

WSP 201 WIP: FEMINIST IDEAS

Fall 2009 Course Meets: Tuesdays & Thursdays 5:40 – 6:55 p.m.

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Course Description

Feminist Ideas is intended to insure that Women's Studies students understand what feminist perspectives are and their relationship to Women's Studies, social issues, and social change. With a focus on Organizing, Family, Health/Reproductive Justice, Violence and Work, students will learn to recognize historical and contemporary feminist leaders, understand the implications and applications of feminist ideas, apply lessons learned from past struggle to contemporary social issues, and evaluate women's changing status, by race, class, age, ability, and sexual orientation and other inequalities.

Prerequisite: English 101 with a grade of C or better.

This course has been approved as a Writing Intensive course as part of the Writing Intensive Program (WIP). Successful completion of this course fulfills the Writing Intensive graduation requirement for Women's Studies majors who entered the university in Fall 2008 or later. Speak to your advisor or visit <http://www.neiu.edu/~wip> for more information.

Course Goals

1. Read and understand feminist ideas;
2. Analyze the relationships between and among various social institutions in the context of inequality, power and oppression and reflect on women's experiences in social institutions, such as work, health care, and the criminal justice system;
3. Evaluate women's changing status, by race, class, age, ability, and sexual orientation;
4. To improve students' written and oral communication skills through writing, discussion, and speaking exercises and projects and writing a research paper.

Required Text: Starhawk. 1993. The Fifth Sacred Thing. New York: Bantam. All other readings online!

Dates

Topics/Assignments

- Sept. 1 **Getting to know each other: Introductions, Introduction to course and course Requirements, Assignments and other course maintenance tasks. Get in groups write definitions of feminisms.**
- Sept. 3 **What is Feminism/Feminisms?**
READING: Declaration of the four sacred things and pages 1-20 (Chapter 1) in Starhawk
Bonus Points! Request your feminist thinker by today and receive 3 extra points!
COMPLETE THE PLAGIARISM TEST IN BLACKBOARD BY MIDNIGHT SUNDAY September 6.
- Sept. 8 **Why Feminism/feminisms?**
READING: Oppression by Frye
Bonus Points! Request your feminist thinker by today and receive 1 extra point!
- Sept. 10 **Histories of feminisms**
Description of feminisms from Sheila Ruths' *Issues In Feminisms* (p. 20-28) & Alice Echols, *Daring To Be Bad*, Introduction. All feminist thinker requests must be submitted by today.
- Sept. 15 **Feminists imagining futures**
READING: Starhawk chapters 2-4 pages 21-75; Rushin: The Bridge Poem
- Sept. 22 **Feminist Organizing**
Ida B. Wells; Combahee River Collective Statement; Audre Lorde Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House

- Sept. 24 Writing a research paper, topics brainstorm and online research session **MEET IN LIB349**
- Sept. 29 **Feminist Organizing Continues**
Mitsuya Yamada, Asian American Women and Feminism; and Adrienne Rich, Women and Honor;
- Oct. 1 **Organizing Continues**
Chela Sandoval Feminist forms of agency & Kimberlé Crenshaw, traffic at the crossroads in sisterhood
Ø **A one-page topic statement including whether you are writing an analytical or argumentative paper**
- Oct. 6 **Family/Community**
Merle Woo, Letter to Ma; Emma Goldman, marriage and love
Ø **Thesis workshopping (Bring Draft of your thesis)**
- Oct. 8 **Starhawk**
Pages 76-147 chapters 5-9
Ø **A thesis statement Due**
- Oct. 13 **Family/Community Continues**
Cheryl Clark, Lesbianism as an act of resistance; Virginia Woolf, Shakespeare's Sister & Start Cherrie Moraga, A Long Line of Vendidas
- Oct. 15 **Family/Community Continues**
Cherrie Moraga, A Long Line of Vendidas
Ø **A working bibliography (5-8 sources)**
- Oct. 20 **Work**
Charlotte Perkins Gillman, Women and Economics
- Oct. 22 **Violence**
Kiini Ibura Salaam, How sexual Harassment Slaughtered, Then Saved me; Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, Women, Violence and resistance
- Oct. 27 **Violence Continues**
Andrea Dworkin; Cynthia Enloe, Sneak Attack Militarization of US Culture
Ø **A working annotated bibliography (5-8 sources)**
- Oct. 29 **Responses to Violence**
Starhawk Chapters 10-13 (p. 148-197) & Grace Paley, Why Peace is more than ever a feminist issue
FIRST FEMINIST EVENT RESPONSE PAPER DUE ON BLACKBOARD BY MIDNIGHT October 31!
- Nov. 3 **Violence Continues**
Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, The Issue is Power (its 70 pages, keep reading, its great!!!!)
- Nov. 5 **Starhawk** Chapters 19-22 (p. 258-316)
Ø **Feminist Research Paper Summary/Outline**
- Nov. 10 **Health/Reproductive Justice**
Angela Davis, Sick and Tired of Being Sick and Tired; Gloria Steinam, If Men Could Menstruate

Nov. 12 Starhawk Chapters 23-30 (p. 317-409)

Nov. 17 **Reproductive Justice Continues**

Chan, Reproductive Issues and Asian American Communities; Mary Daly Intro to Gyn/Ecology pages 1-22 (however if you want to read it all great!!!)

