Course Description and Objectives:
The aim of this course is to critically examine key issues, questions, and debates in contemporary feminist theory from the 1970s to the present. We begin by exploring contemporary liberal, radical, and materialist feminist thought and the socio-economic and political contexts in which these theoretical perspectives arise. Our aim in section one of the course is less about comprehensiveness and more about beginning to understand the key ideas, assumptions, and silences that motivate contemporary feminist theorists’ debates about a range of concepts including but not limited to community, equality, and freedom. Section two explores specific themes in contemporary feminist theory. We will focus on postmodern and other feminist theorists’ understandings of the body, sexuality, masculinity, and race. The final section of the course explores how contemporary feminist theorists utilize gender as a category of analysis. Chief among the questions we will explore in this section are the following: Is gender the social and cultural interpretation of male/female biological difference? Or is gender anything but divisible by two? What about claims that gender necessarily “intersects” with race, class, and sexuality? What, finally, is the relationship between how we utilize gender as a category of analysis and our feminist theory and practice in the classroom, the workplace, and the family?

Each section of the course will: 1) help develop the analytical skills necessary to think critically about feminism and gender; 2) pay particular attention to how feminist theory shapes and is shaped by other hierarchies of power including race and sexuality and 3) draw on a range of texts and films to situate feminist theory not only as an intellectual project but as a personal and an activist one. Our ultimate aim is to build the skills and background that will enable us to apply these ideas and approaches to our own intellectual and political projects.

Course Readings/Films:
The following required text is available at A Room of One’s Own Bookstore, 307 W. Johnson St. Tel: 608-257-7888: The Feminist Philosophy Reader (FPR) ISBN: 0073407399/ 978-0073407395 This text is also on reserve at the Undergraduate Library, Helen C. White Building.

The course pack/reader is available at the L & S Social Science Copy Center, 6120 Social Science Building, 1180 Observatory Drive, Tel: 262-5396

We will use Learn@UW for reflection papers. You can access Learn@UW from the University of Wisconsin’s home page.

Course Requirements:
1. Attending class and participating in class discussion (15%)

You must sign the sign-in sheet at the beginning of every class, except for the first two classes when I will take attendance. You are allowed 2 absences. Any absences greater than this number will drop your participation grade by one full letter grade regardless of the
extent to which you participate in class discussions when present. If you miss more than half of all of the class meetings without a satisfactory explanation you will receive a failing grade for course.

2. Reflection Papers (20%)

You will submit a total of five (one page, typed, double spaced) reflection papers throughout the semester. I will draw on your reflection papers to facilitate class discussion. Each paper may address one or more readings assigned on a specific date. Use your reflection papers to comment on things that you find contradictory, controversial, confusing or otherwise noteworthy in the readings. Please end each of your papers with two specific questions for class discussion. Reflection papers are intended to keep you engaged with the readings. They should not be used to provide detailed summaries of the assigned texts.

You will sign up for reflection papers during our second class meeting. Reflection papers are due at 6 pm via learn@uw on the day before class. You must be present on the days when your reflection papers are due in order to help lead class discussion.

3. Short Essay (10%)

You will write a short (2-3 page) paper in which you critically analyze the key assumptions and potential contradictions in the work of one of the contemporary feminist theorists assigned in the first section of the course. Your short essay (hard copy only) is due in class on Tuesday, September 28.

4. Take Home Mid-Term (25%)

The five page take home mid-term exam is an opportunity for you to: a) critically analyze feminist theorists’ often conflicting understandings of racism, heteronormativity, and feminine bodies and b) to explore how these conflicts both reflect and complicate the radical, liberal, and materialist feminist theories we read in the first section of the course. You will be asked to pay particular attention to what assumptions the proponents of these theories make about who or what constitutes a subordinated “woman.” Your mid-term (hard copy only) is due in my office on Monday, October 25 at 10:00 am.

