Gender, Culture and Theory Professor Janet Jacobs

Sociology 6016 Office Hours T 1:30-2:30 and by

T 11:00-1:30 appointment

Women Studies Cottage 200

**Course Description**

This course is designed to explore three related areas of gender scholarship and research: the development of feminist theories; women and the structures of patriarchy; and the gendered nature of individual and cultural trauma. Drawing on a range of theoretical perspectives and empirical studies, the class will examine feminist ideologies and the scholarship on gender that pertains to reproduction, personality development, and the engendering of individual and mass trauma. Throughout the semester, we will consider how various and diverse theoretical frameworks explain the gendered relations of power, with an emphasis on historical and contemporary control over women’s bodies, psychological development, and the persistence of violence against women and girls across diverse categories of race, class, religion and ethnicity. The readings will draw from interdisciplinary frameworks, including history, sociology, psychology, cultural and legal studies.

**Required Texts**

Alexander et. al. *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*

De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

Gordan, *The Moral Property of Women*

Herman, *Father-Daughter Incest*

Jacobs, *The Holocaust Across Generations*

Rittner and Roth, *Women and the Holocaust*: *Different Voices*

Sanger, *About Abortion*

Spiegelman, *My Father Bleeds History*

Reading assignments for the class are drawn from the texts as well as from reserve readings that have been placed on D2L.

**Schedule of Topics and Assigned Readings**

**Part I Feminist Theories**

1. **Introduction: An Overview of Feminist Theories: The Origins of Patriarchy and the Concept of Otherness**

January 15

De Beauvoir, Introduction; Sacks, “Engels Revisited”

2. **The Second Sex and the Origins of European Twentieth Century Feminisms**

January 22

De Beauvoir, Chaps. XII, XIII, XVI, XVII, XVIII

3.  **The Evolution of Feminist Theories: 1960s-present**

January 29

Firestone, “The Dialectic of Sex”; Radical Lesbians, “The Woman Identified Woman”;

Wittig “One is Not Born a Woman”; The Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist

Statement”; hooks, “Feminist Theory in Practice” (on reserve)

February 5

Baca Zinn and Dill, “Theorizing Difference From Multiracial Feminism”; Crenshaw,

“Mapping the Margins”; Cho, Crenshaw, McCall, “Toward a Field of

Intersectionality Studies” (on reserve)

**Part II Women as Body**

1. **Reproductive Control and Reproductive Rights: Historical Perspective**

February 12

Gordan, Chaps. 4, 5, 6, 8,10, 12

2. **Abortion: Medicalization, the Law and the Fetal Imaginary**

February 19

Sanger, Chaps 1-4

3.  **Abortion: The Social Construction of the Fetus in Anti-abortion Discourse and**

**Technology**

February 26

Sanger, Chaps. 5, 6, 8; Guest speaker Kendra Hutchens

**Part III** **Women and Psycho-social Development**

1. **Psychoanalytic Theory and the Origins of the Feminine and Masculine Binary in European Thought**

March 5

Freud, “Femininity”; “Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between

the Sexes”; Horney, “The Flight From Womanhood”; Chodorow, “Family Structure and

Feminine Personality”

1. **Race, Ethnicity and the Gendered Self**

March 12

Segura and Pierce, “Chicana/o Family Structure and Gender Personality”; Hill Collins, Chaps.

4,8; Hill, Cultural Images and the Health of African American Women”; Beauboeuf, “You Have

to Show Strength” (on reserve)

**Part IV** **Theories of Sexual Trauma and the Persistence of Family Violence**

1. **Sexual Trauma and the Patriarchal Family**

March 19

Freud, “The Aetiology of Hysteria” (on reserve)

Herman, Chaps. 2-8

**Part V Mass Violence and the Engendering of Genocide**

1. **Women and the Holocaust**

April 2

Ritter and Roth:

Research Perspectives: Ringelheim, Bock, Koontz

Testimony: Jackson, Lewinska, Perl, Lengyl (“Scientific Experiments’)

1. **Women and the Bosnian Genocide: Theories and Studies of Mass Rape**

April 9

Seifert, “War and Rape”; Copeland, “Surfacing Gender”; Enloe, “Have the Bosnian Rapes

Opened Up a New Era of Feminist Consciousness?’; Salzman, “Rape Camps” (on reserve)

**Part VI Theories of Mass Trauma, Collective Identity and Post Traumatic Memory**

April 16

1. **Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity**

Alexander, Chaps, 1, 2, 6

1. **Trauma and Post Memory in Descendants of Survivors**

Hirsch, “The Generation of Postmemory” (on reserve)

**Part VII The Intergenerational Transition of Trauma**

1. **The Origins of Cultural Representations of Inherited Trauma**

April 23

Spiegelman, *Maus*

1. **The Social Transmission of Inherited Trauma**

April 30

Jacobs, Introduction, Chaps 1, 2, 5, 6

**Course Requirements**

The requirements for this course include leading class discussion, weekly thought questions, 7 thought papers and a final research paper.

**Leading Class Discussion**: Each student is required to lead two class discussions during the semester. The responsibility of the discussion leader is to guide the students through a discussion of the material assigned for that day. Although it is expected that all students will have read the material prior to class, it might be useful to summarize the main points of the readings as you understand them and to pose questions and ideas to critique, challenge and further interrogate the theoretical concepts and/or research findings presented in the texts.

**Weekly Thought Questions**: Each student is required to come to class prepared with one thought question from the weekly readings. This question will be turned in at the end of class.

**Thought Papers**: To facilitate class discussion and critical thinking, a total of 7 thought papers (3-4 pages in length) are due throughout the semester. You may choose from any of the topic areas on which to write your thought papers. Thought papers are intended to consider the points that the author is making and the author’s contribution to the area of study. Thought papers should not merely be a summary of the ideas but should address what you think are the most significant and meaningful aspects of the work. \*The thought paper is due on the day of the reading assignment and may not be turned in after class.

**Research Paper**: A little over half your grade will be based on a research paper (12-15 pages in length). The paper should address a field of study that we are examining in class and should relate to one of the topic areas. Students will be required to turn in a paper proposal and a tentative bibliography at various points throughout the semester. Students may also want to schedule at least one appointment with me, either during my office hours or at another time, to discuss their research ideas and or the progress of their paper. The fixed due dates for the proposal, bibliography and research paper are:

Paper proposal: March 5

Tentative Bibliography: April 2

Paper Due: April 30

**Point Distribution**: The following is the point distribution for the course requirements:

Discussion Leader 100 points (50 points per discussion)

Thought Papers 210 points (30 points each)

Thought Questions 140 points (10 points each)

Research Paper 550 points

Total 1000 points

I look forward to an exciting and dynamic semester together.