

Sophomore Tutorial: Foundational Concepts and Texts in the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality

Studies in Women, Gender, and Sexuality (WGS) 97
Harvard University, Spring 2017
Tuesdays and Thursdays 10-11:30am, Barker Center 316
Course website: <https://canvas.harvard.edu/courses/21822>

Prof. Robin Bernstein

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This course introduces students to key concepts and texts in the study of women, gender, and sexuality. Together, we will develop a shared vocabulary that will prepare you for advanced study in the WGS concentration. We will become adept in using foundational concepts such as **essentialism, constructivism, historical “waves” of feminism, intersectionality, borderlands, mestiza consciousness, standpoint theory, the politics of location, situated knowledge, biopolitics, the repressive hypothesis, and gender as a category of analysis.** We will learn to distinguish among **liberal, material, and cultural feminisms**, and we will think critically about the **relationship between sex and gender.** We will encounter **queer theory and feminist approaches to science.** We will practice applying these concepts to the analysis of primary texts and to current events. Finally, this course encourages students to think collaboratively, to co-create productive conversations, and to integrate our theoretical explorations with analysis of the politics of our own multiple locations.

Texts and Policies

Required Texts (available at the Harvard Coop and on reserve at Lamont Library):

Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume I*

Course Requirements and Grading:

Attendance and informed, productive participation	25%
4 response papers (varying dates, graded full credit/no credit)	20%
Glossary Assignment #1 (due in class on February 16)	15%
Summary of an argument (2 pages, due February 28)	5%
Analysis of a current event (due in class on March 23)	10%
Glossary Assignment #2 (due in class on April 25)	20%
Attendance at WGS Senior Research Presentation, April 27 (graded full credit/no credit)	5%

Course Policies:

Your most important responsibility in this course is to collaborate with your colleagues to craft productive discussions. You should think not only about your own comments, but about the overall classroom dynamic: who is speaking more, who less? How might you contribute to an atmosphere that enables everyone to participate meaningfully? How do you negotiate disagreements? What silences emerge, and how might we think about those silences? Is silence necessarily a problem? **Most importantly, what might a conversation informed by feminist theories look like? How might we collectively create such a conversation?**

On a more mundane note: lateness and unexcused absence detract from our conversation and therefore figure negatively toward your participation grade. **Laptops are not permitted in our seminar.** Needless to say, practices that disrespect your colleagues (for example, interrupting, hogging the floor, launching personal attacks, texting, or answering cell phones) obstruct rather than advance conversation; such practices are therefore unacceptable.

Late papers will be penalized one third of a letter grade for each day or partial day overdue. Please note that failure to complete any assignment can lower your final grade in excess of the stated percentage. Collaboration on written assignments is permitted only with prior written consent of the professor.

Each student will complete four response papers, which are graded full credit/no credit. Your response paper should run two full pages and should engage thoughtfully with the reading. You will hand in your response paper at the beginning of the class in which we will discuss the reading to which you responded. You must complete two response papers before spring break and two after the break.

Professor Bernstein holds office hours every week, but times vary. Please reserve time online at <http://wgs.fas.harvard.edu/hours>. If the week's available slots conflict with one of your classes, please email Prof. Bernstein to make an appointment.

With a student's consent, meetings during office hours will be "walking meetings." The professor and student will talk while strolling around campus. *Any student may opt for a traditional, "sitting meeting" instead.* If you opt for a sitting meeting, you need not offer any explanation, and no questions will be asked. We will, of course, stay inside during inclement weather. For more information about the intellectual and health benefits of walking meetings, see Nilofer Merchant, "Sitting is the Smoking of our Generation," *Harvard Business Review* 14 January 2013 <http://blogs.hbr.org/cs/2013/01/sitting_is_the_smoking_of_our_generation.html>.

Any student needing academic adjustments or accommodations should present a letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by February 11. All discussions will remain confidential, although AEO may be consulted to discuss appropriate implementation.

Course Schedule

January 24. Introductions

January 26. Sex? Gender?

Thomas Laqueur, "Of Language and the Flesh," chap. in *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990): 1-24.

Judith Butler, "The Compulsory Order of Sex/Gender, Desire," in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (NY: Routledge, 1990), pp. 6-7.

Distributed in class: Glossary Assignment #1

January 31. Gender Essentialism and its Discontents

Gerd Brantenberg, *Egalia's Daughters: A Satire of the Sexes* (1977; reprint, trans. from Norwegian by Louis Mackay, Seattle, WA: The Seal Press, 1985): excerpts.

