

## Tackling History in the Cultural Studies Seminar

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### **ABSTRACT**

While cultural theory developed in past eras was often marred by the biases of its privileged authors, we are still often required to teach the canon, so that graduate students can recognize past intellectual trends to which current critiques of the canon respond. In this article, a “History of Feminist Theory” course is employed as an example of larger principles of foundations course design that can be used in any cultural studies seminar to productively address the tension between old and new schools of thought. It provides suggestions for structuring syllabi and discussions in ways that productively engage with earlier texts, yet without reinforcing their canonicity. The author suggests that viewing “classics” through a comparative and predominantly historical lens can allow teachers to address current cultural issues such as the #MeToo and Black Lives Matter movements via the use of older texts, constructively balancing the need to identify their oversights with the need to learn the history of a particular field. Students usually wish to analyze the popular culture of the present, sometimes resenting being obliged to take historical/foundational courses. However, these are courses we are often required to teach. The tension between obligations and interests can either derail a grad seminar or be harnessed constructively to help students critique the cultural studies canon *more effectively*.

**Keywords:** History, Foundations, Theory, Pedagogy, Canon, Classics

My first brush with cultural studies was via feminism from a coffee-stained, twenty-year-old copy of *Sisterhood is Powerful* (Morgan, 1970) I found at a garage sale and subsequently devoured over the summer break between high school and college. From that moment I was hooked, and despite my doctoral training in Women's Studies, I've continued to approach cultural theory as more of a dumpster-dive rather than an orderly perusal of book stacks: reading out of date and out of context literature both within and without the orthodoxies of the canon, shifting between the popular and the academic angle, always attempting to understand the merits of an abstract argument, and only then, its place in intellectual and cultural history. Setting analyses with wildly different tones, audiences, generations, and genres into dialogue with each other always seemed far more interesting to me than the standard recitation of theoretical taxonomies in a graduate educational environment (which may, after living long enough to have one's *own* heyday of activism and theorizing taught as history, seem much tidier than one can recall). Drawn as I am to the anti-orthodoxy impulses of a *Bad Feminist* (Gay, 2014), my tastes are probably too eclectic and contrarian to have me left in charge of an introductory course on the Foundations of Feminist Thought. Yet, I've managed to teach this graduate seminar at a large public university with a thriving School of Cultural and Critical Studies for many years.

Our two-course sequence (Foundations and Contemporary) is chronologically split, with the foundations course surveying the years 1780-1990. The course mandate is to prepare students for the contemporary theory course by exposing them to classic texts. My students hail from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds, ranging from doctoral students well-versed in feminist theory to those taking their first cultural studies course ever. A chronologically and taxonomically complete survey course can feel like an impossible mission, but the organizational and pedagogical strategies described below include suggestions for handling the tension between both recognizing and resisting past canonization. While theory developed in past eras was often marred by the bias of its privileged authors, we are still often required to teach the canon, so that graduate students can recognize past intellectual trends to which current critiques of the canon respond. This article uses a "History of Feminist Theory" course as an example of larger principles of foundations course design that can be used in any cultural studies seminar to engage productively with older texts.

### **PREMISE OF THE COURSE: BOTH/AND**

Ann Snitow has argued that the central dynamic of feminism has been "oscillation" (1990, p. 9). She describes the history of feminist thought not in the traditional terms of chronological progress, but as a recurring struggle between different groups of feminists with often conflicting priorities, life experiences, and world views in each progressive era. Hence, we have oscillated between using the feminist identity as a rallying device and deconstructing it, and between prioritizing short-term strategies of survival and support in the world as it exists today and long-term work on changing cultural norms to create the world we wish to see – we oscillate in these ways, not only because we're positioned differently in relationship to power, and not only because we've lived in different cultures and eras where some strategies have been more effective than others, but also because we've been given an impossible task. Our response to any form of subordination will inevitably involve multiple logics and strategies because differences between groups are both elided (through the universalization of the dominant group) and exaggerated (through the justification of the unequal treatment of the subordinated).

