

## **ENGL 6360: Topics in Feminist Theory**

**Instructor:** Dr. P. Ingram

**Semester:** Spring 2018

**Office:** 410 Carlisle

**Class Time & Room:** T 2-4:50, CAR 212

**Office Hours:** T/R: 11:00-12:30pm

**Email:** pingram@uta.edu

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This course will introduce students to foundational and new concepts in Feminist Theory. A guiding concern will be the question of what it means to live a “Feminist Life” in theory, in practice, and in politics. We will begin with an overview of various feminist methodologies, engaging with some early feminist work, and then undertake a more in-depth examination of many of the influential texts of the field, including those by Judith Butler, Luce Irigaray, Donna Haraway, Gayle Rubin, Susan Bordo, and others. We will then turn to contemporary feminist engagement in social justice movements and politics, including LGBTQ activism, #BLM, the 2017 Women’s March, #Me Too, and examine the impact on culture of public feminist activism.

**This course is a requirement of the Women’s and Gender Studies Graduate Certificate.**

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

- To develop knowledge of some of the key concepts central to feminist thought of the nineteenth, twentieth, and early twenty-first century.
- To recognize the impact of feminist work in a number of fields including literature, economics, politics, media studies, and aesthetics.
- To engage with feminist issues relevant to our cultural moment, and to understand the ongoing importance of feminist critiques of culture.
- To understand how feminist methodologies can be utilized in students’ own research.

### **TEXTS:**

#### **Required:**

- Valerie Tong and Tina Botts, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*. Fifth Edition, 2018.
- Ahmed, Sara. *Living a Feminist Life*. 2017
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One’s Own*. 1929. Any edition will do.
- Bordo, Susan. *The Destruction of Hillary Clinton*. 2017

**Other weekly readings will be available as numbered PDFs on BlackBoard**

### **REQUIREMENTS:**

Presentation: 25%

7 short (2-3 page) papers: 35%

1 long (15-20 page) paper: 40%

### Grading Scale:

A= 90-100      D= 60-69  
B= 80-89      F= 59 and below  
C= 70-79

### Short Papers

- On some weeks, you will have a writing assignment as well as a reading assignment to complete for class. **The writing prompt is included in the syllabus for that week.** Be sure to answer the question/s asked of you.
- Papers should be submitted via BB before class on the week they are due. You should also bring a hardcopy to class for discussion.

### Presentation and Final Paper

- Student presentations will be conducted in the last two weeks of the semester. **The topic for the presentation will also be the topic for your paper** and will be based on the call for papers (cfp) in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. The cfp can be found here: <http://signsjournal.org/for-authors/calls-for-papers/#public>. The cfp and our assignment is motivated by *The Feminist Public Intellectuals Project (FPIP)* and *#Feminist Resistance* initiated by *Signs*.
- You should attempt to engage with one of the prompts in the cfp adapting it to your own areas of interest or research. You might find it useful to utilize the texts and discussions in the forums of the FPIP-- *Ask a Feminist*, *Short Takes*, and *Currents* <http://signsjournal.org/feminist-public-intellectuals-project/> as the basis or starting point for your own examination. The topics in these forums are wide ranging and should allow you some scope to find something of interest to you. You don't have to use these forums, but your topic must meet the parameters in the cfp prompt.
- The presentation will last for **20-25 minutes**. You will present an overview of your topic, why you chose it, and how you see it fitting into the discourse of public feminism (broadly defined). You will present your argument and your research in a coherent and productive way. *This is not a preliminary exercise*. By the time you present on your topic, you should have completed the research for the paper, and perhaps have a rough draft of it. **You should clear your topic with me no later than the last week of March.**

### Presentations will be evaluated on:

- How well your research and topic reflect the *Signs* cfp on public feminism.
- The coherence of your research and your ability to explain its significance to the class.
- Your level of organization and preparedness in relation to your research.

- The clarity of your answers to questions presented by your peers in relation to your topic

## **PLAGIARISM**

In both oral and written communication, the following guidelines for avoiding plagiarism must be followed:

1. Any words quoted directly from a source must be in quotation marks (for a written assignment and referenced for an oral presentation) and cited.
2. Any paraphrasing or rephrasing of the words and/or ideas of a source must be cited.
3. Any ideas or examples derived from a source that are not in the public domain or of a general knowledge must be cited.
4. All papers and presentations must be the student's own work.

Students who are confused about what constitutes plagiarism should meet with me.

Academic Honesty is expected of all students. Cheating and plagiarism are violations of academic honesty. Any student caught violating the academic honesty code will be failed for the entire semester and the matter will be reported, with documentation, to the Office of Student Conduct for further disciplinary action.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Students who need accommodations are asked to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes, or earlier if accommodations are needed immediately. Bring a copy of all relevant paperwork to the meeting. If you do not have a notification for accommodations but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office for Students with Disabilities, 102 University Hall, 2-3364.

**Student Support Services:** UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as lecture, seminar, or laboratory shall be directed to complete a Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Assignment Schedule (subject to change)**

Readings are due on the date recorded and should therefore be completed BEFORE the corresponding class day.

