

Spring 1-15-2014

## WST 4309-001: Feminist Theory

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**WST 4309 Feminist Theory**  
**Sect. 001, CRN 31668**  
**MW 3:00-4:15 p.m. in CH 3290**  
**Spring, 2014**

“I came to theory because I was hurting—the pain within me was so intense that I could not go on living. I came to theory desperate, wanting to comprehend—to grasp what was happening around and within me. . . . I saw in theory then a location for healing.” bell hooks, “Theory as Liberatory Practice” (1994)

Dr. Jeannie Ludlow

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**Please** use eiu online (D2L) to email me for course-related questions or concerns whenever possible. I receive hundreds of emails a week, and D2L helps me keep all your emails in one place, so I don't miss them.

**Office Hours:** M~~W~~<sup>F</sup> 9-10:30, W 1-2:30, <sup>9-10</sup> and by appointment

**Availability:** If you would like to meet with me outside of these office hours, please do email for an appointment; I will do my best to accommodate your schedule. I check my email in the morning and in the afternoon on week days and almost never on weekends.

**Description:** This course examines feminist theory and its application to cultural and academic issues. It provides an interdisciplinary approach to the analysis of gender politics and women's experiences.

**Course Format and Expectations:** This is a seminar course, which by definition means that it is student-centered and student-driven. It is my educational philosophy that each of us is responsible for her/his own education; the role of the “professor” is to guide and facilitate the learning process, not to tell students what to think. Therefore, it is expected that students will come to class fully prepared to engage in discussions, activities, etc., that revolve around the assigned materials. This is a feminist course, which means that the course content and teaching are based in a particular political perspective. It is, however, never expected that students will unquestioningly agree with (or even completely understand) materials assigned for class. Critical thinking and articulation of disagreements and difficulties are encouraged.

**Student Learning Objectives**—at the end of WST 4309 you should be able to:

1. think critically about gender issues as they relate to a variety of academic disciplines;
  2. articulate how political, social, economic, and/or religious factors influence gender role expectations;
  3. articulate values pertaining to gender differences across as well as within cultures;
  4. articulate the ways gender, race, and culture influence your own role as a responsible citizen of your community and of the global community;
  5. articulate an awareness of cultural contexts in which women have lived and worked;
  6. demonstrate an ability to speak knowledgeably about the relationship of women to several disciplines that comprise Women's Studies;
- and
7. demonstrate an ability to write clearly about the historical development and/or contemporary applications of feminist theory.

**Special circumstances:** Any student who needs disability accommodations for this course should please speak with me as soon as possible. Please note that the University's Office of Disability Services (581-6583) will help with designated learning needs, mobility needs, etc

**GRADES** will be earned through the following graded components, which will be assigned whole letter grades:

1. Participation (includes attendance, weekly posting of discussion questions on WebCT, daily in-class writing, in-class and on-line activities and discussion, and successful completion of all reading and homework assignments)—must be worth a minimum of 10% of total grade
2. Three short papers—must be worth a minimum of 10% of total grade
3. Two take-home exams—must be worth a minimum of 10% of total grade
4. WHAM-related research/display project—must be worth a minimum of 10% of total grade
5. Final research/action project—must be worth a minimum of 10% of total grade

You will choose how your grade will be earned; 50% has been designated. You may choose to distribute the value among the graded components in any way that suits you. Please take care that your percentages all add up to 100%. Your decision must be registered with me by the beginning of class on Jan. 22 (no exceptions), or I will assign each of your components 20% (please see the graded components worksheet).

IN ORDER TO PASS THIS COURSE, YOU MUST COMPLETE FOR GRADING  
THE RESEARCH/ACTION PROJECT, THE RESEARCH/DISPLAY PROJECT, ALL THREE PAPERS & BOTH  
EXAMS.

**OUT OF CLASS ASSIGNMENT/MEETING:** On Wednesday, March 26, at 5 pm in Doudna, we will attend the WHAM keynote speech by feminist science scholar Barbara King. This speech is an important part of your course materials, so it is very important that you plan ahead and make sure to be there. If you simply cannot attend for some reason, please speak with me as soon as possible; I will give you an appropriate alternative assignment, so you will not lose any credit.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY:** Attendance is crucial to your grade. In-class graded activities will only be accepted for grading during the class session in which they are done (no make ups for in-class work; no exceptions). In addition, please keep in mind that you will be responsible for everything that is said, viewed, assigned, etc., during any class sessions that you miss. Information from lectures, discussions, and in-class activities will be covered on the exams. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to contact a classmate to find out what you missed and to make sure that you get copies of handouts, worksheets, etc., from me. If you are late to class, it is your job to check with me at the end of class to make sure you are marked “not absent.”