Oscillation serves as both the conceptual premise and the organizational structure of my course. Because historical context is crucial to understanding theory, and because the mandate for the foundations course (at least at my university) is to cover a specific historical period, a chronological organization is required. On the surface, my syllabus might even look fairly canonical, as it covers the requisite first and second "waves" of feminist history. But an approach emphasizing oscillation is embedded within the model,

shifting the course into *a history of canonization itself*. This both/and approach (acknowledging the history of the canon while deconstructing it) reflects both the need to mentor graduate students with regards to the history of Women's Studies and to help create the means for its canon to be rewritten. Vivian May (2015) has analyzed the growing prominence of intersectionality within Women's Studies and the many ways in which its radical potential has been restricted through misappropriation of the concept. The heightened social power of more privileged feminists is reflected in their ability to define disciplinary norms, and therefore, "Attention to lack of fit, and what it might signify, is pivotal to intersectionality's capacity to change the role erasure plays in perpetuating dominance" (2015, p. 144). As May notes, the attempt to adopt a more intersectional perspective that is merely additive rather than revisional leaves the exclusions of the canon intact, as when early feminist history is framed through the gender-only lens of white feminists, with the contributions of women of color reserved for the contemporary period (p. 146). While my course does cover the time periods canonized as the first and second waves, I try to resist their further canonization through various means: assigning readings that analyze bias in the canon and the lack of fit with the experiences of poor women and women of color; using an intersectional approach to analyze all eras and groups, whether these groups have been socially dominant or subordinate; framing all forms of conceptualization as theory, regardless of aesthetics, genre, or medium, or whether it has been recognized as theory by the canon; covering feminist theorizing in all eras within the time frame under study, including those commonly ignored due to their having been perceived as periods of "abeyance" (Taylor & Rupp, 1987); and emphasizing the diversity of perspectives in each era, including differing feminist social identities, aesthetics and political strategies.

Diversifying the narrative in this way helps undermine the canon by demonstrating its foundation in social bias and highlighting the crucial contributions of feminists struggling for racial and economic justice in every era of the earlier period, even though these were often written out of the feminist canon because of the gender-dominant focus of its gatekeepers. The failure of many past feminisms to address forms of inequality beyond those related to sexism has been central to the distortions of the canon, and the fact that similar debates recur repeatedly within each feminism era can be partly explained by the intractability of privilege. But these debates also recur because privilege, while difficult to dismantle, is always changing. The difficulty of "engagement with social and cultural formations" (De Lauretis, 1990, p. 264) is that they continually adapt to the challenges mounted by activists, developing new rhetorical, often contradictory claims in every era: embracing, combining, and rejecting various essentialist and constructionist claims to justify different forms of oppression; it is this that makes the linearity of the canonical narrative most problematic.

If it were true that early feminism only focused on gender, or that it failed, wholly due to its own flaws, then it would make sense to dispense with the canon. But if we approach the question of what broadly counts as feminism, which seems necessary when studying different historical periods (Offen, 2010, p. 16), we find that the field of struggle was much richer than the narrow, gender-dominant feminism of the canon would suggest. In fact, the oscillation that Snitow traces involves wholly contradictory conceptualizations of the project of feminism within each era from those who focus on the ontological "Woman," to those who focus on the sociological "women" (and the diversity of subject positions and differing experiences within this category), to those who see no benefit to organizing such conceptualizations under the rubric of gender at all (1990, p. 33). If we approach this varied early work sympathetically, trying to understand how it has responded to the specific social and cultural formations of its era, we can better understand why different feminists conceptualized and strategized so differently. This is not to suspend judgment, however, but to render our evaluation of feminist history more effective. If feminist history has not progressed in a directly linear path, then the purpose of revisiting the canon cannot be merely to determine where its unintended gaps and forcible exclusions lie. More importantly, it can also be used to consider a variety of strategies through which feminism can simultaneously employ and deconstruct the subject positions culturally assigned to us,

perhaps learning how our own current responses are time- and culture-bound, and how to respond more flexibly to the inequities of our own current moment without harming some people for the advancement of others.

### **SCOPE OF THE COURSE: THEORY/THOUGHT**

This approach is embedded in the organization of the course and the approaches used in class to confound our understanding of what feminism has meant in each era. We start the semester with Snitow's piece on oscillation (1990) and several other readings that provide a framework for the course that highlights the differing relationship of white women and women of color to patriarchal power (Hurtado, 1988; McIntosh, 1989) while theorizing about the conditions under which potential feminist alliances can occur (Jordan, 1985). These foreshadow our semester-long project of placing activists, theorists, poets, autobiographers and polemicists in dialogue, without presuming an automatic overlap or difference between social groups, and actively demonstrating (rather than merely stating) how marginalized viewpoints don't merely add new knowledge but generate reinterpretations of methods, theories, and knowledges embedded in the canon as well. I also start with these readings because of the accessibility of their language, the precision of their arguments, their varying degrees of objective and subjective voice, and the striking nature of their imagery. Hence, they provide a good introduction to the basics of feminist thought which, for many feminist classrooms, might not be deemed necessary. Given the introductory and cross-disciplinary nature of the foundations course, however, I find that basic concepts like privilege, standpoint, and intersectionality need to be explicitly taught rather than presumed.

