Feminisms and Political Theory

Feminisms and Political Theory deals with the fundamental questions of human political existence: What is justice? What are the extents and limits of human freedom? How, why, and to what degree are we obligated to others? To government? A community’s answers to these questions manifests themselves in its institutional arrangements (e.g., legislative, judicial, executive; the rule of law, etc.) and in its expectations of and for membership. This course is one in the advanced study of political theory from the perspective of feminist thinkers. We will be exposed to a variety of philosophical questions concerning different aspects of gender and their implications for the way we think about the practices of politics and political community. Feminists ask whether the categories in which we ordinarily do politics are gendered masculine and consider alternative conceptions of knowledge, institutional organization, political membership and personhood. Our course will proceed in three units:

1. Feminist Theory: Women and Politics. Here we are introduced to the issues that emerge from both the historical exclusion of women from politics and the project of recognizing and including women as full persons in political life. We will identify the masculinist underpinnings of our political language and institutions, the difficulties of assuming that the term “woman” represents a single set of experiences, and the power dynamics involved in male-female relationships that otherwise are assumed to be “non-political” in nature.

2. A New Politics? Oppression, Community, and Care. In this unit, we will study alternative approaches to politics and political life suggested by feminist thinkers and others concerned with gender in politics. These approaches range from interrogating what we mean by oppression and examining its effects (both subtle and less so), reclaiming older categories like the “social contract” and “community” in a new environment and for broader, more inclusive purposes, and, finally, a major reorientation to politics that focuses upon care and attachment in addition to more traditional assumptions about competition.

3. Decolonizing Feminist Theory. In our final unit, we will encounter the work of Chandra Talpade Mohanty, an Indian feminist theorist working in America. Her work problematizes the Western, white, middle and upper middle class assumptions that still permeate feminist theory. Her work asks how non-white, non-Western women fit into feminist concerns about the role and function of women in political life and structures.

Course Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course,

1. Through direct engagement with trends in scholarship within feminist political theory, you will be able to identify, describe, and critically assess the various approaches to politics and political life that feminist theorists use.

2. You will be able to recognize and apply the methods of feminist political theory to key questions of modern political life through research and reflection, written and oral communication, and both formal and informal modes of interpersonal interaction.

3. You will be able to identify and practice select norms of the political science profession, including peer evaluation, presentation of work, and the development of a collaborative and scholarly intellectual community.

The format of the seminar is hybrid, a blend of face-to-face seminar and computer-based learning on Blackboard. Much of the course learning activity has been moved online, making it possible for our class time to be spent in discussion of our work in issues related to our subject matter. Our face-to-face time will be student-driven presentation and discussion. All discussion and written work in the seminar is intended to develop your critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. Discussions and presentations are intended to develop your public voice to go with the voice trained and given expression in written work. In the course, you will be introduced to the practices of political science. You are the show and your grade will reflect your performance.

Blackboard

All online work for this hybrid course will be done on Blackboard. All relevant information may be found on this course’s page there. It is the student’s responsibility to keep up with assignments, due dates, etc.
POLS 5350—FEMINISMS AND POLITICAL THEORY

Texts
The following texts are required and available at the UT-Tyler Bookstore:

– Ann E. Cudd and Robin O. Andreasen, Feminist Theory: A Philosophical Anthology (Blackwell, 2005)

Selections will be posted on Blackboard as part of the required readings.

Select youtube videos are also required texts for this course and are posted on Blackboard.

Course Requirements

All grading is done on a 10-point scale: A = 90-100; b = 80-89; C = 70-79... Remember that in graduate courses, a grade of “C” or below is considered a failing grade.

The formal requirements of the course and their relative impact on your grade are as follows:

(1) Class Participation Formal and Informal 10%
You are expected to attend class weekly and to participate in our class discussions. This is not a lecture class; it is a seminar. Bring your readings, your questions, your answers, and your insights to class and be ready to articulate and discuss them.

(2) Reading Summaries (due Monday by 6pm of online week) 10%
Each subunit (every other week) when you are not writing a formal essay, you will post one paragraph (250 word) analytical summaries of each reading (one paragraph for each chapter or essay unless otherwise noted). Your analytical summary paragraph should (1) identify the main argument(s) of the work, (2) the major points the author is trying to make, and (3) how he or she used those points and examples to make the argument. Your paragraph should not be a list of answers to the above questions or a set of statements from your notes or a list of any sort. Rather, it should be a well-conceived and readable description of the work that would communicate its meaning and significance to someone who has not read the work.