Nov. 19 Paper Workshopping

Ø **A rough draft, including bibliography and references paper workshopping in class (NOT GRADED)**

Nov. 24 Starhawk Chapters 31-END (p. 410-484)

SECOND FEMINIST EVENT RESPONSE PAPER DUE ON BLACKBOARD BY MIDNIGHT NOVEMBER 31!

Dec. 1 Charlotte Perkins Gillman, Part 1 only; Chrystos, (All 6 poems all on line);

Dec. 3 Kaye/Kantrowitz Jews, Class, Color and the cost of Whiteness;

Dec. 8 Ø A final feminist research paper make a short presentation on your topic in class

Dec. 10 Gloria Anzuldúa, now let us shift....the path of conocimiento

Course and Self Evaluation Due

Course Requirements

- 1. Class Participation** - Overall class participation points will be based on involvement in class by raising questions and issues, listening and responding respectfully to others, participating in group work (obviously you cannot do this if you do not attend class), and turning in your papers on time. The points you may receive for overall class participation will depend upon active engagement with the course, obviously if you have a pattern of disrupting class by talking with neighbors and not paying attention, being late, leaving early or stepping out of the classroom during class you are not participating in a constructive way. If you are a shy person and do not like to talk in class there are other ways you can show your involvement in the course materials so please come and talk to me. Class participation obviously requires class attendance however your actual daily attendance will not be recorded. Excellent class attendance means turning in all your papers on time, being on time and staying for the full time for each class attended, participating in class activities, demonstrating that you did the readings and thought about them (maximum: 15 points). Good attendance means turning in no more than one paper late, being on time and staying for the full time for each class attended, and mostly participating in class activities, doing most of the readings and thinking about them (maximum: 10 points). Fair attendance means turning papers late and not participating when present or not doing the readings (maximum: 5 points). Students with poor attendance and a pattern of disrupting class by being late, leaving early, or stepping out of the classroom during class may receive no points for overall class participation, depending upon how often, the reasons, and whether or not I am notified. Additionally, as listed on page 34 of the NEIU 2006-2007 Academic Catalog, "Students are expected to attend all regularly scheduled classes and examinations. If a student has more than three unexcused absences the instructor may lower the student's grade, require additional work, and/or impose other sanctions as appropriate."
- 2. Biography Presentation:** In keeping with the feminist insight that the personal is political, the object of this assignment is to illuminate the personal experiences of a thinker's life and to reflect upon how these experiences may have influenced her desire to write and her ideas. Each student will choose an author from the list below prepare a short presentation [10 minutes] and outline of the author's life/ ideas to be delivered in class. The presentation & outline will be graded on the basis of the following criteria: did the presentation pose connections between the thinkers life experiences and her theoretical contributions?; how is her life related to her essay/poem we read for class?; did your presentation raise interesting points for class discussion?; do you have specific questions for us about your theorist and her work?; was it clear and concise?. Students will be required to hand in their speaking note & outlines. Students will choose from among the following thinkers and will make their presentation around the day we read a text by author:
Marilyn Frye
Adrienne Rich
Audre Lorde

Emma Goldman
Charlotte Perkins Gilman
Virginia Woolf
Chéla Sandoval
Starhawk
Mary Daly

Andrea Dworkin
Gloria Steinem
Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz
Gloria Anzaldúa
Emma Goldman
Cherríe Moraga

Crystos
Merle Woo
Combahee River Collective
Kimberlé Crenshaw
Mitsuya Yamada
Angela Davis

3. **Feminist Event (two) Response Paper** The goal of these responses is to increase your understanding of women's studies and women's events/videos by asking you to attend and respond to two over the course of the semester. Each must be submitted via the Digital Drop Box in BlackBoard (at <http://neiu.blackboard.com>.) You can attend any women's studies focused event and then write a response paper as described below. (If you have a question about whether an event is related to women's studies please ask me.) So step one, attend an event. Step two write a one page response paper on the event/. Writing a one page (typed, double-space) response paper is unlike almost any other writing assignment you may have done in the past. It may seem easy to write something so short, but it's actually more difficult than writing something longer. You have to distill your response to an often lengthy event (a lecture, a speech, a performance, a play) into about 250 words, which isn't very much at all. To help you with this task, here are some guidelines to consider:

Since you have absolutely no space to waste, DO NOT use even one precious word summarizing the event you're reacting to. We want to know what YOU think about it. There's no need to restate the major points. You can mention briefly items from the event if there's something specific you want to react to, but avoid lengthy quotations or summaries. There's no room for them.

