

# INTRODUCTION TO FEMINISMS, Fall 2007

EN125--HS148--PS125--SC225

**Prof. Connie Griffin**

BEST way to contact me: <griffinc@bc.edu>

FULTON HALL 230 - Tuesdays 4:30-5:45

Discussion Groups - Thursdays 4:30-5:45-Locations TBA

Office: Carney Hall 330 (T/TH Office Hours:2:30-4:00) and by appt.

## **Required Texts**

**WL:** *Women's Lives: Multicultural Perspectives*, \***Fourth Ed.**, Gwen Kirk & Margo Okazawa-Rey

**CRC:** Online: BC Libraries Home Page >Resources >Course Reserves Catalog>Griffin

**Atlas:** *The Penguin ATLAS of WOMEN in the WORLD*, **Third Edition** ("Atlas")

**Our Bodies:** *Our Bodies, Ourselves: A New Edition for A New Era* (**2005 Edition**)

**FEM:** *Feminism*, June Hannam, Pearson Education Ltd, 2007.

**FNS:** *Feminist News Service* [www.womensenews.org](http://www.womensenews.org). Subscription is free (although you may make a donation if you feel so inclined). Required reading assignments and group projects will involve this news service and websites listed at the end of the syllabus.

## **The Course**

This introductory course offers both an overview and an historical foundation for understanding the feminist movement in the U.S. Because systems of privilege and disadvantage shape women's and men's identities and social positions in multiple and unique ways, *Introduction to Feminisms* applies numerous academic disciplinary methods to the study of gender (history, literature, psychology, and sociology) and explores women's and men's experiences within various cultural contexts, including socioeconomic class, race and ethnicity, sexual identity, religion, and generation. Contemporary feminist studies takes into account, not only the cultural diversity of the U.S., but also the increasing globalization of feminism. Personal experience provides a locus for contextualizing commonalities and differences in women's lives and anchors women's studies in its originating impulse—the realization that the personal is political. This introduction to the various strands that make up the feminist movement in the U.S. and globally is shaped by an understanding of cultural complexities, certainly, but most importantly, a commitment to the aspirations, hopes, and values of women and men working together to create more just and equitable social structures, systems, institutions, and relationships.

## **Student Responsibilities and Evaluative Criteria**

**Preparation, Attendance, and Participation (33%):** Active participation makes up a significant portion of your grade for this course, thus you are expected to attend all lectures (Tuesdays 4:30-5:45) and discussion group meetings (Thursdays 4:30-6:15). Attendance will be noted at both. As the faculty director for the *Introduction to Feminisms* course, I will facilitate our movement through the material by providing a structured unfolding of the course contents, bringing in guest speakers from various areas of expertise and experience, and presenting documentary videos exploring research directly related to our focus topics. However, it is in the discussion groups that you will reflect on and analyze the material presented. *Introduction to Feminisms* **peer-led discussion groups offer an innovative opportunity for interactive learning**, not one that you will find in most other courses. This is both an

opportunity and an obligation. ***Introduction to Feminisms* was founded and formed by students who experienced a profound gap in their education around issues of gender identity and experience.** Fully supported by the Women's Studies faculty, along with support from other faculty and administrative members, **it remains a student-driven course today.** This means that you are asked to arrive at discussion groups fully prepared to participate in a thoughtful, engaged, and respectful manner. To do this you must have done the readings and written assignments and come prepared to contribute in a significant way. Teams of student teachers (TAs) who have taken the course before lead the discussion groups. Selected through a rigorous screening process, student teachers participate in an advanced seminar (with me), *Advanced Seminar in Feminist Theory and Pedagogy* simultaneously with retaking the *Introduction to Feminisms* course (with you).

