Capitalism and Gender in the Neoliberal Era

M.A. Level Class – 4 Credits
Fall 2015-16

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Office: 510B
Office Hours: Wed. & Fri. 11:00-13:00 and by appointment

Class Time: Wednesday & Friday 9:00-10:40
Place: Wednesdays Z 14 412, Fridays N 11 203

Course Description:

This course deals with contemporary theories of economic and social relations and their role in producing, reproducing, codifying, inciting, and controlling gender identity and practices around the globe. We will attend to perspectives on the oppression of women, as well as the regulation and normalization of sexual identities, in the current period of neoliberal hegemony.

While the course mainly presents writings by materialist feminists from the U.S and Europe, we also consider an international perspective on labor relations. These authors consider femininity as an ideology conducive to power relations, and the reproduction of global capitalism in particular. Following from this, we will grapple with their understanding of gender oppression as linked to racial oppression, compulsory heterosexuality, and colonization projects, as well as conditioned by class struggle. These authors also reconsider care work as an insufficiently understood form of labor, as well as the role of the mass media in constructing identity.

Comprehension of the material entails serious engagement with third-wave feminism, standpoint theory, social reproduction theory, socialist feminism, new materialism, ecofeminism, world systems theory, postcolonial studies, poststructuralism, queer theory, contemporary anarchism, Black feminism, prison abolitionism, value-form theory, and theories of sex work.

Times, Queer Assemblages” (2005), Kevin Floyd, "Introduction: On Capital, Sexuality, and the Situations of Knowledge" (2009), Nina Power, selections from One-Dimensional Woman (2009), Roswitha Scholz, "Patriarchy and Commodity Society: Gender without the Body" (2009), Brooke Meredith Beloso, "Sex, Work, and the Feminist Erasure of Class" (2012), Tithi Bhattacharya, "Explaining Gender Violence in the Neoliberal Era" (2013), and Cinzia Arruzza, "Remarks on Gender" (2014).

All readings are available in English and included in the course reader.

Class Expectations:

The success of the course depends on student involvement and participation. Each discussion is inherently interactive. I will provide historical and biographical context as well as noting points of conceptual innovation and inheritance. This will provide a framework for myriad individual perspectives on the ideas and possibilities presented by each reading. Within a space of mutual respect and engagement, we will learn from one another and develop a deeper understanding than could ever be presented by any single one of us.

Requirements:

Attendance: Unexcused absences greatly deprecate your class participation grade. Late homework is unacceptable unless your absence is excused. For an absence to be excused, documentation of medical problems or a personal or family emergency is required. In this instance, you or a representative must contact me as soon as possible.

In-class presentations: Each student will contribute a 15-20 minute presentation. Your presentation may include: 1) Close attention to a single crucial moment of the thesis presented by the work under consideration; 2) Description of the argument as a whole and basic concepts; or 3) Historical, political or geographical information about the national context of the essay in question.

This assignment includes written and oral components. The written element should be 6-10 pages (1400-2400 words). I am free to meet with you in advance in order to discuss the best means of approaching the material. The in-class oral presentation may include direct reading from your paper at times, but must also engage with the class as a whole – teach the material and your point of view on it, rather than lecturing.

Participation: Active participation is necessary in order to learn, understand and experience the course. This means, first, that you must have read the assigned material closely before the class session. I recommend taking notes and annotating the text. Approach the material sympathetically but critically, and try to anticipate difficulties or knots in the arguments we consider. Each reading should be considered in terms of the theses it advances, but also in conversation with the other readings in the course and with your own experience and related studies. I welcome contributions that come from your own unique scholarly and personal background.
Final essay: 10-12 pages (3,000 words or less). This may build on the argument you developed in your in-class presentation but must be comprised of new material. The final essay should develop a distinct topic, but meaningfully engage with at least three of the authors we have studied in this class. I welcome productive conversation with other scholarly material. This should be of maximum benefit to your own distinct project as a scholar. If you can profitably bring these authors to bear on other academic concerns, this may be beneficial.

