

 

 [Photo Credit: Catherine Opie](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/18/arts/design/catherine-opie-photography-monograph.html)

 (click the hyperlink to learn more)

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**Levering Hall 202 New Cabell Hall 323**

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**Approaches to Gender & Sexuality Studies**

**Fall 2021**

This course is a graduate-only advanced introduction to the field of contemporary feminist and queer theories, especially in areas where these two fields have made critical interventions. We will survey contemporary feminist and queer epistemology, subject formation, ethics and politics. The main pedagogical goal of the course is to provide students with a foundation in the methods and content of feminist and queer theory. The seminar approaches these two closely related fields from a multidisciplinary perspective by asking a series of questions. What is a woman? What is gender? Sex? Sexuality? What is theory and who can theorize? What is the relationship between theory and the body, and the institutions and structures that shape our everyday lives, such as the family and the economy? The course will not answer these questions definitively, but instead will encourage students to ask more specific versions of these questions and to develop their own research interests related to women, gender and sexuality.

WGS Faculty will visit the class to share their research interests.

**Course Requirements**

*Participation*(15%)

Students are expected to read the course material with care and to participate in class discussion. Attendance, preparation, and participation are expected and are a portion of final grades. Please note that when the class is scheduled to mee on religious holidays, such as Rosh Hashanah, students are excused from class.

*Student Presentations*(15%)

Each student will make a presentation once during the semester. The presentation should be no more than 15 minutes (the instructor will cut you off at 20 minutes) and should center on one aspect of the day’s readings that the student chooses to develop. Do not try to be comprehensive; rather, present a coherent, focused analysis of what interests or compels you about the readings and that builds on your disciplinary strengths and research interests. Students may discuss additional readings (although we will not read additional material). Students should offer a few questions (3-5) to spark discussion during the remainder of the class period. Presenters should post these questions on Collab *at least two days in advance of class* so that students will have time to consider these questions and address them in their discussion posts if they choose. It will be useful for presenters to flag portions of the reading that they found important but challenging and invite the class to discuss these portions in class as a group.

Presenters may provide information for the class via powerpoint, videos or handouts, lead a critical exercise, or use any other appropriate pedagogical tool that advances the objectives of their presentation.

To post discussion questions and other presentation materials g[o to Collab>Forums>](https://uvacollab.screenstepslive.com/s/help/m/sitetools/l/634176-how-do-i-post-to-a-forum) Student Presentations>Presentation Materials>Start a New Conversation for the class session (e.g., Feminist and Queer Methodologies)>Title (type in the topic of the class session)> Message (type in your discussion questions)>Add Attachments (attach your presentation materials).

*Discussion Posts* (20%)

Each student will write an analysis of the readings for 5 of our 15 sessions (approximately 600-650 words long). Students must *submit a minimum of two posts by Oct. 12.* Posts may briefly summarize the arguments of the readings but should focus principally on analysis and critique. Students may also compare and contrast an idea or theme from the week’s readings with one or two readings from previous sessions. For example, students might draw on arguments from Foucault and Butler (Class 2) to gain critical leverage on Halberstam (Class 5). Students should also pose questions for further discussion in their posts or discuss the question or questions posted by presenters to be discussed in class.

Posts are due 30 minutes before class. No late submissions will be accepted. The instructor will randomly grade 2 of the five posts: one from the first half of the semester and one from the second half of the semester. *Note:* students should not post for the class session on which they are presenting.

To post, g[o to Collab>Forums>](https://uvacollab.screenstepslive.com/s/help/m/sitetools/l/634176-how-do-i-post-to-a-forum)Topic for the class session (e.g., Feminist and Queer Methodologies)>“Start a New Conversation”(if you are the first person posting)> Title (of the thread for the class)> If you are not the first person posting for the session> “Reply”. Choose>Text box (write your post)> “Post” (at the bottom left of the page). Students can easily read what others have written if everyone (except for the first person posting) chooses “Reply” rather than “Start a New Conversation.” In other words, *please put all posts in one thread.*

*Final Paper Proposal*(5%)

Students must submit a one-page proposal (separate from the bibliography) on their proposed research paper by Nov. 23: Collab>Assignments>Proposal. The proposal should include the student’s question and a statement of purpose that explains why the question is important given the student’s knowledge of the existing literature, and the steps the student plans to take to answer the question. It should also include an annotated bibliography of at least 5 outside sources plus any relevant course readings. If appropriate, students may choose to write a grant proposal or dissertation proposal instead of a research paper. In the latter case, the student must consult with the dissertation advisor as well as with the instructor on this assignment.

