

Instructor: Dr. Calev Litvack

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Office hours: Online via Zoom, by appointment only; Th, 2:00-4:00pm

Feminist and Social Justice Studies

GSFS 200, Summer 2023

Institute for Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies

McGill University, Faculty of the Arts

M, T, W, Th: 9:35 am - 11:55 am

Location: Leacock 110

May 1, 2023 - June 1, 2023

Course Description:

Introduction to the key concepts, issues, and modes of analysis in the interdisciplinary fields of feminist and social justice studies. Emphasis on the intersections of gender, race, class, sex, sexuality, and nation in systems of power from historical and contemporary perspectives and the means for collectively transforming them.

Learning Objectives:

- To become familiar with a wide range of concepts, theories, methods, and debates in the fields of feminist & social justice studies.
- To situate feminist theory and scholarship in relation to feminist histories and movements.
- To articulate the convergences and divergences between feminist movements and broader movements for social justice, including anti-racist, anti-ableist, abolitionist, and decolonial projects.
- To develop an understanding of distinct forms of feminism and movements for social justice, including the ways the politics of these movements differ across cultural, national, historical, geographical, and class-based lines.
- To develop the critical thinking skills required to relate histories of feminisms and social justice movements to contemporary issues as well as the material specificities that shape contemporary experiences.

- To improve communication skills by engaging in dialogue with peers alongside and in response to historical and contemporary perspective on feminism and social justice.

Course Delivery:

Classes will take place in-person in the designated place at the appointed time, and will involve interactive lectures, in-class exercises, student presentations, and guided discussions of daily readings. Together, we will closely read and annotate texts, break down short films, collectively analyse objects and images, and collaboratively workshop writing skills in response to assigned course material. In addition to lectures, these activities & exercises have been designed to engage the interdisciplinarity of feminist and social justice studies as a field, enhance comprehension of weekly readings, and facilitate group discussion. Students are therefore strongly encouraged to attend all classes, though attendance is not mandatory.

Slides for lectures will be uploaded to myCourses, as will any documents, files, or other media produced during in-class exercises. In the event of an absence, students are advised to arrange a meeting with me during my office hours to review missed course content.

Course Material:

All assigned readings will be made available on myCourses.

Expectations & Policies:

Participation

Students are expected to come to class on time, having read the assigned readings, and prepared to ask questions and discuss course material with others. Given that this course incorporates small-group activities, written exercises, and online forums for discussion, it offers several different modes of and venues for participation, both written and oral. The success of the class depends on each of our active involvement and engagement, so I encourage students to practice communicating both in the ways in which they comfortable as well as in ways that foster personal growth.

Discussion

In class discussions as well as online forums, students are expected to listen to and address their peers with care and respect. In the event of conflict, dissenting opinions, or different perspectives, I advise students to ground their comments in course material. This means that students are expected to make every effort to situate, question, and articulate their own experiences and opinions in relation to passages from assigned texts and lecture material, or with reference to the short films, artworks, and/or images we will review in class together. Violent or harmful language will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

Please note that course material will address sexuality and various forms of violence (e.g., sexual, gender-based, juridico-legal, state-sanctioned) in an explicit and matter-of-fact manner. This material is inseparable from the learning objectives of the course and integral to course content; the course, after all, is committed to thinking alongside and in relation with the historical and material specificities that shape feminist histories and movements for social justice. If at any time you experience difficulties engaging course content due to the subject matter of course materials, please do reach out to me via email or set up a meeting to chat during my office hours.

Communication

Students are encouraged to post questions about assignments and course content in the designated forums on myCourses. I advise you to check these forums first if you have small questions regarding grading or administrative matters. For individual inquiries, I am available via email Mondays-Fridays, and will attempt to respond to all questions and comments within 24-48 business hours.

For substantive inquiries regarding, for instance, course readings or paper topics, or for questions requiring more complex answers, I recommend that you make an appointment to see me during my office hours, which will be held virtually via Zoom. If you have a scheduling conflict during my office hours, please do not hesitate to email me to arrange a meeting for another time.

Late Assignments

Unless arrangements have been made in advance for an extension, late assignments will be penalized 5% per day for a maximum of 7 days. After 7 days, assignments will not be accepted. Please contact me via email as soon as you anticipate requiring an extension, preferably 24 hours before the submission deadline.

If you are having difficulty completing course readings or written assignment, I encourage you to make use of the resources available to you: visit the [McGill Writing Centre](#) for writing support, the [Student Wellness Hub](#) for mental health resources, or make an appointment to see me during my office hours.