Such readings also introduce a recurring theme of the course that is explored in the second week of class: the canonization of some forms of writing as theory – usually those requiring the most cultural and economic capital – and how the ephemerality of other forms means that the primary sources available to historians reproduce social inequality. It's one thing to simply state that early feminist writing was biased in this way, but it's far more compelling to demonstrate this by comparing differing accounts of well-known feminist political events from American vs. European upper-middle-class vs. working-class perspectives (Cott, 1990; Hewitt, 2010), or when analyzing a transcription of Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" speech (1851), to identify how less-privileged women's voices were filtered through the distorting literary conventions employed by elites. This second week raises key issues that will frame the course (and are revisited at the end), such as historiography and the very definition of feminism. For example, we read Karen Offen's "Was Mary Wollstonecraft a Feminist?" (2010) not to learn about Wollstonecraft per se but to raise the issue of how history is told, and how feminism is implicitly defined by the canon. Comparing Offen's fairly broad cross-cultural and cross-historical definition of feminism with that of Penny Weiss (2018, p. 3) allows us to debate the definition of feminism and whether such a definition should prioritize gender inequality over other forms of oppression, and if not, whether feminism is needed at all.

Given the wide historical scope of the course, the challenge lies in the need to provide students with enough historical and theoretical background to enable them to understand the weekly readings while keeping the workload manageable. I use some secondary sources (Tong, 2013) for a theoretical framework for the individual readings, and Giddings (1996) and Offen (2010) for historical background, but rely on lectures to provide most of the context, so that the bulk of students' reading is of primary sources. Finding primary materials from activists in the pre-internet era covered by the course can be challenging, especially for feminist groups outside of North America and Europe. The course is located in the nexus between an era so remote it has been well-colonized as "history" and the internet era, where the digitization of archives is becoming more widespread and more easily accessible. While anthologies do often include documents from the suffrage/abolitionist era and from the 1960s and 1970s, what is reprinted often reproduces the exclusions

of those political periods, and what is available in the period in-between these so-called “waves” is often far more limited. Two excellent exceptions to this pattern are *Writing Red* (Nekola & Rabinowitz, 1993), which collects a variety of genres of socialist fiction and non-fiction writing from the 1930s and 1940s in the United States, and *Feminist Manifestos: A Global Documentary Reader* (Weiss, 2018), which includes manifestos of feminist movements around the world from the 1600s to the present. Both collections are unusual in the breadth and variety of primary materials provided, and the historical contextualization of sources.

Contextualization is critical to approaching the sources productively, as students have a tendency to react to older theory solely from their own current cultural moment, for example in their criticism of Wollstonecraft’s pre-birth control framing of women as mothers (1792), or their frustration at the failure of writers to acknowledge transgender issues centuries before the modern concept emerged. Hence, framing the course around the concept of oscillation allows us to analyze feminist theorizing as a strategy that responds to the rhetorical framing and political needs of its era, which can differ substantially over time and across feminist communities. This is where an historical focus is considerably more helpful than a taxonomical approach, not only because many theorists don’t fall neatly into categories, but also because the canonical periodization of feminist schools of thought is often misaligned with the scholarly and activist work of women of color. It’s hard to imagine two feminist writers more dissimilar than Beauvoir (1953) and Friedan (1963), yet their most popular works were written within a decade of each other. Placing these in dialogue with each other reveals the aesthetic and ideological differences that help explain why Friedan’s work was popularized and embraced while Beauvoir’s wasn’t. Placing them in dialogue with the civil rights movement surrounding them (I use Houck and Dixon (2009) for primary sources and McGuire (2010) for secondary analysis) allows the activism of that period to illuminate gaps in canonical thinking, as we explore both the gender politics and historiography of the civil rights movement and the racialized framing of Beauvoir’s and Friedan’s analyses of gender. Furthermore, even after identifying gaps, we often explore the reasons why theorists framed their analyses the way they did, and whether their approaches, however flawed, could be useful today.

