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Course Description: Feminism changed everything—relationships between men and women, how women presented and represented themselves, family life, politics, the Academy, the world. It changed how we read texts and how we write them. This is a course about transformation and change—about a movement that changed the world and all of our lives. We will look at Feminism as a political movement, as well as a critical approach to reading and understanding literature. We will also look at how women and men, in literary and film texts, reflect, explore and challenge the received gender roles of their society throughout the twentieth century and into the 21st. We will read some of the classic texts of feminism, such as Virginia Woolf’s A Room of One’s Own, as well as a number of critical essays that approach the subject from different perspectives. We will track feminism’s long first wave from the late 18th century through the 19th, a movement that culminated in women gaining the right to vote in America in 1920. We pick up active feminism again in the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s during the second wave with its major legal challenges and critical equal rights legislation. We will end the course with a consideration of the emergence of a new, energized Feminism in the last decade that might well prove to be the third wave.

Course Outcomes:  
Students will be able to  
1. engage in the major ideas and critical debates of feminism;  
2. apply the principles of gender analysis in writing and discussion;  
3. discuss and write about texts in the historical context of the feminist movement;  
4. understand and summarize the major arguments of feminist critical articles;  
5. further develop the capacity to sustain controlled, critical arguments that analyze and synthesize texts;  
6. demonstrate an understanding of the craft of writing, including concision, diction, grammar, and syntax;  
7. produce creative writing that shows an awareness of language, freedom from cliché, and an understanding of genre, style, and topic;
8. identify and use a range of sources, including in-depth, peer-reviewed journal articles and books, suitable to the scholarly conversation on a particular topic, to evaluate and integrate source material, and to document accurately;
9. demonstrate an understanding of the literary tradition, the historical and cultural contexts of literature, and critical methods of reading;
10. give well-planned, engaging presentations.

Required Texts:
Atwood, Margaret, *The Handmaid’s Tale*
Beard, Mary, *Women & Power*
Freedman, Estelle B., ed. *The Essential Feminist Reader*
Friedan, Betty, *The Feminine Mystique*
MacLean, Nancy, *The American Women’s Movement, 1945-2000*
Moore, Honor, ed., *Poems from the Women’s Movement*
Woolf, Virginia, *A Room of One’s Own*

Requirements:
Discussion Forum 20%
Short Essay 15%
Final Research Essay 25%
  Topic Narrative and Bib. 5%
  First Copy 10%
Article summary 10%
Creative: Manifesto 5%
Group magazine presentation 5%
Final Panel Presentation 5%

The following major assignments and activities address the outcomes as indicated:

Discussion Forums (Outcome #1-6, 9-10)
Discussion is crucial to testing ideas and creating knowledge. You learn more by engaging directly and actively with our readings, with me, and with your peers. In order to ensure a high degree of participation from everyone and encourage a collaborative environment, you have been placed in teams. Each team will lead discussion for that day’s reading a total of four times during the semester. On the day you are responsible for the readings, please post to the forum for your group a response of 300 to 500 words on your assigned section on D2L at least 24 hours in advance of our class meeting. You will find the forums by clicking on the Discussion tab and then clicking on the appropriate forum. To post, begin a new thread. Each post should include the following:
What are the major ideas/arguments in the reading? What interested you most about this reading? What surprised you? What values are being emphasized? What characteristics or values are condemned? What are some of the major themes? What are the major metaphors or similes used to describe characters and actions and how do they relate to the major themes? What feminist principles are in play? How does the reading challenge or reinforce gender/race/class/other stereotypes? How does this reading relate to your own experience? As we explore specific concepts and ideas in class over the course of the semester, you should explore these as they arise and add these concepts to your critical arsenal.

In your post you may respond to one or several of the questions above. Your post should, however, include the following components:

1. At least two specific references to the reading under consideration.
2. At least one specific reference to a passage from a different book/article/poem/story, which provides some comparative perspective.
3. A question or idea for further consideration.