Your grade will be based on:

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<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class attendance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily class participation and in-class work</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class presentation – oral component</td>
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<td>- written component</td>
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<td>Final paper</td>
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Writing guidelines

Writings (the presentation and final paper) must be typed in a 12-point standard font, as well as double-spaced and with page numbers inserted. You must also title your paper. The document supporting the in-class presentation may be emailed or in hard copy; the final paper should be sent by email. Provide full references and be sure to avoid plagiarism. MLA and APA are both acceptable modes of citation. You may find the guidelines for these, as well as other helpful formatting rules, at the Purdue Owl (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/).

Learning Outcomes:

This course develops understanding of contemporary feminist thought, particularly with regard to economic substructures. Readings, lectures, discussion, presentations, and written essays are all integral aspects of this goal. In addition, the successful student will:
- Understand historical materialist approaches to individual development and selfhood.
- Appreciate the modes of argumentation attendant to contemporary critical thought.
- Formulate cogent positions on contemporary debates regarding economic and state policy.
- Develop an understanding of the global factors in determining concrete local situations.
- Understand and assess a variety of theses regarding the relationship between the domestic sphere and public space.
- Critically evaluate and compare readings according to methodology, argument, and style.
- Demonstrate the capacity to summarize, comprehend, and debate fundamental arguments, orally.
- Identify supplementary information through independent research that extends or complicates assigned readings.

Class Schedule:
Week 1
9/23 First class – introductions and overview

9/25 Nancy C.M. Hartsock
“The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism” (1983) (pp. 283-310)

Week 2
9/30 Lise Vogel
*Marxism and the Oppression of Women* (1983)
Chapters 1-2, “Introduction” and “A Decade of Debate” (pp. 1-30)

10/2 Vogel
*Marxism and the Oppression of Women*
Chapter 5, “Marx: The Mature Years” (pp. 59-76)

Week 3
10/7 Vogel
*Marxism and the Oppression of Women*
Chapters 9-11, “A Dual Legacy,” “The Reproduction of Labour-Power,” and “Beyond Domestic Labour” (pp. 133-182)

10/9 Donna Haraway
“A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century” (1985) (pp. 291-324)

Week 4
10/14 Maria Mies
*Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale* (1986)
Introduction, ch. 1, “What Is Feminism?” (pp. 1-44)

10/16 Mies
*Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*
Ch. 2, “Social Origins of the Sexual Division of Labour” (pp. 44-73)

Week 5
10/21 Mies
*Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*
Ch. 3, “Colonization and Housewifization” (p. 74-112)

10/23 Mies
*Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*
Ch. 4, “Housewifization International: Women and the New International Division of Labour” (pp. 112-144)
Week 6
10/28 Mies
*Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*
Ch. 5, “Violence against Women and the Ongoing Primitive Accumulation of Capital” (pp. 145-174)

10/30 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
“Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988) (pp. 66-111)

Week 7
11/4 Nancy Fraser
“From Redistribution to Recognition?: Dilemmas of Justice in a ‘Post-Socialist’ Age” (1995) (pp. 68-93)

11/6 Judith Butler
“Merely Cultural” (1997) (pp. 265-277)

Week 8
11/11 Tiqqun
“Sonogram of a Potential” (2001) (web)

11/13 Johanna Brenner
“Transnational Feminism and the Struggle for Global Justice” (2003) (pp. 25-34)

Week 9
11/18 Angela Y. Davis
“How Gender Structures the Prison System” (2003) (pp. 60-84)

11/20 Silvia Federici
Preface, Introduction (pp. 7-20) and

Jasbir Puar
“Queer Times, Queer Assemblages” (2005) (pp. 121-140)

Week 10

11/27 Nina Power, selections from *One-Dimensional Woman* (2009) (pp. 11-50)

Week 11
12/2 Roswitha Scholz
“Patriarchy and Commodity Society: Gender without the Body” (2009) (web)

12/4 Brooke Meredith Beloso
“Sex, Work, and the Feminist Erasure of Class” (2012) (pp. 47-70)

**Week 12**
12/9 Tithi Bhattacharya
“Explaining Gender Violence in the Neoliberal Era” (2013) (web)

12/11 Cinzia Arruzza
“Remarks on Gender” (2014) (web)


**Fill out a course evaluation online. Thanks for your thoughts.**

**Final essay due date to be determined.**

Late papers will only be accepted with a valid excuse and with my approval before the deadline. Grades will be marked down for each day late.