

**Feminist Studies HL 4010**  
**Lecturer: Dr Wernmei Yong Ade**  
**Semester I 2020-2021**  
**Wednesday 230-530pm**

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, in order to create 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 "the 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 (uploaded on NTULearn):

- Course reader (selection of essays)
- Li Ang, *The Butcher's Wife*
- Nawal El-Sadaawi, *Woman At Point Zero*
- Mahasweta Devi, *Breast Stories*

Texts (acquired by students; no specific edition):

- Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*
- Marguerite Duras, *The Lover*
- Alice Walker, *The Colour Purple*
- Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges are Not the Only Fruit*
- Angela Carter, *The Passion of New Eve*

Films (please watch in your own time):

- *Vertigo*
- *Alien*
- *Alien Resurrection*
- *Mad Max: Fury Road*

**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:

	<b>Topic</b>
Week 1 August 12	Introduction  “One is not born a woman, one becomes a woman”  Essays: Simone de Beauvoir and Toril Moi
Week 2 August 19	Psychoanalysis and feminism, madness and motherhood.  Text: <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i>
Week 3 August 26	The male gaze  Film: <i>Vertigo, Alien</i>
Week 4 September 2	The female gaze?  <i>The Lover</i>
Week 5 September 8	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>
Week 6 September 15	Introducing ecriture feminine: Irigaray and Cixous  <i>The Lover</i>
Week 7 September 23	Gender and sexuality I  Essays: Monique Wittig, Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde <i>The Colour Purple</i>
Week 8 September 30	RECESS WEEK
Week 9 October 7	Postmodernism and Feminism  Film: <i>Alien Resurrection</i> Essay: Donna Haraway's <i>Manifesto for Cyborgs</i>

Week 10 October 14	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 21	Intersectional feminist criticism I: "Women of Color" feminist criticism Essay: Kimberle Crenshaw <i>The Colour Purple</i>
Week 12 October 28	Intersectional feminist criticism II: The Third World Woman?  <i>Woman at Point Zero</i> <i>Breast Stories</i>
Week 13 November 4	Intersectional feminist criticism II: The Third World Woman? continued Essay: Gayatri Spivak <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> <i>The Butcher's Wife</i>
Week 14 November 11	New materialism, the post-human and feminist theory  <i>The Passion of New Eve</i> <i>Mad Max: Fury Road</i>

**Method of instruction:**

3-hour seminar

**Mode of Assessment:**

100% Continuous Assessment

**Breakdown:**

- Essay Assignment One (2500 word context based essay) 25%
- Essay Assignment Two (2500 word general essay) 25%
- Blog Project (3 posts over 14 weeks) 25%
- End of Term Assessment (2.5 hour open book 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.