English/FemGen 363D – Feminist Theory
Thinking Through/With/About the Gendered Body
Autumn 2014

Class meetings: T 2:15 – 5:05 pm
Encina West 101

This graduate feminist theory course will consider issues related to the complex relationship between sex, gender, sexuality, biological reproduction, violence, and social power.

Organized around a series of case studies, we will consider questions such as: Why and how does gender matter to women living today? How and why are some human bodies gendered as female, others gendered as male, and yet others as something else altogether? What is the relationship between a body’s sex and its gender? How do cultural norms affect the gendering of bodies? Why is the absence of sexual desire so threatening? What role does violence, both symbolic (i.e., racial) and physical (i.e., rape), play in enforcing a hegemonic gender system?

This is a core course for the PhD minor in Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Enrollment is limited to PhD-level students and will be capped at 16. Depending on enrollment, MA students with a strong background in graduate-level feminist scholarship will be accepted at the discretion of the instructor.

**REQUIRED TEXTS**
Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman, *Material Feminisms* (ebrary)
Anne Fausto-Sterling, *Sexing the Body* (ebrary)
Estelle Freedman, *Redefining Rape*
Course Reader (available online)

**RECOMMENDED BOOKS**
Alison Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip*
Sarah Richardson, *Sex Itself: The Search for Male and Female in the Human Genome*
Linda Nicholson, ed., *The Second Wave*

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS**
The course will consist of both class presentations and group discussions. It is important that you come to class having done all the assigned readings. I will lead the first two classes. These will focus on what have become “classic” statements in feminist theory. At all other sessions,
NOTE: THIS SYLLABUS MAY BE MODIFIED

seminar participants will make an oral presentation based on the assigned readings. I will make presentation assignments at the second meeting, so look over the syllabus to see what you might want to present on.

For some weeks I have chosen to present what I think of as “case studies.” These case studies are designed to connect the broad issue under consideration to the embodied lives of women living in the today’s world, to make clear the high stakes of the issues under consideration, and to illustrate the practical impossibility of neatly separating out gender from sex, race, class, sexuality, geography, culture, and biological reproduction. You do not need to read them or view these case studies with great care, since our main discussions will center on the assigned readings. You should, though, familiarize yourself with the range of feminist issues at stake in each case.

Because this is a weekly seminar with a heavy reading list, it is crucial that you begin your reading for the subsequent week right after each class meeting. To encourage this, and to facilitate deep engagement with the questions and issues raised in the class, you will be required to post a substantive and insightful comment of at least 500 words on the week’s readings to the discussion forum by Monday at noon of each week. I will do my best to post a prompt by Sunday night for those of you who might be more comfortable responding to one. You should feel free to start a new thread of your own or to respond to the postings of your fellow seminar participants. Because the week’s discussion will take off from the Forum postings, you should read your colleagues postings before coming to class.

In addition to the weekly postings, you are required to hand in a 12-15 page seminar paper. Topics and preliminary bibliographies for the final paper is due by November 23. Final papers are due on December 12 by 5:00 p.m.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Material Feminisms = MF
Course Reader = CR

Sep 23 – Feminism: A Contested Concept
Case Study:  http://womenagainstfeminism.tumblr.com
Readings:
  de Beauvoir, “Introduction’ to The Second Sex” (1955) CR
  Gayle Rubin, “The Traffic in Women” (1975) CR
  Combahee River Collective, “Statement” (1979) CR
  Hartsock, Nancy C. M. “The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism” (1983) CR

Sep 30 – Feminist Poststructuralism and its Critics
Readings:
Alcoff, “Cultural Feminism Versus Post-structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory” (1988) CR
Butler, “Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire,” and “Conclusion: From Parody to Politics” (1990) CR
Susan Bordo, “Feminism, Postmodernism, and Gender-Scepticism” (1990) CR
Joan W. Scott, “Experience” (1992) CR
Karen Barad, “Meeting the Universe Halfway: Realism and Social Constructivism Without Contradiction” (1996) CR

Oct 7 – Sex Itself
Case Study: “Either/Or: Sports, Sex, and the Case of Caster Semenya”
http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2009/11/30/eitheror
Readings:
  “Dueling Dualisms”
  “That Sexe Which Prevaileth”
  “Of Gender and Genitals: The Use and Abuse of the Modern Intersexual”
  “Should There Be Only Two Sexes?”
  “Gender Systems: Toward a Theory of Human Sexuality”
Sarah Richardson, “Sexing the X: How the X Became the ‘Female Chromosome’” (2012)
Spectacles and Scholarship: Caster Semenya, Intersex Studies, and the Problem of Race in Feminist Theory” (2014)

Oct 14 – Transnational and Intersectional Feminisms
Readings:
  Chandra Mohanty, “‘Under Western Eyes’ Revisited,”(2002)
  Maria Lugones, “Introduction,” and “Tactical Strategies of the Streetwalker”
  Vida Panitch, “Surrogate Tourism and Reproductive Rights” (2013)

Oct 21 – Transgendered Feminisms
Case Study: “Housing Dispute Puts Quaker University at Forefront of fight Over Transgender Issues:
Readings:
Gayle Salamon, “Transfeminism and the Future of Gender” CR

Oct 28 – Feminist Disability Studies
Case Study: “Disabled People Say They, too, Want a Sex Life, and Seek Help in Attaining it”
Readings:
Alison Kafer, Feminist, Queer, Crip, “Introduction,” and “Accessible Futures, Future Coalitions” CR
Abby Wilkerson, “Disability, Sex Radicalism, and Political Agency” CR
Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory” CR
Tobin Siebers, “Disability Experience on Trial” MF
Ellen Samuels, “Critical Divides: Judith Butler’s Body Theory and the Question of Disability” CR
Alexis Shotwell, “Open Normativities: Gender, Disability, and Collective Political Change CR

Nov 4 – Material and EcoFeminisms
Readings:
Michael Hames-García, “How Real is Race?” (2008) MF
Stacy Alaimo, “Trans-Corporeal Feminisms and the Ethical Space of Nature” (2008) MF
Chris Cuomo, “Climate Change, Vulnerability, and Responsibility” (2011) CR

Nov 11 – Feminist Asexuality Studies
Case Study: “Battling Asexual Discrimination, Sexual Violence and ‘Corrective Rape’”
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/06/20/asexual-discrimination_n_3380551.html?1371733068
Readings:
Kristin Scherrer, “Coming to An Asexual Identity” (2008) CR
Eunjung Kim, “Asexualities and Disabilities in Constructing Sexual Normalcy” (2014) CR
Ela Przybylo, “Masculine Doubt and Sexual Wonder: Asexually-Identified Men Talk about their (A)sexualities” (2014) CR

Nov 18 – Gendered and Sexual Violence
Case Study: “Reporting Rape and Wishing She Hadn’t”
Readings:
Nicola Gavey, “Rape, Trauma, and Meaning” (2008) CR
Estelle Freedman, Redefining Rape

Dec 2 – Enforcing Gender Through Violence and Imprisonment
Readings:

STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES
Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL:http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae).

HONOR CODE
The Honor Code is the University's statement on academic integrity written by students in 1921. It articulates University expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work:
1. The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:
   1. that they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading;
   2. that they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.
2. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code.
3. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.