*Final Paper*(45%)

Students will write an analytical essay or research paper on a relevant topic of their choice (approximately 15 pages), or a grant proposal or dissertation proposal.

*Incompletes*

Any MA student who entered the university as an undergraduate who requires an incomplete must fill out the form available [here](https://college.as.virginia.edu/sites/college.as.virginia.edu/files/IncompleteFormandGuidelines.pdf) within the week of the final exam period. Graduate students who did not enter the university as undergraduates are not required to use this form.

**Course Policies**

Let the instructor and students know the name you use, how to pronounce it correctly, the pronouns you use, and any additional information needed for productive classroom and professional interactions. Reminders may be necessary and are most welcome given that we meet as a class only once a week.

Students will turn in all written work on Collab.

**Resources**

Ms. [Erin Pappas](http://guides.lib.virginia.edu/womenstudies) is the librarian for WGS. Erin can purchase resources as needed if they are not in the library. She also is available for individual research consultations. Resources are also available in the [WGS library](http://wgs.virginia.edu/research_support).

Are you in need of a primer on WGS terminology? See: Catharine R. Stimpson and Gilbert Herdt, 2014, *Critical Terms for the Study of Gender*, University of Chicago Press (Virgo).

New to feminist or queer theory and looking for an overview? See Rosemarie Tong, 2019, *Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction*, 5th ed. Routledge, Lisa Disch and Mary Hawkesworth, eds., 2016, *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*, Oxford, [Virgo ebook](https://search.lib.virginia.edu/sources/books/items/u8568207), and Nikki Sullivan, 2003, *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory*, New York University Press.

For a great resource on all kinds of ideas and concepts, see Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <https://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>

If you have (or suspect you have) a learning or other disability that requires academic accommodations, you should contact the [Student Disability Access Center](http://www.virginia.edu/studenthealth/sdac/sdac.html) as soon as possible, and at least two to three weeks before any assignments are due. The instructor will make whatever accommodations students need to be successful in the course. Please properly document necessary accommodations with the SDAC. Be sure to provide the instructor with enough notice to make appropriate arrangements.

If you or someone you know is struggling with [gender, sexual, or domestic violence](http://www.virginia.edu/sexualviolence/get_help_now.pdf), or is a target of a hate crime, there are many community and University of Virginia resources available including [Just Report It](http://www.virginia.edu/justreportit/..), [The Office of the Dean of Students](http://www.virginia.edu/sexualviolence/): 434- 924-7133 (after hours and weekends 434-924-7166 for the University Police Department; ask them to refer the issue to the Dean on Call), the [UVA Women's Center](http://womenscenter.virginia.edu/counseling/): 435-982-2361, [Sexual Assault Resources Agency](http://saracville.org/survivor-services/) (SARA) hotline: 434-977-7273 (24/7), [Shelter for Help in Emergency](http://www.shelterforhelpinemergency.org/contact-us/) (SHE) hotline: 434-293-8509 (24/7). If you prefer to speak anonymously and confidentially over the phone to UVa student volunteers, call [Madison House's HELP Line](http://www.madisonhouse.org/overview-helpline/) (24/7): 434-295-8255.

**Required Books (in the order you will need them):**

The following books are widely available online, as an ebook on Virgo, or on Collab, as indicated. Number 11 is *not* available on Collab or as an ebook on Virgo. All other course readings are on Collab.

