WST 301: Histories of Feminism

Class Time: Tues and Thurs, 10:00- 11:20 a.m.
Class Location: Physics, P112

This course traces the intellectual and movement histories of feminism. Although this course specifically hones in on U.S. feminism in late twentieth century, it aims to place this history in a broader transnational context, while paying close attention to the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality. To do so, we will examine a wide range of material, including archival documents, historical analyses, theoretical texts, memoirs, and films. In the first part of the course, we consider the contexts and intellectual traditions that helped incite the emergence of the women’s liberation movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The second part of the course, then, turns its attention to this movement itself. In this section of the course, we look at position papers and other documents that were published in four U.S. cities in or around the year of 1970, thinking critically about the production and dissemination of these texts. Next, the third section of the course moves thematically and roughly chronologically through the 1970s and 1980s, considering the genealogy of feminist thinking in relation to key concepts or debates in U.S. feminism. Finally, in the last section of the course, we read cutting-edge feminist and queer scholarship that revisits this moment in the history of U.S. feminism to raise theoretical questions about memory, affect, temporality, space, and feminist historiography. Overall, students in this course will develop the critical tools to engage with historical documents, while sharpening their understanding of the contexts out of which these texts emerged.

Student Learning Objectives:
1. Analyze key developments in the history of feminism
2. Identify continuities and differences in feminist thinking and tactics over time and space
3. Discuss the history of feminism with particular attention to race, class, gender, and sexuality
4. Evaluate a range of primary and secondary sources
5. Apply theoretical concepts to consider the history of feminism
6. Demonstrate critical and analytical thinking skills verbally and in writing

Required Materials:
Students are not required to purchase any books for this course. All course documents are made available on Blackboard as PDFs. Please print and bring all course material to class.
Course Requirements:

Attendance and Participation (20%):
Consistent attendance and active participation are crucial components of your grade. Arriving excessively late or leaving early will count as an absence. You are allowed three absences over the course of the semester. After three absences, your participation grade will be automatically lowered one grade level with each additional absence (e.g. A- → B+). If you miss more than five classes, you automatically fail this course!

As well as consistently attending class, you are also expected to complete all of the assigned readings and come prepared to discuss the material. If you come to class without printed copies of the readings, this will adversely affect your attendance and participation grade.

Archive Visit—Paper (20%):
Within the first eight weeks of the semester, students will visit an archival repository to look at material related to women’s rights, feminism, and/or women’s or gender histories. You can feel free to visit a local repository, such as the archives and special collections located in Stony Brook’s library. However, I encourage you to consider making a trip to New York City, which has world famous collections in this area. You may, for example, arrange to visit Fales Library and Special Collections (which has a Riot Grrrl Collection); the Tamiment Library and Robert F. Wagner Archives; Barnard’s zine library; or a community-based repository, like the Lesbian Herstory Archives or Interference Archive. We will discuss further how to go about arranging an appointment to visit an archive. If there is interest, I can arrange hours at the Lesbian Herstory Archives specifically for the purpose of allowing students in the class to complete this assignment.

After visiting an archive of your choice, you will write up a short 3-5 page paper that discusses your experience and, specifically, how the material you consulted relates to the class. You will turn in a hard copy of this paper on October 25 along with relevant documentation related to your visit (e.g. an email chain with an archivist). A more detailed prompt will be given in September.

Primary Source Project—Paper and Presentation (30%)
This assignment is designed to build upon your first paper. For this paper and presentation, you will focus on one primary source relevant to the history of feminism that is not included on the syllabus. Examples of a primary source might include a periodical, position paper, graphic/art piece, literary text, or a song. This can be something you found during your archival visit, though it does not have to be. During week twelve of the semester, students will share their primary source with their classmates during scheduled class presentations. On either November 15 or November 17, students will submit a hard copy of a 5-7 page paper on the same date as their presentation. This paper will analyze the primary source and use at least two course readings to contextualize it within the history of feminism. A more detailed prompt will be given closer to the due date.

Note: The focus of most of what we are reading in this course is U.S. feminism in the 1970s and 1980s. Students are encouraged to pick a primary source that aligns with this geographic and
historical focus. If you would like to write about a primary source that is earlier, later, or non-U.S. based, you are encouraged to consult me for suggestions of outside readings that more directly relate to your topic. With my approval, relevant outside readings may be used in lieu of the two required course readings.

**Take Home Final—or Paper (30%)**
The final component of your grade is a take-home exam. This exam will test your knowledge of assigned materials. Particular emphasis will be placed on your ability to apply theoretical concepts to historical moments discussed earlier in the semester. We will discuss the take-home exam in more depth near the end of the semester. It will be due by email one week after the last day of class on **December 15**.

Instead of the final, you may elect to write a research paper (8-10 pages) on a topic on your choosing related to the history of feminism. To do so, you must email me a paragraph proposing your topic by **November 15**. The paper will be due on **December 15**.

