

**CAST 316: From Equal Rights to Human Rights:
Feminist Perspectives on Social Justice
Spring 2011
TTH 3-4:15, King 327**

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*** This course serves as an elective in the Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies major***

How do feminist activists and theorists identify inequalities based on gender, sexuality, race, class, ability and other axes of identity? What theoretical underpinnings shape their agendas for social change? This interdisciplinary course focuses on how liberal ideals of individual rights have enabled and constrained feminist theories of social justice. We will use a historical and comparative approach to study a range of American feminist theories including the civil rights model and challenges to the rights paradigm from Queer theorists, disability rights activists, and Third World and Indigenous feminists. Historically, we will concentrate on the contemporary period, beginning with second wave feminisms. The primary methodology of this course will be in-depth textual analyses of feminist theories but we will also study the social and political impact of these theories on activist movements. In addition to discussion of assigned readings, students will complete independent research on topics of their own choosing. This course provides an important addition to course offerings on feminist theory and thus also contributes to the GSFS major.

Course Goals:

- To develop a competency in feminist theories about social justice, rights and activism
- To understand the historical development of different feminist approaches and some of productive tensions and debates around justice, equality, rights, and identity
- To utilize intersectional approaches to the study of feminist theories and social movements
- To recognize the transnational connections of social justice theories and activism
- To think critically about the intersections of Feminist Studies and other interdisciplinary projects like Queer Studies, Disabilities Studies, Indigenous and Native Studies
- To develop advanced critical thinking skills through reading, writing, and discussion
- To conceptualize and execute independent research using primary and secondary sources

REQUIRED READINGS:

Books are available at the Oberlin College Bookstore and on reserve in Mudd Library. Articles listed on the class schedule can be located under Course Articles on Blackboard (BB).

Currah, Paisley, Richard M. Juang and Shannon Price Minter eds. *Transgender Rights*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

Enke, Anne. *Finding the Movement: Sexuality, Contested Space, and Feminist Activism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007.

Hesford, Wendy S. and Wendy Kozol, eds. *Just Advocacy?: Women's Human Rights, Transnational Feminisms, and the Politics of Representation*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2005.

Smith, Andrea. *Native Americans and the Christian Right: the Gendered Politics of Unlikely*

Alliances. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.
Smith, Bonnie and Beth Hutchison, eds. *Gendering Disability*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2004.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

I – Preparation, Attendance, and Participation (10%)

This course is an upper-level reading intensive seminar that requires a great deal of reading and demands a high level of engagement. Attendance is mandatory as is your informed and thoughtful participation. You must complete assigned readings prior to class and be prepared to discuss, question, argue, and perhaps rethink issues raised in the readings. Effective participation includes not only thoughtful comments and critiques; it also demands that one is a thoughtful, careful listener, open to different positions as well as willing to respectfully challenge and be challenged by your peers.

**It is important to cultivate skills that allow you to manage lengthy reading assignments. If you find you are having trouble finishing the readings, please see me so that we can identify more effective strategies.

Agenda-Setting Project (10%)

Working in pairs, you will help to establish the agenda for one class session and then lead discussion that day. Using the BB site blog, each pair of students will post a paragraph setting out your agenda for the class period, no later than 48 hours before class. Everyone else is required to contribute to the agenda setting process within the next 24 hours. The two discussion leaders will collate student responses and develop a plan for the upcoming class period. This plan must include bringing in at least one primary source relevant to the readings. In between these agenda-setting projects, please use the blog to comment on the readings, class discussions or other relevant material.

II- Written Assignments

This writing intensive class is designed to explore a variety of feminist theories as well as to develop critical reading, writing, and analytical skills.

Two critical analyses (40%), 5-7 pages, due March 14 and April 20 by noon

These papers ask you to critically analyze key issues from the assigned readings. Specific directions will be provided two weeks prior to the deadline for each paper. Papers will be evaluated according to the following criteria: your ability to articulate the authors arguments; a critical analysis and evaluation of different theoretical positions; clarity of thought; and the ability to synthesize texts and materials presented and discussed in class.

Final Research Project (40%)

Choose a topic related to course themes for this research paper. Research projects must include both primary and secondary sources.

- Proposal (5%): 2-4 pages (1-2 pages description; 1-2 pages annotated bibliography). Due April 11, by noon.
- Presentation (5%): In class, provide a ten-minute talk about your research project. Presentations must include a clear thesis and supporting evidence.
- Final Paper (30%): 10-12 pages. Due May 20, no later than 9pm.

GUIDELINES FOR PAPER SUBMISSIONS

Please submit ALL assignments electronically in Word format (either .doc or .docx but not Pages) to the Blackboard site by the start of class, unless otherwise specified. Papers should be double-spaced, use 12-point font, and use a standardized citation format.

ALL ASSIGNMENT DUE DATES ARE FIRM DEADLINES.