2. Don't try to cram all your thoughts about the event into that one page. Pick one (or at most two) idea / question / concern that the event raised for you, and develop it as fully as you can. Explain your reaction, justifying what in the event brought it up for you (without summarizing—see #1) and how you have processed it. You needn't have reached a conclusion or found the absolute "truth" about the issue you raise; it's OK to be tentative and searching in this sort of informal paper. It's also more than OK to disagree with what you witnessed—so long as you can articulate your objection with some clarity.

3. As you write these one page-papers, temporarily put aside what your high school English teacher told you about having an introduction, body and conclusion—the proverbial 5 paragraph theme. Though this form is usually sound, you'll only be writing 1-2 paragraphs here and don't need to start with generalizations (as in a typical intro) or end with summary (as in a typical conclusion). In fact, this form will only get you in trouble. Instead, launch right into your main point without any fanfare. This is not to say you shouldn't have some loose sense of structure, only that you don't need a formal thesis or outline. A good topic sentence near the beginning, defining the issue or question or objection will do just fine.

4. Don't worry too much about writing style. Although you want to write clear and grammatically correct sentences, a response paper should sound like just that—your response. You don't need to waste time finding just the right polysyllabic word. Put that thesaurus away and spend the time thinking through your ideas instead.

Grading of the Response Papers

A = If you receive 9-10 points you wrote an excellent well-constructed response, with no spelling mistakes or run-on sentences. You had a clear topic sentence that described what your paper was about and you thoughtfully considered the event. You seriously considered some aspect of the event and responded without unsupported generalizations, trite or superficial comments. B = If you receive 7-8 points you wrote a good essay. Your paper was well written but had a few rough spots. You considered the event but not in great depth or without going into detail about your response. C = If you receive 6 points you wrote an adequate essay. Your paper is acceptable but is unclear or hard to follow. D = If you receive 5 points you wrote an incomplete paper. Either you did not follow the assignment or your paper is unclear and insufficient. F = If you receive less than 5 points you turned in a poor paper, it was incomplete and superficial and did not engage with the assignment at all.

4. **Feminist Research Paper**

Research Paper Project: The research paper is the major assignment of the course. The paper will be broken down into a series of assignments to be completed by various dates throughout the semester. The goal of the assignment is a well-written research paper that successfully addresses a topic of relevance to feminist ideas and/or practice. You will either write an Argumentative or Analytical paper. You are expected to conduct independent research for this paper which will go substantially beyond the readings covered in this course. Your research paper will all be roughly 7-9 pages long and will require that you use approximately 5-8 sources (you will probably have to read more sources to find the ones that will work for your paper, though). You should use 12-point font and one-inch margins and have a title that helps the reader understand your point of view. You should also cite your sources in accordance with Chicago, MLA or APA standards (Choose which

ever makes sense for your focus and see the Writing Lab). We will be following the outline of research papers presented at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/workshops/hypertext/ResearchW/index.html>

The steps in the research paper project include: (More information will be provided in separate handouts)

- Ø A one-page topic statement including whether you are writing an analytical or argumentative paper (10 points)
- Ø A thesis statement (5 points)
- Ø A working bibliography (5-8 sources) (5 points)
- Ø A working annotated bibliography (5-8 sources) (10 points)
- Ø Feminist Research Paper Summary/Outline (15 points)
- Ø A rough draft, including bibliography and references (NOT GRADED)
- Ø A final draft (40 points)

Grading for the Research Paper Final 40 points

I. THESIS

- a. **Clarity (4)** (Is the thesis clearly stated?)
- b. **Accuracy (3)** (Does the thesis introduce specifically what the paper argues?)
- c. **Originality (3)** (Does the paper attempt to go beyond a re-hash of readings & discussion?)

II. ARGUMENT

- a. **Selection of research evidence (3)**
- b. **Interpretation of evidence (4)** (Does the paper explain how the evidence cited illustrates/supports the thesis being argued?)
- c. **Organization (4)** (Is the paper organized in a logical manner?)
- d. **Introduction (2)** (Does the Introduction set up the ideas put forth in the paper?)
- e. **Conclusion (2)** (Does the conclusion sum up the ideas put forth in the paper?)
- f. **Persuasive (3)** (Does the paper convince the reader of the theoretical points being made?)

III. STYLE

- a. **Clarity of prose (3)**
- b. **Quality of proofreading (2)** (Are there typos, misspellings or grammar mistakes? Bibliography?)
- c. **Overall flow of the paper (2)** (Is it easy to follow and reads well?)

IV. Incorporation of Suggestions from paper workshoping and first draft (5)

Grading considerations:

- Careful writing, proofreading, spell checking, etc. required.
- Poor writing or poor organization will lead to a poor grade.
- I will look for original, critical thinking, in depth analysis, demonstration of good grasp of the reading assignments discussed
- Avoid unsupported generalizations, trite or superficial comments.
- Full citation of all sources required, including course readings for this course
- If you don't follow instructions and your paper does not fit the specific requirements of this assignment, you will get a low or failing grade.
- If you are not sure if your topic or choice of readings fit, be sure to consult with me ahead of time.
- Warning, academic integrity means, among other things, that if the paper is not written in your own words you could be charged with plagiarism and receive an F.

7. **Course and Self Evaluation** (Please type the responses to the following questions and turn them in on the last day of class) worth 10 points. They will be graded on clear writing and thoughtful consideration of the questions, no matter the responses.
1. How have your ideas about Women's Studies and feminisms changed over the course of the semester?
 2. Please reflect (in a few paragraphs) on what you have learned about women and what this course has meant to you.
 3. What, in your opinion, were the best parts of the course?
 4. What, in your opinion, are things that could be improved about the course? How would you improve them?
 5. Reflect on the process of writing the research paper: What aspects were most instructive? Did you learn anything? Do you feel more confident about your writing? Other reflections?
 5. Please try to evaluate your performance and participation in the course over the semester. How did you do? Did you meet your own expectations? Did you meet the expectations of the course? What grade would you give yourself and why?
8. **In class exercises** We will have a series of in class writing assignments that will be picked up over the course of the semester. These are for the purpose of writing and feedback only and will not be graded.

9. Plagiarism Test (to be completed online in Blackboard) will consist of you writing the answers to the following questions: 1. Define Plagiarism (in your own words) and explain why it's such a "big deal." 2. Using a selection from a feminist text we read for class (it is online in the test), create a paragraph that employs word-for-word plagiarism from this source. 3. Using the same selection, create a paragraph that employs paraphrase plagiarism from this source. 4. Using the same selection, create a paragraph that uses this source, is free from plagiarism and contains at least one thought of your own about it.

Written Assignments & Academic Integrity and Honesty

Any/All written assignments must be neatly typed and **double spaced** with appropriate margins (top, bottom, left, right). You must proof read your paper for typos, spelling and grammatical errors, etc. before turning in your paper. Although this is not an English grammar class, such errors will figure into the grading of papers. All students' work **must** be their own original work. If you use the work/words of others, you **MUST** cite your source(s) in the text of your paper and include them in a bibliography/reference list at the end of the paper. If you use an idea from class lectures, readings, audio-visual materials, guest lectures or outside sources and acknowledge whose idea or writing it is, I consider this **good scholarship and academic honesty**. If you use someone else's ideas (that includes information secured from the internet) and do not acknowledge that they are "borrowed" I consider this **plagiarism**. If you buy, borrow or otherwise submit a paper or work that you did not do, I will consider this to be **the worse form of academic dishonesty and fraud**. **If detected, plagiarism and/or any form of academic dishonesty will be punished to the full extent allowable under the academic regulations at Northeastern Illinois University.** Students are responsible for making and keeping a copy of all of their work, including papers turned in to me. **ONLY TYPED PAPERS WILL BE READ AND GRADED!!!**

Grading will be assessed as follows:

ASSIGNMENTS	POINTS
Participation	15
Feminist Thinker Presentation (will be due throughout semester)	10
Course and Self Evaluation paper due in class	10
The following are graded on content and written expression:	
PLAGIARISM TEST ONLINE	10
One page topic statement	10
Thesis/question	5
Feminist Bibliography	5
Feminist Annotated Bibliography	10
Feminist Research Paper Summary/Outline	15
Feminist Research Paper	40
Feminist Event Response Papers (2 due on blackboard)	20
TOTAL	150

Grading Scale: A =150-135 points; B =134-120 points; C = 119-105 points; D = 104-90 points; F = below 90

Accommodating Disabilities

If you have or acquire any sort of disability that may require accommodation, I urge you to discuss it with me (preferably after class or during a scheduled office visit). I want to do everything that I can to help everyone who wants to succeed in this course but will need your help as well. If you want to find out what special services and accommodations are available on campus, contact the H.E.L.P. Office in A119 or call extension 5496.