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** In this course, we will comply with EIU’s academic integrity policy (please see your catalog). I have absolutely no tolerance for plagiarism or cheating. Please note that “plagiarism or cheating” includes (but is not limited to) the following:

1. **quoting** from a source without correctly citing that source and/or without using quotation marks
2. **paraphrasing** from a source without correctly citing that source
3. turning in a paper with an **incorrect or incomplete works cited list**
4. **falsifying** data
5. turning in **someone else’s work** as your own—this includes (but is not limited to)
  - a. **copying** another’s work from a quiz or assignment
  - b. turning in work that **someone else wrote** for you
  - c. using on-line or hard copy **paper mills**
6. turning in **your own work that was written for another course**, without prior permission.

**IMPORTANT:** This is a senior-level course; you are expected to demonstrate senior-level facility with proper research, writing, and citation conventions. If your paper cites/uses Wikipedia, Yahoo Answers, Wiki Answers, Ask.com, or any other non-academic, non-reliable source, that paper will automatically fail. If your paper does not use a standard, accepted academic citation style (e.g., MLA,

APA, Chicago Manual of Style, ASA, etc.) correctly and consistently, that paper will automatically fail. If you do not know how to use your citation style correctly, please get help. The best help is found in my office, on the Purdue OWL (online writing lab) website (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>), and in EIU's Writing Center (<http://castle.eiu.edu/writing/>).

Violations of EIU's academic integrity policy will result in an **automatic failing grade** in this course and notification of the Office of Student Services. For more information, see [www.eiu.edu/~judicial](http://www.eiu.edu/~judicial).

**LATE POLICY:** Late work is strongly discouraged. However, late is better than not at all. Work will depreciate in value one letter grade for each school day it is late, beginning at 3:00 p.m. on the day it is due, unless otherwise noted. All work is due at the time noted in the schedule.

#### **Materials needed:**

PLEASE NOTE: You are required to do all assigned reading for this course. Two required texts for this course are available from Textbook Rental. Several required readings will also be available only via D2L. REQUIRED TEXTS from TRS

Mann, Susan Archer. *Doing Feminist Theory: From Modernity to Postmodernity*. NY: Oxford UP, 2012.

Gillis, Stacy, Gillian Howie, and Rebecca Munford, eds. *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration*. Expanded 2nd edition. Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

If you need help with D2L, please let me know—it isn't difficult to learn, but the first few times, it can be a little confusing. If you cannot find something that is supposed to be there, please let me know that, too.

**A great on-line dictionary site: [www.onelook.com](http://www.onelook.com)**

### **ASSIGNMENTS AND PROTOCOL**

#### **PARTICIPATION**

Participation consists of regular attendance and productive participation in class discussions and in-class activities. Please note that the **bolded** phrases are most important.

- A = almost perfect attendance and almost never late; **active and substantive participation in class discussions, explicitly about the materials assigned for that day or unit**, involving obvious critical thought and making connections to other materials or examples; avoidance of "side" conversations in class; leadership role in group activities and discussion; professional interactions with others in class, even when disagreeing strongly, and in all communications with professor; inattention to cell phones and other electronic devices during class
- B = almost perfect attendance and almost never late; **consistent participation in class discussions and activities with some references to assigned materials**, even when confused or struggling with ideas; professional behavior in class (including not carrying on "side" conversations and not being rude) and in all communication with professor; inattention to cell phones and other electronic devices during class
- C = consistent attendance with full preparation of course materials but **little to no verbal participation in discussions** unless required; professional behavior in class and in all communications with professor; consistent "follower" role in group activities; OR **consistent enthusiastic participation in discussions and activities, with no explicit evidence of full preparation of course materials**; professional behavior in class and in all communications with professor; inattention to cell phones and other electronic devices during class
- D = frequent lateness or absence; unprofessional, rude, or inappropriate behavior in class or on the discussion board (including, but not limited to, doing homework for other classes, reading newspapers in class, occasionally attending to cell phones, "side" conversations, etc.)

F = missing class; disruptive or hostile behavior in class or on the course discussion board; frequently attending to cell phones or other electronic devices during class.

