

Feminist Pasts, Feminist Futures
POLSCI 703 (Winter 2022)
Thursday 2:00-5:00 pm

Professor: Ann K. Heffernan
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Office Hours: TBD

OVERVIEW:

Feminism has long entailed a heightened attention to, if not a critique of, normative orientations toward time. In her 1979 essay “Women’s Time,” Julia Kristeva famously distinguished between linear, historical time and the cyclical and monumental time associated with women. And yet, feminism is often narrated as a series of successive waves, with each building on, and often exceeding, a prior wave. What would it mean to dispense with this progressive narrative, and how might we conceive of the past—and the future—differently?

This course will begin by considering the production of historical knowledge, its relation to the political present, and its bearing on possible futures. We will proceed by (re)considering concepts and points of contestation in feminist theory—among them, intersectionality and coalitional politics, legal rights and their limitations, and the aims of political action—before turning, in the last section of the course, to efforts to imagine alternative political futures.

Readings will be drawn from contemporary political theory, critical theory, legal theory, disability studies, and feminist historiography.

ASSESSMENT:

Attendance and Participation: 25%

I view this class as a collaborative enterprise grounded in engaged discussion and open debate. I understand participation to include not only comments or questions, but the ability to actively listen to your colleagues and thoughtfully and respectfully engage with—and challenge—their ideas.

Discussion Leadership 15%

While I will typically open class with a short lecture to frame the readings, you will each be responsible for beginning one class discussion. Typically, this will involve a short (5-7) presentation in which you situate the text relative to each other and to the overall aims of the course. While some texts are in explicit conversation with each other, in some cases the resonances (or points of disagreement) are less obvious. You will (briefly) draw these out for the class and then pose a series of 2-3 questions to orient the discussion.

Seminar Paper 60%

You will be required to write a seminar paper of 15-20 pages (due date and details TBD).

OTHER POLICIES AND INFORMATION:

Attendance: While complete attendance in the class is encouraged, I recognize that the pandemic will likely make this impossible. Most importantly: please stay home if you feel sick. Depending on how things go, zooming in may be an option (if you're feeling well enough). Testing is available around campus, including at the Michigan Union. You can sign-up [here](#).

Accessibility: If you have a physical, sensory, cognitive, or psychological disability and require accommodations, please let me know if I can do more to make the class (and class materials) more accessible. You do not have to disclose your disability status in order to request accommodations from me. I do want to know about what kinds of accommodations will make our classroom a productive learning environment for you, but I also want you to know that disclosure is a choice. Disclosure isn't limited to disability status, either: it may come up with respect to past trauma, gender identity, sexuality, etc.

Formal requests for accommodations may be made by contacting the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office located at G664 Haven Hall. The SSD phone number is 734-763-3000. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined you will be issued a verified individual services accommodation (VISA) form. While I don't require you to have completed a formal request with the SSD Office, it can be helpful for accessing resources (OCR PDFs, for example).

Student Well-Being: Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being (especially this year). These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, mental health, alcohol or other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing any issues, seeking help is a courageous thing to do for yourself and those who care about you. If the source of your stressors is academic, please contact me so that we can find solutions together. For personal concerns, U-M offers many resources, some of which are listed at [Resources for Student Well-being](#) on the Well-being for U-M Students website. You can also search for additional resources on that website.

Academic Honesty and Integrity: The University of Michigan community functions best when its members treat one another with honesty, fairness, respect, and trust. The college promotes the assumption of personal responsibility and integrity, and prohibits all forms of academic dishonesty and misconduct. All cases of academic misconduct will be referred to the LSA Office of the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education. Being found responsible for academic misconduct will usually result in a grade sanction, in addition to any sanction from the college. For more information, including examples of behaviors that are considered academic misconduct and potential sanctions, please see lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/academic-integrity.html

Zoom Policies: Building rapport and a classroom community is essential in a small seminar. However, I recognize Zoom (and remote learning in general) presents some significant hurdles. In light of this, a few brief notes:

- Please mute your microphone if you are not speaking (and remember to turn it on when you are).