DATE	ASSIGNMENT DUE/CLASS ACTIVITIES
Week 1 T 1/16	<b>Reading:</b> Ahmed, Intro and Part I (chapters 1-3)
Week 2 T 1/23	<p><b>Reading:</b> Ahmed, <i>Living a Feminist Life</i></p> <p><b>Writing:</b> Reflect on Ahmed's book. Some topics to consider: your own feminist journey (don't include anything you wouldn't want to share with the class); how feminist theory can be generated by living a feminist life; what it means to be a feminist "killjoy"; how to establish feminist bonds, etc. This is personal/critical writing. It doesn't have to be formal, analytical prose, but it should engage intelligently with the issues Ahmed discusses.</p> <p><b>~2-3 typed pages double-spaced</b></p>
Week 3 T 1/30	<b>Reading:</b> <i>Feminist Thought</i> , Introduction and Chapter 1, "Liberal Feminism"; <b>PDF #1</b> , Excerpts from Wollstonecraft, Grimke, Stanton, Taylor, Truth
Week 4 T 2/6	<p><b>Reading:</b> Woolf, <i>Room of One's Own</i>; <b>PDF #2</b> Du Plessis</p> <p><b>Writing:</b> What does it mean to write "like" or "as" a "woman"? Consider the various permutations of this question addressed by both Woolf and Du Plessis? What are the opportunities and limitations of understanding writing as gendered? Are these approaches still relevant or useful in our gender-fluid, techno, cyborg world?</p> <p><b>~2-3 typed pages double-spaced</b></p>

Week 5 T 2/13	<p><b>Reading:</b> <i>Fem Thought</i>, Chapter 2, “Radical Feminism”; <b>PDF#3</b> Rubin, MacKinnon</p> <p><b>Writing:</b> Examine MacKinnon’s arguments about pornography and rape in light of Rubin’s analysis of the sex/gender system. How are these systems related in patriarchy? Give examples. Consider the role of pornography in our culture today. Does MacKinnon’s analysis still hold up? What role might technology, specifically the techno-porn industry, play in the sex/gender system?  <b>~2-3 pages double-spaced</b></p>
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Week 6 T 2/20	<p><b>Reading:</b> <i>Fem Thought</i>, Chapter 3, “Marxist and Socialist Feminism”; <b>PDF #4</b> Hartmann and Hochschild</p>
Week 7 T 2/27	<p><b>Reading:</b> <i>Fem Thought</i>, Chapter 4, “Women of Color Feminisms”; <b>PDF #5</b> Collins, Crenshaw, Mohanty</p> <p><b>Writing:</b> Collins, Crenshaw, and Mohanty appear to address different audiences in their essays. Consider these differences; who are they writing to? Why? What are some of the connections between racism and patriarchy explored by these authors? How, according to the authors are these issues experienced in the academy? Are these tensions as evident/more evident today?  <b>~2-3 pages double-spaced</b></p>
Week 8 T 3/6	<p><b>Reading:</b> <i>Fem Thought</i>, Chapter 6, “Psychoanalytic Feminism”; <b>PDF #6</b> Chodorow, Irigaray</p>
Week 9 T 3/13	<p><b>SPRING BREAK</b></p>
Week 10 T 3/20	<p><b>Reading:</b> <i>Fem Thought</i>, Chapter 8, “Ecofeminism” <b>PDF #7</b> Haraway, Alaimo</p> <p><b>Writing:</b> Both Haraway and Alaimo discuss the importance of ethics in environmental feminism. How does each imagine such an ethics to work in everyday life? How do animals fit into the environmental paradigm? Why do Haraway, Alaimo, and other theorists/activists see environmental practice as implicitly feminist or feminine? Is this association productive, in your view?  <b>~2-3 pages double-spaced</b>  <b>**Make sure to meet with me this week or next to discuss your presentation/paper topic**</b></p>

Week 11 T 3/27	<p><b>Reading:</b> <i>Fem Thought</i>, Chapter 9 “Existentialist, Poststructural, and Postmodern Feminisms.” <b>PDF#8</b> Beauvoir, Butler</p> <p><b>Writing:</b> Outline the main elements of Butler’s critique of Beauvoir. How do the existentialist and poststructuralist positions ultimately differ? Which seems most productive to you? Why?  <b>~2-3 pages double-spaced</b></p>
Week 12 T 4/3	<p><b>BODIES</b></p> <p><b>Reading: PDF#9</b> Butler, Bordo, Garland-Thompson, Preciado</p>
Week 13 T 4/10	<p><b>SOCIAL JUSTICE MOVEMENTS</b></p> <p><b>Reading: Note these are three separate readings:</b> Cohen, "<a href="#">Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens</a>";</p> <p>Garza, “A herstory of the #Black Lives Matter movement”  <a href="http://www.thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/">http://www.thefeministwire.com/2014/10/blacklivesmatter-2/</a>;</p> <p><b>Ask a Feminist: A Conversation with Cathy J. Cohen on Black Lives Matter, Feminism, and Contemporary Activism.</b> <a href="http://signsjournal.org/ask-a-feminist-cohen-jackson/">http://signsjournal.org/ask-a-feminist-cohen-jackson/</a></p>
Week 14 T 4/17	<p><b>POLITICS</b></p> <p><b>Reading:</b> Bordo, <i>The Destruction of Hillary Clinton</i> AND  <a href="http://signsjournal.org/destruction-of-hillary-clinton/">http://signsjournal.org/destruction-of-hillary-clinton/</a></p> <p><b>Writing:</b> Open reflection on the arguments about Hillary made by Bordo in the book and the responses to it by the commentators on the <i>Signs</i> website.</p>
Week 15 T 4/24	<p><b>Student Presentations—see instructions above</b></p> <p><a href="http://signsjournal.org/feminist-public-intellectuals-project/">http://signsjournal.org/feminist-public-intellectuals-project/</a></p>
Week 16 T 5/1	<p><b>Student Presentations</b></p> <p><a href="http://signsjournal.org/feminist-public-intellectuals-project/">http://signsjournal.org/feminist-public-intellectuals-project/</a></p>
F 5/4	<b>Final Papers Due via BB</b>

**Emergency Phone Numbers:** In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at **817-272-3003** (non-campus phone), **2-3003** (campus phone). You may also dial 911.