Feminisms in Political Theory

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.

Learning Objectives and Essay Guidelines

Because political theory is about ideas and their political manifestations, the student’s focus, should be on the ideas, their implications, and the many ways they have been and could be used (for good and ill). Like the thinkers we read, our experiences and beliefs are important; but also like these thinkers, those experiences and beliefs are not all there is. In this course we will be critically analyzing critical texts in Feminist political theory. A critical analysis in political theory is, quite literally, a method of describing and evaluating an argument by separating that argument into its various parts or elements. Students will be challenged to do this in both their oral and written work in this course. Therefore, the following are both learning objectives for the course as a whole and to be applied to the works and authors we encounter in both your written and oral work in the course.

A careful analysis must begin with the text at hand. A clear and critical explanation of the meaning of the text is essential. This process is often referred to as *exegesis*. Special care should be taken to describe the general meaning of the text as accurately as possible. It is inevitable, however, that you will attach your own meaning to the text as you interpret it. This act of interpretation, a *hermeneutical act*, is a major part of your analytical essay. It is the point at which you begin to evaluate the author’s argument in terms of its component parts. This is most easily done in terms of three types of criteria: empirical, analytical, and normative.

**Empirical Evaluation:** What kinds of statements about the world or about human nature is the author making? Are they verifiable statements? Does the author make any attempt at verification? Is it a persuasive attempt? *It is only part of your responsibility, in an analytical essay, to engage in your own testing of the author’s empirical assertions.* FIRST, your role as an analyst requires you to identify those assertions.

**Analytical Evaluation:** In this aspect of your analysis, you are examining the author’s reasoning. What kinds of logical arguments is the author making? Do they make sense? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the arguments?

**Normative Evaluation:** What kinds of values are embraced by the author? Identify both the explicit and implicit values and subject them to critical evaluation.

Obviously, the above description of the analytical process is artificially fragmented. *If you proceed literally in the fashion described above, your presentation/essay will be very stilted. Don’t do it!* The point to be taken is that however you proceed, and you should search for your own analytical style, *your analysis must contain the ingredients discussed above*. A final note: an analytical essay must follow all of the rules of formal writing. Make every effort to write clearly, with proper English and punctuation, and proofread your essay. You will be held accountable.

**Texts, Grading, Requirements**

**Textbooks.** The following texts are required and available at the UT-Tyler Bookstore:

Grading. All grading is done on a 10 point scale: A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79; etc. I will use the numbers (as opposed to letters alone) to give you a clearer sense of how far you must go to reach the next level of perfection.

Course Requirements. All grading is done on a 10-point scale: A = 90-100; B = 80-89; C = 70-79... The formal requirements of the course and their relative impact on your grade are as follows:

(1) Informal Class Participation

In addition to the more formal participation requirements outlined below, students 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 and Presentation

Each week the student IS NOT preparing an essay, s/he will turn in a summary of the week’s readings. These summaries should be no more than half a page single-spaced per assigned reading. Students will be called upon to present particular readings to the class, addressing (at least) the following: (1) What are the issues raised by the author? (2) How does s/he address them? and (3) What has the essay to say to the subject matter/discussion of this course?

(3) Essays/Presentations

Beginning with Sep 28, every other week each student will be required to write an essay in response to the week’s readings. These essays should be not less than 5 nor more than 7 pages in length (typed, 12 point font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins all round). Thoroughness, clarity, and economy of style are all to be valued. In addition, students will present their essays in a 15-minute presentation designed to illuminate the relevant issues and stimulate further discussion. DO NOT READ YOUR ESSAY TO THE CLASS!

WARNING: IGNORE THE FOLLOWING PAPER GUIDELINES AT YOUR PERIL:

(1) DO NOT try to avoid addressing the issues by talking about the author’s writing style, difficulty, etc. In this class, as in all of your graduate classes in political science, you are considered a professional willing to work to understand difficult material. You can always ask the teacher for help, too, but do it BEFORE the day you turn in/present your paper.

(2) Write in reasoned, professional terms. Use your best English: there is no excuse for misspellings; make sure all of your sentences have subjects, verbs, and objects; make sure they match in number; do not use contractions; write in paragraphs (change to a new but related thought = new paragraph) above all, do not write the way you speak! Write like a professional.

(3) Focus on one or two ideas or issues that are common to all the readings. Do not simply rehearse the argument of the author—in 5-7 pages, you do not have the time! Your task is to discuss the readings in terms of the one or two most important ideas or issues that you have identified. As a start, consider the issues raised in our discussions in class and where this author/idea fits. Add your own insights where appropriate. Raise questions and critical issues—do not rant.

(4) These are NOT research papers. Limit yourself to the text before you. The assignment is designed to get you to read closely, carefully, and analytically. Resist the urge to run to the internet. Force yourself to deal with the text, come to some understanding of the issues raised, and, in this way, when presenting your paper to your colleagues, everyone will have had access to the same material.

