

Sociology of Gender Syllabus

WMST / SOCY 325.0301

Spring 2009

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Office Hours: *after class or by appointment*

MWF 12am – 12:50am; ASY 2309

“What matters is not to know the world but to change it.”

~ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin White Masks*

“Life in this society being, at best, an utter bore and no aspect of society being at all relevant to women, there remains to civic-minded, responsible, thrill-seeking females only to overthrow the government, eliminate the money system, institute complete automation and destroy the male sex.”

~ Valerie Solanas, *SCUM Manifesto*

“In women, courage is often mistaken for insanity.”

~ In *Iron Jawed Angels*

I. Course Description

This course is a survey of the sociology of gender through an interdisciplinary feminist perspective, with a specific emphasis on a critical analysis of our own assumptions as well as those of the theorists we read. We will explore patriarchy both as a *social construction* and as a *structural system of power and inequality* that intersects with other systems of power and inequality, such as race, class, sexuality, nationality, and so on. We will read feminist theorists and researchers, analyze their theoretical arguments and implications, and discuss how they converge into and differ from each other. The best feminist research is interdisciplinary, and I would encourage you to develop intellectual relationships with scholars and scholarship in diverse fields.

II. Required Readings

- **[FTR]** Carole McCann and Seung Kyung Kim (2003). *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. New York: Routledge. ISBN: 0415931533
- **[Lorde]** Audre Lorde (1984). *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. The Crossing Press. ISBN: 0895941414
- **[PS]** Carol Queen and Lawrence Schimel (eds) (1997). *Pomosexuals: Challenging Assumptions about Gender and Sexuality*. San Francisco: Cleis Press Inc. ISBN: 1573440744
- **[BB]** Additional articles will be posted on Blackboard as PDF files under “Course Materials.” Blackboard is accessible via <http://www.elms.umd.edu>

III Overview of Format and Procedures

I will use a blog for you to input your weekly discussion questions (and, optionally, comments etc). It is hosted on the Blackboard. The link to the blog is on the left frame when you log on to the Blackboard (see item VIII for instructions). It may be indexed by search engines such as Google or Yahoo (i.e. your work may be publicly visible). We will use the Blackboard (<http://www.elms.umd.edu>) also as our repository of some required readings. If you cannot access any of these during any part of the semester, please contact me immediately.

In class, we will mostly have discussions that focus on our readings and personal insights (“personal is political”). I may at times have to lecture *briefly* on theoretical materials and basic concepts. However, you should be ready to participate in class discussions on a daily basis by not only keeping up with and understanding the readings, but also by maintaining a critical eye on both what you are reading and what you are thinking as you read it. We have a heavy load of readings, so please plan ahead.

Questions and personal insights about the materials are always more than welcome. I see personal anecdotes, insights, and everyday experiences as much part of sociology, if not more, as the sociological grand theories :)

I do not expect that we will share the same views on most of the topics we cover. I want you to share your views, especially when they do not agree with my views, the readings, and / or your classmates' perspectives. The range of views people hold will make this class much more interesting, as long as everyone is allowed to express their views and feelings. I expect everyone in the class to respect each other's point of view.

Because discussion is an integral part of this course, I want to ensure that the classroom is a “safe place” for frank and open discourse. Although we will have different viewpoints on many of the readings, I expect all of us to treat one another with respect. Because we will also come to the class with different levels of experiences (both real-world and academic), we should be attentive to maintaining openings in discussion for everyone. Asking questions and allowing for critical analytical perspectives should be a top priority – often questions that appear most simple may end up being the most difficult to grapple with (and therefore, the most productive).

IV Course Attendance

I will be taking attendance *randomly*. Your overall attendance will be rewarded as follows: zero absences = +10, one absence = +7, two absences = +4, three or more absences = +0. Pre-approved excused absences are allowed (i.e. your own or your child's sickness, job interview, religious holiday, travel for an official university event, and major family priorities such as a funeral – you must be able to furnish proof about the reason of your absence). *Students with five or more unexcused absences will be penalized one full final letter grade at the end of the semester* (e.g. a “B-” will become a “C-”).

V Class Requirements and Grading

<i>Pop Quizzes (10%)</i>	50 (in total)
<i>Midterm & Final (20% each)</i>	100 (each)
<i>Class Participation (20%)</i>	100
<i>Class Presentation / Discussion Leading (30%)</i>	150
Total	500

Final Letter Grades

A 460-500 points (92%)	C 360-389 points (72%)
A- 450-459 points (90%)	C- 350-359 points (70%)
B+ 440-449 points (88%)	D+ 340-349 points (68%)
B 410-439 points (82%)	D 300-339 points (60%)
B- 400-409 points (80%)	F 299 points or lower
C+ 390-399 points (78%)	

a. Midterm & Final: Each midterm will be open-book (so, bring your notes and books with you to class), and will consist of one or two *short* essay questions where your answers are *expected to be very well structured, concise, and to the point*. A week prior to the exams, you may be asked to come up with a pool of questions during class or via email from which I will choose the midterm questions. See the class schedule (item #XI) for the midterm & final date.

b. Class Presentation & Discussion Leading: Feminism is very much about cooperation and circumvention of authority, including mine as the instructor. *Each of you* will take charge of leading discussion of the course materials for one class session during the semester, either alone or with other students. Sign up for a day of your choice through the Blackboard (at most 3 students per day may present). I will not check if everyone signed up for discussion leading. I expect everyone to have signed up for a day of their choice by the end of Week 3. If you drop the course, *take your name off the blackboard list before dropping the course*.