Accessibility

As the instructor of this course, I take your accessibility needs seriously and endeavor to provide an inclusive learning environment. The requirements for this course have been designed to accommodate a variety of learning styles and needs. That being said, if at any time you experience barriers to learning, I invite you to reach out via email or set up a meeting during my office hours to discuss your concerns. [The Office for Students with Disabilities](#) is also a valuable resource in this regard.

Language

In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French written work that is to be graded.

Academic Integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

Intellectual Property Considerations

It is each student's responsibility to ensure that any recordings of classes and associated materials are not reproduced or placed in the public domain. This means that each of you can use it for your educational and research purposes, but you cannot allow others to use it by putting it up on the Internet or by giving it or selling it to others who may make it available.

Course Requirements:

- ***Discussion Posts x 4 (5% each, 20% total)***

Due: Sunday, May 7, 14, 21, 28 (Weeks 2-5), by 11:59pm

Every Thursday, a question will be posted in the discussion forum on myCourses that engages course material from that week. ***Four discussion posts*** (one per week) of ***250-300 words each*** must be posted in response to these questions to fulfill this requirement. You will receive full credit for completion of these posts, as long as they show evidence that you are keeping up with course material.

- ***In-class presentation (10-15 minutes, 20% total)***

Due: Sign-up for presentation date in spreadsheet on myCourses; handout due by 5pm the day prior to presenting.

On Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday of Weeks 2-4, students will present on assigned readings in two groups of 2-3. Presentations must (1) summarize the thesis, main argument, or purpose of the assigned reading (2) identify *how* the author supports the main claims of the text and (3) pose one well-crafted questions that critically engages the text for class discussion. Students must perform a close reading of at least one key passage to contextualize their question, and/or situate it in relation to the text's main claims.

Each group must prepare a ***one page handout*** that covers the above points and upload a ***pdf version*** in the designated discussion forum on myCourses by ***5pm*** the day prior to presenting. This handout can be in outline or bullet form. More information and detailed rubric to be posted on myCourses.

- ***Short paper (600-900 words, 25% total)***

Due: Friday, May 19th, 5pm

This paper will demonstrate your ability to relate historical and theoretical perspective on feminisms and social justice to contemporary issues, events, policies, or cultural objects. Focusing on concepts, theories, or modes of analysis drawn from **one or two assigned readings**, closely analyze a topic or object of your choosing. Papers must show a nuanced understanding of course materials, rigorously engage key terms and concepts, and make a strong case for the relevance of the assigned reading to the selected object of analysis. More information and detailed rubric to be posted on myCourses.

- **Final take-home exam (35% total)**

Due: Thursday, June 1st, 5pm, or Friday, June 2nd, 5pm

An open-book take-home exam will be posted at 5pm on either Wednesday, May 31st or Thursday, June 1st, and will be available for completion within 24 hours. This exam will be in short-essay format, and will ask students to synthesize main themes and concepts from the duration of the semester. More information to be posted on myCourses.

Course Schedule:

Week 1 Introductions: Positionality, Definitions & Categories	
M, May 1	Alcoff, Linda. "The Problem of Speaking for Others." <i>Cultural Critique</i> , no. 20, Winter 1991, pp. 5-32.
T, May 2	Ahmed, Sara. "Introduction: Bringing Feminist Theory Home." <i>Living a Feminist Life</i> . Duke University Press, 2017, pp. 1-18.
W, May 3	hooks, bell. "Theory as Liberatory Practice." <i>Teaching to Transgress</i> , Routledge, 2014, pp.59-75.
Th, May 4	Mohanty, Chandra. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." <i>Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity</i> , Duke University Press, 2003, only pp. 17-37 .
May 4th: Deadline to add/drop class	
Week 2 Rethinking Feminisms' Waves: Liberal, Socialist, and Radical Feminisms	

M, May 8	<p>Schuller, Kyla. "Woman's Rights are White Rights?" <i>The Trouble with White Women: A Counterhistory of Feminism</i>, Bold Type books, 2021, pp. 27-56 (e-book).</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> Grady, Constance, "The waves of feminism, and why people keep fighting over them, explained." Vox, July 2018, https://www.vox.com/2018/3/20/16955588/feminism-waves-explained-first-second-third-fourth</p>
T, May 9	<p><i>Presentation reading:</i> Combahee River Collective, "The Combahee River Collective Statement," 1977, https://www.blackpast.org/african-american-history/combahee-river-collective-statement-1977/</p> <p><i>Additional assigned readings:</i> Lorde, Audre. "The Master's Tool Will Never Dismantle the Master's House." <i>Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches</i>, Crossing Press, 2012, pp.110–13.</p>
W, May 10	<p>Hartmann, Heidi. "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism: Towards a More Progressive Union." <i>Radical Political Economy: Explorations in Alternative Economic Analysis</i>, edited by Victor D. Lippit, M.E. Sharpe, 1996 [1981], pp. 165–96.</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> Wittig, Monique. "One Is Not Born a Woman," <i>The Straight Mind: And Other Essays</i>, Beacon Press, 1992, pp. 9-20.</p>
Th, May 11	<p><i>Presentation reading:</i> MacKinnon, Catharine. "Francis Biddle's Sister: Pornography, Civil Rights and Speech." <i>Feminism Unmodified: Discourses on Life and Law</i>, Harvard University Press, 1987, only pp. 163–174.</p> <p><i>Additional assigned reading:</i> Rubin, Gayle. or "Thinking Sex: Notes for a Radical Theory of the Politics of Sexuality." <i>Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader</i>, Duke University Press, 2011, only pp. 171–81.</p>
<p>Week 3 Currents of Black Feminist Thought: Intersectionality, Abolition, & Reproductive Justice</p>	
M, May 15	<p>Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." <i>University of Chicago Legal Forum</i>, no. 139, 1989, pp. 139-67.</p>