- Please try and keep your video on if and when you can (I recognize that some of us have less-than-great internet connections). You may use virtual backgrounds, though be aware that they can cause bandwidth issues.
- Pets are absolutely allowed and eagerly welcomed.

Contacting me: I am here to be a resource for you. **Do** take advantage of my office hours, and feel free to email me at any point with questions or concerns. I will try to reply to emails within 24 hours. You can sign up for office hours [here](#). If there are no times available that work, please email me and we'll figure something out!

Finally: The keyword for this semester is flexibility. Barring the first two weeks and further announcements from the University, we will attempt to be in-person. This will likely mean that people (including me) may be absent or in quarantine at some point during the term. I will try to work around this as best I can.

COURSE SCHEDULE

January 6th: Introduction

PART I: CONCEIVING THE PAST

January 13th: Revisiting the Waves

Required Reading:

- Kathleen Laughlin et al., "Is it Time to Jump Ship? Historians Rethink the Waves Metaphor," *Feminist Formations* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 76-101.
- Leela Fernandes, "Unsettling 'Third Wave Feminism': Feminist Waves, Intersectionality, and Identity Politics in Retrospect," in *No Permanent Wages: Recasting Histories of U.S. Feminism*, ed. Nancy A. Hewitt (Rutgers University Press, 2010), 98-120.
- Pamela Caughie, "Introduction to Theorizing the First-Wave Globally," *Feminist Review* 95, no. 1 (2010): 5-9.
- William Spurlin, "Resisting Heteronormativity/Resisting Recolonisation: Affective Bonds between Indigenous Women in Southern Africa and the Difference(S) of Postcolonial Feminist History," *Feminist Review* 95, no. 1 (2010): 10-26.

Recommended:

- Kanika Batra, "The Home, the Veil and the World: Reading Ismat Chughtai towards a 'Progressive' History of the Indian Women's Movement," *Feminist Review* 95, no. 1 (2010): 27-44.
- Melody Berger, *We Don't Need Another Wave: Dispatches from the Next Generation of Feminists* (Seal 2006).
- Martha Weinman Lear, "The Second Feminist Wave," *New York Times Magazine*, March 1968.

January 20th: Historical Time

Required Reading

- Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. Keith Tribe (Columbia University Press, 2004); Preface (pp. 1-5), Chs. 1-3 (pp. 9-57) 5 (pp. 75-92), 7 (pp. 105-114), 9 (pp. 128-151), 14 (pp. 255-275).

Recommended Reading

- Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life," in *Untimely Meditations*, ed. Daniel Breazeale (Cambridge University Press, 1997): 57-124.
- Hannah Arendt, "The Concept of History: Ancient and Modern," in *Between Past and Future* (Penguin, 2006): 41-90.
- W. B. Gallie, "Art as an Essentially Contested Concept," *The Philosophical Quarterly* 6, no. 23 (April 1956), 97-114.
- Reinhardt Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Samuel Presner (Stanford University Press, 2002).
- François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time*, trans. Saskia Brown (Columbia University Press, 2016).

January 27th: Historical Production and the "Cycle of Silences"

Required Reading

- Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Beacon, 1995).

Recommended Reading

- Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, 2000).
- Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge University Press, 1988).
- Achille Mbembe, "The Power of the Archive and its Limits," in *Refiguring the Archive*, eds. Carolyn Hamilton et al., (Springer, 2002): 19-27.
- Ethan Kleinberg, *Haunting History: For a Deconstructive Approach to the Past* (Stanford University Press, 2017).

February 3rd: Archival Limits, Archival Desires, and "Mutilated Historicity"

Required Reading

- Saidiya Hartmann, "Venus in Two Acts," *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (2008):
- Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016).

Recommended Reading

- Avery F. Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (University of Minnesota Press, 2008).
- Saidiya V. Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth Century America* (Oxford University Press, 1997)
- Walter Johnson, "Agency: A Ghost Story," in *Slavery's Ghost: The Problem of Freedom in the Age of Emancipation*, by Richard Follet, Eric Foner, and Walter Johnson (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011): 8-30.
- Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton University Press, 2009).
- Jennifer Terry, "Theorizing Deviant Historiography," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 3, no. 2 (1991): 55-73.