4) Final Examination Essay

A take-home final examination consisting of a comprehensive essay question will be given to students at the last class meeting. The essay will be comprehensive and will be 6-7 pages in length. Your final will be due via electronic mail no later than 6pm on Monday, May 6, 2012. LATE PAPERS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.
Syllabus

Students are expected to have done the readings for the class day assigned and to come to class ready to discuss them. Students will be notified of any changes in the schedule of readings in a timely manner. DO NOT ASSUME that a reading will not be covered, e.g., that we appear to be behind and therefore will not “get to” that reading on time.

14 Jan M  Distribution of Syllabus and Introduction

21 Jan M  LABOR DAY HOLIDAY—no class

28 Sep M  What is Feminism?
Read in Cudd, pp 1-37:
--Mary Wollstonecraft, “Of the Pernicious Effects which Arise from the Unnatural Distinctions Established in Society”
--John Stuart Mill, The Subjection of Women
--Simone de Beauvoir, “Introduction from The Second Sex
Read in Bryson, Chapters 1-2

4 Feb M  Feminism, Politics, Sexism
Read in Cudd, pp. 37-83:
--Kate Millett, “Theory of Sexual Politics”
--Ann E. Cudd and Leslie E. Jones, “Sexism”
Read in Bryson, Chapter 10

11 Feb M  Oppression  (GROUP 1, PAPER #1 DUE)
Read in Cudd, pp. 84-114:
--Marilyn Frye, “Oppression”
--Iris Marion Young, “Five Faces of Oppression”
--Sandra Bartky, “On Psychological Oppression”
Read in Bryson, Chapter 3

18 Feb M  What is Gender?  (GROUP 2, PAPER #1 DUE)
Read in Cudd, pp. 115-153:
--Elizabeth A. Lloyd, “Pre-theoretical Assumptions in Evolutionary Explanations of Female Sexuality”
--Louise M. Antony, “Natures and Norms”
--Judith Butler, “Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire”
Read in Bryson, Chapter 11

25 Feb M  (Feminist) Epistemologies  (GROUP 1, PAPER #2 DUE)
Read in Cudd, pp. 154-209
--Sally Haslanger, “Gender and Race: (What) Are They? (What) Do We Want?”
--Genevieve Lloyd, “The Man of Reason”
--Elizabeth Anderson, “Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation and a Defense”

4 Mar M  Gendered Knowledge  (GROUP 2, PAPER #2 DUE)
Read Cudd, pp. 188-236:
--Elizabeth Anderson, “Feminist Epistemology: An Interpretation and a Defense”
--Helen E. Longino, “Can there be a Feminist Science?”
--Sandra Harding, “Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: What is ‘Strong Objectivity’?”
Read in Bryson, Chapter 13
10-15 Mar  SPRING BREAK

18 Mar M  Gender and Value (GROUP 2, PAPER #3 DUE)
Read Cudd, pp. 237-279:
--Annette C. Baier, “The Need for More than Justice”
--Joan Tronto, “An Ethic of Care”
--Eva Feder Kittay, “Vulnerability and the Moral Nature of Dependency Relations”

25 Mar M  Gender and Value (continued) (GROUP 1, PAPER #3 DUE)
Read Cudd, pp. 264-324:
--Eva Feder Kittay, “Vulnerability and the Moral Nature of Dependency Relations”
--Jean Hampton, “Feminist Contractarianism”
--Martha Nussbaum, “Women and Cultural Universals”

1 Apr M  Autonomy and Self (GROUP 2, PAPER #4 DUE)
Read Cudd, pp. 325-376:
--Jean Grimshaw, “Autonomy and Identity in Feminist Thinking”
--Marilyn Friedman, “Autonomy, Social Disruption, and Women”
--Anita L. Allen, “Forgetting Yourself”
--Susan Brison, “Outliving Oneself”

8 Apr M  What Would Liberation Be? (GROUP 1, PAPER #4 DUE)
Read Cudd, pp. 377-421:
--Simone de Beauvoir, “Conclusion from The Second Sex”
--Catherine A. MacKinnon, “Difference and Dominance: On Sex Discrimination”
--Susan Moller Okin, “Toward a Humanist Justice”
--Drucilla Cornell, “Feminism, Utopianism, and the Role of the Ideal in Political Philosophy”

15 Apr M  Decolonizing Feminism
Read Mohanty, Feminism Without Borders, Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 1-84)

22 Apr M  Demystifying Capitalism and Reorienting Feminism
Read Mohanty, Feminism Without Borders, Chapters 7-9 (pp. 169-253)

29 Apr M  Reading and Research Day—no class meeting

6 May M  FINAL PAPER DUE

Notes on Classroom Etiquette or THE RULES
--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 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.
Notes on Classroom Etiquette (continued)
--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.

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.

POLICIES THAT MUST APPEAR IN EACH COURSE SYLLABUS

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://www2.uttyler.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.uttyler.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 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 psychiatric disabilities. If you have a disability, including non-visible disabilities such as chronic diseases, learning disabilities, head injury, PTSD 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 the Accessibility Case Manager/ADA Coordinator, Cynthia Lowery Staples. 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 office located in the University Center, Room 3150 or call 903.566.7079. You may also send an email to cstaples@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.