(3) Peer Response to Summaries (due Wednesday 6pm of online week) 10%
Each subunit, when you are not writing a formal essay, you will post a one paragraph response (300 words) to the summaries (as a whole) of one of your group-mates. Your response should be written in the mode of being helpful and supportive, but it must also be more substantial than “nice job.” Specifically, your response should address the following: (1) Can you identify the general argument and major points of the work in the summaries? (2) Are the summaries clear and well-written (one paragraph, concise but complete sentences, etc.)? (3) Note if and where the summaries brought out important points that you may have overlooked. Again you are writing a paragraph, not a list of answers to these questions. Be thoughtful, clear, and helpful.

(4) Issue Identification Exercises (due Friday 6pm of each online week) 10%
Each subunit, when you are not writing a formal essay, identify (2) key issues or questions you find in this week’s readings that need to be developed and discussed in our face-to-face meeting. For each issue, post a brief paragraph (150-200 words) in which you (1) clearly identify the issue; (2) explain where and how you encountered it in our reading; and (3) explain why the issue is urgent. Come to class ready to explain and discuss your work with your classmates.

(5) Peer Response to Draft Essay (due Thursday 6pm of online essay weeks) 10%
In online weeks when essays are being prepared, you will write and post a one paragraph response (300 words) to the draft of your group partner’s essay. Your response should be written in the mode of being helpful and supportive, but it must also be more substantial than “nice job.” Specifically, your response should address the following: (1) Can you identify the general argument and major points of the essay? (2) Are the essay’s points drawn together in a way that is readily understood by the reader? (3) Is the essay clear and well-written (uses paragraphs, concise but complete sentences, etc.)? (4) Does the essay bring out important points that you may have overlooked. Again you are writing a paragraph, not a list of answers to these questions. Be thoughtful, clear, and helpful.
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(6) Essays (2 x 15% each) and Final Essay (20%)

At the end of Unit 2 (Schmitt) and Unit 3 (Arendt), each student will be required to write an analytical essay in response to a prompt grounded in that unit’s readings and our discussions. These essays should be not less than 5 or more than 7 pages in length (typed, 12 point font, 1 double-spaced, 1-inch margins all round). Prompts will be posted two weeks before the essay is due. You may find specific guidelines about the paper on Blackboard under the appropriate week’s assignments.

IMPORTANT: Preparation of your essays will proceed online according to the following schedule:

1) Friday of the first face-to-face week by 2pm: Post a one-paragraph (250 words) paper topic proposal for approval by your professor. Your paragraph should be well-written, clear and address itself to the following: What are the issues raised by the topic and how will you use the authors you have chosen to address them? What do you expect to find?

2) Monday 6pm of online week: Post a full draft of your essay (5-7 pages following all rules of grammar, etc.) to be evaluated by your peer respondent.

3) Thursday 6 pm of online week: Post your peer evaluation of your partner’s draft essay.

4) Monday of the face-to-face meeting: Bring a hardcopy of your final paper to class and be ready to discuss it with your colleagues.

Your Final Essay, due Tuesday, May 3 at 9am will be 7 pages in length and will cover the material of the entire course. You may find specific guidelines about the paper on Blackboard under the appropriate week’s assignments.

Notes on Etiquette or THE RULES

--Online: please interact with one another in a helpful, professional manner. We are here to form a collegial, collaborative community of scholars and to begin practicing the civil norms that go along with such a community. In other words, be nice—or else! ; ).

--Face-to-face class starts promptly. Be here on time. After the first week or so of the semester, you WILL be denied entry if you arrive more than 5 minutes late. Late arrival is disruptive to the classroom experience of your classmates and, perhaps even your professor. In any case, it works against the mission of the classroom. To this end, I suggest you not drive from class to class—gas is too expensive and we could all use the exercise.

--The format of the face-to-face class is some lecture, student presentation, and conversation. The classroom is a safe place to ask questions. But they should be questions that derive from work with and in the material and NOT because you did not do the assignment.

--You will not read newspapers, textbooks, or study for other classes while in this class. If you do so, you will be asked to leave—and in no uncertain terms.

--Turn all cellphones and other electronic devices off (or set to vibrate) for the duration of class. You are not to accept calls or engage in text messaging during class. If you do so, I will confiscate your device. If you are awaiting a call or message of extreme importance, I suggest you skip class.

