achieve full equality and human dignity.
- Apply feminist theory to a current text in popular culture, showing how ideas about femininity, masculinity and equality are produced and disseminated in everyday life.
- Use feminist thought to critique and propose change regarding some issue or institution in the local community.
- Articulate the connections between your Christian faith, personal experiences & values, and gender issues.
- Write and communicate more clearly, persuasively and insightfully.

Course policies:

1. **Academic Honesty** -- Cheating and plagiarism *absolutely* violate the ideals and mission of the university, and are grounds for *immediately failing the course* and disciplinary action by the dean. See <http://www.plagiarism.org/> for many excellent examples of plagiarism is, and how to keep from academic dishonesty in your writing and research.
2. **Academic Accommodation** – My main goal is to help you learn and engage with the material of this course, and I am happy to help meet unique learning needs when I am notified of them.

While all students are expected to meet the minimum academic standards for completion of this course as established by the instructor, students with disabilities may require academic accommodations. At Point Loma Nazarene University, students requesting academic accommodations must file documentation with the Disability Resource Center (DRC), located in the Bond Academic Center. Once the student files documentation, the Disability Resource Center will contact the student's instructors and provide written recommendations for reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the individual needs of the student. This policy assists the University in its commitment to full compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities (ADA) Act of 1990, and ADA Amendments Act of 2008, all of which prohibit discrimination against students with disabilities and guarantees all qualified students equal access to and benefits of PLNU programs and activities.

3. Citations and Inclusive Language – In political science, the most common form of citations is the "author-date" format from the Chicago Manual of Style. Please use this style in any work for this class. Examples can be found at:

http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html.

Because of the changing standards of English usage, language that refers appropriately to both men and women inclusively should be used whenever possible. Some simple guidelines include replacing "man" or "mankind" with "humanity," "humankind," "persons," or "people." "He," "him" and "his"--when not referring to an actual male person --should be avoided by alternate sentence constructions or replaced with "he or she," "him or her," or "hers or his." Gender specific terms may be replaced by their current alternatives: for example, "Congressman" has been correctly replaced by "Congressperson" or "member of Congress," etc.

4. Classroom behavior – While coming to this class will hopefully be an enjoyable experience, it is not like attending a movie, viewing a sporting event, or watching television; your respectful behavior and engaged attention is expected at all times. Class time is precious. It is our opportunity to interact, discuss, and create knowledge together. It is not a passive experience, but one that you should be ready to participate actively in.

In that spirit, here are some basic expectations for class time: Please be on time to class each day. Cell phones should be turned off during class time, and no electronic devices (including laptop computers, smart phones or iPads) may be used to surf the web, check email, text, network on Facebook/Twitter/Instagram etc., play games, or engage in other multi-tasking activities during class; this is disrespectful and distracting to your classmates and the instructor. Please do not leave the room (for a drink, to use the restroom, etc.) unless it is absolutely necessary; no one is allowed to leave the classroom for ANY reason whatsoever during exam periods. My expectation is that we will all strive to treat one another with respect, kindness and professionalism, which includes listening carefully and responding thoughtfully and with grace to the thoughts and opinions of our colleagues. These behaviors will lead to a more fruitful learning environment for all of us.

Course requirements: There are several requirements for the successful completion of this course. The most important is your regular, punctual, and prepared attendance & participation in class activities. As an upper-division theory seminar, the main work of this course is to read and analyze feminist thought together. This course depends primarily upon the quality of your reading, thinking and discussion for its success. Much of what you learn will be as a result of your interaction with your peers; thus it is in your own best interest to come to class well-prepared each day. As an added incentive, class attendance and participation (including quality and quantity of contribution to class discussions, and occasional written analyses of reading assignments or guest speakers) will be worth 10% of your final grade. You may miss only two

class meetings without any penalty during the semester (this includes for personal reasons or illness); after two absences, you will lose 2 points per absence from your FINAL course grade.

Other course requirements include three essay exams (two midterms and a final) that together will be worth 60% of your grade; participation in a group feminist activism project (10%); and a final research project, a feminist analysis of either a current policy issue or artifact of popular culture (20%). Exam and due dates are noted on the syllabus; the group activism project must be completed by **Wednesday April 16**. Please make special arrangements with the instructor ahead of time if you have a problem completing any of the requirements at the scheduled time, as any late papers will lose one letter grade (10% of the assignment's worth) for each calendar day it is late.