**Weekly Essays (33%):** Each student will keep an ongoing portfolio made up of weekly essays based on the readings, lectures, video screenings, and guest speakers, as well as group discussions. Your essays will be turned into your TAs at the end of class on Tuesdays, however, you must make a copy to bring to the Thursday discussion sessions so that you may draw on them for discussion. Your weekly essays will be read, evaluated, and responded to by your TAs. All essays must be 3-5 pages, typed, double-spaced, and stapled (**electronic or hand-written papers will not be accepted and late papers will have points deducted**). **Weekly essays will be evaluated based on the following criteria:** 1) **synthesis** of the week's material: evidence that you have read and understood the major themes covered in the week's readings as a whole (rather than only one aspect of your readings; 2) **critical thinking and analysis of the week's thematic focus**; 3) **a cumulative understanding and synthesis** of course topics (drawing on previous course topics to illustrate a current issue under discussion); 4) **self-reflection and self-awareness** (examples from personal experience and observation included when appropriate); and 5) **organization and quality of writing; depth and complexity of analysis of the issues.**

**Final Essay Exam (33%):** Your **final take-home essay exam** should total about seven pages (1 ½ page for each question). It is due on the scheduled day for final exams (submitted via email attachment as a word document) and will be read and evaluated by me.

### Course Calendar

**Reading Assignments:** readings and discussion topics are listed on the date of relevant lectures; **they should be read before the Tuesday lecture, guest speaker, or documentary.** Weekly essays will be turned in to your TAs at the end of that week's Tuesday lecture; however, you should also bring a copy of your essay to your discussion meeting on Thursday so that you may draw on it for purposes of participation. In discussion groups, you will often be asked to share an excerpt from your essay.

SEPT 4/6

**Introduction and Overview** of the Course; Introduction of Teaching Assistants;

**Reading in preparation for Thursday's Discussion Group:** "A Day Without Feminism" and "What is Feminism," from *ManifestA*, by Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards, Course Reserves Catalog (CRC), (O'Neill Library Home Page-On-Line). Also, the Introduction (2-9) to *Women's Lives: Multicultural Perspectives*. Feminism, Chapter Seven, The Twenty-first Century--Still Making Waves (159-170).

**SEPT 11/13**

**Feminism: Historical Perspectives.** Required Reading by Tuesday: *Feminism*, "Who's Who" and "Key Dates" (xi-xvi); Chapter One: Turning the World Upside Down (1-15). *Feminism*, Chapter Two, The Beginnings of Modern Feminism (17-48), Chapter Three, Women's Suffrage 1860s-1920s (49-81), Chapter Six, The Personal is Political: Second Wave Feminism. Early Feminist Theory and the *Querelle des Femmes* (1400-1789), Joan Kelly (CRC). "What is Activism?" in *Manifesta*, Jennifer Baumgardner & Amy Richards (CRC). Documentary Viewing: excerpt from "My Feminism."

**SEPT 18/20**

**Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Gendered Identity and Structural Inequality.**

Required Reading by Tuesday: Simone de Beauvoir, Introduction to *The Second Sex*, Course Reserves Catalog (CRC), O'Neill-On-Line. Adrienne Rich, "Notes Toward a Politics of Location" (CRC). Sojourner Truth, "Ain't I A Woman?" (CRC). "White Privilege & Male Privilege," Peggy McIntosh (CRC). *Women's Lives: Multicultural Perspectives*, Chapter One, Theories and Theorizing (1-57), including the following Readings: Lorber, Johnson, Combahee River Collective, Pratt, Lee, Mohanty, and Roychoudhuri. *Women's Lives: Chapter Two: Identities and Social Locations* (61-119), including Readings: Daly, Allison, Pough, Kaye/Kantrowitz, Elkassabani, Martinez, Waters. *Penguin Atlas of Women in the World*, Introduction and Part One: Maps 1, 3.