--You may use a laptop, but only for the purpose of taking notes. If I catch you surfing the web, playing games, or engaged in some other activity not related to the work of the class, you will lose your laptop privileges.

--You are responsible for material missed due to absence. I suggest you exchange notes with other responsible students in any case, but particularly if you have to miss. I am happy to answer questions about this material, but will not rehearse my lectures or our class discussions.

--Some semesters, life gets in the way. Should you have one of these semesters, I am more than happy to talk to you about what to do. But if the trauma is too great, I strongly suggest you drop one or all of your courses. Your education is vitally important, but there are things that outrank even education sometimes—and you have to make that call when it is necessary. I cannot grade you on how well or poorly you deal with your life at given moments. Your grades reflect your performance in class—not how well you are dealing with other things. I wish all of us a semester in which these things aren’t issues.
SYLLABUS
Readings should be completed/videos should be viewed by the date assigned. All assignments should be completed and posted on Blackboard by the due date and times listed.

UNIT ONE: Feminist Theory: Women and Politics.
Here we are introduced to the issues that emerge from both the historical exclusion of women from politics and the project of recognizing and including women as full persons in political life. We will identify the masculinist underpinnings of our political language and institutions, the difficulties of assuming that the term “woman” represents a single set of experiences, and the power dynamics involved in male-female relationships that otherwise are assumed to be “non-political” in nature.

29 Aug M  **Face-to-Face: Introduction to Feminist Theory**
--Video: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, “We Should All Be Feminists”
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg3umXU_qWc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg3umXU_qWc)
--Video: Dr. Aprajita Kashyap, “Feminist Theory and Perspective”
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ho-HNgz3qko&list=WL&index=38](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ho-HNgz3qko&list=WL&index=38)

5 Sep M  **Online: Feminism, Politics, and Sexism**
Readings from Cudd and Andreasen, pp. 27-83:
--Simone de Beauvoir, “Introduction” from *The Second Sex*
--Kate Millett, “Theory of Sexual Politics”
--Cudd and Jones, “Sexism”

**Online Assignments (See Blackboard):** Post Summaries (Mon. 6pm); Peer Response to Summaries (Thu. 6pm); Issue Identification exercise (Fri. 6pm)

12 Sep M  **Face to Face: Feminism, Politics, and Sexism Discussion**
Readings from Cudd and Andreasen, pp. 27-83:
--Simone de Beauvoir, “Introduction” from *The Second Sex*
--Kate Millett, “Theory of Sexual Politics”
--Cudd and Jones, “Sexism”

19 Sep M  **Online: Knowing and Gender**
--Butler, “Feminism and the Subversion of Identity” from *Gender Trouble* (Blackboard)
--Genevieve Lloyd, “The Man of Reason” (Cudd and Andreasen, pp. 177-187)
--Video: Martha Nussbaum, “Political Emotions” (the first 55 minutes only)
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87hwtoLfd6I&list=WL&index=45](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87hwtoLfd6I&list=WL&index=45)

**Online Assignments (See Blackboard):** Post Summaries (Mon. 6pm); Paper Topic (Fri. 2pm)
26 Sep M  **Face to Face: Knowing and Gender**
--Butler, “Feminism and the Subversion of Identity” from *Gender Trouble* (Blackboard)
--Genevieve Lloyd, “The Man of Reason” (Cudd and Andreasen, pp. 177-187)
--Video: Martha Nussbaum, “Political Emotions” (the first 55 minutes only)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=87hwtoLfd6I&list=WL&index=45

**Online Assignments:** Draft essay (Mon. 6pm); Peer evaluation (Thu. 6pm)

3 Oct M  **Face to Face: Feminism, Politics, Knowing and Gender**
**ESSAY DUE:** Bring a hardcopy of your final paper to class and be ready to give a 15-minute presentation of your essay and discuss it with your classmates.