Despite the distance history creates, my students are easily able to make these connections. As they read Uma Narayan’s (1993) personal history interwoven with the rhetorical struggle over the meaning of a transnational feminism (1993), they perceive a thread of continuity with Roxanne Gay’s disidentificatory play with the trope of the bad feminist (2014). They are struck by how strongly Emma Goldman’s (1973) commentary on the challenges and joys of feminism (1917) resonates with debates over feminist generations and the navigation of heterosexual relationships today. They are moved by June Jordan’s lyrical demonstration of how narration of personal experience can build alliances (1985). They passionately debate the reproductive technofuturism of *The Dialectic of Sex* (Firestone, 1970) and delight in framing the audacity, wit, and snark of *The SCUM Manifesto* (Solani, 1967) in terms of the #MeToo movement. They compare the blistering, brilliant arguments of Wells-Barnett’s anti-lynching campaign (1900) to Black Lives Matter activism against police brutality today. Thus, I believe my strategy of immersing students in these earlier historical moments and presenting theory as a socially- and individually- situated response is what allows them to make such passionate connections with their own concerns.

## **THEORY AS AESTHETICS/DYNAMICS**

Jumping back and forth across time requires a lot of preparation and context, but it does generate lively engagement with what might otherwise feel like dry, disembodied texts. I encourage my students to approach theory not as disembodied thoughts on the page but as the ideas of socially involved people, and as early attempts to articulate, often before the terminology was even formed, many of the same social problems we struggle against today. Traditional academic approaches to theory can be nearly biblical, at least toward some

theorists, citing Foucault (1978) chapter and verse, as if it were an essential truth rather than (as I describe it to my students) “just the thoughts of some guy.” Personalizing and demystifying theory helps make it less intimidating, and reminds us that many of the early feminist writers we study were writing alone, without the support of activist communities in some cases, or flourishing feminist academic communities in others. Much of what we read, especially from the 1960s and 1970s, was written at a time when people with a variety of credentials and writing styles were trying their hand at generating High Theory for a general audience, which was marketed as paperback bestsellers. This lends itself to discussions of each era’s aesthetic, cultural, and political norms that have generated theory that looks and feels quite different from that of other eras.

Schools of thought are often retrospectively described as “winning” or “losing” based on their merits, with interpersonal and intergroup dynamics also playing a significant role in how, when, and why feminist movements have either flourished or self-destructed (Boxer 2010; Echols 1989), both historically and today. They also impact the aesthetic forms through which politics are expressed. From the personalization of utopian politics in new social movements to the structuralism and violent rhetoric of Marxism, feminism has often been influenced by the flavor of its political moment, and the struggle for acceptance within and against other (often male-dominated) leftist movements. These aesthetic influences might seem trivial, but I would argue that they strongly shape the meaning we take from feminist arguments. For example, the sex wars were often framed by the “anti-sex” side as an intergroup struggle: they accused “pro-sex feminists” of shaping their arguments to win the approval of men, and represented themselves as the brave souls who were willing to speak the truth, regardless of the culture’s response to them.

But when we compare the “pro-sex” and “anti-sex” claims of the period in formalist rather than ideological terms, my students notice the enormous significance of the authors’ choices to frame their discussions in totalizing, abstract voices vs. concrete, personal ones. Comparing the vulnerability that Hollibaugh and Moraga (1981) risk by sharing a *conversation* about what they’re rolling around in bed with to Dworkin’s (1987) transmutation of her own experience (the sex I’m having doesn’t feel good; it feels like rape) into a universal dictum, it’s easy to see how one adds to our understanding while the other obscures it. This viscerally demonstrates how aesthetics and politics are inextricable. Despite the flaws in its logic, Dworkin’s piece is not irredeemably bad: it is an early call for a phenomenology of sex, before it was even termed as such. But the author’s rhetorical choices had a significant impact on the kinds of activism its theorizing inspired. By comparing two contrasting writing styles on the same subject in the same era, we’re able to tease out which of their components are productive or counterproductive to feminist progress. It’s a shift from asking are these good or bad, correct or incorrect, to *under what conditions* is feminist theorizing helpful, *and to whom*?

### **COURSE VS. CURRICULUM: PAST/PRESENT**

Hence, I would argue for the continuing importance of spending some time studying the canon of older texts. Though they are rife with errors of omission and commission, approaching them with an empathetic eye — not to *excuse* their exclusions, silences, and cruelties but to better understand them — trains students to approach contemporary theory with an equally nuanced perspective. My students seem to have been primed from past coursework to merely “call out” early work and stop analyzing there, but if the goal is to understand and not merely to judge, it becomes easier to admit that while contemporary feminist thought has certainly learned from past mistakes, it has not been able to resolve many of the tensions between the differing feminist theories and activism that Snitow outlines. For example, once can easily identify moments in past eras when some feminist groups attacked others as a means of gaining acceptance within male-dominated institutions (as in Boxer’s 2010 study of the role of intra-group dynamics on socialist feminists’ attacks on liberal feminism), similar anxieties over acceptance within the academy may have been one of the motivating

forces behind the rise of post-structuralism and its ritualistic attacks on “essentialist” feminism in the early 1990s (Gallop, 1991).