**SEPT 25/27**

**Yvette Hyater-Adams, Renaissance Muse Coach in Transformative Language Arts, will speak on how "Finding Our Voices, Telling Our Stories Creates Personal and Social Change."**

Required Reading by Tuesday. Ntozake Shange, *Nappy Edges* selections: "wow, yr just like a man," "I talk to myself," and poems. Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider* essays, including "Poetry is Not a Luxury," "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," "Scratching the Surface," and "Sexism: An American Disease in Blackface" (CRC). Sandra Cisneros, selections from *The House on Mango Street* (CRC). Minnie Bruce Pratt, "Identity: Skin Blood Heart." "No Name Woman," Maxine Hong Kingston (CRC).

**OCT 2/4**

**Women's Bodies: Beauty and the Beast--A Multi-Billion Dollar Business.** Required Reading by Tuesday: *Women's Lives: Chap Three* (121-163). *Our Bodies, Ourselves: Chapters 1, 2, 6.* "Erotica vs. Pornography," Gloria Steinem (CRC). "Reading the Slender Body," Susan Bordo (CRC). *Atlas*, Maps 18, 19. "Plastic Makes Perfect?" Sarah Green (CRC). Documentary Viewing: "Beyond Killing Us Softly," by Jean Kilbourne's."

**OCT 9/11**

**Violence Against Women: Familiar Patterns.** Required Reading by Tuesday: *Women's Lives*, Chapter Six. *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, Chapter 8. *Atlas*, Maps 7, 8, 20, 21. See Course Reserves Catalog - On-Line: Robin Warshaw, Introduction: "I Never Called it Rape"; and "Reality of Acquaintance Rape." "Rape Statistics," Elizabeth Wolf. "Vigil for Slain Woman." Kathleen Burge, "Woman Killed on Nantucket." Jon Elliston, "Hidden Casualties: When Troops Return from War," Jon Elliston. "Fighting Back," Bella English. "Many New or Expectant Mothers Die Violent Deaths," Donna St. George (CRC). "The Girls Next Door," Peter Landesman (CRC). Documentary Viewing: *Dreamworlds 3*.

**OCT 16/18**

**SPEAKER: ROB OKUN, Executive Director, Men's Resource Center for Change; Editor, "Voice Male," will speak on the topic "Men Redefining Masculinity and Providing New Visions of Manhood."** Required Reading by Tuesday: Explore the "Men's Resource Center for Change" website at [www.mrcforchange.org](http://www.mrcforchange.org) and review their newsletter, *Voice Male*." Go to [www.womensenews.org](http://www.womensenews.org) and read Rob Okun's *Commentary*, "Men Also Share Fruits of Women's Equality Day." The following readings are on CRC: Kenneth Clatterbaugh, Ch. 1, "Introduction to the Men's Movement," from *Contemporary Perspectives on Masculinity*, 1997 (1-16). R. W. Connell, "The History of Masculinity," from *The Masculinity Studies Reader*, 2002 (245-61). Susan Faludi, Ch. 1, "The Son, the Moon, and the Stars: The Promise of Postwar Manhood," from *Stiffed*, 1999, (3-47). "Being A Boy," Julius Lester. "Feminism's Personal Questions-for Men," William Becker. "Male Roles," Janet Shibley Hyde.

**OCT 23/25**

**SPEAKER: David Hooks, former Executive Dir., Vermont Cares, Delegate at the International AIDS Conference 2006, Toronto, and Augustus Nasmith, Jr., International AIDS Activist, will speak on the topic "HIV/AIDS: When the Global Gets Personal."** Required Reading by today: *Our Bodies, Ourselves*: "Sexual Health": Chaps 13-16; *Atlas*: Map 48. "Time to Deliver," Augustus Nasmith, Jr. (CRC). HIVShort2007, David Hooks (CRC). Review information on link: [http://www.populationaction.org/resources/factsheets/factsheet25\\_PEPFAR.htm](http://www.populationaction.org/resources/factsheets/factsheet25_PEPFAR.htm).

