

SOC 477: Feminism and Sociological Theory

Fall 2011

Lectures: Monday and Wednesday 2:30-3:45pm

Classroom: Agricultural Hall 10

Course Website: <https://learnuw.wisc.edu>

Instructor: Pilar Gonalons-Pons

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Office Hours: Monday 4:00-5:30pm or by appointment

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Feminist theories comprise a wide range of works that share a common goal: identify and analyze sources and forms of gender inequality in order to confront it. Authors will focus on different institutions, organizations, and social processes to explain the practices and dynamics of gender relations and inequality, such as law, patriarchy or prejudice, just to name a few. The link between theory, activism and politics is core to feminist theory developments.

This class provides an overview of theories from six schools of thought: liberal, radical, marxist/socialist, standpoint, multicultural/postcolonial and postmodern/poststructural. We will review and critically discuss their theoretical contributions and debates. To do so, we will analyze their key ideas, concepts, assumptions and gaps. These theoretical discussions will be followed by readings about applications to sociological research. Generally, we will combine a week on theory and another week on research topics that each theoretical perspective brings up. These pieces will serve both as illustrations and also as links between abstract formulations and concrete implementations.

The goals for this class are threefold. First of all, this class is about reading theory, which is not an easy task. Theory texts are difficult and often confusing. For this reason, this class aims to guide you through the readings and provide you tips to successfully read and understand these texts independently. On average, we read 40 pages for each class. You need to leave enough time to do the readings and pay careful attention to the argument. Second, this class is also about discussion. The best way to learn theories is by discussing and interrogating them in class. You should always be ready to actively participate in class. There is no stupid question in theory. Discussion should serve for raising questions or doubts and also to critically examine the readings. We should be aware that feminist theories often bring up sensitive and politically controversial topics. It is my goal that our class is a safe environment where we can all talk calmly and directly about these issues, with an open mind to respect and learn from each other. Last but not least, this class aims to enhance your skills for critical thinking and writing. By means of discussion and assignments you will learn how to critically review texts, evaluate them in relation to each other and elaborate your opinion. Overall, this class will provide the basic knowledge and skills to incorporate feminist thinking in your future projects.

Class organization

Every day I will get us started with a short presentation (about 15m) to contextualize the topic and the most important questions and concepts to discuss. After that, the class will be open for debate. Discussion will be the first and foremost goal of our meetings. For this reason, it is very important that you come prepared. I will post some reflection questions every week at learn@UW that can guide your own inquiries.

The course is structured in seven sections:

0. Week 2, Introduction
1. Week 3-4, Liberal feminism. Applications to labor market.
2. Week 5-6, Radical feminism. Applications to bodies and sexuality.
3. Week 7-9, Marxist feminism and Standpoint. Applications to housework and care work.
5. Week 10-12, Multicultural/Postcolonial feminism and intersectionality. Applications to nationalism and gender
6. Week 13-14, Postmodern/poststructural feminism. Applications to masculinity
7. Week 15 - The politics of theory

Students should have some background on gender studies and social sciences. If some student does have trouble following the class, please come and see me during my office hours.

Classroom rules: electronic devices (computers, cell phones, etc) are not allowed in class because they obstruct productive discussion. You won't need to take notes; I will post all the materials in class.

Academic misconduct: I will follow the university policies on academic misconduct (including but not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, etc.) Complete information can be found at www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/academic_misconduct.html

Class requirements

1. Attendance and participation (15 points)

I will take attendance every day. You can miss two classes without your grade being affected. If you miss more classes without a satisfactory explanation your grade will drop significantly (i.e. a full letter grade every two-additional absences). In addition to attendance, you are required to actively participate in class.

2. Reading reactions (15 points)

You need to do the assigned readings before each class. This will guarantee that our discussions are productive and engaging. Additionally, you will need to hand in **reading**

reactions before each class. These should include one-paragraph where you critically engage the readings (i.e. discuss a certain topic or concept about the readings) and two or more questions for discussion. The reading reactions are not summaries, they are meant to get you in the habit of interrogating the readings.