Organizing the class discussion involves presenting a short (5 to 10 minutes) orientation / summary of the required reading(s) for the week, raising specific questions and issues that will encourage discussion, and relating the material to previous readings and class discussions. Be as creative as you can / want during this time.

Your role as discussion leader will not be in “lecturing” on the material (unless you want to), but more in facilitating a thoughtful and active discussion of these materials in any way you can. The discussion should not only ensure that your classmates will leave that class with a full understanding of the readings, but also insist that they approach the readings from a critical perspective. Joint discussion leaders should meet well in advance of the class session to plan their duties for the session. You should bring to class a list of at least five main questions (some or all of which may include discussion questions sent by your classmates) that you plan to address. Present your summary first, then your discussion questions. Do not “mix them up.”

You are welcome to assign your own readings to the class as long as you let me know

two weeks beforehand to provide you with confirmation / permission.

I will provide the form I use to evaluate your performance later on via Blackboard.

c. Class Participation & Discussion Questions: As mentioned above, class participation is a crucial part of this course. Not only part of your participation evaluation depends on how well that week's leaders perform as discussion facilitators, but also part of *their* grade depends on how much and how well *you* participate in the discussion they lead. Therefore, it is crucial for you to come to class well prepared. Additionally, though I like and expect lively, and at times of heated discussions, you are expected to be respectful to your classmates. Disagreements that take the form of personal attacks will not be tolerated.

Furthermore, at least one day before each class, you have to input one discussion question about the readings we have for that class to our discussion blog in Blackboard so that if they would like to, discussion leaders can utilize your input. As you input these questions, you are also more than welcome to provide feedback, comments, or further questions as "comments" or as new "blog entries". I will combine your in-class and web-based participation to come up with an overall "class participation" grade.

d. Pop Quizzes: We may or may not have quizzes, depending on whether I feel that you come to class prepared. Quiz questions may inquire not only about the information and major arguments presented in the readings, but also tap into what implications these readings have or how we can approach them critically. The format of these quizzes will be very much like that of the midterms. Quizzes will be either in essay format (in which case they will be open-book) or in multiple choice format (in which case they will be closed-book).

e. Make-ups: *There will be no make-up exams or assignments, unless you were sick or injured (in which case, you will have to provide me with a doctor's note when you return for class), or unless there was a religious observance that day (you have to notify me by writing of any religious observances within the first two weeks of the beginning of the semester).*

VI Accommodations for students with disabilities:

I will make every effort to accommodate students who are registered with the Disability Support Services (DSS) Office and who provide me with a University of Maryland DSS Accommodation form which has been updated for the Spring 2009 semester. I may not be able to accommodate students who are not registered with DSS or who do not provide me with documentation.

VII Computer Requirements

You will need an email account that is registered under the University of Maryland Directory for this class. You are responsible for checking it regularly. You will also need regular access to a computer with internet access in order to communicate with your classmates, add your input to our blog, and use the Blackboard. If your UMD email address is not the email address you use, you should set it up so that it forwards any email sent to that account to the one you do check regularly.

VIII Using the Blog for Discussion Questions etc.

Go to the Blackboard through <http://www.elms.umd.edu/>, log on, and browse to our course

module. Click on the link on the left frame titled “*Click To Add / Read Weekly Discussion Questions.*” Take a look at the page and what your friends wrote so far. To add your question / comments, click the “New Entry” button on the top right of the page. In the resulting editable form box, input your discussion question, giving some reference to which reading(s) your question refers to. Leave the “Blog Entry Title” section as it is or change to your liking. Click “Save.” If you would like to add comments to your classmates' questions, click the “Comment” link right under the relevant question, input your comment in the editable box that appears after you clicked the link, and click “Add Comment.” *Email / see me if you are having any trouble editing the page.*

IX Getting Assistance

Do not hesitate to let me know whenever you have any problems, comments, or feedback regarding readings, your work, the course, or any other issues. My office hours are TBA, but I prefer to be initially contacted via email at mehmetaergun@gmail.com. Assume that I did not get your email unless I replied. *Please prefix the subject line of your email with the following string: [wmst325]*

If the topic you need to discuss is very personal, do *not* email me and instead, see me after class (email is not a very secure way of communication) or ask for an appointment.

