

# **POLS 4543-101: Feminist Political Theory**

Midwestern State University

Fall 2019

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 12:00 – 12:50 PM

PY 209

**Dr. Linda Veazey**

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**Office Hours:**

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays: 9:30 – 11:45 AM

## **Course Description and Learning Objectives:**

The purpose of this course is to begin to examine philosophical and practical issues associated with the consideration of women and gender in society. In other words, we will consider what it means to do academic work on women and gender and contemplate how that work changes the scope and manner of our endeavors. This course will be interdisciplinary, and will take both a historical and thematic approach. We will begin our journey through feminist theory in the Enlightenment and conclude in our contemporary period. We will explore issues such as the meaning “woman” and “gender,” as well the connection between social movements and theory and the intersection of systems of inequality in the lives of women and the feminist project. As important as our discussions of what it means to study women and gender, will be how we can study gender or how the study of women and gender can influence research throughout the academy and beyond. The readings we will examine this semester, although primarily works of feminist theory, will use a variety of methodological approaches. The consideration of how scholars have sought to support their arguments and design their research is just as crucial to our discussion as their arguments themselves.

## **Women’s and Gender Studies Minor:**

POLS 4543 fulfills the political theory requirement of the Political Science major and is also part of the **Women’s and Gender Studies Minor**. Please see me for more information about the Women’s and Gender Studies minor.

## **Required Texts:**

Jack Halberstam. *Trans\*: A Quick and Quirky Account of Gender Variability*. University of California Press, 2018.

Julia S. Jordan-Zachery. *Shadow Bodies: Black Women, Ideology, Representation, and Politics*. New Brunswick, Camden, and Newark, New Jersey; London, 2016.

Alison Kafer. *Feminist Queer Crip*. Bloomington; Indianapolis, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Casey Ryan Kelly. *Abstinence Cinema: Virginity and the Rhetoric of Sexual Purity in Contemporary Film*. Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2016.

Carisa R. Showden. *Choices Women Make: Agency in Domestic Violence, Assisted Reproduction, and Sex Work*. Minneapolis, Minnesota: London: Minnesota University Press, 2011.

Additional Readings on D2L

## Grades:

### Breakdown of Grades:

Grade Category	Grade Percentage
Analytical Essay	15%
Midterm Exam	15%
Reading Questions, Classwork, and Homework	12%
Term Paper	22%
Term Paper Presentation	8%
Attendance and Engagement	10%
Final Exam	18%

## Grading:

On each exam and for the final grade, points will be assigned according to the following scale:

Letter Grade	Numerical Grade
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	0-59

## Course Engagement Grading:

Unexcused Absences/ Course Non-Engagement	Engagement Grade
0	100
1	95
2	90
3	85
4	80
5	70
6	65
7	60
8	55
9+	0

## Class Policies:

### Attendance and Engagement:

#### Absences:

You should attend class. Students who do not attend class often have difficulty with the course and receive lower grades. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting and will be noted in Attendance and Engagement. **Students missing more than 8 course periods may be dropped from the course without notice.** The only excused absences will be those as follows: illness with a doctor's note covering the date(s) absent from class, death in the family, legal proceedings occurring during class period, university-approved absence such as travel as member of a MSU sports team, or emergency situation as determined by the instructor.

#### Engagement:

Engagement during class is as important as physical attendance and engagement, as well as non-engagement will be noted daily. Students are expected to Students observed using mobile phones, reading non-class materials, or otherwise not fully engaged in class, will not receive engagement credit for that class period. Distracting behavior will also constitute non-engagement for the class period. Talking, passing notes, etc. during lecture or while other students are asking or answering questions. In other words, you are expected to behave like responsible adults in class. Behaviors such as the above will be taken as evidence of non-engagement during the class period. Students will not receive credit for engagement during the class period when behaviors such as the above are observed. This syllabus serves as the notice

of the above policies; students will receive no further alert if engagement points are not earned during a class meeting.

#### **Lateness:**

I will take attendance at each class meeting. Students arriving after the role has been called will not be counted as on-time and will be marked as tardy. **Two tardies will be the equivalent to one absence.** Students arriving more than 10 minutes late to class will be counted as absent for that class meeting. Students who leave early without an excuse that meets the excused absence criteria for this course may be marked tardy or absent, depending upon how much time remains in the course meeting.

#### **Leaving Class/Disruptions:**

Students are expected to be present for the entire class period. Excessively leaving the classroom during the class period is defined in this syllabus as more than 2 times during one class period or leaving 1 time for more than 10 minutes in one class period. **Excessive trips outside of the classroom during a class period will be the equivalent to 1 absence.** This is a form of disruptive behavior. If a student requires an accommodation to this rule (e.g. due to illness or medical condition), this matter must be approved by the professor in advance.

#### **Disruptive Behavior:**

Furthermore, disruptive behavior, including but not limited to raising one's voice to the instructor or classmates, threatening the instructor or classmates, excessive noise or behavior that disrupts the class will not be tolerated. This syllabus serves as the warning that disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Students committing disruptive behavior will be removed from the class.