5. Take Home Final Exam (30%)

The six to eight page take home final exam will allow you to both theorize and actually use gender as a feminist category of analysis. The final exam requires that you: a) choose a pre-assigned debate in contemporary feminist theory on a specific topic (examples include pornography, gay marriage, welfare reform, subordinated masculinity) and b) critically assess this debate by way of an intersectional, post-structural, and/or transgendered analytical lens.
Details regarding questions, format, and grading criteria will be provided in class. Your final exam (hard copy only) is due in my office on Friday, December 17 at 3:00 pm.

**Classroom Conduct:** Cell phones, texting, Ipods, laptops, PDAs, and their accompanying earpieces are NOT allowed during class in order to facilitate a non-distracting and intellectually productive learning environment. If you are found using any of these devices your attendance will be “zeroed” for the day in question. “Testing” is not a valid excuse for using any of the above devices during class.

**Statement on Grade Related Questions and Appeals:**
If you have questions about a grade, please speak to me first. If the question is not resolved, speak with the Chair, Jane Collins, or Associate Chair, Christine Ewig. They will attempt to resolve the issue informally and inform you of the Appeals Procedures if no resolution is reached informally.

*I will only discuss questions about grades during office hours or by appointment - not over email or before/after class.*

Final grades will be determined according to the following official UW grading scale: A 93-100; AB 88-92; B 83-87; BC 78-82; C 70-77; D 60-69; F below 60.

**Late Paper Policy:** Papers and exams turned in late will be penalized by ten (10) percentage points for each 24-hour period after the due date.

**Academic Misconduct (Plagiarism and Cheating):** This class will strictly follow and enforce the university’s policies on academic misconduct. UWS 14.03 defines academic misconduct to include acts in which a student seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation. Examples include but are not limited to: a) cutting and pasting text from the web without quotation marks or proper citation; b) paraphrasing from the web or written texts without crediting the source; c) using notes in an exam when such use is not allowed and d) using another person’s ideas, words, or research and presenting it as one’s own.

Complete information on academic misconduct is at www.wisc.edu/students/saja/misconduct/academic_misconduct.html.

**Writing Center:** For additional help with papers, visit the Writing Center at any stage during the writing process. Stop by 6171 Helen C. White, call for an appointment (263-1992), or consult the Center’s resources online at www.wisc.edu/writing/.

**Accessibility:** Please let me know if you require any alternative accommodations or if you have any accessibility concerns that may affect your performance in this course. The McBurney Resource Center (www.mcburney.wisc.edu), 1305 Linden Dr. 263-2741, TTY 263-6393, provides assistance and documentation regarding physical, learning, sensory, or psychological disabilities.

**Section One: Roadmaps to Contemporary Feminist Theory**

**Introduction**

**September 2:**
- Meet and Greet
- Review Syllabus
September 7:
- Audre Lorde, Audre. “The Master’s Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master’s House” (FPR)
- Charlotte Bunch. "Not by Degrees: Feminist Theory and Education"
- Maria Lugones and Elizabeth Spelman. "Have We Got a Theory for You: Feminist Theory, Cultural Imperialism and the Demand for 'The Woman's Voice"

Liberal Feminisms
September 9:
- Martha Nussbaum. “Feminism, Internationalism, Liberalism”
- Marilyn Friedman. “Autonomy, Social Disruption, and Women” (FPR)

September 14:
- NOW Statement of Purpose
- Susan. Okin. “Vulnerability by Marriage” (FPR)
- Judith Jarvis Thomson. “A Defense of Abortion”

Radical Feminisms
September 16:
- Shulasmith Firestone. “Dialectic of Sex”
- Radicallesbians. “The Woman Identified Woman”
- Marilyn Frye. “Oppression” (FPR)

September 21:
- Catherine McKinnon “Difference and Dominance”
- Denise Thompson. “Differences Among Women”

Materialist Feminisms
September 23:
- Heidi Hartmann. “The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism”
- Michele Barrett. “Capitalism and Women’s Liberation.”