Similarly, the prejudices of the past are often conflated with the essentialism present in early feminism pre-“theory” (i.e., the period covered in a foundations course), yet many of the same prejudices were operating in the age of High Theory as post-structuralism entered academic feminism, given the lack of attribution that feminists of color received for their contributions to contemporary feminist thought (King, 1994). Despite their deficiencies, the classics of the feminist canon have their uses, and can be mined in order to engender an understanding of challenges feminists continue to face today. Very often, the students coming into my classroom are already aware of the *what* — that resistance to the recognition of privilege impedes feminist progress, for example — but seeing the *why* and the *how*, closely tracing that process as we place feminist theories in dialogue (across subject positions, locations, and generations) generates a productive space for students to discuss the difficulties of recognizing our own forms of privilege, find effective ways to challenge those of others, and sustain our networks of support when dialogue does not result in enriched alliances.

I have argued that revisiting the canon can be a helpful tool for today, but it is not the only tool, or even the most important one *for any individual course*. But — at the graduate curricular level — allowing students the time to study the foundational texts is still necessary in order to address the original academic understanding of theory, precisely because it is what has been canonized. In that sense the canon is foundational, in that it is what came before and was once understood to be central. One course in a graduate curriculum can serve this role, especially if canon-formation is approached critically and with the goal of preparing students to move beyond it. But because this canonized understanding should not be the foundation of any cultural studies *program* as a whole, it might better be named “History of Theory,” as in some programs. This would more accurately reflect the professional need to document the history of the field while avoiding the sense of endorsement that “Foundations” implies. Rather than avoiding the canon, this approach helps students learn how to critique the older texts more accurately and productively, using critique not as an end but a beginning — a springboard to deeper understanding. Of course, students bring different types of knowledge to the classroom, and therefore have different needs in relation to the canon. For privileged students, ceasing to call out earlier prejudices could serve as a form of resistance to interrogating their own privilege, and so an historically-, aesthetically-, and sociologically contextualized exploration of past theorizing could encourage them to consider the role privilege plays in their relationship to current cultural studies. At the same time, even those who are less socially privileged can still benefit from a course on the canon if it has been framed in a way that develops familiarity with and ability to critique it in the field.

Creating a syllabus is its own form of canon-building, an act of complicity I engage in every year. My course is designed to construct a dialogue across the semester that foregrounds questions of canonization, draws on histories of academic and activist analyses that explore the impact of intragroup dynamics and social privilege on theory, and openly discusses the thought process behind my syllabus design, as well as my own ambiguity about the kind of balancing act a foundational course requires. In addition to the standard learning outcomes, my unofficial goals for the course include awakening students’ curiosity about older texts, past activism, and the impact of non-academic voices on academic thought, as well as modeling a scholarly method of studying theory that situates it within the personal, political, and intellectual contexts and histories in which it has been shaped. I believe these methodological and affective shifts help students understand contemporary theory more deeply, giving them a frame of reference for critiques of the canon and insights into the production of cultural theory *today*.

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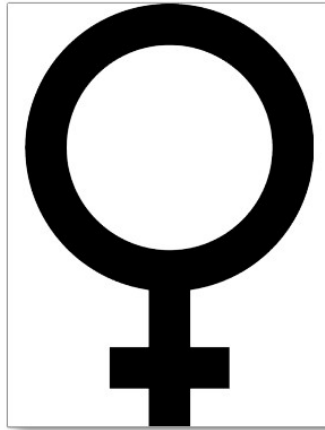
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**APPENDIX**



# **FOUNDATIONS OF FEMINIST THEORY**

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This online course will explore the historical origins of contemporary U.S. feminist thought, which has been shaped by a variety of cultural forces around the world. We'll use this historical perspective to understand how the development of theory is affected by the political and intellectual work preceding it and contemporaneously surrounding it. Because of the diversity of women's experiences, feminists often disagree in their analyses of and tactics for countering inequality. A central question of the course, therefore, is whether feminists worldwide can or should have a unified women's movement across national and cultural borders.