### **Classwork and Homework:**

#### **Classwork and Notes:**

If you do miss class, you are responsible for all material missed. Students are responsible for obtaining notes from a classmate for any missed material. In-class activities may be graded. **Classwork cannot be made up.**

#### **Reading Questions:**

Reading Questions are due at the start of the class period. Reading questions will not be accepted late. If a student is absent for any reason, reading questions are expected to be submitted by the due date. They are intended for use in class discussion that day and cannot be submitted late, even with an excused absence. Reading questions may be submitted early.

#### **Homework and Late Work:**

Homework assignments other than reading questions will have a due date and points deducted for late work for each day the homework is late. The count begins immediately after assignments are collected. No work will be accepted more than **one week** past the original due date. No work may be submitted after the last class period of the course.

## Communication and Grades:

### Discussion of Grades:

If you have questions about your grades, please make an appointment to discuss it with me. Discussion of grades is a matter between the instructor and the student. If the grading concern is in regard to a fellow student receiving more points for an answer, both students must be present at the grade discussion appointment.

### Communication:

The best way to reach me outside of class is to contact me via email or in person during my office hours. My email address and office number are listed on the first page of the syllabus.

## Quizzes and Exams:

### Quizzes:

From time to time, there may be a quiz given in class covering recent lecture and textbook material. These help make sure people are keeping up with reading and lecture material. If you are absent for a quiz and do not provide a course-approved excuse, you will be given a ZERO on the quiz. Students arriving late to class without a course-approved excuse will not be given extra time on the quiz. No cell phones or electronic devices may be used during quizzes or exams. Students observed looking at mobile phones or other similar electronic devices during quizzes or exams will receive an automatic zero on that exam or quiz.

### Make-up Exams:

Students are expected to be present for all exams on the dates which the class will take them. A make-up exam will only be given if the following criteria are met: If a student has a course-approved excuse and the instructor is notified **in writing, prior** to the examination, and the instructor approves the excuse and make up exam, arrangements for a make-up exam will be made. If a student fails to notify the instructor, the student will receive a zero for the exam. **Unless arrangements have already been made in accordance with this policy, no exam may be administered after the graded exam is returned to the class.**

### Missing the Final Exam:

If the final exam is missed and arrangements for a make up exam have not been made in advance, the final exam cannot be made up.

### Taking Exams Early:

Only under extraordinary circumstances can a student take an exam early. Only university-approved excuses, death in the family, or illness with a doctor's note be considered for taking an exam early. The request for an early exam must be made **in writing**. For any reason, no request will be approved to schedule the final exam earlier than one week before its scheduled date.

**Arriving Late to Exams:**

Students arriving late to an exam, including the final exam, will not be allowed to take the exam if any student in the course has already completed the exam.

**Leaving During Exams:**

Students are expected to be present for the entire exam. Once a student has received the exam, the student may not leave the classroom until the exam has been submitted. If a student requires an accommodation to this rule (e.g. due to illness or medical condition), this matter must be approved by the professor in advance of the exam.

**Academic Dishonesty:**

Academic dishonesty on exams, quizzes and assignments will result in a ZERO on the quiz, assignment, or exam and the student or students in question may receive an F in the course and/or be turned over to the University for sanction.

**Accommodations:**

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from the University's Disability Support Services (DSS) during the instructor's office hours. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from DSS has been provided.

**MSU Campus Carry Statement:**

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature allows licensed handgun holders to carry concealed handguns on campus, effective August 1, 2016. Areas excluded from concealed carry are appropriately marked, in accordance with state law. For more information regarding campus carry, please refer to the University's webpage at <http://mwsu.edu/campus-carry/rules-policies>

## Class Outline:

*The following is a tentative outline of the semester. Students will be notified of any changes.*

### **Week 1: Introduction to Course and Feminist Political Theory**

Monday, August 26  
Introduction to course

Wednesday, August 28  
Introducing Political Theory

Friday, August 30  
Judith Grant. Chapter 2: Inventing Feminist Theory. *Fundamental Feminism*. 1992.

#### **Monday, September 2: Labor Day – No Class**

Wednesday, September 4:

The Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions.

Sojourner Truth. "Ain't I a Woman" from the Seneca Falls Convention.

Friday, September 6:  
Episode 1, "Awakenings," Makers: Women who Make America. PBS, 2013.

Betty Friedan. "The Problem that has no Name." *The Feminine Mystique*. 1963.

### **Week 3: Radical Feminism v. Liberal Feminism**

Monday, September 9:  
Episode 2 "Changing the World." Makers: Women who Make America, PBS, 2013.

Wednesday, September 11:  
Catharine A. MacKinnon. "Rape: On Coercion and Consent." *Towards a Feminist Theory of the State*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989: 170-183.

Gloria Steinem, "If Men Could Menstruate," pp. 209-210

Friday, September 13:

Shulamith Firestone, excerpt from *The Dialectic of Sex*, in Janet Kourany, James P. Sterba, and Rosemaire Tong, eds., *Feminist Philosophies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1999), pp. 353-359.