### **WHAM-related research/display project**

One of the assignments in this class is to develop (as a group), research, create, and mount a display related to our Women's History and Awareness Month theme in the library display case inside the south entrance. This year's focus is on **feminism and the nature/nurture question**; related topics include feminist psychology; feminist pedagogy; body politics; and animal sciences. You will: work together as a class to decide what kinds of information your display will include and divide up the research and creation tasks; work individually (or in small groups) on researching and creating the materials that will go in the display; and work together as a class (with my help) to put the display in the display case. Remember that the best displays are visual (colorful, lots of images, very short bits of text) and informative (charts, maps, statistics, timelines, etc.). I will be sure you have the materials you need for this assignment (you don't have to buy anything).

#### **DEADLINES:**

2/10 in-class meeting with me to start the planning/idea generation process; start doing your research!

2/12 in-class meeting to check in with one another, get organized, etc.

2/19 in-class meeting to finalize plans and start making display materials (imp: finish your research!)

2/24 bring completed display materials to class for creation of the display

2/26 each student will turn in an individually-written short report in which you: a) describe what you learned doing this project; b) give the display a letter grade and write a full paragraph explaining why that is the correct grade for the display; and c) assign a separate letter grade to every student in the class (including yourself) and tell why that is the grade you think that person earned. If you do not turn in this report, you will not pass the display project assignment.

**E-mail guidelines:** When you communicate with your instructors, whether by e-mail, by phone, or in person, you are engaging in a professional exchange. Please be sure to reflect this professionalism in your communication. Also, please note that I only check my e-mail two or three times each school day. Give me at least one full school day (24 hours, M – F) to answer any e-mail message—I typically do not check my campus e-mail on weekends. (PLEASE NOTE: these are very good guidelines to follow for all your professors.)

### **Exams**

Each exam for this class will be a take-home exam comprised of a few short answer questions (dealing with important terminology) and one essay question; you may be asked about any materials covered in class up to that point.

**Papers**—these papers function primarily as **analytical response papers** that include applications and additional research; in other words, you will analyze one or more of our course readings and apply its concepts to something you find through your own research (some situation, text, etc.). You will submit three of these papers for grading, via D2L; please be sure that the entire paper is properly formatted and is in one single document (Word or Rich Text only, please); do not submit works cited as a separate document. Please note that *length requirements* are determined by word count, not page count, and every word counts—title, citations, works cited list, etc.

**In order to pass** a paper must have:

a clear, arguable thesis idea (explicitly stated or implied)—not just description  
all the parts of an essay (intro, multiple body paragraphs, conclusion)



- a point (a reason to read it)
- an audience (your audience is your classmates, unless you indicate otherwise)
- specific examples in every paragraph, which uphold the thesis idea
- a complete and correct Works Cited list, citing three required readings from class *and* at least one additional (not from class) source
- competent grammar and spelling

In order to **earn an A**, a paper must have all of the above plus:

- an original idea or strong analysis, with no internal inconsistencies or argumentative fallacies
- evidence of critical thinking and reading (don't believe everything you read/hear)
- creative introduction and conclusion
- direct engagement with counterarguments (that is, with ideas that disagree with yours)
- synthesis and analysis (not just summary and description)
- no spelling/grammar errors

For each paper, you should cite at least three readings from our required course materials plus at least one source that you find through research.

Each paper will be graded on the basis of the following (in addition to the above):

- does it meet the assignment criteria (length, format, etc.)?
- does it address the assigned topic, accurately and informatively?
- is the relationship between the paper and our class readings/materials made explicit?
- does it demonstrate research competence?
- does it demonstrate strong synthesis writing (putting sources in conversation with one another) ability?
- does it show that you have thought through the assignment carefully?

All students in the class will write **three short papers** (typed, double-spaced, *maximum length 1500 words* [approximately 5 pp.]; minimum length whatever it takes to do a good job).

PAPER 1 is due 2/17 and may cover any readings due from the beginning of class through Feb. 12.

PAPER 2 is due 3/31 and may cover any readings due from Feb. 17 through March 26; this paper must directly engage with the WHAM keynote speech.

PAPER 3 is due 4/23 and may cover any readings due from March 31 through April 21.

### **Final Project: Taking It to the People!**

In "Educating Women: A Feminist Agenda," bell hooks challenges feminists to take feminist messages to those outside of Women's Studies classes. This is the challenge of your final project in this course. For this assignment, you will choose a feminist issue that we've discussed (even briefly) in class and that you care about. You will do further research on this issue to learn more. Then, you will develop a plan for taking your knowledge to the community (broadly defined). You will implement your plan. Then you will write up and present to the class a report that tells what issue you chose, what you learned about the issue doing the research, what plan you developed, and how well your plan worked and why (or why not). You may choose to collaborate with other students on this assignment (each student does separate research and writes a separate paper, but you may work together on the plan and implementation). **I strongly recommend working in teams; more people = more energy for more creative projects.**