T, May 16	Cohen, Cathy J. "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?" <i>GLQ</i> , vol. 3, 1997, pp. 437-465.
W, May 17	Maynard, Robyn. "Mysogynoir in Canada," <i>Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present</i> , Fernwood Publishing, 2017, pp. 128-157. <i>Optional:</i> Jones, El. "6 Important Justice Stories Taking Place While No-One Is Looking." <i>Halifax Examiner</i> , 28 Mar. 2021, http://www.halifaxexaminer.ca/uncategorized/6-important-justice-stories-taking-place-while-no-one-is-looking/ .
Th, May 18	Ross, Loretta. "Trust Black Women: Reproductive Justice & Eugenics." <i>Radical Reproductive Justice: Foundation, Theory, Practice, Critique</i> , edited by Lynn Roberts et al., The Feminist Press, 2017, pp. 58-83. <i>Optional:</i> Goodwin, Michele. <i>Beyond Roe: The Fight for Our Future</i> . 59, https://msmagazine.com/podcast/59-beyond-roe-the-fight-for-our-future-with-melissa-murray-lourdes-rivera-and-monica-raye-simpson/ . Accessed 18 Apr. 2023.
Friday, May 19th, 5pm: Short Paper Due	
Week 4 Gender & Colonial Modernity: Indigenous & Decolonial Feminisms	
M, May 22	<i>No classes.</i>
T, May 23	Arvin, Maile, Eve Tuck and Angie Morrill. "Decolonizing Feminism: Challenging Connections between Settler Colonialism and Heteropatriarchy." <i>Feminist Formations</i> , vol. 25, no. 1, 2013, pp. 8-34. <i>Optional:</i> Cuthand, TJ. <i>Woman Dress</i> . 2019, https://www.nfb.ca/film/woman-dress/ (6:29 mins).
W, May 24	Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. "The Sovereignty of Indigenous People's Bodies." <i>As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance</i> , University of Minnesota Press, 2017, pp. 95-118. <i>Optional:</i> Morgan, Jas M. <i>Eco-Feminist Appropriations of Indigenous Feminisms and Environmental Violence</i> . 30 Apr. 2015, https://thefeministwire.com/2015/04/eco-feminist-appropriations-of-indigenous-feminisms-and-environmental-violence/ .

<p>Th, May 25</p>	<p>Rice, Carla, et al. "Decolonizing Disability Through Activist Art." <i>Disability Studies Quarterly</i>, vol. 41, no. 2, 2, June 2021.</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> Huard, Adrienne. "COC Methodology." <i>Public: Art, Culture, Ideas</i>, no. 62, 2020, pp. 60–74.</p>
<p>Week 5 Bodies, Binaries & Boundaries: Coalitions & Future-Building</p>	
<p>M, May 29</p>	<p>Guest Speaker: Prof. Gracen Brilmyer, Director of Disability Archives Lab, Assistant Professor, McGill's School of Information Studies</p> <p>Kafer, Alison. "Introduction: Imagined Futures." <i>Feminist, Queer, Crip</i>, Indiana University Press, 2013, pp. 1–24.</p>
<p>T, May 30</p>	<p>Koyama, Emi. "The Transfeminist Manifesto." <i>Catching a Wave: Reclaiming Feminism for the 21st Century</i>, edited by Rory Dicker and Alison Piepmeier, Northeastern University Press, 2003, pp. 244–59.</p> <p><i>Optional:</i> Ahmed, Sara. "An Affinity of Hammers." <i>TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly</i>, vol. 3, no. 1–2, Duke University Press, 2016, pp. 22–34.</p>
<p>W, May 31- June 1</p>	<p>Exam period.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Thursday, June 1, 5pm: Take-home exam due</p>	