## **Week 4-5: Intersectionality and Contesting Essentialism**

Monday, September 16:

bell hooks. "Sexism and the Black Female Slave Experience." *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. Boston: South End Press, 1981, pp. 15-49

Wednesday, September 18: The Problem of White Feminism

bell hooks. "Racism and Feminism: The Issue of Accountability." *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. Boston: South End Press, 1981, pp. 119-158.

Friday, September 20:

The Combahee River Collective Statement. 1977

Monday, September 23:

Gloria Anzaldúa, "La Conciencia de la Mestiza: Towards a New Consciousness," In *Feminist Theory: A Reader*. (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). Wendy Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski (Editors). Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2010: 362-367.

Wednesday, September 25:

Kimberlé Crenshaw. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43.6 (1991):1241-1299.

Sarah Deer. "Decolonizing Rape Law: A Native Feminist Synthesis of Safety and Sovereignty." *Wicazo Sa Review*. 24.2(2009): 149-167.

Friday, September 27:

"Rape on the Night Shift." *Frontline*. PBS June 23, 2015.

## **Week 6: Gender, Sex, and the Body**

Monday, September 30

Casey Ryan Kelly. *Abstinence Cinema*. Pp. 1-53

Wednesday, October 2:

*Abstinence Cinema*, pp. 54-91

Friday, October 4:



Abstinence Cinema, pp. 92-142

### **Analytical Essay Due**

## **Week 7: The Gendered Body and Race**

Monday, October 7:

*Shadow Bodies*, pp. 1-50

Wednesday, October 9:

*Shadow Bodies*, pp. 52-100

Friday, October 11:

*Shadow Bodies*, pp. 101-156

## **Week 8-9: Gender, Knowledge, and Care**

### **Monday, October 14: Midterm Exam**

Wednesday, October 16:

Michael Kimmel. Chapter 3: "'Bros Before Hos': The Guy Code." *Guyland: The Perilous World Where Boys Become Men: Understanding the Critical Years Between 16 and 26*. New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 2008: 44-69.

Friday, October 18:

Nancy Chodorow. "The Sexual Sociology of Adult Life." From *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (1978). Reprinted in *Feminist Theory: A Reader*. Edited by Wendy K. Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2010: 264-271.

Monday, October 21:

Carol Gilligan, "Images of Relationship." From *In a Different Voice* (1982). Reprinted in *Feminist Theory: A Reader*. Edited by Wendy K. Kolmar and Frances Bartkowski. Boston: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2010: 312-318.

Cordelia Fine. "Unraveling Hardwiring."

Wednesday, October 23:

Karen Zivi, "Contesting Motherhood in the Age of AIDS: Maternal Ideology in the Debate over Mandatory HIV Testing." *Feminist Studies* 31.2(Summer 2005): 347-374.

Friday, October 25:

Josephine Donovan. "Feminism and the Treatment of Animals: From Care to Dialogue. *Signs*. 31.2(Winter 2006): 305-329

## **Week 10: Trans Identity and Feminism**

Monday, October 28:

*Trans\**, chapter 1-2

### **Term Paper Proposal Due**

Wednesday, October 30:

*Trans\**, Chapters 3-5

Friday, November 1:

*Trans\**, Chapters 6-7

## **Week 11: Addressing Gender and the Economy**

Monday, November 4:

Pat Mainardi. "The Politics of Housework."

"You Should Have Asked." Go Ask Emma.

Wednesday, November 6:

Kathi Weeks. "Hours for What we Will: Work, Family, and the Movement for Shorter Hours." *Feminist Studies*, 35.1: 101-127. 2013.

Martha Burk. *Power Plays; Six Ways the Male Corporate Elite Keeps Women Out*. 2005.

Friday, November 8:

Carol Baker. "The Women's Movement against Sexual Harassment. 2008.

Ronan Farrow. "Weighing the Costs of Speaking Out About Harvey Weinstein." *The New Yorker*. October 27, 2017.

## **Week 12: Addressing Ableism and Rethinking Feminism through Disability Studies**

Monday, November 11:  
Feminist, Queer Crip, pp. 1-46

Wednesday, November 13:  
Feminist, Queer, Crip, pp. 47-102

Friday, November 15:  
Feminist, Queer, Crip, pp. 103-169

### **Week 13: Gender and Agency**

Monday, November 18:  
*Choices Women Make*, pp. 1-92

Wednesday, November 20:  
*Choices Women Make*, pp. 93-133

Friday, November 22:  
*Choices Women Make*, pp. 134-219

### **Weeks 14-15: Term Paper Presentations**

Monday, November 25:  
Presentations

**Wednesday, November 27 and Friday, November 29: Thanksgiving Break – No Class**

Monday, December 2:  
Presentations

Wednesday, December 4:  
Presentations

Friday December, 6:  
Presentations

**Term Paper Due**

**Final Exam: Wednesday, December 11, 3:30-5:30 PM**