The reading reactions are DUE at 10am before each class, you should POST them on the corresponding discussion board at learn@UW. Late reading reactions will not be accepted. You will need to hand in 15 reading reactions to obtain full points.

3. Two analytic papers (30 points)

You should pick one theoretical reading from two sections, one from the first half of the semester and the other one from the second half, and write a 3-4 page analytic review of that piece. The goal of this exercise is that you relate concrete pieces to each school of thought, critically assess the argument that the author is making and relating it to application and other theoretical readings.

First analytic paper is due Wednesday 11/2. The second analytic paper is due the last day of class Wednesday 12/14. Hand in hard copies in class.

4. Five Quizzes (35 points)

You will take a short quiz (about 30 minutes) the last day of each section. These tests will consist of multiple-choice and short-answer questions. Tests will cover content from the readings and general topics we discuss in class. These quizzes aim to make sure you understand the main concepts, theories and implications of each school of thought, they do not intend to make you memorize. By attending and participating in class and reviewing your reading notes should be enough to successfully pass these quizzes.

5. Bonus points activity last day of class (5 points): TBA

Additional requirements for honor students:

Students who take the class for honors should write an additional analytic paper (due the last day of class 12/14) and two 1-page reflection papers about two of the recommended readings (the first due on Wednesday 11/2 and the second one due the last day of class, Wednesday 12/14).

Grades: A 93-100 AB 88-92 B 83-87 BC 78-82 C 70-77
D 60-69F below 60

Required books

R.W. Connel (2009) Gender. Polity

R. Tong (2009) Feminist Thought. A More Comprehensive Introduction. Westview

C. J. Pascoe (2007) Dude you're a fag. UC Press.

*Note: start reading Pascoe's book soon enough. We will entirely discuss it over one week. Do not leave it for the week prior to discussion.

You can buy the books at Room of One's Own (located downtown, very close to state street, at 307 West Johnson St. - <http://www.roomofonesown.com/>). I strongly recommend buying the books there so that we support local stores and the wide variety of community activities and services offered by this store. You also have these same books on reserve at the College Library. Unfortunately, the library only owns the earlier versions of Connell and Tong's book. These earlier editions are slightly different. If you plan to use the earlier edition thorough the semester you should let me know, but I strongly recommend you to buy the new editions.

Additional readings are posted online on the course website at learn@UW. I will also make available a course package at the Social Sciences Copy Center for readings starting 9/21.

CALENDAR OF READINGS

WEEK 1 - Introduction

Wed 9/7 Syllabus and course introduction.

WEEK 2 – Theorizing gender and the need for theory

Mon 9/12 Lorde (1977) Poetry is no Luxury
Chafetz (1997) Feminist Theory and Sociology
Connell (2002) Gender. (ch 1-2, pp. 1-27 both versions)

Wed 9/14 Connell (2002) Gender (ch.3-5, pp. 24-96 old version; ch. 4-6, pp. 50-114 new version)

*Recommended: Acker (1973) Women and Social Stratification
Scott (1986) Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis

WEEK 3 – Liberal Feminism

Mon 9/19 Tong (2009) Feminist Thought, Ch1. "Liberal Feminism" (11-45)

Wed 9/21 Wollstonecraft (1792) A vindication of the Rights of Women.
Mills (1870) The Subjection of Women
Friedan (1963) The Feminine Mystique
NOW (1966) Statement of Purpose
Nussbaum (1999) Feminism, Internationalism and Liberalism (1-14)

WEEK 4 – Theory applications to labor market research

Mon 9/26 Kanter (1977) Men and Women of the Corporation (207-210)
Epstein (2007) A theory of Female Subordination
Crittenden (2001) The Mommy Tax
Jacobs and Gerson (2004) The Time Divide (192-202)

Wed 9/28 Quiz (30m)
Clips and final discussion

WEEK 5 – Radical Feminism

Mon 10/3 Tong (2009) Feminist Thought. Ch 2, “Radical Feminism” (48-95)

Wed 10/5 Marilyn Frye (1978) Some Reflections on Separatism and Power
Daly (1978) Gyn/Ecology (pp. 1-9)
Rich (1980) Compulsory heterosexuality

*Recommended: MacKinnon (1982) Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: An Agenda for Theory

WEEK 6 – Theory applications to body and sexuality research

Mon 10/10 MacKinnon (1987) Sexual Harassment (p. 103-116)
Bernstein (2007) Temporarily yours (pp. 1-22)
hooks (1997[1992]) Selling Hot Pussy.

