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
CRC: Online: BC Libraries Home Page >Resources >Course Reserves Catalog>Griffin
FNS: Feminist News Service 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 Evaluator 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
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

SEPT 18/20
**Theoretical Frameworks for Understanding Gendered Identity and Structural Inequality.**

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."**

OCT 2/4

OCT 9/11
OCT 16/18

OCT 23/25

OCT 30/NOV 1

NOV 6/8
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,

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