February 10th: Telling Feminist Stories

Required Reading

- Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 773-797.
- Joan W. Scott, "Feminism's History," in *The Fantasy of Feminist History* (Duke University Press, 2011): 23-44.
- Rita Felski, "Telling Time in Feminist Theory," *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature* 21, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 21-28.
- Claire Hemmings, "Telling Feminist Stories," *Feminist Theory* 6, no. 2 (2005): 115-39.
- Victoria Browne, *Feminism, Time, and Nonlinear History: A Polytemporal Approach* (Palgrave MacMillan: 2014), 1-47 (Introduction and Chapter 1).

Recommended Reading

- Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (Columbia University Press, 1983).
- Clare Hemmings, *Why Stories Matter: The Political Grammar of Feminist Theory* (Duke University Press, 2011).
- Kimberly Hutchings, *Time and World Politics: Thinking the Present* (Manchester University Press, 2008).
- Julia Kristeva, "Women's Time," in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

Part II: INSTITUTIONAL IMAGINARIES

February 17th: Identity Knowledges: Revisiting the Category of Women Debates

Required Reading

- Judith Butler, "Subjects of Sex/Gender/Desire," in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge, 1999), 1-46.
- Linda Zerilli, "Feminists Know Not What They Do: Judith Butler's *Gender Trouble* and the Limits of Epistemology," in *Feminism and the Abyss of Freedom* (University of Chicago Press): 33-65.
- Robyn Wiegman, "Doing Justice with Objects or, the 'Progress' of Gender," in *Object Lessons* (Duke University Press, 2012): 36-90.

Recommended Reading

- Linda Alcoff, "Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory," *Signs* 13, no. 3 (Spring 1988): 405-436.
- Wendy Brown, "Feminism Unbound: Revolution, Mourning, Politics" and "The Impossibility of Women's Studies," in \emptyset : 98-135.
- Robyn Wiegman, "The Possibility of Women's Studies," in *Women's Studies for the Future: Foundations, Interrogations, Politics* eds. Elizabeth Lapovsky Kennedy and Agatha Beins (Rutgers University Press,

February 24th: Taking a Break from Feminism?

Required Reading

- Gayle S. Rubin, "Thinking Sex," in *Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader* (Duke University Press, 2011): 137-181.
- Lauren Berlant and Michael Warner, "Sex in Public," *Critical Inquiry* 24 (Winter 1998): 547-566.
- Robyn Wiegman, "Telling Time: When Feminism and Queer Theory Diverge," in *Object Lessons* (Duke University Press, 2012): 91-136.

- Cathy J. Cohen, "Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics," *GLQ*, no. (May 1997): 437-65.

Recommended Reading

- Leo Bersani, "Is the Rectum a Grave?" *October* 43 (Winter 1987): 197-222.
- Judith Butler, "Against Proper Objects," *differences* 6, no. 2 (1994): 1-26.
- Ian Halley, "Queer Theory by Men," *Duke Journal of Gender, Law, and Policy* 11, no. 7 (Spring 2004): 7-53.
- Janet Halley, *Split Decisions: How and Why to Take a Break from Feminism* (Princeton University Press, 2006).
- Biddy Martin, "Sexualities Without Genders and Other Queer Utopias" *Diacritics* 24, no. 2 (Summer-Autumn 1994): 104-121.

March 3rd: No Class (Spring Break)

March 10th: The Intersectionality Wars?

Required Reading

- Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence, Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1241-1299
- Jennifer C. Nash, "Institutionalizing the Margins," *Social Text* 32, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 45-65.
- Robyn Wiegman, "Critical Kinship: Universal Aspirations and Intersectional Judgments," in *Object Lessons* (Duke University Press, 2012): 239-300.

Recommended Reading

- Patricia Hill Collins, "It's All in the Family: Intersections of Gender, Race and Nation," *Hypatia* 13, no. 3 (1998): 62-82.
- Brittney Cooper, "Intersectionality," in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory*, eds. Lisa Disch and Mary Hawkesworth (Oxford University Press, 2016): 385-406.
- Kathy Davis, "Intersectionality as Buzzword: A Sociology of Science Perspective on What Makes Feminist Theory Successful," *Feminist Theory* 9, no. 1 (April 2008): 67-85.
- Jennifer Nash, *Black Feminism Reimagined After Intersectionality* (Duke University Press, 2019).
- Nira Yuval-Davis, "Intersectionality and Feminist Politics," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 13, no. 3 (2006): 193-209.

PART III: IMAGINING ALTERNATIVE FUTURES

March 17th: Queer Potentialities, Queer Refusals

Required Reading

- Lee Edelman, "The Future is Kid Stuff," in *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 1-32.
- J. Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Duke University Press, 2011), Chapter 3 ("The Queer Art of Failure") and Chapter 4 ("Queer Negativity and Radical Passivity").
- José Esteban Muñoz, "Introduction: Feeling Utopia," and "Queerness as Horizon: Utopian Hermeneutics in the Face of Gay Pragmatism," *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York University Press, 2009): 1-32.

Recommended Reading

- Carolyn Dinshaw, Lee Edelman, Roderick A. Ferguson et al. "Theorizing Queer Temporalities: A Roundtable Discussion" *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 13, no. 2-3 (2007): 177-195.
- Kate Eichhorn, "The 'Scrap Heap' Reconsidered: Selected Archives of Feminist Archiving," in *The Archival Turn in Feminism: Archive in Order* (Temple University Press, 2015): 25-54.
- Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Duke University Press, 2010).
- Heather Love, "Epilogue: The Politics of Refusal," in *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History* (Harvard University Press, 2007).

March 24th: Carceral Feminism and the Limits of Rights

Required Reading

- Wendy Brown, "Suffering the Paradoxes of Rights," in *Left Legalism/Left Critique*, eds. Wendy Brown and Janet Halley (Duke University Press, 2002): 420-434.
- Elizabeth Bernstein, "Carceral Politics as Gender Justice? The 'Traffic in Women' and Neoliberal Circuits of Crime, Sex, and Rights" *Theory and Society* 41, no. 3 (May 2012): 233-259.
- Anna Terwiel, "What Is Carceral Feminism?" *Political Theory* 48, no. 4 (2020): 421-442.

Recommended Reading

- Lisa Bower, "Queer Acts and the Politics of Direct Address," *Law & Society* 28, no. 5 (1994): 1009-1033.
- Wendy Brown, "Rights and Losses," in *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton University Press, 1995): 96-134.
- Chandan Reddy, "Time for Rights? Loving, Gay Marriage, and the Limits of Legal Justice," *Fordham Law Review* 76, no. 6 (2007): 2849-2872.
- Linda Zerilli, "Refiguring Rights Through the Political Practice of Sexual Difference," *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Criticism* vol. 15, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 54-90.

March 31st: Fugitive Justice

Required Reading

- Wendy Brown, "Wounded Attachments," *Political Theory* 21, no. 3 (1993): 390-410.
- Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're so Paranoid, You Probably Think this Essay is About You," in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Duke University Press, 2003), 123-151.
- Stephen Best and Saidiya Hartman, "Fugitive Justice," *Representations* 92, no. 1 (Fall 2005): 1-15

April 7th: Alternative Futures

- Sami Schalk and Jina B. Kim, "Integrating Race, Transforming Feminist Disability Studies," *Signs* 46, no. 1 (2020): 31-55.
- Alison Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Indiana University Press, 2013), selections.
- Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, *Care Work: Dreaming Disability Justice* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2018), selections.

Recommended Reading:

- Patty Berne, "[Disability Justice: A Working Draft](#)" (2015).
- Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, "Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory," *NWSA Journal* 14, no. 3 (2002): 1-32.

- Joanna Hedva, "Sick Woman Theory," *Mask Magazine*, January 2016, <http://www.maskmagazine.com/not-again/struggle/sick-woman-theory>
- Julia Watts Belser, "Disability, Climate Change, and Environmental Violence: The Politics of Invisibility and the Horizon of Hope," *Disability Studies Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (2020).

April 14th: Flex Week