1. Dino Franco Felluga, 2015, *Critical Theory: The Key Concepts,* Abingdon: Routledge (available as an ebook on Virgo and as a pdf on Collab)
2. Judith Butler, 1990, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*: 3-44 (available as an ebook on Virgo and as a pdf on Collab).
3. Michel Foucault, 1976 *History of Sexuality*. Volume I: 1-51 (available as a [pdf](file:///Users/denisewalsh/Desktop/FoucaultHistorySex.pdf) online and on Collab).
4. Patricia Hill Collins, 2000, *Black Feminist Thought*, New York: Routledge: Ch. 1, 2, 5, 11 (available as an ebook on Virgo, as a pdf online and on Collab).
5. bell hooks, 2014 [1984], *From Margin to Center*, Routledge: 10 of 12 chapters (available as a [pdf](https://diyworkshop.noblogs.org/files/2015/10/Bell_Hooks_Feminist_Theory_from_Margin_to_CenteBookZZ.org_.pdf) online and on Collab).
6. Brooke A. Ackerly and Jacqui True, 2020, *Doing Feminist Research in Political and Social Science* 2nd edition. London: Red Globe Press: Ch. 1-6 (ebook on Virgo).
7. Michael Warner, 2000, *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics and the Ethics of Queer Life*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press: entire.
8. Joan Scott, 2018, *Sex and Secularism*, Princeton University Press: Introduction, Ch. 1, 2 and 5 (available as an ebook on Virgo).
9. Nicola J. Smith, 2020, *Capitalism’s Sexual History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: Introduction, Ch. 1 and Ch. 5 (available as an ebook on Virgo).
10. Serene J. Khader, 2020, *Decolonizing Universalism: A Transnational Feminist Ethic*, New York: Oxford University Press: Intro, Ch. 1, and Ch. 3 (available as an ebook on Virgo).
11. C. Heike Schotten, 2018, *Queer Terror: Life, Death, and Desire in the Settler Colony*, New York: Columbia University Press: Introduction and Ch. 5.

**Course Outline**

Occasional changes to the syllabus are possible and will be announced in advance.

***Part I. Theories, Methods, Approaches***

**Class 1 (Aug 24): What is critical theory? Feminist theory? Queer theory?**

Introductions and discussion of the syllabus. Be prepared to sign up for a presentation during class.

Dino Franco Felluga, 2015, *Critical Theory: The Key Concepts*. Routledge: Introduction; choose 5 concepts to read and summarize them in your own words.

Sara Ahmed, [*Living a Feminist Life*,](https://criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu/susan_fraiman_reviews_living_a_feminist_life/)Duke University Press, 2017: Intro and Conclusion.

Students may do a discussion post for these readings.

**Class 2 (Aug 31): What is a woman? What is gender? What is sex? What is sexuality?**

Simone de Beauvoir (trans. Borde and Malovany-Chevallier), 2011, *The* *Second Sex*, Vintage: Introduction only.

Michel Foucault, 1976 *History of Sexuality*. Volume I: Parts I and II (available as a pdf online and on Collab).

Judith Butler, 1990, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*: Part I, “Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire,” (available as an ebook on Virgo and as a pdf on Collab).

**Class 3 (Sept 7): Feminist and Queer Methodologies**

*How do scholars do feminist and queer theory?*

Nancy Hartstock, 1983, “The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism” in eds. Sandra Harding and Merrell Hintikka, *Discovering Reality*. Dortrecht, Holland: Reidel Publishing: 283-305.

Adrienne Rich, 1984, “Notes Toward a Politics of Location” in *Blood, Bread, and Poetry*. New York: Norton: 210-232.

Patricia Hill Collins, 2000, *Black Feminist Thought*, New York: Routledge: Ch. 1, 2, 5, 11 (available as an ebook on Virgo, as a pdf online and on Collab).

Uma Narayan, 2004, “The Project of Feminist Epistemology: Perspectives from a Nonwestern Feminist” in *The Feminist Standpoint Theory Reader*, New York: Routledge: 213-224.

Sara Ahmed, 2006, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, Chapel Hill: Duke University Press: Ch. 2.

**Class 4 (Sept 14): Intersectionality**

*What is intersectionality? What are the trajectories of power that produce it?*

bell hooks, 2015 [1984], *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, Routledge: Ch. 1 and 6 (book available online as a pdf and on Collab).

Gloria E. Anzaldúa, 1987, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*: Ch. 7.

Kimberle Crenshaw, 1991, “Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory, and Antiracist Politics” in *Feminist Legal Theory: Readings in Law and Gender.* Eds. T.K. Bartlett and R Kennedy. Boulder: Westview Press: 57-80.

Roderick Ferguson, 2004, *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: Ch. 4.

Maria Lugones, 2007, "Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System," *Hypatia* 22(1): 186-209.

**Class 5 (Sept 21): Sexualities, Queer Genders, and Trans**

*How has queer theory destabilized our understanding of sexuality and gender, and to what effect?*

Audre Lorde, 1984, “Uses of the Erotic: Erotic as Power,” *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*, Freedom, CA: Crossing Press: 53-59.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1990, “The Epistemology of the Closet,” in *The Lesbian and Gay Studies Reader*: 45-61.