Short Essay – Due in class - Tuesday, September 28

September 28:
- Film Clip - Fast Food Women
- Nancy Fraser. “After the Family Wage: Gender Equity and the Welfare State” (FPR)

Section Two: Themes in Contemporary Feminist Theory

Bodies, Sexualities, and Sexual Practices
September 30:
- Ann Ferguson. “Sex War: The Debate Between Radical and Libertarian Feminists” (FPR)
- Persimmon Blackbridge, Lizard Jones, and Susan Stewart. “Kiss and Tell: Questioning Censorship” (FPR)
- Catherine MacKinnon. “Sexuality” (FPR)

October 5:
- Chris Cuomo. “Claiming the Right to Be Queer” (FPR)

October 7:
Film clip – Killing us Softly 4
-Susan Bordo. “Reading the Slender Body”

October 12:
- Oyeronke Oyewumi. Visualizing the Body: Western Theories and African Subjects” (FPR)
- S. Wendell. “Toward a Feminist Theory of Disability” (FPR)

Race, Post-Coloniality, and the Politics of Representation
October 14:
- Aileen Moreton-Robinson. “Tiddas Speakin’ Strong” (FPR)
- Maria Lugones. “Playfulness, ‘World’-Travelling, and Loving Perception” (FPR)
- JeeYeun Lee. “Beyond Bean Counting”

October 19:
'-Gloria Anzaldua. “La Conciencia de la Mestiza/Towards a New Consciousness” (FPR) and "Haciendo Teorias"
- Patricia Hill Collins. “Distinguishing Features of Black Feminist Thought”

October 21: Mid-Term Exam Review

Midterm due in my office on Monday, October 25 at 10:00am

October 26: Film – TBA

October 28:
- Suan Okin. “Gender inequality and Cultural Difference”
- Cynthia Enloe. “Updating the Gendered Empire” (FPR)

November 2:
- Chandra Mohanty. “Under Western Eyes”

Masculinity and the Politics of Feminist Theorizing
November 4:
- Robyn Wiegman. “Introduction”
- bell hooks. “Reconstructing Black Masculinity”(FPR)

November 9:
- Samuel Adu-Poku “Envisioning (Black) Male Feminism: A Cross-Cultural Perspective”

November 11:
- Diane Richardson and Victoria Robinson. “Theorizing Women's Studies Gender Studies and Masculinity: The Politics of Naming”
- T. Modleski. “Postmortem on Post-feminism”
Section Three: Complicating Gender as a Feminist Category of Analysis

Intersectionality

November 16:
- Elizabeth V. Spelman. “Gender & Race: The Ampersand Problem in Feminist Thought” (FPR)
- Kimberle Crenshaw. “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color” (FPR)

November 18:
- Peggy McIntosh. “White Privilege and Male Privilege” (FPR)
- Alison Bailey. “Locating Traitorous Identities: Toward a View of Privilege-Cognizant White Character” (FPR)

November 23:
- Ange Marie Hancock. “Intersectionality as a normative and empirical paradigm”
- Leslie McCall. “The Complexity of Intersectionality”

November 25: Thanksgiving Break

Deconstructing the Tale of Two Genders

November 30:
- Carol Gilligan. “Moral Orientation and Moral Development” (FPR)
- Joan Scott. “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis”

December 2:
- Film Clip - Juggling Gender
- Judith Butler. “Performativity Acts and Gender Constitution” (FPR)

Theorizing Transgender

December 7:
- Anne Fausto-Sterling. “Should There Be Only Two Sexes?” (FPR)
- Stephen Whittle. “Where did we go wrong: Feminism and Trans Theory”

December 9:
- Judith Halberstam. “Transgender Butch: Butch/FTM Border Wars and the Masculine Continuum” (FPR)
  Jamison Green. “Look. No Don’t: The Visibility Dilemma for Transsexual Men”

December 14:
- Conclusion/Review

Final exam due in my office on Friday, December 17 at 3:00 pm