Course requirements include:

Midterm exam one	20%
Midterm exam two	20%
Final exam	20%
Policy or Popular Culture Analysis	20%
Group activism project	10%
Attendance & participation	10%

Grading Scale:

A	93-100%	C	73-76%
A-	90-92%	C-	70-72%
B+	87-89%	D+	67-69%
B	83-86%	D	63-66%
B-	80-82%	D-	60-62%
C+	77-79%	F	0-59%

Texts:

Diana Tietjens Meyers, ed. *Feminist Social Thought: A Reader*. Routledge, 1997.
Deborah Siegel, *Sisterhood Interrupted: From Radical Women to Grrls Gone Wild*. Palgrave, 2007.
Sarah Bessey, *Jesus Feminist*. Howard Books, 2013.
Kathryn Stockett, *The Help*. Berkley, 2011 (paperback edition).
Ayad Akhtar, *The Who and The What*, world premiere at La Jolla Playhouse February 11-March 9.
Other articles as assigned (posted on course Eclass site).

Course Schedule (subject to revision and addition of timely articles by the instructor):

I. DEFINING FEMINISM: ISSUES AND STRATEGIES

Tuesday January 14: Introduction: What is feminism?

Wednesday January 15: Why feminism?

Deborah Siegel, Introduction, *Sisterhood Interrupted*

Amy Yao, "Myth of Effortless Perfection" at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/amy-yao/college-women-pressure_b_2898446.html

Watch Sheryl WuDunn, "Our Century's Greatest Injustice" at

http://www.ted.com/talks/sheryl_wudunn_our_century_s_greatest_injustice.html

Friday January 17: Thinking about gender -- The Mismeasure of Woman

Carol Tavis, *The Mismeasure of Woman* (excerpt)

Watch Sheryl Sandberg, "Why We Have Too Few Women Leaders," at

http://www.ted.com/talks/sheryl_sandberg_why_we_have_too_few_women_leaders.html

Hanna Rosin, Ted talk on "The Rise of Women (and the end of men)" at

http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/hanna_rosin_new_data_on_the_rise_of_women.html

Monday January 20: Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday – no class

II. HISTORY OF AMERICAN FEMINISM: SOCIAL MOVEMENT AND THEORY

Wednesday January 22: Feminist roots in the enlightenment

Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (excerpts)

Mill, *The Subjection of Women* (excerpts)

Friday January 24: The "First Wave" of American feminism

Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls Convention, 1848"

Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I A Woman?" and "Keeping Things Going"

Watch excerpt of documentary *Not For Ourselves Alone*

Monday January 27: Between the "waves": midcentury gender roles

Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open*, pp. 8-36

Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Introduction)

Watch "Makers: Women Who Made America" (part one) at <http://www.makers.com/documentary/>

Wednesday January 29: Arising From the New Left: Marxist/Socialist Feminism

Siegel chapter 1 (pp. 21-34)

Hayden and King, "A Kind of Memo"

Nancy Hartsock, Meyers ch. 25

Friday January 31: The Sexual Revolution

Siegel chapter 1 (pp. 35-46) and chapter 2

Watch "Makers: Women Who Made America" (part two) at <http://www.makers.com/documentary/>

Monday February 3: Radical Feminist Theorizing

Catharine MacKinnon, "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State" in Meyers ch. 4

Wednesday February 5: Separatism

Radicalesbians, "The Woman Identified Woman" (excerpt)

Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality" (excerpt)

Marilyn Frye, "Some Reflections on Separatism and Power," in Meyers ch. 22

Friday February 7: Sexuality and Violence

"Eve Ensler Wants to Save the World"

Until the Violence Stops, V-Day documentary

Monday February 10: Another Current in the Second Wave: Liberal Feminism

Siegel chapter 3

Rebecca Traister review of *A Strange Stirring* or chapter one of *The Feminine Mystique*

Wednesday February 12: Liberalism and Equality Dilemmas

Wendy Williams, "The Equality Crisis," Meyers ch. 36

Friday February 14: MIDTERM EXAM ONE

III. ESSENTIALISM: IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY

Monday February 17: Inclusion or exclusion? Women of Color in the Second Wave

This Bridge Called My Back (excerpts)

Ruth Rosen, *The World Split Open*, pp. 276-291

Wednesday February 19: Problematizing Essentialism

Spelman, "Woman: the One and the Many," Meyers ch. 9

Deborah King, "Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness" in Meyers ch. 12

Thursday February 20: *The Who and the What*, La Jolla Playhouse, 8 pm

Friday February 21: Sisterhood and Solidarity

bell hooks, Meyers ch. 26

(You can also watch a talk by hooks on "Ending Domination" at

<http://www.beyondwhiteness.com/2012/02/22/bell-hooks-ending-domination/> -- highly recommended to get a better understanding of her voice, tone and style)

IV. "DIFFERENCE FEMINISM," PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY, AND AN ETHIC OF CARE

Monday February 24: Psychological Construction of Gender Identity

Nancy Chodorow, "Gender, Relation and Difference in Psychoanalytic Perspective," Meyers ch.1

Iris Marion Young, "Is Male Gender Identity the Cause of Male Domination?" Meyers ch. 2