In addition, you should respond to at least one post per week. Each of your four posts is worth 20 points. You earn all 20 points by posting on time and by keeping to the 300- to 500-word parameters. Your weekly response is worth 2 points each, and there should be at least 10 of them.


Group Magazine Assignment and Presentation (Outcomes #1-3, 5-6, 9-10):
Like Virginia Woolf before her, Betty Friedan went to the library. In the first four chapters of *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Friedan traces the unfortunate trajectory of American women from “New Woman” to “Happy Housewife.” As she put it metaphorically, in 10 years we went from Sarah and the Seaplane to the Sandwich Maker. In the first couple of chapters, she focuses on the images of women (and sometimes men) and the stories in some of the magazines, such as *Look* and *Life*, we will be browsing through today. The way that women were represented in the media amounted to an increasing infantilization of women. Even the print size in *McCall’s*, Friedan argues, got larger. Women were no longer writing their own stories. The voice inside their heads had effectively been silenced. Adlai Stevenson, the liberal candidate for president, told women at their Smith College commencement in 1955 that their first duty as educated women was to use their expensive, ivy-league educations to be wives and mothers. Sylvia Plath graduated from Smith that year, and she was in the audience. What I want you to do today is to begin doing some research on the magazines we have available at the library. With Friedan as your guide, work in groups of two to three, using gender as your lens for analysis, to look at how women and men are represented in different decades. Look for patterns. Provide specific examples. Each group will report on their findings next week. You will be giving a 10-15 minute presentation on your findings.
Essays (Outcomes #1-6, 8-9): The word “essay” connotes exploration—a venturing into interesting territory. All essays should be double spaced, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman, one inch standard margins, and MLA manuscript format: 
https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/
Your writing should be clear, analytical, and specific. The essay prompts are outlined below:

Short Essay: Write a short analysis paper (4-5 pages) that brings together at least two texts we have read so far in class that can be related either in a comparative or contrasting way. You will need to make an argument about the major ideas and support it with textual evidence. You will be graded on the quality of the writing, the argument, and the analysis.

Final Feminist Critical Essay with Sources: Your final essay will focus on a text (or group of related texts) of your choosing. Your approach is Feminist, which means that you will use gender as your primary lens for interpreting the text/s. You will need to place your reading of the text in dialogue with what other critics have said about it, primarily FEMINIST critics. Since this is a 400-level course, I expect strong analysis and a depth and breadth of research commensurate with an advanced seminar. That means that your research needs to reflect a familiarity with a range of sources from general to scholarly (with an emphasis on the scholarly) and a critical engagement with those sources. You are joining a scholarly conversation, in other words, about your text. We will have a little taste of archival research with our session on magazines from the forties, fifties and sixties. Depending on your project, this type of research could be really interesting and challenging. This is a build-a-paper assignment that is meant to help prepare you for the kind of sustained research and writing you will be doing in Capstone. Each graded assignment contributes to the final whole, which will be a 12- to 15-page final essay on a work or works of your choice. I have left space at the end of the semester for independent work and consultations with me. Your final presentation will be a formal scholarly panel presentation of your research. Many of our students participate in undergraduate research conferences across the country, so this final presentation will give you a chance to see how this works if you haven’t already done one of these, and to give you the confidence to share your work in the future.

Criteria for grading
• Strong introduction and conclusion with analytical thesis
• Claims about the text supported throughout with textual evidence from primary and secondary text(s)
• Text placed in dialogue with other critics and explains what more can be said (where are the holes?)
• Strong range of research represented—from general to scholarly
• All material documented in correct MLA style
• All material integrated smoothly with lead-ins and paraphrase for summary
Topic Narrative and Bibliography for Final Feminist Critical Essay (see above): This is a modified version of what we would ask you to do at the beginning of the capstone project. In this case, you already have texts and a framework to work from based on the class. Your topic narrative should be a two-to-three-page essay that offers an explanation of the topic you would like to pursue and the texts and authors you will focus on. Your essay must accomplish the following tasks with as much specificity as possible:

- Give a description of your envisioned topic by focusing on ONE text and author. You can also refer to other texts and authors you might consider that explore similar ideas. In this case, you can focus on texts we’ve used in class, including primary texts, such as the novels or poetry, as well as the critical essays.
- Describe how the preliminary research you have done convinces you that yours is a viable project. Your preliminary research at this point should be done primarily by searching the MLA data base through the library. This is THE primary data base for peer-reviewed articles and books in our field. What is the conversation out there? How will you join it?
- Discuss some of the questions that will fuel your research. Identify what you will need to do to get going on your project. What is the first thing you will do? And then what? What items are already on your reading list for this topic? Feel free to use your first critical essay as a starting point for this last project. You must include a working bibliography in MLA style.

Creative (Outcome #1, 6-7): Write your own manifesto (2-3 pages). A manifesto is a written statement declaring publically the intentions, motives, or views of its issuer. We have considered several manifestos, including Mina Loy’s “Feminist Manifesto,” Wollstonecraft’s Vindication of the Rights of Woman, the “Riot Grrrl Manifesto,” and even Rebecca Walker’s “Becoming the Third Wave.” Later, we will read Mary Beard’s Women & Power: A Manifesto (2017), demonstrating the ongoing urge to manifest for change. More broadly, all of the texts we have read are animated, one way or another, by characteristics of Feminism, a movement that lends itself to manifesting ideals.

This assignment asks you to personalize—and then to publicize—this idealizing feature of Feminism. A manifesto necessarily provides a critique of existing values, at least to some degree. After all, there would be no need to make a declaration if everyone already agreed. More significantly, though, a manifesto calls for a change in outlook—it identifies an ideal that is worth striving to attain. In your manifesto, strive to make the critique of existing beliefs secondary to the call to new beliefs.

For our “manifeminestiveal,” each of you will have an opportunity to inspire the masses. Come prepared to enlighten us about your topic and to read selections from your text.

Critical Summary (Outcome #4): Write a one-page summary of one of the critical essays we have read and discussed in class. Review the Guide to Reading Criticism to help you with this task. Your summary must be very focused and concise.
Final Panel Presentations (Outcomes #1-6, 8-10): This is the penultimate step that many scholars who write literary criticism follow before publication—that is, presenting one’s work to an audience of one’s peers. Many of our students here at Westminster present their work at URAC, at undergraduate research conferences across the country, and at our own annual Sigma Tau Delta undergraduate international conference. Your panel presentation is an important opportunity for you to practice this important skill and possibly to prepare yourself for national presentations. There are several steps you must take in order to have a successful experience:

1. Select five pages from your research paper to read to the class. This will certainly include your introduction and your thesis. After that, you want to select the best arguments. A presentation must be heavy on argument. You need to lead your listeners through the paper’s arguments so that they don’t get lost, because remember that they are listening and not reading your work. Clarity is everything here. You will also need examples to illustrate those arguments, just as you would in the written work.

2. Once you have chosen your selection, make it work as a spoken piece. You may need to insert a couple of transitions or bring up the argument a bit more, or cut down on quotation. Usually I work through this step by reading what I have aloud and editing and revising as I go.

3. Practice, practice, practice. The most professional presentations will be those that you have practiced ahead of time. You have 10 minutes for your presentation. That is generally about five typed pages—2 minutes a page. Practice reading it ahead of time several times so you’re comfortable and you can read your paper dramatically and without being buried in the text. You want to be able to make eye contact with your audience. Make sure you project your voice and read loudly enough so that we do not have to strain to hear you.

4. If you are in the audience, your job is to listen attentively, take notes and ask questions at the end. There is nothing more discouraging for a presenter then a dead, tired or hung over audience who isn’t interested enough (or polite enough) to ask questions.