You can also get assistance from your classmates by emailing to the class list socy325@umd.edu . This email address will be functional after the add-drop period ends.

X Academic Honesty

Students are prohibited from cheating on exams, plagiarizing papers, submitting fraudulent documents, fabricating information on assignments and forging signatures on behalf of other students, as well as anything else that falls within the purview of the Code of Academic Integrity and the Student Code of Conduct. Any violation of these codes may be referred to the Office of Judicial Programs.

XI Course Schedule **(may change to accommodate guest speakers or student needs)**

Date	Assignment
Week 1	
1/26	Syllabus Overview
1/28	FTR : Introduction, pp. 12 – 23
1/30	Lorde Introduction (5p)
Week 2	
2/2	FTR Ch2: Beauvoir, Introduction to <i>Second Sex</i> (9p)
2/4	FTR Ch5: bell hooks, Feminism ... (7p)
	Lorde Sexism: An American Disease in Blackface (6p)
2/6	FTR Ch30: Narayan, The Project of Feminist Epistemology (10p)
Week 3	
2/9	Lorde The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle The Master's House (4p)
	FTR Ch16: Rushin, The Bridge Poem (2p)
2/11	FTR : Ch31: Collins, Politics of Black Feminist Thought (10p)
2/13	Lorde Scratching the Surface: Some Notes on Barriers to Women and Loving (8p)
Week 4	
2/16	FTR Ch15: Collective, A Black Feminist Statement (8p)
2/18	FTR Ch32: Calhoun, Separating Lesbian Theory from Feminist Theory (19p)
2/20	[cont'd] FTR Ch32: Calhoun, Separating Lesbian Theory from Feminist Theory (19p)
Week 5	
2/23	Lorde The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism (10p)
2/25	Lorde Eye to Eye: Black Women, Hatred, and Anger (30p)
2/27	FTR : Ch18: Anzaldua, La Conciencia de la Mestiza (9p)
Week 6	
3/2	Lorde Grenada Revisited: An Interim Report (14p)
3/4	FTR Ch20: Dutt, Some Reflections on US Women of Color (7p)
	FTR Ch21: Hartmann, Marxism and Feminism (16p)
3/6	[cont'd] FTR Ch21: Hartmann, Marxism and Feminism (16p)
	FTR Ch23: Molyneux, Mobilization (9p)
Week 7	
3/9	FTR Ch14: Wartime Sexual Violence against Women (7p)
3/11	BB Sideris (2003) War, gender and culture (11p)
3/13	BB Wood (2004) Sexual violence during war (24p)

3/16 – 3/20: Have a great Spring Break!

Week 8

- 3/23 ---->>>> **MIDTERM** <<<<-----
- 3/25 **Lorde** The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action (5p)
- 3/27 **BB** Pauwels (2003) Linguistic sexism and feminist linguistic activism (20p)

Week 9

- 3/30 **FTR** Ch35: Scott, Deconstructing Equality-Versus-Difference (13p)
- 4/1 **BB** Hall (1995) Lip service on the fantasy lines (30p)
- 4/3 **BB** Cameron (1997) Performing gender identity (17p)

Week 10

- 4/6 **FTR** Ch24: Koedt, Myth of Vaginal Orgasm (7p)
- 4/8 **BB** MacKinnon (1989) Pleasure under patriarchy
- 4/10 **Lorde** Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power (7p)

Week 11

- 4/13 **BB** Kristeva: Women's Time (19p)
- 4/15 **FTR** Ch25: Wittig, One is not born a woman (6p)
- 4/17 **BB** Irigaray: This sex which is not one (10p)
- [optional] **BB** Cixous: The Laugh of the Medusa (19p)

Week 12 **BB** Butler (1999) "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire" (in *Gender Trouble*)

- 4/20 Butler, sections 1, 2, and 3 (15p)
- 4/22 Butler, sections 4 and 5 (15p)
- 4/24 Butler, section 6 (15p)

Week 13

- 4/27 **PS** Scott: Le Freak (7p)
- 4/29 **PS** Antoniou: Antivenom for the Soul (8p)
- PS** Nagle: Stroking my inner fag (5p)
- 5/1 **PS** Vassi: Beyond bisexuality (6p)
- PS** Allison: Her body, mine, and his (6p)

Week 14

- 5/4 **PS** Queen: Beyond the valley of the fag hags (9p)
- 5/6 **PS** Califia: Identity sedition and pornography (20p)
- 5/8 **PS** Wilchins: Lines in sand, cries of desire (12p)

Week 15

- 5/11 **No Class**
- [optional] **PS** Queen and Schimel, Introduction (7p)
- [optional] **PS** Bornstein, Preface (6p)

Final **May 19th at 8-10am**

Have a Great Summer! :)