

POLS 4543-101: Feminist Political Theory

Midwestern State University

Fall 2023

Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 11:00 – 11:50 AM

PY 209

Dr. Linda Veazey

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Office Hours:

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:

bell hooks. *Feminism is For Everybody: Passionate Politics*.

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

Kathi Weeks. *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries*. Duke University Press, 2011.

Additional Readings on D2L

Grades:

Breakdown of Grades:

Grade Category	Grade Percentage
Theory Analysis	15%
Midterm Exam	20%
Reading Leadership	10%
Term Paper	15%
Term Paper Presentation	10%
Attendance and Engagement	10%
Final Exam	20%

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

Content and Trigger Warning:

Material for this class may be triggering due to discussions of sexual violence and other topics. Students should know that by taking this class, you will be reading and discussing this material.

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 9 course periods may be dropped from the course without notice.** Excused absences will be those as follows: illness, 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 me. To excuse an absence, I must be notified in advance of the class meeting.

Engagement:

Engagement during class is as important as attendance. Students are expected to engage in the class and be fully present with their engagement. 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. 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 either in-person or online 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), please let me know in advance.

Safe Zone Statement:

This classroom is to be a place where students will be treated with respect. We will work together to create an inclusive space that respects equality and diversity in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, political beliefs, culture, age, or ability. Additionally, diversity of thought is appreciated and encouraged, provided you can agree to disagree. It is the expectation that all students consider the classroom a safe environment. Harassment, sexual misconduct, violence, bullying, and disruptive behavior will not be tolerated and will result in removal from the classroom and reporting to the appropriate university authority. This syllabus is your warning.

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.**

Writing Assignments:

All writing assignments are due on D2L. **No late work** will be accepted late without an approved medical or emergency excuse that has been approved by me.

Communication:

Outside of class time, please email me through my MSU email (not D2L) or visit me in my office hours. My email address and office hours are listed on the first page of the syllabus.

Exams:**Exams:**

Exams will be given in person during class time. Now materials including notes, a book, websites, apps, etc., may be used during 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.

Make-Up Exams

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.**

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

Technology Requirements:

Microsoft Office or a compatible program for written assignments. Access to Microsoft Office 365 available through the Office 365 for Students on the Microsoft website.

Academic Dishonesty:

All work submitted in this class is expected to be the student's own and original to this course. Otherwise, the MSU Honor Creed has been violated and academic dishonesty has occurred. Using the work of another person as one's own is theft of intellectual property. Submitting work to this course that was produced for another course without permission of both instructors, is also academic dishonesty. Any violation of MSU academic honesty policy will result in an

automatic ZERO on the assignment, quiz, or exam in question. Assisting another student in academic dishonesty will also result in a ZERO on that assignment. A second instance of academic dishonesty will automatically result in an F for the course. All instances of academic dishonesty may be turned over to the University for sanction.

The MSU Honor Creed applies in this course, and students are expected to abide by it. Student work in this course expected to be original and produced only for this course. Students may not use the textbook, chapter summaries, notes, PowerPoints, lectures, or any online material during quizzes and exams. Students may not collaborate with each other during quizzes or exams or to create substantially similar responses to writing assignments.

In addition, students **may not** copy the textbook or websites, such as Wikipedia pages, for written response questions. Students **may not** memorize and write in-class response questions material copied or substantially copied from textbook materials or webpages. Each written assignment or written response is expected to be in your own words. Submitted work that replicates the textbook or a webpage will be considered academic dishonesty. In addition, students may not submit work from previous courses or use AI tools, such as Chat GDP. AI Detection Detectors, such as Turnitin, will be used in this course.

In other words, all submitted work is expected to be fully your own thoughts and words and created for this course.

Accommodations:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe that you have a disability requiring accommodation, please contact:

Disability Support Services (DSS)
Room 168, Clark Student Center
940-397-4140

Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation until verification from DSS has been provided.

<https://msutexas.edu/student-life/disability/current-students.php>

MSU Campus Carry Statement:

Senate Bill 11 passed by the 84th 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.

Introduction to Course and Feminist Political Theory

Week 1: Monday, August 28 – Friday, September 1

Introduction to course

Introduction to the Study of Gender

Introduction to Political Theory

The 1st Wave: Early Feminist Writings

Labor Day – No Class

Wednesday, September 6:

Early Feminist Theory

Friday, September 8:

The Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions

Sojourner Truth. “Ain’t I a Woman.”

Gender and Identity Description Due

The 2nd Wave: The US Feminist Movement

Monday, September 11

Judith Grant. “Inventing Feminist Theory”. Chapter 2. *Fundamental Feminism*

Gender and Identity Description Due

Wednesday, September 13

Simone de Beauvoir. Excerpt from *The Second Sex*

Friday, September 15

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

Initial Paper Proposal

Radical Feminism

Monday, September 18:

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

Feminist Theory Analysis Due

Wednesday, September 20:

Redstocking Manifesto

Friday, September 22:

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

Intersectionality and Contesting Essentialism

Monday, September 25:

The Combahee River Collective Statement. 1977

Annotated Bibliography Due

Wednesday, September 27:

Mikki Kendall. Chapter 1: Solidarity is still for white women. *Hood Feminism*.

Friday, September 30: Midterm Exam

Monday, October 2:

bell hooks. *Feminism is for Everybody*, chapters 1-6

Wednesday, October 4:

bell hooks, chapters 7-13

Friday, October 6:

bell hooks, chapters 14-19

Monday, October 9:

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

Wednesday, October 11:

Martinez, Magdalena. 2022. "The Future is Latina": Feminist Borderlands and Latina Legislators. *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies*, 43(2): 1-27.

Friday, October 13:

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

Monday, October 16:

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

Literature Review Due

The Gendered Body and Race

Wednesday, October 18

Shadow Bodies, pp. 1-50

Friday, October 20:

Shadow Bodies, pp. 52-100

Monday, October 23:

Shadow Bodies, pp. 101-156

Methods Section Due

Gender, Knowledge, and Care

Wednesday, October 25:

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 27:

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 30

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.

Wednesday, November 1:
Cordelia Fine. "Unraveling Hardwiring."

Friday, November 3:
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.

Monday, November 6
Josephine Donovan. "Feminism and the Treatment of Animals: From Care to Dialogue. *Signs*. 31.2(Winter 2006): 305-329

Addressing Gender and the Economy

Wednesday, November 8:
Pat Mainardi. "The Politics of Housework."

"You Should Have Asked." Go Ask Emma.

Friday, November 10:
Weeks, *The Problem with Work*, Introduction

Monday, November 13
Weeks, *The Problem with Work*, Chapter 1

Wednesday, November 15
The Problem with Work, Chapter 2

Friday, November 17
The Problem with Work, Chapters 3 and 4

Monday, November 20: Term Paper Peer Review Workshop

Monday, November 27:
The Problem with Work, Chapter 5 and Epilogue

Addressing Ableism and Rethinking Feminism through Disability Studies

Wednesday, November 29: Alison Kafer. Introduction and Chapter 6, *Feminist Queer Crip*.

Friday, December 1: TBA

Term Paper Presentations

Monday, December 4

Final Paper Due

Presentations Begin

Wednesday, December 6 and Friday, December 8:

Paper Presentations continue

Final Exam

Monday, December 11: 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM