

University of Pennsylvania Dept. of Political Science
PSCI 280 Feminist Political Thought

Professor N. Hirschmann

Spring 2004

This course is designed to provide an overview of the variety of ideas, approaches, and subfields within feminist political thought. Readings are divided into three sections, each representing one of the three major “kinds” of feminist theory that the discipline of Political Science engages in. The first is contemporary feminist theorizing about the meaning and status of “feminism” itself—what is feminism about, how should feminist theory be conducted, what values and ideas are central to the meaning of the term “woman?” Once these terms are introduced, the second section focuses on women in the history of Western political thought; what is the historical basis for the ideas we discussed in Section I? The third section is on feminist approaches to practical political problems and issues, particularly abortion, domestic violence, cultural difference, and sexual harassment; what can feminist theory contribute to the lived conditions of women’s lives?

Jan 12 INTRODUCTION

PART I: CONTEMPORARY FEMINIST METHODS AND THEORETICAL ISSUES

(P) Jan 14 Simone deBeauvoir, The Second Sex; Introduction, chapters 3, 4, 8 (pp 128-38) [1974 edition: pp. 144-55]

Jan 19, Martin Luther King Day (observed), no class

Jan 21 Simone deBeauvoir, The Second Sex; Chapter 11, 17 (484-92), 18 (middle 539-bottom 543), 21 (597-605, middle 611-top 616) [1974 edition: chapters 11, 17 (pp. 540-550, 585-88), 18 (pp. 601-606), 21 (pp. 663-73, 680-85)]

(BB) Jan 26 Nancy Hartsock, "The Feminist Standpoint: Toward a Feminist Historical Materialism" in Discovering Reality, ed. S. Harding and M. Hintikka

(BB) Jan 28 Patricia Hill Collins, "Learning from the Outsider Within: The Sociological Significance of Black Feminist Thought," Social Problems, vol. 33, no. 6, December 1986

(P) Feb 2, 4 Carol Gilligan, In A Different Voice, Intro, Ch. 1-2, 4-5

(BB) Feb 9 Uma Narayan, “Colonialism and its others: considerations on rights and care discourses Hypatia, v10 n2 (Spring 1995) p133-41.

(P) Feb 11 bell hooks Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center, ch.1-4, 6, 11

(P) Feb 16 bell hooks Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center, ch. 5, 7, 8, 10, 12

Feb 18, Review and Conclusion, Section I
First Take-Home Essay Questions Handed Out

Feb 23 First Take-Home Essays Due, no class held on this date

PART II: WOMEN IN WESTERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

(BB) Feb 25 Aristotle, *Politics*, Book I, “The Theory of the Household”

(BB) March 1 Rousseau, *Emile*, Book I, 37-47, Book V, 357-73, 474-80

(P) March 3 Rousseau, *Emile* (continued); Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, Introduction, Dedication, Ch. 1-3

Mar 8, 10, Spring Break, no class

(P) March 15, Mary Wollstonecraft, *Vindication of the Rights of Women*, 4-6, 10, 13

(P) March 17, J.S. Mill, *The Subjection of Women*, ch. 1-3

(P) March 22 March 24 Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *Women and Economics*, pp. 5, 10-17, 181-82, 242-47, 286-94, 298-301, 312-17

March 24, Review and Conclusion, Section II
Second Take-Home Essay Questions Handed Out

March 29
Second Take-Home Essays Due in Class

PART III: THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF FEMINIST ISSUES

A. Sexual Assault

(BB) March 29 Susan Brison, “Outliving Oneself: Trauma, Memory, and Personal Identity,” in *Feminists Rethink the Self*, ed. Diana T. Meyers

(BB) March 31 Sharon Marcus, “Fighting Bodies, Fighting Words: A Theory and Politics of Rape Prevention,” in *Feminists Theorize the Political*, ed. J. Butler and J. Scott

B. Domestic Violence

(P) April 5 Isabel Marcus, “Reframing ‘Domestic Violence’: Terrorism in the Home,” Elizabeth Schneider, “The Violence of Privacy,” and Martha Mahoney, “Victimization or Oppression? Women’s Lives, Violence, and Agency,” all in *The Public Nature of Private Violence*, ed. Martha Fineman and Roxanne Mykitiuk

(P) April 7 Kimberle Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence

Against Women of Color,” Rosemary Ofeibe Ofei-Aboagye, “Domestic Violence in Ghana: Some Initial Questions,” both in Fineman and Mykitiuk.

Plus: bell hooks, Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center, ch. 9

C. Welfare

(P) April 12 Martha Fineman, “Dependencies,” Eva Kittay, “From Welfare to a Public Ethic of Care,” and Joan Tronto, “Who Cares?” all in Women and Welfare: Theory and Practice in the United States and Europe, ed. N. Hirschmann and U. Liebert

(P) April 14 Heidi Hartman and Hsiao-ye Yi, “The Rhetoric and Reality of Welfare Reform”, Lisa Dodson, “At the Kitchen Table: Poor Women Making Public Policy”, and Joyce Mushaben, “Challenging the Maternalist Presumption: The Gender Politics of Welfare Reform in Germany and the United States,” all in Hirschmann and Liebert

D. Veiling and Cultural “Difference”

(BB) April 19 Arlene Elowe MacLeod, “Hegemonic Relations and Gender Resistance: The New Veiling as Accommodating Protest in Cairo,” Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, vol. 17, no. 3, 1992.

April 21, Review and Conclusion

(P) indicates book available at UPenn bookstore

(BB) indicates that reading is on electronic reserve through Blackboard site for this course

Readings:

Books available for purchase are:

Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex

Carol Gilligan, In A Different Voice: Moral Psychology and Women’s Development

bell hooks, Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center

John Stuart Mill, The Subjection of Women

Mary Wollstonecraft, Vindication of the Rights of Women

Martha Fineman and Roxanne Mykitiuk, ed. The Public Nature of Private Violence

N. Hirschmann and U. Liebert, eds. Women and Welfare: Theory and Practice in the United States and Europe

Written Work: Two Take-Home Essays: due Feb 23 and March 29. I will distribute questions in class on Wednesday, Feb. 18 and March 24, respectively; essays will be due by the start of class on the due date. Essay should be 5 pages in length, typewritten, and will draw on the readings. There will be penalties for late papers, and extensions will be granted only in documented cases of illness or family emergency. Each accounts for about 30% of final grade.

Final exam: The final will consist of identification of terms and concepts introduced throughout the course, one essay on the last section of the course, and one cumulative essay. Final counts for about 40% of final grade. Some students may substitute a research paper for the final exam, but you must consult with me first.

I say "about" in the above percentages because I also want to leave room for class participation. On the whole, active participation in class discussions can help your grade, flagrant absences can hurt it, particularly if you are borderline.