*A background in feminist theory is not required for this course, but those with one should still find the seminar helpful.*

## READINGS

*Given the historical nature of the course, we're using older books alongside newer ones. All are available at the bookstore, can be purchased online, and are on reserve at the library for students local to the area.*

### REQUIRED BOOKS

- Nicholson, Linda, ed. *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*. New York: Routledge, 1997.
- Tong, Rosemarie. *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*. 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Boulder, CO: Westview, 2009/2013/2019.
- Weiss, Penny, ed. *Feminist Manifestos: A Global Documentary Reader*. New York: New York University, 2018.

### OPTIONAL BOOKS

- *The following are all excellent resources, and you might want to purchase some of them if you plan to pursue further study in their respective fields. However, most of them are expensive (around \$100.00), and one is out of print. Therefore, we'll only be reading several articles from each, which will be available on Canvas.*
- Bhavnani, Kum-Kum, ed. *Feminism and 'Race'*. New York: Oxford University, 2001.
- Giddings, Paula. *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*. 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: William Morrow, 1996. [NOTE: BOTH EDITIONS HAVE THE SAME PAGINATION]
- Hirsch, Marianne, and Evelyn Fox Keller, eds. *Conflicts in Feminism*. New York: Routledge, 1990. [NOTE: OUT OF PRINT]
- Offen, Karen, ed. *Globalizing Feminisms, 1789-1945*. New York: Routledge, 2010.

### ONLINE ARTICLES:

All other readings (*see the "Reading List" section below*) can be accessed through Canvas.

## ASSIGNMENTS

60 PTS                      *Discussion participation:* regular, substantive contributions to our 15 discussions: Discussion starters will be posted by 9 a.m. on Monday each week. Your final response *must be posted under the "Final Thoughts" thread* (if one hasn't been started yet, please start it.) Begin with the title "Final Thoughts," and include your impressions of the most important ideas expressed, common patterns you noticed, remaining questions, etc.

15 PTS                      *Discussion starters:* You'll sign up for 2 days in the "Oscillations" module, and for each, you'll upload a discussion starter by 9 a.m. the Monday before our Wednesday discussion. The report is a mini-essay (750-1500 words) that describes and then analyses one of the manifestos in the Weiss anthology from that week's era, connecting it to assigned readings and including several questions for the class. Your third discussion starter will be based in the final section of Weiss (21<sup>st</sup> century) and will be posted for the "Integrating Global and U.S. Feminisms?" discussion at the end of the semester.



**Socialist Feminism (1910s/1920s)**

- SECONDARY Tong, "Marxist and Socialist Feminism"  
 PRIMARY Trent, "Breed, Women, Breed" (1929); "Lady in a Limousine" (1929)  
 PRIMARY Schreiner, "Sex Parasitism" (1911)  
 PRIMARY Goldman, "Traffic in Women" (1910); "Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation" (1917)  
 SECONDARY Cott, "Historical Perspectives: The ERA Conflict in the 1920s"  
 SECONDARY Boxer, "Rethinking the Construction of 'Bourgeois Feminism'"  
 DISCUSSION 4 SEEING RED, WRITING RED

**Civil Rights and Feminism (1950/1960s)**

- SECONDARY Giddings, *When and Where I Enter* [257-288]  
 PRIMARY Houck and Dixon, *Women and the Civil Rights Movement* [154-168]  
 SECONDARY McGuire, *At the Dark End of the Street* [xv-xxii, 98-107, 156-173]  
 DISCUSSION 5 POSTWAR GENERATIONS *optional: Eyes on the Prize, ep. 3*

**Liberal Feminism and Existentialism (1950/1960s)**

- SECONDARY Tong, "Liberal Feminism"  
 PRIMARY Friedan, excerpt from *The Feminine Mystique* (1963)  
 SECONDARY Giddings, *When and Where I Enter* [234-239]  
 SECONDARY Tong, "Existentialist and Postmodern Feminism"  
 PRIMARY Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (1953): Introduction and Ch. 12 excerpt  
 DISCUSSION 6 THE PHILOSOPHER AND THE JOURNALIST *optional: Lorraine Hansberry on Beauvoir*

**The Transition to Radicalism (1960s/1970s)**

- SECONDARY Davis, *Moving the Mountain* [70-77]  
 SECONDARY Hartman, "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism"  
 PRIMARY Morgan, "Goodbye to All That" (1970)  
 PRIMARY Firestone, "The Dialectic of Sex" (1970)  
 PRIMARY Rubin, "The Traffic in Women" (1975)  
 DISCUSSION 7 STRUCTURE AND ANGER