**UNIT TWO: A New Politics? Oppression, Community, and Care**
*In this unit, we will study alternative approaches to politics and political life suggested by feminist thinkers and others concerned with gender in politics. These approaches range from interrogating what we mean by oppression and examining its effects (both subtle and less so), reclaiming older categories like the “social contract” and “community” in a new environment and for broader, more inclusive purposes, and, finally, a major reorientation to politics that focuses upon care and attachment in addition to more traditional assumptions about competition.*

10 Oct M  **Online: Oppression**
Readings from Cudd and Andreasen, pp. 84-114:
--Marilyn Frye, “Oppression”
--Iris Marion Young, “Five Faces of Oppression”
--Sandra Bartky, “On Psychological Oppression”

**Online Assignments (See Blackboard):** Post Summaries (Mon. 6pm); Peer Response to Summaries (Thu. 6pm); Issue Identification exercise (Fri. 6pm)

17 Oct M  **Face to Face: The Problem of Oppression**
Readings from Cudd and Andreasen, pp. 84-114:
--Marilyn Frye, “Oppression”
--Iris Marion Young, “Five Faces of Oppression”
--Sandra Bartky, “On Psychological Oppression”

24 Oct M  **Online: Contract, Community, and Care**
--Carole Pateman, “The Fraternal Social Contract” (Blackboard)
--Jean Hampton, “Feminist Contractarianism” (Cudd and Andreasen, pp. 280-302)
--Marilyn Friedman, “Feminism and Modern Friendship: Dislocating the Community” (Blackboard)
--Annette C. Baier, “The Need for More than Justice” (Cudd and Andreasen, pp. 243-51)

**Online Assignments (See Blackboard):** Post Summaries (Mon. 6pm); Peer Response to Summaries (Thu. 6pm); Issue Identification exercise (Fri. 6pm)
UNIT THREE: Decolonizing Feminist Theory.

In our final unit, we will encounter the work of Chandra Talpade Mohanty, an Indian feminist theorist working in America. Her work problematizes the Western, white, middle and upper middle class assumptions that still permeate feminist theory. Her work asks how non-white, non-Western women fit into feminist concerns about the role and function of women in political life and structures.

**28 Nov M**

**Face to Face: Chandra Mohanty—Decolonizing Feminism**

--Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 1-84)
--Video: Chandra Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes”: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EDFA-bKq1o&list=WL&index=44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EDFA-bKq1o&list=WL&index=44)

**Online Assignments (See Blackboard): Post Summaries (Mon. 6pm)**

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**5 Dec M**

**Online: Decolonizing Feminism**

--Mohanty, *Feminism Without Borders*, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 1-84)
--Video: Chandra Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes”: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EDFA-bKq1o&list=WL&index=44](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9EDFA-bKq1o&list=WL&index=44)

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**14 Dec W**

**FINAL PAPER DUE online at (rleblanc@uttyler.edu) by 9am**

**IMPORTANT:** The instructor reserves the right to make appropriate adjustments in this syllabus and in course requirements as conditions warrant. He pledges NOT to make changes disadvantageous to the pedagogical mission of the course or prejudicial to the student’s opportunity to learn the course material. By staying in this class, you agree to this and all the other terms and conditions of this syllabus.
**Policy Regarding Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty is against university as well as community standards. Academic dishonesty is defined as: cheating, plagiarism, or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses.

**Plagiarism** is defined as submitting the language, ideas, or thoughts or work of another as one’s own. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- use of direct quotations without quotation marks and without credit to the source;
- paraphrasing or using direct quotations within quotation marks without credit to the source;
- failure to provide adequate citations for material obtained through electronic research;
- downloading and submitting work from electronic databases without citation;
- submitting material created/written by someone else as one’s own, including purchased term/research papers;
- allowing someone to copy or submit one’s work as his/her own;
- participation in a group project which presents plagiarized materials;
- submitting the same paper in more than one course without the knowledge and approval of the instructors involved;
- assisting in the act of plagiarism by allowing one’s work to be used in this fashion;
- aiding and abetting another student’s dishonesty.

**Cheating** is defined generally as copying from someone else’s exam, homework, or laboratory work. Types of cheating include but are not limited to:

- using notes or other materials during a test or exam without authorization;
- obtaining or providing unauthorized information during an examination through verbal, visual, or unauthorized use of books, notes, texts, or other materials;
- obtaining or providing information concerning all or part of an examination prior to that examination;
- taking an examination for another student or arranging for another person to take an exam in one’s place;
- altering or changing test answers after submitting it for grading, or after grades have been awarded;
- releasing information about an examination to anyone who has yet to take the examination.

**Disciplinary procedures for incidents of academic dishonesty may result in any of the following:**

1. permanent dismissal from the university; 2. suspension from the university for not less than one semester; 3. outright failure of the course (an automatic final grade of ‘F’); 4. canceling the student’s enrollment in the class without a grade (‘W’); 5. awarding a failing grade on the exam, test, or assignment in question; 6. requiring the student to take another examination or test on the same material or to resubmit the paper or assignment based on a specific topic.

