

Feminist Studies HL 4010
Lecturer: Dr Wernmei Yong Ade
Semester I 2018-2019
Monday 0930-1230

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 hand copies are available).

Weekly Schedule:

| | Topic |
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| Week 1 August 13 | Introduction "One is not born a woman, one becomes a woman" Essays: Simone de Beauvoir and Toril Moi |

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| Week 2 August 20 | Women and Representation I: Psychoanalysis and feminism, madness and motherhood. Text: <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> |
| Week 3 August 27 | NO CLASS |
| Week 4 September 3 | Women and Representation II: The male gaze Film: <i>Vertigo, Alien</i> |
| Week 5 September 10 | Women and Representation III: Female Spectatorship <i>The Lover</i> |
| Week 6 September 17 | 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> : Irigaray and Cixous <i>The Lover</i> |
| Week 7 September 24 | RECESS WEEK |
| Week 8 October 1 | Gender and sexuality I Essays: Monique Wittig and Adrienne Rich <i>The Colour Purple</i> |
| Week 9 October 8 | Postmodernism and Feminism Film: <i>Alien Resurrection</i> Essay: Donna Haraway's <i>Manifesto for Cyborgs</i> |
| Week 10 October 15 | Gender and Sexuality II Essays: Judith Butler <i>The Passion of New Eve</i> <i>Oranges are Not the Only Fruit</i> |
| Week 11 October 22 | Intersectional feminist criticism I: "Women of Color" feminist criticism Essay: Kimberle Crenshaw |
| Week 12 October 29 | Intersectional feminist criticism II: The Third World Woman? |

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| | <i>The Colour Purple</i> <i>Woman at Point Zero</i> |
| Week 13 November 5 | Intersectional feminist criticism II: The Third World Woman? continued Essay: Gayatri Spivak <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> <i>Breast Stories</i> <i>The Butcher's Wife</i> |
| Week 14 November 12 | Narrating Sexual Violence |
| Week 15 November 19 | Revision week |
| Week 16 November 26 | Class Test |

Method of instruction:

3-hour seminar

Mode of Assessment:

100% Continuous Assessment

Breakdown:

- Essay Assignment One (3000 word context based essay) 25%
- Essay Assignment Two (3000 word general essay) 25%
- Blog Project (6 posts over 14 weeks) 25%
- End of Term Test (2.5 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 & Anzaldúa, 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.