**Radical Feminism (1960s/1970s)**

- SECONDARY Tong, "Radical Feminism"  
 SECONDARY Echols, *Daring to Be Bad* [139-15, 186-202]  
 SECONDARY Davis, *Moving the Mountain* [87-89]  
 PRIMARY Excerpts from *Sisterhood is Powerful* (read all):  
 ▪ National Organization for Women, "NOW Bill of Rights" (1970)  
 ▪ New York Radical Women, "Principles"  
 ▪ Redstockings, "Redstockings Manifesto" (1970)  
 ▪ Solanis, "Excerpts from The SCUM Manifesto" (1967)  
 ▪ WITCH, "WITCH Documents" (1970)  
 DISCUSSION 8 NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENTS *optional: She's Beautiful When She's Angry*

### **Lesbian Feminism (1970s/1980s)**

- SECONDARY Echols, *Daring to Be Bad* [210-220]  
PRIMARY Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" (1980)  
PRIMARY Frye, "To Be and Be Seen" (1983)  
PRIMARY Radicalesbians, "The Woman Identified Woman" (1970)  
PRIMARY Excerpts from *For Lesbians Only: A Separatist Anthology* (*read all*):
- Revolutionary Lesbians, "How to Stop Choking to Death or: Separatism" (1971)
  - Gutter Dyke Collective, "This is the Year to Stamp Out the Y Chromosome" (1973)
  - Marty/SEPS, "Popular Separatist-Baiting Quotes" (1983)
- PRIMARY Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement" (1977)  
DISCUSSION 9 LESBIANS, WOMYN, AND SEPARATISM

### ***Proposal for final essay due***

### **The Sex Wars (1970s/1980s)**

- SECONDARY Echols, "The New Feminism of Yin and Yang" (1984)  
PRIMARY Hollibaugh and Moraga, "What We're Rollin Around in Bed With" (1981)  
PRIMARY Dworkin and MacKinnon, "Questions and Answers" (1988)  
PRIMARY Dworkin, *Intercourse* (1987)  
PRIMARY Rubin, "Thinking Sex" (1984)  
DISCUSSION 10 CONFLICTS IN ACTIVISM AND ANALYSIS

### **Post-Structuralism/Postmodernism (1970s/1980s)**

- SECONDARY Tong, "Postmodern Feminism"  
PRIMARY Cixous "Laugh of the Medusa" (1975)  
PRIMARY Wittig, "One is Not Born a Woman" (1981)  
PRIMARY Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination" (1989)  
PRIMARY Scott, "Deconstructing Equality vs. Difference"  
DISCUSSION 11 AROUND 1981

### **The Women of Color Critique (1980s)**

- SECONDARY Tong, "Women of Color Feminisms"  
SECONDARY Alarcon, "The Theoretical Subject(s) of Bridge"  
PRIMARY Anzaldua, "La Conciencia de la Mestiza" (1987)  
PRIMARY Excerpts from *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981/1983) (*read all*):
- Anzaldua, "La Prieta" (1981)
  - Carrillo, "And When You Leave, Take Your Pictures With You" (1981)
  - Chrystos, "I Don't Understand Those Who Have Turned Away From Me" (1981)
- PRIMARY Lorde, "The Uses of Anger" (1981)  
DISCUSSION 12 BRIDGES, BORDERS, AND BETRAYALS

### **Postcolonialism (1980s/1990s)**

- SECONDARY Tong, "Global, Postcolonial, Transnational Feminisms"  
PRIMARY Narayan, "Contesting Cultures" (1993)  
PRIMARY Ong, "Colonialism and Modernity" (1988)  
PRIMARY Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1988)  
PRIMARY Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes" (1988)  
DISCUSSION 13 THEORY IN ITS FEMINIST TRAVELS

## CONCLUSIONS

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### Integrating Global and U.S. Feminisms? Case Studies

PRIMARY Beijing 1995 links re: UN's Fourth World Conference on Women (1995)

DISCUSSION 14 UNITY AND DIFFERENCE; YOUR ESSAY RESEARCH

**Final discussion starter due: choose one from the final section of Weiss (21st century)**

### Bad Feminism?

PRIMARY Contemporary Feminisms, Contemporary Divides links

PRIMARY Gay, Roxanne, *Bad Feminist* (2014)