Judith Halberstam, 1998, *Female Masculinity*, Chapel Hill: Duke University Press: 1-43.

(And see the mention of Halberstam re: the Avital Ronnell scandal>Collab>Resources>WGS #MeToo>New Republic)

Susan Stryker, 2006, “(De)subjugated Knowledges: An Introduction to Transgender Studies,” Susan Stryker and Stephen Whittle eds., *The Transgender Studies Reader,* New York: Routledge: 1-18.

E. Patrick Johnson, 2010, “’Quare’ studies, or (almost) everything I know about queer studies I learned from my grandmother,” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 1: 1-25.

WGS Faculty Visitor: [Andre Cavalcante](https://wgs.as.virginia.edu/people/profile/amc7jc)

**Class 6 (Sept. 28): CLASS CANCELLED Preparing for the Final Paper**

*How can you apply a feminist and/or queer approach to your own research?*

Read the requirements for the research proposal and final paper on the syllabus. Begin brainstorming ideas and write a paragraph for the three ideas you like best. Then do the following readings:

Brooke A. Ackerly and Jacqui True, 2020, *Doing Feminist Research in Political and Social Science* 2nd edition. London: Red Globe Press: Ch. 1-6 (ebook on Virgo).

Read the remainder of the book as applicable to your research project, (e.g., if you are in the social sciences and doing research that uses variables).

If you are not in the social sciences (and even if you are!) I recommend the following:

* Contact your faculty advisor or a faculty member in WGS and ask them for readings that discuss methods in your discipline from a feminist and/or queer theory perspective. Read 2-3 that are most relevant to your research topic.
* Consult The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research 5th edition, 2018 (on reserve in Clemons), which has articles on a wide array of disciplines and methods, including art, performance, cultural studies, ethnography, and autoethnography.

Students may do a discussion post on these readings and how they inform their research project.

***Part 2: Feminist and Queer Interventions***

**Class 7 (Oct 5): The Body**

*How do feminists and queer theorists understand the body and its place in society?*

Iris Marion Young, 1980, “Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment Motility and Spatiality,” *Human Studies* 3: 137-156.

Sonia Kruks, 2010, “Simone de Beauvoir: Engaging Discrepant Materialisms,” Diana Coole and Samantha Frost eds., *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency and Politics*, Duke University Press: 258-280.

Shateema Threadcraft, 2016, “Embodiment,” *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*, Oxford University Press: 207-226.

Robert McRuer, 2006, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability*, New York: New York University Press: Introduction and Ch. 1 (available as an ebook on Virgo).

WGS Faculty Visitor: [Cori Field](https://wgs.as.virginia.edu/people/profile/cf6d)

**Class 8 (Oct. 12): Reading Day Assignment: The Family**

*How has the family been sexed, raced, classed and gendered, and what should we do about it?*

bell hooks, 2014 [1984], *From Margin to Center*, Routledge: Ch. 3 and 10.

Michael Warner, 2000, *The Trouble with Normal: Sex, Politics and the Ethics of Queer Life*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press: entire.

**Class 9 (Oct. 19): Representation**

*How have women and queers been represented, what is wrong with this representation, and how have they responded?*

Chandra Talpade Mohanty, 1988, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonialist Discourses,” *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham: Duke University Press: 17-42.

Elizabeth Cowie, 1990, “Representations,” in Parveen Adams and Elizabeth Cowie, eds., *The Woman in Question*, Cambridge: MIT Press: 113-116.

Jose Esteban Muñoz, 1999, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press: Introduction and 4.

Saidiya Hartman, 2016, "The Belly of the World: A Note on Black Women's Labors," *Souls* 18, 1: 166-73.

NB: We spend the first 20-25 minutes of class discussing the readings from Oct. 12

**Class 10 (Oct. 26): Gender-based Violence**

*What is violence and how is it gendered?*

Catharine MacKinnon, 1983, “Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: Toward a Feminist Jurisprudence,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 8 (4): 635-656.

bell hooks, 2014 [1984], *From Margin to Center*, Routledge: Ch. 5 and 9.

David Valentine, 2007, *Imagining Transgender: An Ethnography of a Category*, Chapel Hill: Duke University Press: 204-230.

Alisa Kessel, 2021, *“*Rethinking Rape Culture: Revelations of Intersectional Analysis,” *American Political Science Review* First View:1-13.

WGS Faculty Visitor: [Doug Meyer](https://wgs.as.virginia.edu/people/profile/dom6e), 5:30-6pm.

**Class 11 (Nov 2): Gender Justice**

*What is gender justice? How do we get it and who is it for?*

bell hooks, 2014 [1984], *From Margin to Center*, Routledge: Ch. 2 and 4.

Iris Marion Young, 1991, *Justice and the Politics of Difference,* Princeton:Princeton University Press: Ch. 2.

Cathy Cohen, 1997, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics?” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 3 (4): 437-465.

* And Cohen’s reflection on her 1997 publication: 2019, “The Radical Potential of Queer? Twenty Years Later,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, 25 (1) :140-144.

Judith Butler, 2004, *Undoing Gender*, New York: Routledge: Ch.1

Serene J. Khader, 2019, *Decolonizing Universalism: A Transnational Feminist Ethic*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: Introduction and Ch. 1 (available as an ebook on Virgo).

**Class 12 (Nov 9): Religion and Secularism**

*How is women’s agency different from feminist agency? How are gender, religion and secularism related?*

Saba Mahmood, 2005, *The Politics of Piety*, Princeton: Princeton University Press: Ch. 1 and 5 (available as an ebook on Virgo).

Joan Scott, 2018, *Sex and Secularism*, Princeton University Press: Introduction, Ch. 1 and Ch. 5 (available as an ebook on Virgo).

Serene J. Khader, 2019, *Decolonizing Universalism: A Transnational Feminist Ethic*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: Ch. 3 (available as an ebook on Virgo).

WGS Faculty Visitor: [Allison Pugh](https://wgs.as.virginia.edu/people/profile/ap9cd)

**Class 13 (Nov 16): Capitalism and Neoliberalism**

*What is the relationship between feminism and neoliberalism? How can queer theory help us to assess capitalism and neoliberalism?*

bell hooks, 2014 [1984], *From Margin to Center*, Routledge: Ch. 7.

Lisa Duggan, 2003, *The Twilight of Equality? Neoliberalism, Cultural Politics, and the Attack on Democracy*, Beacon Press: Introduction, Ch. 1. (and see the response by Duggan to the Avital Ronnell scandal> Collab>Resources> WGS #MeToo>Duggan)

Nicola J. Smith, 2020, *Capitalism’s Sexual History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press: Introduction, Ch. 1, Ch. 5 (available as an ebook on Virgo).

WGS Faculty Visitor: [Domale Keys](https://humanrightspractice.arizona.edu/people/domale-dube-keys)

**Class 14 (Nov. 23): NO CLASS: Thanksgiving Break**

**Research paper proposals due by 6pm on Collab.**

**Class 15 (Nov. 30): The War on Terror**

*How and why is the war on terror masculinist and homonormative? How has the security state and the war on terror been normalized, at what cost, and who gains?*

Iris Marion Young, “The Logic of Masculinist Protection: Reflections on the Current Security State,” *Signs* 29 (11): 1-25.

Jasbir K. Puar, 2007, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, Duke University Press: Ch. 1.

Jasbir Puar, 2017, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability*, Duke University Press: Preface, Introduction.

C. Heike Schotten, 2018, *Queer Terror: Life, Death, and Desire in the Settler Colony*, New York: Columbia University Press: Introduction and Ch. 5.

**Class 16 (Dec. 7): Gendered Futures**

*Whose future is foretold? Who gets to have a future? Should we imagine our future, and if so, how?*

Lee Edelman, 2004, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive*, Chapel Hill: Duke University Press: Ch. 1 (see [Jacques Lacan](https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/lacan/#RegThe), *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Section 2 for an overview of the psychoanalytic concepts that Edelman uses).

Jose Esteban Muñoz, 2009, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, New York: New York University Press: Introduction and 6 (available as an ebook on Virgo).

Joan Scott, 2018, *Sex & Secularism*, “Reproductive Futurism,” Princeton University Press: Ch. 2 (available as an ebook on Virgo).

bell hooks, 2014 [1984], *From Margin to Center*, Routledge: Ch. 12.

Also see: Schotten, pp. 36-41 and 105-118 print version

WGS Faculty Visitor: [Matthew Chin](https://wgs.as.virginia.edu/people/profile/mc4hz) (after 4pm)

**(December 17): Final Paper due at 6pm**