Grading Policy

Class participation	10%
Agenda Setting Project	10%
Two Critical Analyses	40%
Oral Presentation	5%
Research Proposal	5%
Research Project	30%

ADDITIONAL COURSE INFORMATION

Classroom Expectations: Regular on-time attendance is mandatory. Please arrive a few minutes early so that we may start class on time. More than two unexcused absences typically result in a lower final grade. Each late arrival will be counted as one-half of an absence. In case of illness or personal emergency, absences may be excused through a doctor or dean's note. Turn off all cell phones. No texting. Laptops are great for consulting readings and note taking, but I take great exception to people who use class time to check email, surf the web, or engage in any social networking sites.

Late Work: All assignments must be completed on time. Papers not turned in on that date will be penalized in grading and may not receive written comments.

P/NP: Students opting for this grading system must fulfill all course obligations and complete all assignments to receive credit for the course.

Writing Proficiency: Your final paper will be evaluated using the rubric posted on the course Blackboard site under the —Course Materials tab. If your paper fails to achieve a “yes” rating in two or more categories, you may not receive proficiency. Please feel free to make an appointment to discuss writing proficiency evaluation in this course

Academic Incompletes: No late assignments will be accepted past the end of reading period without an approved incomplete from the Dean of Studies, per college policy. Extensions on final projects also require an approved incomplete. There are no exceptions to this policy.

Honor Code: This course adheres to the policies of the Oberlin College Honor Code, which applies to all work submitted for academic credit, whether it is a creative project, a quiz, an exam or a paper. For papers, that means you must cite all written sources that you consulted, whether you quote directly or paraphrase. This is true whether you are using electronic or printed materials. Incomplete or improper citations are a form of plagiarism. If you are unfamiliar with proper citation formats, or have questions please consult me, a reference librarian, and/or a writing tutor. Lack of familiarity with proper procedures is not a defense.

At the end of each academic exercise, students shall write in full and sign the Honor Pledge: “I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment.” See Oberlin Honor Code, www.oberlin.edu/students/student_pages/honor_code2.html, for more information.

Students with Disabilities: If you need disability–related accommodations for your work in this course, support is available through Student Academic Series. Contact Jane Boomer, Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities for assistance in developing a plan to address your academic needs. Please also let me know if I can be of assistance.

CLASS SCHEDULE

2/8 Introduction

Unit 1: Second Wave Feminisms – Conceptualizing Rights

2/10 Defining Feminisms
Readings: Thompson, “Multiracial Feminism” (BB); Fernandes, “Unsettling ‘Third Wave’ Feminism” (BB); Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement” (BB)

2/15 Claiming Rights in Public Spheres
Reading: *Finding the Movement*, 1-61 (62-101 optional)

2/17 Claiming Rights in Public Spheres *****
Reading: *Finding the Movement*, 103-173

2/22 Claiming Rights in Public Spheres *****
Reading: *Finding the Movement*, 177-216, 252-267

Unit 2: Legacies of Rights-based Activism

2/24 Whose Rights; Whose Justice?
Reading: *Transgender Rights*, xiii-xxiv, 3-50, 74-92

3/1 Juridical activism: assessing strategies *****
Reading: *Transgender Rights*, 141-216

3/3 Juridical activism: assessing strategies *****
Reading: *Transgender Rights*, 217-261, 274-321

3/8 Rights vs. Needs? *****
Readings: Apostolidis, “Feminist Theory, Immigrant Workers' Stories” (BB); Nadasen, “Welfare Rights” (BB); Sullivan and Lee, “Organizing Immigrant Women” (BB); Ernst, “Move(ment) Beyond Rights” (BB)

3/10 Review and writing workshop

3/14 Position Paper #1 Due By Noon

Unit 3: Re-assessing Rights Claims

3/15 Challenging Rights Discourse
Reading: Butler, *Undoing Gender* (BB); *Gendering Disability*, 73-105

3/17 Do Rights Claims Work with the ADA?
Reading: *Gendering Disability*, 1-72

3/22 Do Rights Claims Work with the ADA? *****
Reading: *Gendering Disability*, 145-215, 253-271

- 3/24 Transnational Feminisms and the Problematics of Human Rights
Reading: *Just Advocacy*, pgs. 1-74, 99-119
- 3/29-3/31 Fall Break**
- 4/5 Transnational Feminisms and the Problematics of Human Rights *****
Reading: *Just Advocacy*, pgs. 120-144, 195-242, 266-290
- 4/7 Unexpected Alliances: Do Sovereignty Claims Compete with Rights Claims?
Reading: *Native Americans and the Christian Right*, ix-xxv, 1-8, 74-114
- 4/11 Research Proposal due by noon**
- 4/12 Unexpected Alliances *****
Reading: *Native Americans and the Christian Right*, 115-254 (255-275 optional)
- 4/14 Feminism and Environmental Justice Activism *****
Readings: Buckingham and Kulcur, "Gendered Geographies" (BB); Di Chiro, "Living Environmentalisms" (BB); Rainey and Johnson, "Grassroots Activism" (BB); "Principles of Environmental Justice" (BB)
- 4/19 Review and Writing Workshop
- 4/20 Position Paper #2 Due by Noon**
- 4/21 "Toward a Vision of Sexual and Economic Justice"
S&F Online: <http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/sexecon/index.htm>
Introduction and Parts 1 & 2
- 4/26 "Toward a Vision of Sexual and Economic Justice" *****
S&F Online: <http://www.barnard.edu/sfonline/sexecon/index.htm>
Parts 3, 4 & 5
- 4/28 Presentations
- 5/3 Presentations
- 5/7 Presentations

FINAL PROJECT DUE MAY 20 NO LATER THAN 9PM.