**OCT 30/NOV 1**

**SPEAKER: Robyn Ochs, will speak on the topic, "Identity and the Sexuality Spectrum," Editor of *Getting BI: Voices of Bisexuals Around the World*.** Required Reading by today: Review Robyn Ochs' website: [www.robynocho.com](http://www.robynocho.com). *Women's Lives*, Chapter Four (165-201), including READINGS: Cisneros, Wolf, Jordan, Raymond, Khan, Feinberg, Lorde, *OUR BODIES, OURSELVES*: "Relationships and Sexuality": Chaps 9-12. Online Course Reserves: Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality." Marjorie Garber, Introduction to *Vice Versa*. Dinitia Smith, "Love that Dare not Squeak its Name." "Talking to Straight People," Dorothy Allison, 143-150 (CRC).

**NOV 6/8**

**SPEAKER: Heather Stephenson will speak about the history and themes of OUR BODIES, OURSELVES, The Women's Health Movement, and the Boston Women's Health Collective.** Required Reading by Tuesday: *Women's Lives*, Chap 5 (203-247); Review the following chapters in *OUR BODIES, OURSELVES* and focus more on those that interest you, less on those that do not (I understand that there is too much material here for you to digest in one week): Introduction and Letter from the Founders (ix-xiv), "The Politics of Women's Health," Chap 31 (719-747), "Reproductive Choices": Chaps 17-20, "Childbearing": Chaps 21-25. Also visit Our Bodies website: [www.ourbodiesourselves.com](http://www.ourbodiesourselves.com). *Atlas*: Review Maps 9-15. Online Course Reserves Catalog: "Reproductive Rights Under the Backlash," Susan Faludi. Susan Brownmiller, "Abortion is a Woman's Right." "Pregnant Embodiment: Subjectivity and Alienation," Iris Marion Young, 1995. See archive articles related to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Plan B Emergency Pill at [www.womensenews.org](http://www.womensenews.org), as well as the following reports: "War on Women" & "Bush Administration Record on Reproductive Rights" at [www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org).

**NOV 13/15 --**

**Patriarchy & Literacy; Complementarity or Hierarchy?**. Anna Besch, M.A. Philosophy, "The Alphabet versus the Goddess, or Literacy and Patriarchy," and Julia Feder, M.A. student in Theology, "Roman Catholicism and Gender Complementarity: Defining Femininity and Delimitating the Ordained Priesthood." Required Reading by today: For Julia Feder's Talk, read: John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis*, May 22, 1994, (CRC). Paul McPartlan. "The Marian Church: Hans Urs von Balthasar and the ordination of women (CRC). Hans Urs von Balthasar. "The Marian Principle" (CRC).

**NOV 20/23 -- THANKSGIVING BREAK**: Because there will be no discussion session this week, we will not have a lecture. Please use the time to read for next week's guest speaker.

**NOV 27/29 --**

**SPEAKER: PATRICIA HYNES, Prof., BU School of Public Health, will speak on the topic, "On the Battlefields of Women's Bodies: Health Effects of War on Women."** Required Reading by today: *Women's Lives*, Chap 11 (483-531). *Atlas*: Map 39. "On the Battlefields of Women's Bodies," by H. Patricia Hynes (CRC) & "The Other War" by Chris Hedges and Laila Al-Arian (CRC). Also, review the following website: [www.feministpeacenet.org/](http://www.feministpeacenet.org/). Note especially articles and statistics on militarism and violence against women.

**DEC 4/6**

**Feminism and the Future: Creating Change Through Collaboration, Creativity, and Action.** Required Reading by Tuesday: Chap 13 (569-610). *Our Bodies, Ourselves*: Chap 32 (748-758). *Atlas*: Map: Feminist Organizing: 40. "Bridging the Feminist Divide," Bella English (CRC). "Pink Thongs and Patriarchy," Lisa Featherstone. In your last essay this week please consider your vision and hopes for a more socially just, harmonious, and sustainable world, as well as some of the ways you might go about acting on that vision in personal, social, and political ways. Revisit the following web sites and draw on some of those that interest you. Incorporate into your essay ways you might see yourself actively participating in an organization or organizations that appeal to you.

