

Women's Studies 10: Feminist Perspectives on Women and Society

Instructor: Dr. Sharon Bays

UCLA Fall Quarter 2003

Office: 240 Kinsey Hall

Office Hours: Monday 2-3 and Wednesday 11-11:45

Course Description:

This course is designed to explore the condition of women's lives, in of themselves, in relation to each other and to men. We will assume that these conditions are not the same for all women, that they change historically and oftentimes according to race, class, ethnicity or sexuality. We also want to ask if there are some conditions that women everywhere may share. What are our commonalities? We will want to know: How can feminist theory help us to understand specific problems critical to women in the U.S.? Through a critical analysis of a diverse selection of texts -- theoretical, literary and visual -- by and about women, students will be encouraged to develop their own ideas about the ways that feminist thought and practice "aid in the process of self-recovery" in ways that "transform self, community and society" (bell hooks).

Women's Studies 10 is designed as a course that surveys a number of women's studies topics. Issues we will explore in this class include women, work and the division of labor, sexuality and health, violence against women, women's social and political activism, the influence of the media, family ideologies and changing gender roles. Students will study these topics in and of themselves but also explore the theoretical links among them. We will also investigate the relationship of gender, race and sexuality to state policies that effect us all. Two of the central premises of this class are that 1) we live in an unequal society, based largely upon the socially constructed categories of race, class, gender and sexuality and that 2) to begin to change these power inequalities, we must first examine our own position of relative power and the ways in which we act to uphold forms of oppression that are harmful to us all.

Required Texts: Purchase the Andersen book at the UCLA Store: Textbook Division.

Andersen, Margaret L. 2003. Thinking About Women: Sociological Perspectives on Sex and Gender. Sixth Edition. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company.

Women's Studies 10 Reader. Compiled by Dr. Sharon Bays. Purchase at Westwood Copies, 1001 Gayley (310 208-3233).

Course Goals:

1. Establish an atmosphere for critical and alternative thinking.
2. Raise our collective consciousness about a number of negative processes such as sexism, racism, classism and homophobia, a number of positive actions like the movements against these oppressions and possibilities such as collective action, etc.
3. Assist students in the translation of the concrete conditions of their lives into a theoretical perspective and the reverse.
4. To think about the integration of race, class, gender and sexuality in the class and in our lives.

Course Requirements:

1. Lecture: You are expected to attend the lectures and be responsible for your own notes. Most of the potential exam questions come from lectures and section discussions (see below). Videos and films are thoughtfully integrated into course issues and they are entertaining. Attend, enjoy and take notes. In most cases, there will be time for discussion after viewing the film.

2. Section: You are expected to come to your section having completed the readings and prepared to question and discuss the issues raised in the articles. This course has a heavy reading load, including difficult articles and chapters that you may want to read more than once. Read actively. Make notes, raise questions and identify themes and central ideas as you read. These notes can be a springboard for class discussions. Class attendance, completion of readings, journals (see below) and participation (30% of grade).

Journal: You will keep an ongoing journal to sort out your thoughts about issues that relate to class materials. The journal will not be a summary of course materials but rather an opportunity to reflect on the questions they raise in your own life.. Feel free to write down ideas, images, dialogues or conversations, observations and poems. Most of the journals will be directed by the professor. This means she will give you questions on which to ponder and expound, as ever, mindful of the readings and your own experience. In the latter part of the quarter students will also interview family members/mentors or friends with specific questions in mind. Students will also create a *model for activism*, or a prescription for change, in which they will address a social problem. Journals must be typed and dated for credit -- at least one and a half to three pages. No credit will be given when assignments are not completed. Journals are critical to this course and are due at section (see Section For grade%) all weeks except for week one.

The first journal is due on October 1 in class and will address these three questions: What do you know about feminism? Where did you learn it and from whom? Why are you taking this class?

3. Mid-term Exam: The mid term will be a combination of term identifications, short essays and a long essay. (30% of grade).

4. Final Exam: the final exam will be a combination of term identifications, short essays and long essays. ((40% of grade)

Considerations for Class Discussions and Conversation:

Critical thinking (a requirement) often involves self-examination and questioning. In this class, you will incorporate a significant new component in this effort: you will also consider your classmates' location/situation in the process of thinking about your own. This involves the art of active listening. Please work on this skill.

Engaging in critical thinking means that we will often rub against the grain of our own expectations and assumptions. This could be a good thing.

It may be more productive to formulate good questions and to explore the possibilities than to think we have to come up with hard and fast solutions.

Try not to interrupt while another person is speaking.

Everyone who wants to speak will have a chance to speak before anyone can speak twice.

While personal experiences of racism, sexism, classism and homophobia are highly valued, keep in mind that we are trying to understand these intersecting oppressions as not just personally experienced but as fundamentally rooted in the exercise of political and economic power that shapes our social formation.