Grading will be based on the following:

- Clarity of argument and support for your claims (75%)
- Forceful, engaging delivery of your paper (you make eye contact with your audience; you smile; you are enthusiastic about your work); you convey a sense of confidence in your hard work (20%)
- Professional, appropriate dress (ie. you have not just rolled out of bed in your sweats and slopped over to class) (5%)

Classroom Policies:

Late Work: Papers, exams and presentations are due on the day they are due. Late work will be penalized 5% per day unless prior arrangements have been made.
Academic Integrity: The lasting reward of academic integrity is a good character and the
ability to learn on your own. Those seem worthy aspirations. Plagiarism or cheating of
any kind will result in a failing grade for the assignment, as well as notification of the
dean. More than one instance will result in a failing grade for the course and further
administrative action. Please review the college’s Academic Integrity Policy beginning
on p. 66 of the undergraduate catalogue.

Attendance: You are required to come to class. Missing class more than three times will
reduce your final grade by half a letter for each missed day. I expect students to have
done the day’s reading prior to class so that we can have a lively discussion even if
you’re not leading discussion that day. Believe me, you’ll appreciate it when you have to
lead a discussion and your classmates are prepared. Exceptions to this policy will only be
made in extreme circumstances, and you must discuss it with me.

Class Schedule
Feminism: The First Wave
Week 1
January 16: Introduction, timeline, the groundings of Modern Feminism


Week 2
January 23: Read “A Guide to Reading and Analyzing Criticism” (on D2L) first. Carroll
Smith-Rosenberg, “The New Woman” (scanned copy on D2L); One evening this week:
Film screening for Iron Jawed Angels. Team 2 Posts.

January 25: Discuss film.

Week 3
January 30 and February 1: Woolf, A Room of One’s Own. Team 3 Posts on Jan. 30,
Team 4 on Feb. 1

Transition to the Second Wave
Week 4
February 6: Essential Feminist Reader: Mina Loy’s “Feminist Manifesto” (handout), 38.
Simone de Beauvoir. Team 5 Posts.


Week 5
February 13: Short Essay Due. Group Magazine Project: Constructions of femininity
and masculinity in magazines (meet in library)

February 15: Meet in library and continue research.
Week 6
February 20: Reports from magazine research (three to four groups, 10-15 minute presentations)


Before next week, watch the first episode of the Netflix series: Good Girls Revolt

Second Wave: 1960s, 1970s
Week 7
February 27: Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “The Abortion Movement and the AMA, 1850-1880” (copy on D2L) and Anne Sexton’s “The Abortion” (also on D2L). Team 5 Posts.


****Spring Break****

Week 8

March 15: Manifesto Due. In class, manifeministerval (see assignment). Discussion of Final Paper.

Week 9
March 20: Butler, “Bodily Inscriptions, Performative Subversions” (copy on D2L). As you read the poetry for next time, think about the various ways that these poets take part in “performative subversions.” Team 3 Posts.


My Bleasby is tonight at 7 p.m. on the American Feminist Poetry Movement. Please plan to attend.

**Week 10**

The Backlash
**Week 11**
**April 5:** Margaret Atwood, Handmaid’s Tale

**Week 12**
April 10-12: Finish Atwood, Handmaid’s Tale. Team 2, April 10, Team 3, April 12.

**Week 13**
**April 17:** Draft Due of Final Paper (at least five strong pages of your final paper that includes an analytical thesis, a main section that has been thoroughly developed, and a working bibliography).

April 18: Undergraduate Research Celebration. Please attend at least two panels or poster sessions that are related to the Feminisms course and come prepared next Tuesday to discuss in class.

**April 19:** Individual Consultations. See schedule on D2L.

The Third Wave
**Week 14**
April 24 and 26: Rebecca Walker, “Becoming the Third Wave” in The Essentialist Feminist Reader and Mary Beard, Women & Power. Team 4, April 24; Team 5, April 26.

**Week 15**
**May 1 and 4:** Final Draft Due May 1. Wrap up. Final Thoughts. Prep time for presentation. Select panels.

May 9, 8-10:30 a.m.: Final Exam Period: Panel presentations of final research.