**Extra Credit!**
Throughout the semester, students will have the opportunity to earn up to three points of extra credit on their final grade. For extra credit, you may attend an event held on or near campus that relates to the themes of this course. To receive credit, you will then submit a brief critical response of approximately 500 words. While I encourage you take advantage of all the exciting feminist events taking place on or near campus, you may only receive extra credit for one. Extra credit responses are due one week after the date of the event.

**Academic Integrity**
Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person's work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instances of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. Faculty in the Health Sciences Center (School of Health Technology & Management, Nursing, Social Welfare, Dental Medicine) and School of Medicine are required to follow their school-specific procedures. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at: http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/academic_integrity/index.html

**Disability Support Services Statement**
If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your coursework, please contact Disability Support Services at 128 Educational Communications Center. You can reach this office by phone at (631) 632-6747 or via email at dss@stonybrook.edu. They will work with you to determine what accommodations, if any, are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential. Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services. For procedures and information, go to the following web site http://www.ehs.sunysb.edu and search “Fire Safety and Evacuation and Disabilities.”
Critical Incident Management Statement
Stony Brook University expects students to represent the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, and/or inhibits students' ability to learn.

Reading Schedule:

**Part 1: Paths to Women's Liberation**

*Week One: Introducing Women's Liberation*

- Tues, Aug 30: Course Overview
  - In class film: *She's Beautiful When She's Angry* (2014)

- Thurs, Sept 1: [cont.]

*Week Two: Intellectual Foundations of Women's Liberation*

- Tues, Sept 6: No Class!

- Thurs, Sept 8: Mary Wollstonecraft “Introduction” to *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), pp. 9-14
  - Anna Julia Cooper excerpt from “*A Voice from the South*” (1892), pp. 43-49
  - Simone de Beauvoir “Introduction” to *The Second Sex* (1949), pp. 3-17

*Week Three: U.S. Suffrage and Post-War Political Contexts*

- Tues, Sept 13: Declaration of Sentiments (1848)
  - Alice Duer Miller “Why We Oppose Pockets for Women” (1914)

- Thurs, Sept 15: Betty Friedan, “The Problem that has No Name” *Feminine Mystique* (1963), pp. 1-22
  - NOW, “Statement of Purpose” (1966)

**Part 2: Women’s Liberation in New York, Chicago, Boston, and DC in and around 1970**

*Week Four: New York*

- Tues, Sept 20: New York Radical Women, “Principles” (1968) and “No More Miss America” (1968)
The Feminists “A Political Organization to Annihilate Sex Roles” (1969), in Notes from the Second Year, pp. 114-118
New York Radical Feminists, “Organizing Principles” (1970), in Notes from the Second Year, pp. 119-122
Robin Morgan, “Goodbye to All That” (1970) from RAT, pp. 6-7

Thurs, Sept 22:
Shulamith Firestone, “The Dialectic of Sex,” from The Dialectic of Sex (1970), pp. 3-14

Week Five: Chicago and Boston

Thurs, Sept 29: Task: take a look at the digitized issues of Boston based Cell 16’s No More Fun and Games. Come prepared to discuss at least three articles of your choosing in depth. You are encouraged to bring your laptop.

Week Six: D.C.
Charlotte Bunch for the Furies Collective “Lesbians in Revolt: Male Supremacy Quakes and Quivers” (1972) the Furies (Vol 1: No 1), pp. 8-9.
Alison Wolfson, “Clenched Fist, Open Heart” from Feminist Memoir Project (1998), pp. 268-283

Thurs, Oct 6: Task: take a look at DC based newspaper off our backs, which is digitized on JSTOR. Select and print 2-3 articles, published between the years of 1970-1973, that interest you.


Week Seven: Theories of Lesbian Identity, Desire, and Politics

Joan Nestle, “Butch Femme Relationships: Sexual Courage in the
1950s” (1981)

**Week Eight: Womyn Only Space, Gender Politics, and Trans Feminism**

Tues, Oct 18: Janice Raymond “Introduction” to *The Transsexual Empire* (1979), pp. 1-18


**Week Nine: Feminism, Racism, and the development of Black Feminism**


“Paper from Archive Visit is due!


**Week Ten: Black and U.S. Third World Feminism in the University**


**Week Eleven: The Anti-Pornography Movement and the Feminist Sex Wars**


“We Protest” Flyer

**Week Twelve: Primary Document Project Presentations**

Tues Nov 15: student presentations
*paper due with presentation

Thurs Nov 17: student presentations
*paper due with presentation
Week Thirteen: Happy Thanksgiving!
Tues, Nov 22: No class!

Thurs, Nov 24: No class!

Part 4:
New Approaches to U.S. Feminism

Week Fourteen
In Class viewing: Elisabeth Surbin’s Shulie (1997)


Week Fifteen

Thurs, Dec 8: Cait McKinney “Body, Sex, Interface” (2015)
*Take home final due Thurs, Dec 15