Wednesday February 26: A Different Voice

Carol Gilligan, Meyers ch. 29

Friday February 28: Critique of "Care" as basis of feminine identity and action

Claudia Card, "Gender and Moral Luck," Meyers ch. 33

Michele Moody-Adams, "Gender and the Complexity of Moral Voices," Meyers ch. 35

****Group Activism Project Ideas Due to Dr. Beail Today****

Monday March 3: Maternal Thinking

Sara Ruddick, Meyers ch. 30

V. MOTHERHOOD AS A SITE OF FEMINIST THEORY AND POLICY

Wednesday March 5: Reproductive Choice

Virginia Mollenkott, "Reproductive Rights: Basic to Justice for Women," *The Christian Scholar Review*

Susan Bordo, "Are Mothers Persons?," *Unbearable Weight*

Friday March 7: Praxis of Motherhood

Ann Crittenden, *The Price of Motherhood*, Introduction

Linda Hirschmann, "Homeward Bound," *American Prospect* 11/21/05 at

<http://prospect.org/article/homeward-bound-0>

March 10-14: SPRING BREAK, no class meetings

VI. THEORY FOR ACTION: POSTMODERN POLITICAL POSSIBILITIES

Monday March 17: Feminism, Humanism, Cyborgs

Donna Haraway, Meyers ch. 27

Wednesday March 19: Postcolonialism

Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes"

Alison Murray, "Debt-Bondage and Trafficking: Don't Believe the Hype" (both from *Feminist Postcolonial Theory*, ed. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills)

Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

Friday March 21 – Monday March 24: Postmodern Critiques and Possibilities

Judith Butler, "Gender Trouble," Meyers ch. 6

Fraser and Nicholson, "Social Criticism Without Philosophy," Meyers ch. 7

Wednesday March 26: MIDTERM EXAM TWO

VII. FAITH AND FEMINISM

Friday March 28: Christianity, Feminism, and Feminist Theology

Sarah Bessey, *Jesus Feminist* Introduction, chapters 1-4

****Required:** Watch short video of either Virginia Ramey Mollenkott (Feminist Theology II panel) or Roberta Hestenes (panel I) at the Harvard Women's Studies in Religion Program Conference, "Religion and the Feminist Movement," located on the web at

http://www.hds.harvard.edu/wsrp/scholarship/rfmc/rfm_video.htm, and write short response by class time on Wednesday April 2

Monday March 31: Feminism in Christian Life

Bessey Ch. 5-7

Excerpt from Rachel Held Evans, *A Year of Biblical Womanhood*

Wednesday April 2: Women's Experiences in the Church

Bessey ch. 8-12

Friday April 4: Feminist Activism Project Group Work Day

Monday April 7: Gender, Feminism and Popular Culture – Analyzing *The Help*

Kathryn Stockett, *The Help* chapters 1-12 (pp.1-165)

Wednesday April 9

Kathryn Stockett, *The Help* chapters 13-26 (pp.166-341)

[I encourage you to go hear Dr. Paul Farmer in Brown Chapel this evening!! You will be glad you did!]

Friday April 11

Kathryn Stockett, *The Help* chapters 27-34 and “Too Little, Too Late” afterword (pp.342-451)
Responses to *The Help* from the Association of Black Women Historians and other critics (links)

Monday April 14: Feminism in Popular Culture

Peggy Orenstein, “What’s Wrong With Cinderella?” at
<http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/24/magazine/24princess.t.html?pagewanted=all>

Wednesday April 16: Feminism in Popular Culture

Readings from Angela McRobbie, Rosalind Gill & Christina Scharff
****Group Feminist Activism Project must be completed by this date****

Friday April 18 – Monday April 21: EASTER BREAK, no classes**Wednesday April 23: Postfeminism?**

Siegel chapter 4
Watch “Makers: Women Who Made America” (part three) at <http://www.makers.com/documentary/>

Friday April 25: Third Wave Feminism

Siegel chapter 5
To Be Real and *Listen Up* (excerpts)

Monday April 28: From Madonna to Miley & Beyonce: Sexuality and Feminist Empowerment

Princeton Report on Undergraduate Women’s Leadership (2011)
Links to current articles about feminist responses to Miley and Beyonce online

Wednesday April 30: Feminism Full Circle: Women at Home?

Beth Ann Pentney, “Feminism, Activism and Knitting” at
<http://zwanzigtausendfrauen.at/2011/04/feminism-activism-and-knitting-are-the-fibre-arts-a-viable-mode-for-feminist-political-action/?lang=en>
Rachel Wilkerson, “Feminism and the New Domesticity” at
<http://apracticalwedding.com/2013/07/feminism-and-the-new-domesticity/#more-72588>

Friday May 2: Where Is Feminism? Where is it Headed?

Deborah Siegel, *Sisterhood Interrupted*, conclusion
****POLICY ISSUE OR POPULAR CULTURE FEMINIST ANALYSIS DUE AT START OF CLASS**

*****FINAL EXAM 10:30 am-1 pm, Wednesday May 7, 2014*****