This assignment has five primary elements:

**A. the topic**—proposal, due April 2, 2014, in class

- choose an issue in which you are interested
- do preliminary research to see whether you will be able to access good information

--write a one-page proposal in which you tell me what issue you've chosen and why; what you have learned during your preliminary research (proposals without preliminary research will fail); who else you are working with (if anyone); and your preliminary plan of action (what you are going to do to bring the info to others)

**B. the research**—annotated bibliography, due April 9, 2014, in class

--research at least four additional (not from class!) academic or professional sources about your topic (note: activist websites may be very helpful to you, but do not constitute "research" for the purposes of this assignment)

--write an annotated bibliography from your research (for more info, please see the IUPUI handout "Preparing an Annotated Bibliography" on WebCT)

**C. the plan/implementation**

--coordinate what you need for your plan, and do it!

--remember to keep in touch with me as you do this, so I can help you with any logistical problems that come up

**D. written report**—due April 28, 2014, in class

Your written report is to be no more than 1500 words (approximately 5 pp., typed, double-spaced) and should be a full account of what topic you chose, what you learned about the issue doing the research, what your plan was and how well it worked (and why/not), what you learned doing your project, and how your research and your plan enhanced one another. In this report, you must include a strong argument for how your work on this project is related to feminism. Your written report must include a self-evaluation, in which you evaluate your work on this project (i.e., give yourself a grade) and explain that evaluation. If you collaborate with another student, you must also include an evaluation (grade) of that student and a rationale for your evaluation of her/him.

**E. in-class presentation**—during our final exam period, which is Thu., 5/8/14 from 12:30-2:30 pm. You will present the contents of your written report to your classmates (but not your self-evaluation or your evaluation of your collaborators). You may use any materials you choose to make your presentation as good as it can be: videos, pictures from your project, music, etc. Each presentation will be no longer than fifteen minutes. Any student whose presentation goes over the fifteen-minute limit will earn a lower grade on this assignment.

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**Figuring your graded components**

**The Value Of Your Graded Components—fill this in when you turn in your sheet to me.**

Graded Component	minimum value	chosen value
PARTICIPATION	10%	_____
THREE PAPERS	10%	_____
TWO EXAMS	10%	_____
WHAM RESEARCH/DISPLAY PROJ.	10%	_____
FINAL PROJECT	10%	_____
TOTAL of "chosen value" column		_____

**EXAMPLES:**

Let's say I love writing papers, hate taking in-class exams, and am good at discussing readings and ideas.

Then I might choose something that looks like this:

Graded Component	minimum value	chosen value
PARTICIPATION	10%	___20%__
THREE PAPERS	10%	___45%__
TWO EXAMS	10%	___10%__
WHAM PROJECT	10%	___10%__
FINAL PROJECT	10%	___15%__

Or, let's say I am a good exam-taker and don't like speaking up in class, but I do like group work. Then I might choose something that looks like this:

Graded Component	minimum value	chosen value
PARTICIPATION	10%	___10%__
THREE PAPERS	10%	___15%__
TWO EXAMS	10%	___40%__
WHAM PROJECT	10%	___25%__
FINAL PROJECT	10%	___10%__

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**WST 4309 Feminist Theory**

**Spring, 2014—schedule**

Please note: (page number) indicates the *first page* of the reading

Mann = Mann, *Doing Feminist Theory*

GHM = Gillis, Howie, and Munford, *Third Wave Feminism*

D2L = eiu online

All readings listed in the schedule are required readings and are due on the date on which they are listed.

**Unit 1: foundations**

- 1/13/14** Introduction to the course  
video: *One Fine Day*  
what feminist concepts interest you?
- 1/15** READ: Proto-feminist Readings (all on WebCT)  
Hildegard of Bingen, "The Light Speaks" (ea. 12th century)  
Christine de Pizan, "To Ennoble the Mind of Woman" (1405)  
Laura Cereta, "Wearied by your Carping" (1488)  
Artemisia Gentileschi, "The Spirit of Caesar in the Soul of a Woman" (1649)  
Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, "How Great Is the Strength of My Inclination" (1691)  
Tarabai Shinde, "Why Blame Women?" (1882)  
Qiu Jin, "Promoting Women's Rights" (ea. 20th century)  
Taj Al-Saltana, "'Liberating Women': An Iranian Feminist Perspective on National Identity" (1914)  
Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, "The Purdah Bus" (late 1920s)
- 1/20** no classes—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 1/22** READ: Mann to p. 30
- 1/27** READ: Mann chp. 2 (pp. 33-77)