Simone de Beauvoir, Introduction to *The Second Sex*

February 2. Gender Constructivism and Science

Martin, Emily, "The Egg and the Sperm: How Science has Constructed a Romance Based on Stereotypical Male-Female Roles," *Signs* 16.3 (Spring 1991), 485-501. Access online through JSTOR.

Sarah S. Richardson, "Sexing the X: How the X Became the 'Female Chromosome.'" *Signs* 37.4 (Summer 2012) 909-933. Access online through JSTOR.

February 7. Foundational Text: Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

Please read all front matter and the full section, *Atravesando Fronteras/Crossing Borders*

Distributed in class: Assignment for Analysis of a Current Event

February 9. Foundational Text: Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*

No new reading assignment; we'll just continue our conversation

RECOMMENDED EVENT: February 9, 5-7pm, Plimpton Room, Barker Center 133. Talk by Prof. Evelyn Hammonds. "The Physician's Negro: Race and Racialization in U.S. Medicine." Description: It is simply unquestioned here in the 21st century that human bodies are 'different' and that the concept of 'race' captures fundamental biological and cultural differences between individuals and groups. Despite persistent questioning of the use of racial categories in medicine beginning in the 20th century, from the colonial period forward, white physicians assiduously cataloged these differences and the physical body continued to play a contradictory role in making race real. Physician's practices of comparison served to define what was 'black' and what was 'white.' This talk will consider how physicians' practices of racial comparison produced racial categories like the "Negro." The "Negroes" described in medical texts were not real representations of African Americans but rather a constructed category defined only by their difference from whites. Sponsored by the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard University and the Committee on Degrees in Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality as part of the Gender and Sexuality Seminar, "Bodies, Archives, Databases."

February 14. “Waves” of Feminism

Charlotte Krollokke, “Three Waves of Feminism: From Suffragettes to Grrrls,” online at http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/6236_Chapter_1_Krollokke_2nd_Rev_Final_Pdf.pdf>

Linda Nicholson, “Feminism in ‘Waves’: Useful Metaphor or Not?,” *New Politics* 12.4 (winter 2010). Online at <http://newpol.org/print/content/feminism-waves-useful-metaphor-or-not>>

Becky Thompson, “Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism,” *Feminist Studies* 28.3 (Summer 2002): 337-360. Access online through JSTOR.

February 16. “Waves” of Feminism: Third Wave

Kimberly Springer, “Third Wave Black Feminism?” *Signs* Vol. 27 No. 4 (Summer 2002), pp. 1059-1082. Access online through JSTOR.

Beverly Guy-Sheftall, “Response from a ‘Second Waver’ To Kimberly Springer’s ‘Third Wave Black Feminism?’” *Signs* Vol. 27 No. 4 (Summer 2002), pp. 1091-1094. Access online through JSTOR.

In class: mini-lecture on liberal, material, and cultural feminisms

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED EVENT: Thursday, February 16, 7-8:30, Harvard Bookstore (1256 Massachusetts Ave), Professor Caroline Light reads from her new book, *Stand Your Ground: A History of America’s Love Affair with Lethal Self-Defense*

February 21. Standpoint Theory and the Politics of Location

Nancy C. M. Hartsock, “The Feminist Standpoint: Toward a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism.”

Patricia Hill Collins, “Defining Black Feminist Thought,” chap. in *The Second Wave: A Reader in Feminist Theory*, ed. Linda Nicholson (New York: Routledge, 1997): 241-259. Online at <http://www.feministezine.com/feminist/modern/Defining-Black-Feminist-Thought.html>>

Michael Awkward, “A Black Man’s Place in Black Feminist Criticism,” in Joy James and T. Denean Sharpley-Whiting, eds., *The Black Feminist Reader* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000), pp. 88-108.

February 23. Glossary Workshop

Glossary Assignment #1 due at the beginning of class!

Please bring enough copies to share with all your classmates and the professor.

Distributed in class: assignment for article summary

February 28. Intersectionality

This day only: please bring a laptop to class (loaners are available; please contact the professor if you would like to use one)

Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color.” In *After Identity: A Reader in Law and Culture*, ed. Dan Danielsen and Karen Engle (New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 332-354.

DUE IN CLASS: Summary of Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins.”

March 2. Globalization and Feminism

Amrita Basu, “Globalization of the Local/Localization of the Global: Mapping Transnational Women’s Movements”

Durba Mitra, “Critical Perspectives on the SlutWalks in India,” *Feminist Studies* 38.1 (Spring 2012): 254-260. Access through JSTOR.

Special guest: Durba Mitra, incoming Assistant Professor of Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality

March 7. Situated Knowledges

Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. Ed. Carole R. McCann and Seung-Kyung Kim. New York: Routledge (2003) 370-81.