**In all cases of substantiated academic dishonesty,** a permanent record of academic discipline will be established in the Office of the Dean of Students. These records are searched regularly by government agencies, licensing authorities, certification authorities, and others. The existence of such a record can bar entry to many occupations.

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The following University policies must appear on each course syllabus or be provided as an informational sheet (web-links to these policies may be used in the print or electronic syllabus):

http://www.utttyler.edu/academicaffairs/syllabuspolicies.pdf

**Students Rights and Responsibilities**

To know and understand the policies that affect your rights and responsibilities as a student at UT Tyler, please follow this link: http://www.utttyler.edu/wellness/rightsresponsibilities.php

**Grade Replacement/Forgiveness and Census Date Policies**

Students repeating a course for grade forgiveness (grade replacement) must file a Grade Replacement Contract with the Enrollment Services Center (ADM 230) on or before the Census Date of the semester in which the course will be repeated. Grade Replacement Contracts are available in the Enrollment Services Center or at http://www.utttyler.edu/registrar. Each semester’s Census Date can be found on the Contract itself, on the Academic Calendar, or in the information pamphlets published each semester by the Office of the Registrar.
Failure to file a Grade Replacement Contract will result in both the original and repeated grade being used to calculate your overall grade point average. Undergraduates are eligible to exercise grade replacement for only three course repeats during their career at UT Tyler; graduates are eligible for two grade replacements. Full policy details are printed on each Grade Replacement Contract.

The Census Date is the deadline for many forms and enrollment actions that students need to be aware of. These include:

- Submitting Grade Replacement Contracts, Transient Forms, requests to withhold directory information, approvals for taking courses as Audit, Pass/Fail or Credit/No Credit.
- Receiving 100% refunds for partial withdrawals. (There is no refund for these after the Census Date)
- Schedule adjustments (section changes, adding a new class, dropping without a “W” grade)
- Being reinstated or re-enrolled in classes after being dropped for non-payment
- Completing the process for tuition exemptions or waivers through Financial Aid

State-Mandated Course Drop Policy
Texas law prohibits a student who began college for the first time in Fall 2007 or thereafter from dropping more than six courses during their entire undergraduate career. This includes courses dropped at another 2-year or 4-year Texas public college or university. For purposes of this rule, a dropped course is any course that is dropped after the census date (See Academic Calendar for the specific date). Exceptions to the 6-drop rule may be found in the catalog. Petitions for exemptions must be submitted to the Enrollment Services Center and must be accompanied by documentation of the extenuating circumstance. Please contact the Enrollment Services Center if you have any questions.

Disability/Accessibility Services
In accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the ADA Amendments Act (ADAAA) the University offers accommodations to students with learning, physical and/or psychological disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible a disability diagnosis such as a chronic disease, learning disorder, head injury or ADHD, or you have a history of modifications or accommodations in a previous educational environment you are encouraged to contact the Student Accessibility and Resources office and schedule an interview with an Accessibility Case Manager. If you are unsure if the above criteria applies to you, but have questions or concerns please contact the SAR office. For more information or to set up an appointment please visit the SAR webpage (http://www.uttyler.edu/disabilityservices/) or the SAR office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to saroffice@uttyler.edu.

Student Absence due to Religious Observance
Students who anticipate being absent from class due to a religious observance are requested to inform the instructor of such absences by the second class meeting of the semester.

Student Absence for University-Sponsored Events and Activities
If you intend to be absent for a university-sponsored event or activity, you (or the event sponsor) must notify the instructor at least two weeks prior to the date of the planned absence. At that time the instructor will set a date and time when make-up assignments will be completed.

Social Security and FERPA Statement:
It is the policy of The University of Texas at Tyler to protect the confidential nature of social security numbers. The University has changed its computer programming so that all students have an identification number. The electronic transmission of grades (e.g., via e-mail) risks violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act; grades will not be transmitted electronically.

Emergency Exits and Evacuation:
Everyone is required to exit the building when a fire alarm goes off. Follow your instructor’s directions regarding the appropriate exit. If you require assistance during an evacuation, inform your instructor in the first week of class. Do not re-enter the building unless given permission by University Police, Fire department, or Fire Prevention Services.