\*FINAL ESSAY EXAM DISTRIBUTED; DUE DATE BASED ON FINAL EXAM SCHEDULE.

SEPT. 12 (WED) -- DROP/ADD ENDS

NOV. 9 (FRI) -- SPRING REGISTRATION BEGINS

DEC 11-12 (TUES-WED) -- STUDY DAYS

DEC 13-20 (THURS-THURS) -- TERM EXAMS

**Selected Web Sites (send to me your recommendations for suitable sites not listed here)**

African Women's Media Center [www.awmc.com](http://www.awmc.com)

Asian Women United [www.asianwomenunited.org/](http://www.asianwomenunited.org/)

BC Libraries>Resources>Ethnic News Watch (includes gender)

Bisexual Resource Center [www.biresource.org](http://www.biresource.org)

Catholics for Choice [www.catholicsforchoice.org/](http://www.catholicsforchoice.org/)

Center for Women's Global Leadership [www.cwgl.rutgers.edu](http://www.cwgl.rutgers.edu)  
Chicana Feminist Home Page [www.chicanas.org](http://www.chicanas.org)  
Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere [www.colage.org/](http://www.colage.org/)  
Choice Action Network [www.naral.org](http://www.naral.org)  
Coalition Against Trafficking in Women [www.catwinternational.org](http://www.catwinternational.org)  
CODEPINK Women for Peace [www.codepink4peace.org/](http://www.codepink4peace.org/)  
Equality Now [www.equalitynow.org](http://www.equalitynow.org)  
EqualMarriage.org [www.equalmarriage.org](http://www.equalmarriage.org)  
Feminista [www.feminista.com](http://www.feminista.com)  
Feminist Campus [www.feministcampus.org](http://www.feministcampus.org)  
Feminist News Service [www.womensenews.org](http://www.womensenews.org)  
Feminist Peace Network [www.feministpeacenet.org/](http://www.feministpeacenet.org/)  
Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders [www.glad.org/](http://www.glad.org/)  
Global Fund for Women [www.globalfundforwomen.org](http://www.globalfundforwomen.org)  
Human Rights Campaign [www.hrc.org/](http://www.hrc.org/)  
Human Rights Watch [www.hrw.org/women/](http://www.hrw.org/women/)  
Jewish Women's Archive [www.jwa.org/](http://www.jwa.org/)  
Manifesta [www.manifesta.net](http://www.manifesta.net)  
Mass Equality [www.massequality.org](http://www.massequality.org)  
Men's Resource Center for Change [www.mensresourcecenter.org](http://www.mensresourcecenter.org)  
Ms Magazine [www.ms magazine.com](http://www.ms magazine.com)  
Muslim Women's League [www.mwlusa.org](http://www.mwlusa.org)  
National Organization for Women [www.now.org](http://www.now.org)  
Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays [www.pflag.org/](http://www.pflag.org/)  
Planned Parenthood [www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)  
Republicans for Choice [www.republicansforchoice.com](http://www.republicansforchoice.com)  
Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice [www.rcrc.org/](http://www.rcrc.org/)  
Third Wave Foundation [www.thirdwavefoundation.org](http://www.thirdwavefoundation.org)  
UN Development Fund for Women [www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)  
UN Women's Watch [www.un.org/womenwatch/](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/)  
Women of Color and Education [www.sistermentors.org](http://www.sistermentors.org)  
Women of Color Health Collective [www.sistersong.net/](http://www.sistersong.net/)  
Women of Color Resource Center [www.coloredgirls.org](http://www.coloredgirls.org)  
World Congress of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Jews [www.glbtejews.org/](http://www.glbtejews.org/)  
Young Radical Women [www.yrw.cjb/net](http://www.yrw.cjb/net)