March 9. Decolonizing Feminism(s)

Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse," *Feminist Review* 30 (Autumn 1988): 61-88. Access online through JSTOR.

RECOMMENDED EVENT: March 9, 5-7pm, Plimpton Room, Barker Center 133. Public talk by Prof. Nancy Krieger, "Challenging Biological Essentialism with Embodied Histories of Health Inequities." Description: A lurking biological essentialism infuses contemporary research on "health disparities." Mindful of the long reach of early 20th century mainstream eugenics, biological sexism, and the long shadow of Jim Crow, Krieger discusses how NIH presents "health disparities" in its strategic documents and its new mandate to account for sex, but not also gender, in all studies. Krieger draws on ecosocial theory to present an alternative approach that conceptualizes health inequities as embodied history, using examples from trends in US mortality, police violence, breast cancer, including in relation to Jim Crow. Sponsored by the Mahindra Humanities Center at Harvard University and the Committee on Degrees in Studies of Women, Gender, and Sexuality as part of the Gender and Sexuality Seminar, "Bodies, Archives, Databases."

March 14. SPRING BREAK. NO CLASS.

March 16. SPRING BREAK. NO CLASS.

March 21. Applying Foundational Concepts to a Text

Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic*

March 23. Applying Foundational Concepts to an Event

DUE IN CLASS: Analysis of a Current Event. Please be prepared to discuss the event and your analysis with your classmates.

In-class exercise: How to Read Foucault

March 28. Foundational Text: Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume I*

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume I*, Parts 1, 2, 3 (in most editions, pp. 1-75)

March 30. Foundational Text: Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume I*

Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume I*, Parts 4, 5

April 4. Queer Nation, Queer Theory

Queer Nation Manifestos (<http://www.jessanderson.org/doc/qnation.html>)

Gloria Anzaldúa, "To(o) Queer the Writer—Loca, escritor y chicana," originally published 1991; in AnaLouise Keating, *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, 163-175.

Cathy Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" *GLQ: A Journal of Gay and Lesbian Studies* Vol. 3, no. 4 (1997): 437-485
Access online through EBSCOhost.

Michael Hames-García, "Queer Theory Revisited," in *Gay Latino Studies: A Critical Reader*, ed. Michael Hames-García and Ernesto J. Martínez (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011), 19-45.

April 6. Queer Theory

Jewelle Gomez, "Femme Erotic Independence," in Sally R. Munt, ed., *Butch/Femme: Inside Lesbian Gender* (London: Cassell, 1998): 101-108.

Jewelle Gomez, "Imagine a Lesbian, a Black Lesbian," in Gomez, *Forty-Three Septembers: Essays* (Ithaca, NY: Firebrand Press, 1993): 129-150. Access online through Hollis.

Watch *FTF: Female to Femme* (2015), by Elizabeth Stark and Kami Chisholm (access online through Hollis).

Peruse <http://www.jewellegomez.com/>.

Recommended: Elisa Rolle, "Diane Sabin & Jewelle Gomez," <http://elisa-rolle.livejournal.com/2369766.html>

Special guest: Jewelle Gomez

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED EVENT: Thursday, April 6, time and location TBA: Public reading of *Waiting for Giovanni: A Dream Play*, by Jewelle Gomez in collaboration with Harry Waters, Jr.

April 11. NO CLASS.

April 13. Gender: A Useful Category of Analysis?

Joan Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *American Historical Review* 91.5 (December 1986): 1053-1075. Access online through JSTOR.

Afsaneh Najmabadi, "Beyond the Americas: Are Gender and Sexuality Useful Categories of Analysis?" *Journal of Women's History* 18.1 (Spring 2006): 11-21. Access online through Project Muse.

April 18. "I would rather be a cyborg than a goddess"

Donna Haraway, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century: An Ironic Dream of a Common Language for Women in the Integrated Circuit," in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 149-181. Online at

<http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/irvinem/theory/Haraway-CyborgManifesto.html>

Hari Kunzru, "You are Cyborg," interview with Donna Haraway, *Wired* 5:2 (1997) 1-7.

Online at http://www.wired.com/wired/archive/5.02/ffharaway_pr.html

April 20. Glossary Assignment #2 Workshop

Draft of Glossary Assignment #3 due in class. Please bring enough copies for all your classmates and the professor.

April 25. Wrap-Up

Glossary Assignment #2 due in class.

Worksheets from the first day of class will be returned.

REQUIRED EVENT, April 27, 11am-2pm (NOTE TIME!) Robinson Basement

Seminar Room: WGS Senior Research Presentations. Lunch will be served.

Enjoy your summer!