Class Gatherings by date:

--**September 29: Introduction** : description and expectations of course/ introductions/ readings, reader, how to read/ assignments, paper, weekly journals/ thoughts on class discussions, dialogues, conversations, questions.

--October 1: Introduction to Feminist Thinking:

Readings: Chapter 1 in Thinking About Women (hereafter referred to as Thinking).

"Let's Get Real About Feminism: The Backlash, the myths, the movement." Ms. Sept. '93. In Reader.

"Selections from Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism and the Future.

Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards. In Reader.

"Ms. Goes to College." Ms. Aug/Sept. 2001. In Reader.

"Commonalities and Differences" Johnnetta B. Cole. In Reader.

"Designing an Inclusive Curriculum: Bringing All Women Into the Core." Elizabeth Higgenbotham. In Reader.

Film: My Feminism.

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-- October 6-8: Social Construction of Gender, Race and Class:

Historical Underpinnings and Contemporary Identities:

Readings: Chapter 2 in Thinking.

"White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies" Peggy McIntosh. In Reader.

"Is Multiracial Status Unique: The Personal and Social Experience." Michael Thornton. In Reader.

"School Segregation is Growing, Report Finds." L.A. Times. 6/99. In Reader.

"The Development of Chicana Feminist Discourse," 1970-1980." Alma Garcia. In Reader.

"Some Home Truths on the Contemporary Black Feminist Movement." By Barbara Smith. From *Words of Fire*. In Reader.

"To Be Black, Male and Feminist: Making Womanist Space for Black Men on the Even of a New Millennium." Gary Lemons. In Reader.

--October 13: Images of Women in the Media.

Readings: Chapter 3 in Thinking.

"How Can Media Coverage of Women be Improved?" Maurine Beasley. Reader.

“No News Is Women’s News.” Junior Bridge. In Reader.
“Miss Physically Fit America.” L.A. Times. Reader.
“An Identity Reduced to a Burka.” In Reader.
“No Comment” and Gallery of Offender” Ads in Reader.
“Material Girl: The Effacement of Postmodern Culture.” Susan Bordo. In The Gender/Sexuality Reader. Edited by Roger Lancaster and Macaela di Leonardo. Routledge. 1997. In Reader.
Films: Killing Us Softly 3.
Barbie Nation

--October 15: Sexual Politics I: Women, Health and Reproduction:

Readings: Chapter 7 in Thinking.
“ Judge Orders Coverage of Birth Control.” L.A. Times 6/13/01. In Reader.
“ Catholics Lose Case On Contraception.” L.A. Times 7/3/01. In Reader.
“California: A Political Landscape for Choice and Conflict.” Michael Russo. In Reader.
Political Cartoon in L.A. Times. In Reader.
“State Issues Apology for Policy of Sterilization.” By Carl Ingram. In Reader.
“Strategies (for reproductive control) in colonial America.” Janet Farrell Brodie. In Reader.
“La Sufrida: Contradictions of Acculturation and Gender in Latina Health.” Denise Segura and Adela De La Torre. In Reader.
“Ergonomics A Woman’s Issue? They Suffer More Injuries Targeted in Defeated Safety Rules.” L.A. Times 3/11/01. In Reader.

--October 20: Body Consciousness: Rethinking the Politics of Thinness

Readings: "Being Thin is Now Fashion to Die For." Ellen Goodman. In Reader
“Gallery of Offender” Ads. In Reader.
"A Way Outa No Way": Eating Problems Among African American, Latina and White Women." Becky Thompson. In Reader.
Film. The Pill.

--October 22-27: Sexual Politics 11: Sexuality, Power and Violence

Readings: Chapter 4 in Thinking.
“Sexual Violence in the Politics and Policies of Conquest: Amerindian Women and the Spanish Conquest of Alta California.” Antonia Castaneda. In Reader.
“Asian Pacific American Women and Racialized Sexual Harassment.” Sumi K. Cho. In Reader.
“Poverty, Rape, Adult/Teen Sex: Why Pregnancy Prevention Programs Don’t Work.” Mike Males. In Reader.
“Producing the Battered Woman: Shelter Politics and the Power of the Feminist Voice.” by Karen Kendrick. In Reader.
“Hard Choices: Teen Mothers Fear Returning to Unstable Homes to Retain Federal Benefits.” by Lisa Richardson. In Reader.
“The Problem of Rape on Campus.” Project on the Status and Education of Women. In Reader.
Appendix A from the UCLA Catalog on Definitions/Information: Rape and Sexual Harassment/Assault. In Reader.
“Healing the Body and Spirit.” L.A. Times 1/15/51. Reader.

“Fact sheet: What to do if it happens to you. In Reader.
“51% of rape victims are girls under 18.” In Reader.
“Half of Women in Prison System were Victims of Abuse, Report Says.” In Reader.
“Homophobia: Why Bring it up?” Barbara Smith. in Reader.
“Women, Men and Aggression in an Egalitarian Society.” Maria Lepowsky. In Reader.
Film: Tough Guise and review for the mid-term exam on the 27th.