Wed 10/12 Quiz (30m)
Clips and final discussion.

WEEK 7 – Marxist/Socialist Feminism

Mon 10/17 Tong (2009) Feminist Thought. Ch 3, “Marxist Feminism” (96-128)

Wed 10/19 Hartmann (1976) The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism:
Towards a More Progressive Union
Acker (1999) Rewriting Class, Race and Gender.

*Recommended: Hartman (1976) Capitalism, patriarchy and job segregation by sex
Walby (1986) Towards a New Theory on Patriarchy.

WEEK 8 – Standpoint Theory. Critiques to knowledge.

Mon 10/24 Harding (1987) Introduction. Is there a feminist method?
Smith (1987) Women’s perspective as a Radical Critique of Sociology
Hartsock (1987) The Feminist Standpoint

Wed 10/26 Haraway (1988) Situated Knowledges.
Harding (1993) Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology

WEEK 9 – Theory applications to Housework and Care Work.

Mon 10/31 Glenn (1992) “From Servitude to Service Work: Historical Continuities in the Racial Division of Paid Reproductive Labor”
Folbre (2001) The Invisible Heart (17-21, 225-232)
Parreñas (2008) Patriarchy and Neoliberalism in the Globalization of Care (40-61)

Wed 11/2 DUE: FIRST ANALYTIC PAPER
Quiz (30m)
Clips for final discussion

WEEK 10 – Multicultural and Postcolonial Feminism.

Mon 11/7 Tong (2009) Feminist thought. (ch 6, 200-236)

Wed 11/9 Mohanty (2003) Under Western Eyes (17-42)
Hooks (1981) Sisterhood: political solidarity between women.

*Recommended: Anzaldua (1987) Conciencia mestiza

WEEK 11 – Intersectionality Theory: integrating multiple axes of domination

Mon 11/14 Collins (1990) Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment.
Glenn (2000) The Social Construction and Institutionalization of Gender and Race (3-27; pages 27-43 recommended)

Wed 11/16 Hancock (2007) When Multiplication Doesn't Equal Quick Addition
Choo and Ferree (2010) Practicing Intersectionality

WEEK 12 – Theory Applications to Nationalism and Gender

Mon 11/21 Quiz (30 min)
Collins, Patricia Hill (2001) “Like one of the family”
Espiritu (2001) “We don't sleep around like white girls do”
Booth (2010) “A magic bullet for the ‘African’ mother?”

Wed 11/23 Continue discussions. Watch clips from documentary Maquilapolis

*Recommended: Glenn (2002) Unequal Freedom

WEEK 13 – Postmodern/Poststructural Feminism

Mon 11/28 Tong (2009) Feminist Thought. (Ch8, 270-290)

Butler (1993) Performative acts and gender constitution (415-427)

Wed 11/30 Candance and Zimmerman (1985) Doing gender

Deutsch (2007) Undoing gender

WEEK 14 – Theory Applications to Masculinities

Mon 12/5 Pascoe (2007) Dude You're a Fag

Wed 12/7 Pascoe (2007) Dude You're a Fag

*Recommended: Butler (1993) Bodies that Matter (1-23)

WEEK 15 – The Politics of Theory

Mon 12/12 Quiz (30min)

hooks (1991) Theory as a liberatory practice

Clips from: feminism controversies, challenges and actions.

Wed 12/14 DUE: SECOND ANALYTIC PAPER

Group presentations and last discussion