

Feminist Studies HL 4010
Lecturer: Dr Wernmei Yong Ade
Semester 1: 2016-2017

This course aims to introduce students to the central concepts in feminist theory, and to apply these to the analyses of literary texts. The course will begin with the work of Simone de Beauvoir, whose ideas remain central to the development of feminist literary criticism, feminist theory as well as feminist philosophical thought. In a bid to question prevailing (masculine) representations of women, we move on to consider "the male gaze" in both cinema and literature, and then to the development of "New French" feminisms and *écriture féminine*, or feminine writing, which poses a challenge to Western (masculine) philosophical thought, thus creating a cultural space for female self-representation. We will finally arrive at an evaluation of how contemporary feminism situates itself in relation to postmodernism, whose perspective raises uncertainties about the existence of a specifically female subject and therefore the possibility of political agency for women. Such a perspective forces feminism to interrogate the 'nature' of woman and femininity, and question 'universal' statements about what women want, or what 'the female experience' comprises. To this end, this module will also engage in intersectional feminism. Students will be expected to engage with feminism as both an ideology and a literary tool of analysis.

Core Texts:

To be provided by lecturer:

- Course Reader (a selection of primary and secondary readings)
- Films: *Vertigo*, *Alien*, *Alien Resurrection*

Texts (acquired by students; no specific edition):

- Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Penguin.
- Marguerite Duras, *The Lover*, (The Perennial Collection) Harper Collins.
- Alice Walker, *The Colour Purple*, Orion Publishing.
- Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*, Vintage.
- Angela Carter, *The Passion of New Eve*, Virago

NOTE ON TEXTS: Students are expected to source for the texts on the list above by themselves. The NTU bookshop WILL NOT bring them in. Recommended online bookstores: Book Depository (free shipping), Amazon (second copies are available).

Weekly Schedule:

| | Topic |
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| Week 1 | Introduction "One is not born a woman, one becomes a woman" |
| Week 2 | Women and Representation I: Psychoanalysis and feminism, madness and motherhood. |

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| | Text: <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> |
| Week 3 | Women and Representation II: The male gaze Film: <i>Vertigo</i> |
| Week 4 | Women and Representation III: Is there a female gaze? |
| Week 5 | Women and Representation IV: do women write differently? Virginia Woolf: <i>A Room of One's Own</i> Alice Walker: <i>In Search of Our Mother's Gardens</i> Introducing <i>écriture féminine</i> : the work of Irigaray and Cixous. Text: <i>The Lover</i> |
| Week 6 | Postmodernism and Feminism Film: <i>Alien Resurrection</i> Essay: Donna Haraway's <i>Manifesto for Cyborgs</i> |
| Week 7 | Gender and sexuality I Essays: Judith Butler Text: <i>The Passion of New Eve</i> |
| Week 8 | Recess Week |
| Week 9 | Gender and Sexuality II Essays: Monique Wittig and Adrienne Rich Text: <i>Oranges are Not the Only Fruit</i> |
| Week 10 | Intersectional feminist criticism: "Women of Colour" feminist criticism Essay: Kimberle Crenshaw Text: <i>The Colour Purple</i> |
| Week 11 | Intersectional feminist criticism: The Third World Woman? Text: To be determined |
| Week 12 | Ecofeminist criticism |
| Week 13 | Overview |
| Week 14 | End of Term Test |

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Method of instruction:

3-hour seminar

Mode of Assessment:

100% Continuous Assessment

Breakdown:

- Essay Assignment One (2000 word context based essay) 25%
- Essay Assignment Two (2000 word general essay) 25%
- Blog Project 25%
- End of Term Test (two hour in-class essay test) 25%

Suggested Secondary Reading:

(You are encouraged to explore and supplement the readings offered in the course reader with your own. You are however not confined to this list, nor are you required to read everything on this list. The following books are available in the library.)

Mccann, Carole. & Kim, Seung-kyung. *Feminist Theory Reader: Local and Global Perspectives*. Routledge, 2013.

Jones, Amelia ed. *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*. Routledge, 2010.

Cahill, Ann J., Hansen, Jennifer, Butler, Judith et. al. *Continental Feminism Reader*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2003.

Mann, Susan Archer. *Doing Feminist Theory: From Modernity to Postmodernity*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

Donovan, Josephine. *Feminist Theory: The Intellectual Traditions*. Continuum, 2000, London, New York.

Jackson, Stevi & Jones, Jackie. *Contemporary Feminist Theories*. Edinburgh University Press, 1998, UK.

Warhol, Robyn R. & Herndl, Diane Price, ed. *Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*. Rutgers University Press, 1997, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Eagleton, Mary, ed. *Feminist Literary Theory A Reader*. Basil Blackwell, 1986, UK.

Humm, Maggie, ed. *Feminisms, A Reader*. Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992, London.

Belsey, Catherine and Moore, Jane, ed. *The Feminist Reader: Essays in Gender and the Politics of Literary Criticism*. Basil Blackwell, 1989, New York.

Gilbert, Sandra and Gubar, Susan, ed. *Feminist Literary Theory and Criticism A Norton Reader*. Norton, 2007, New York & London

Marks, Elaine and Courtivron, Isabelle de, ed. & introd. *New French Feminisms An Anthology*. Schocken Books, 1981, New York

Oliver, Kelly and Walsh, Lisa. *Contemporary French Feminism*. Oxford University Press, 2004, UK

Gibert, Sandra M. & Gubar, Susan. *The Madwoman in the Attic*. Yale Nota Bene, Yale University Press, 2000, New Haven & London.

Spender, Dale. *Man Made Language*. Pandora Press, 1990, Canada.

Moi, Toril. *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory*. Routledge, 1985, London & New York.

Millet, Kate. *Sexual Politics*. University of Illinois Press, 2000, Chicago.

Mitchell, Juliet. *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. Basic Books, 2000, NY.

Nicholson, J. Linda ed. *Feminism/ Postmodernism*. Routledge, 1990, NY.

Felski, Rita. *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change*. Harvard University Press, 1989, Cambridge Mass.

Moraga, Cherrie & Anzaldua, Gloria eds. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Colour*. Kitchen Table, Women of Color Press, 1983, Latham, NY.

Hooks, Bell. *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre*. South End Press, 2000, MA.

Hooks, Bell. *Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*. South End Press, 1999, MA.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade, Russo, Ann & Torres, Lourdes eds. *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism*. Indiana University Press, 1991, Bloomington.