--October 29-Mid term. Bring a blue book.
--No journal due midterm exam week

--November 3-5: Women and Work

Readings: Chapter 5 in Thinking.

“Uneven Development: Class, Race and Gender in the US Before 1900.” Leith Mullings. In Reader.

L.A. Times articles on Women and Work, The Glass Ceiling and Affirmative Action in Reader.

“Unequal Pay is Targeted by Tougher U.S. Enforcement.” L.A. Times. 1/30/99. Reader.

“Wage Gap Continues to Vex Women.” L.A. Times. 2/11/2001. Reader.

“Female Anchors on Local TV Paid 28% Less.” L.A. Times 6/1/2000. Reader.

“Hunger Stalks the Working Poor.” In Reader.

“America’s Torrent of Need.” L.A. Times 8/5/2001. Reader.

“Food Stamp Program is Failing in California.” L.A. Times 4/28/2001. Reader.

“Redirect the Rebate.” L.A. Times. 7/8/2001. Reader.

Film on November 5th: The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter.

--November 10: Women Laboring: Case Studies

“Think Like a Man, Work Like a Dog, Act Like a Lady: Occupational Dilemmas of Policewomen.” Susan Martin. In Reader.

“Why We Need More Women Cops.” L.A. Times. 3/21/94. In Reader.

“Pittsburgh is Showcase for Women In Policing.” NY Times 6/21/98. In Reader.

“Why Women Make Better Cops.” Glamour 9/95.

“Sex Harassment hard to Root Out in Sheriff’s Dept.” In Reader.

“Jury Awards 3 Glendale Officers \$3.5 Million in Harassment Suit.” In Reader.

November 12: Women, Community and Activism: In Their Own Voices

Women Organizers.

“To the Women of the Left.” SDS Women In Reader.

“Mountain Movers.” Susie Ling. In Reader.

“A Life of their Own.” L.A. Times. In Reader.

Women of the Year Activists. Ms. Magazine. In Reader.

“Playing Hardball” Ms. Magazine. June/July 1999. In Reader.

“Committee Looks at Title IX Results.” UCLA Bruin. In Reader.

Film: Made in Thailand.

--November 17: Women and/in Politics: Rethinking the Political

Readings: Chapter 10 in Thinking.

“Running as a Woman: Gender Stereotyping in Political Campaigns.” by S. Inyengar, N. Valentino, S. Ansolabehere and A. Simon. In Reader.

“Communities, Resistance and Women’s Activism: Some Implications for a Democratic Polity. Martha Acklesberg. In Reader.

“What’s Culture Got to do With It? Cultural Preservation and Hmong Women’s Activism in Central California.” By Sharon Bays. In Reader.

“Creating Community: Mexican American Women in Eastside Los Angeles.” By Mary Pardo. In Reader.

--November 19-24: Women, Men, Family and Households: The Changing Family

Readings: Chapter 6 in Thinking.

"Gender and the Family." Glenn. In Reader.

“At Home Moms Risk Later Impoverishment.” In Reader.

"Overcoming Patriarchal Constraints: The Reconstruction of Gender Relations Among Mexican Immigrant Women and Men." Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo. In Reader.

“New Definitions of Masculinity.” In Reader.

“L.A. County’s Answer for Racial Tensions: Intermarriage.” In Reader.

“Unwed Partners Up 72% in U.S. L.A. Times 8/20/2001. In Reader.

--November 26: Women and Religion

Readings: Chapter 8 in Thinking.

Selections from “Spiritual Marketplace: Baby Boomers and the Remaking of American Religion. Wade Roof. In Reader.

“Episcopalians Bolster Law on Ordaining Women. L.A. Times. In Reader.

“Religions Divided on Stem Cell Issue.” L.A. Times. 7/21/2001. In Reader.

“Black Theology and the Black Woman. by Jacquelyn Grant. In Reader.

“Seeing Sex Education as a Sacred Duty.” L.A. Times. 7/6/2001. In Reader.

“Chicano Liberation Theology.” by L. Millan. In Reader.

-- December 1: Art, Criticism and the Feminist Muse.

Readings: Poetry/Short stories/ Literary criticisms.

"Women Artists: The Creative Process." bell hooks. In Reader.

“Cinemaya.” Renee Tajima-Pena. In Reader.

“Brass Ceiling.” (Women in Jazz in L.A.). In Reader.

“The Last Days of Lilith.” Steiner. In Reader.

“The Dixie Chicks Come Clean.” The Cover of Entertainment Weekly. In Reader.

Film: Righteous Babes.

--December 3: Continue discussions, lecture, and review for final exam.

-- Final Exam, Thursday December 11, 8-11 am. Please bring a blue book.