ARTICLES on BLACKBOARD

Apostolidis, Paul. "Feminist Theory, Immigrant Workers' Stories, and Counterhegemony in the United States Today." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 33, 3 (2008): 545-568.

Baxandall, Rosalyn and Linda Gordon, eds. *Dear Sisters: Dispatches from the Women's Liberation Movement*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000. Excerpts

Buckingham, Susan and Rakibe Kulcur. "Gendered Geographies of Environmental Injustice." *Antipode* 41, 4 (2009): 659-683.

Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2004. Pgs. 17-39

"Combahee River Collective," "A Black Feminist Statement." In *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*, ed. B. Guy-Sheftall, 232-240. New York: New Press, 1995.

Di Chiro, Giovanna. "Living Environmentalisms: Coalition Politics, Social Reproduction, and Environmental Justice." *Environmental Politics* 17, 2 (April 2008): 276-298.

Ernst, Rose. "Move(ment) Beyond Rights: Welfare Rights in an Era of Personal Responsibility." *Studies in Law, Politics and Society* 40 (2007): 80-101.

Fernandes, Leela. "Unsettling 'Third Wave' Feminism: Feminist Waves, Intersectionality, and Identity Politics in Retrospect." In *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism*, ed. Nancy A. Hewitt, 98-119. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2010.

Nadasen, Premilla. "Expanding the Boundaries of the Women's Movement: Black Feminism and the Struggle for Welfare Rights." *Feminist Studies* 28, 2 (Summer 2002): 271-301.

"Principles of Environmental Justice," in *The Quest for Environmental Justice: Human Rights and the Politics of Pollution*, ed. Robert Bullard, 299-302. San Francisco, CA: Sierra Club Books, 2005.

Rainey, Shirley A. and Glenn S. Johnson. "Grassroots Activism: An Exploration of Women of Color's Role in the Environmental Justice Movement." *Race, Gender & Class* 16, 3-4 (2009): 144-173.

Sullivan, Richard and Kimi Lee. "Organizing Immigrant Women in America's Sweatshops: Lessons from the Los Angeles Garment Worker Center." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 33, 3 (2008): 527-532.

Thompson, Becky. "Multiracial Feminism: Recasting the Chronology of Second Wave Feminism." In *No Permanent Waves: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism*, ed. Nancy A. Hewitt, 39-60. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2010.

BOOKS ON RESERVE

Baxandall, Rosalyn and Linda Gordon, eds. *Dear Sisters: Dispatches from the Women's Liberation Movement*. New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000. **HQ1421 .D43 2000**

Butler, Judith. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge, 2004. **HQ1075 .B89 2004**

García, Alma M, ed. *Chicana Feminist Thought: the Basic Historical Writings*. New York: Routledge, 1997. **HQ1421 .C52 1997**

Cobble, Dorothy Sue, ed. *The Sex of Class: Women Transforming American Labor*. Ithaca: ILR Press, 2007. **HD6079.2.U5 S49 2007**

Currah, Paisley, Richard M. Juang and Shannon Price Minter eds. *Transgender Rights*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006. **HQ77.9 .T716 2006**

de Jesús, Melinda L. *Pinay Power: Peminist Critical Theory: Theorizing the Filipina/American Experience*. New York: Routledge, 2005. **E184.F4 P547 2005**

Enke, Anne. *Finding the Movement: Sexuality, Contested Space, and Feminist Activism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007. **HQ1421 .E65 2007**

Guy-Sheftall, Beverly. *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African-American Feminist Thought*. New York: New Press, 1995. **E185.86 .W925 1995**

Hesford, Wendy S. and Wendy Kozol, eds. *Just Advocacy?: Women's Human Rights, Transnational feminisms, and the Politics of Representation*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2005. **HQ1236 .J87 2005**

Nelson, Jennifer. *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement*. New York: New York University Press, 2003. **HQ766.5.U5 N45 2003**

Roth, Benita. *Separate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in America's Second Wave*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004. **HQ1421 .R684 2004**

Smith Andrea. *Native Americans and the Christian Right: the Gendered Politics of Unlikely Alliances*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008. **E98.R3 S54 2008**

Smith, Bonnie and Beth Hutchison, eds. *Gendering Disability*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2004. **HV1569.3.W65 G46 2004**