DISCUSSION 15 WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

**Final essay due**

## READING LIST

- Afshar, Haleh. "Women and the Politics of Fundamentalism in Iran." *Feminism and 'Race.'* Ed. Bhavnani, Kum-Kum. New York: Oxford University, 2001. 348-365.
- Agarwal, Bina. "Environmental Action, Equity, and Ecofeminism: Debating India's Experience." *Feminism and 'Race.'* Ed. Bhavnani, Kum-Kum. New York: Oxford University, 2001. 410-455.
- Ang, Ien. "'Other' Women and Postnational Feminism." *Feminism and 'Race.'* Ed. Bhavnani, Kum-Kum. New York: Oxford University, 2001. 394-409.
- Anzaldúa, "La Conciencia de la Mestiza." *Feminism and 'Race.'* Ed. Bhavnani, Kum-Kum. New York: Oxford University, 1987/2001. 93-107.
- Anzaldúa, Gloria. "La Prieta." *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Eds. Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Kitchen Table Women of Color Press, 1981/1983. 198-209.
- Beauvoir, Simone de. "From The Second Sex." *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Eds. Wendy Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1953/2013.
- Boxer, Marilyn. "Rethinking the Construction of 'Bourgeois Feminism.'" *Globalizing Feminisms, 1789-1945.* Ed. Offen, Karen. New York: Routledge, 2010. 286-301.
- Carrillo, Jo. "And When You Leave, Take Your Pictures With You." *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Eds. Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Kitchen Table Women of Color Press, 1981/1983. 63-64.
- Chrystos. "I Don't Understand Those Who Have Turned Away From Me." *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings By Radical Women of Color*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Eds. Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa. New York: Kitchen Table Women of Color Press, 1981/1983. 68-70.
- Cixous, Helene. "The Laugh of the Medusa." *Signs* 1/4 (1976): 875-93.
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- Cooper, Anna Julia. "The Status of Woman in America." *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought.* Ed. Beverly Guy-Sheftall. New York: The New Press, 1892/1995. 43-49.
- Cott, Nancy. "Historical Perspectives: The ERA Conflict in the 1920s." *Conflicts in Feminism.* Eds. Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox Keller. New York: Routledge, 1990. 44-59.
- Davis, Flora. *Moving the Mountain: The Women's Movement in America Since 1960.* Chicago: University of Illinois, 1999. 70-77; 87-89.
- Dworkin, Andrea. *Intercourse.* New York: The Free Press, 1987. 121-143.
- Dworkin, Andrea and Catherine MacKinnon. "Questions and Answers." *Making Violence Sexy: Feminist Views on Pornography.* Ed. Diana E. H. Russell. New York: Teachers College Press, 1988/1993. 78-96.
- Echols, Linda. "The New Feminism of Yin and Yang." *Powers of Desire: The Politics of Sexuality.* Eds. Ann Snitow, Christine Stansell, and Sharon Thompson. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983. 439-459.
- Echols, Linda. *Daring to Be Bad: Radical Feminism in America, 1967-1975.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1989. 139-158; 186-202; 210-220.
- Edwards, Louise. "Women's Suffrage in China: Challenging Scholarly Conventions." *Globalizing Feminisms, 1789-1945.* Ed. Offen, Karen. New York: Routledge, 2010. 275-285.
- Fleischmann, Ellen. "The Other 'Awakening': The Emergence of Women's Movements in the Modern Middle East, 1900-1940." *Globalizing Feminisms, 1789-1945.* Ed. Offen, Karen. New York: Routledge, 2010. 170-192.
- Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique.* New York: Norton, 1963/2001. 15-32.

- Frye, Marilyn. "To Be and Be Seen." *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*. Freedom, CA: Crossing Press, 1983. 152-174.
- Gay, Roxanne. *Bad Feminist*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2014. ix-xiv; 303-313; 314-318.
- Giddings, Paula. *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: William Morrow, 1996. 119-127; 234-239; 257-271; 273-288.
- Goldman, Emma. "The Traffic in Women." *Feminist Theory: A Reader*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Eds. Wendy Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1910/2013. 92-97.
- Goldman, Emma. "The Tragedy of Woman's Emancipation." *The Feminist Papers: From Adams to de Beauvoir*. Ed. Alice Rossi. New York: Bantam, 1917/1974. 506-516.
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- Gutter Dyke Collective. "This is the Year to Stamp Out the Y Chromosome." *For Lesbians Only: A Separatist Anthology*. Eds. Sarah Hoagland and Julia Penelope. London: Onlywomen Press, 1973/1988. 338-339.
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