

WTQS 399: Independent Study

Wells College, Spring 2023

Taught by: Dr. Jess River Vooris aka “Prof V” or “Dr. River”

Pronouns: they/them

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Office: 209 Zabriski Hall

Office Hours: Tues/Thursday 12-2 pm, Wednesdays: time TBD, Mondays by appointment

Course Description:

This course deepens students’ understandings of how feminist perspectives situate power and privilege in relationship to interlocking categories of gender, race, class, sexuality, ability and nation. Through foundational theoretical texts, it expands students’ understandings of significant theoretical frameworks that inform women’s, gender, critical race and sexuality studies, as well as debates and tensions within them. By interweaving core feminist texts with contemporary cultural and artistic artifacts, the course helps students examine the relationships between everyday experiences, political institutions, forms of resistance and theoretical meaning-making.

Students will complete a feminist “intervention” project that will integrate different theories that they have learned over the course of the semester. This project will address a particular feminist issue, and stage an intervention in that issue. Final products might include a zine, podcast, proposal for an event, or children’s book.

Course Objectives:

- Students will deepen their understanding of the concepts of gender, sex, privilege, intersectionality, and power
- Students will understand how art and creative expression has been key to feminist theory
- Students will analyze and compare different theoretical approaches to feminism
- Students will engage in feminist praxis in their final project for the course

Grades:

35% participation: attending weekly meeting with Prof V, and an additional meeting between students. Students will complete a weekly journal about the time they meet together.

15% Feminist Show and Tell: Once during the semester students will individually, or as a pair, share an object/piece of media, and connect it to key class concepts

50% Final Intervention Project: Students will create a feminist killjoy survival kit—following the guidelines set by Sara Ahmed in *Living a Feminist Life*

Reading Schedule:

Week One: Introductions

- Adrienne Rich, "Claiming an Education" (4 pages)
- Gloria Anzaldua, "Letter to Third World Women Writers" (10 pages)

Week Two: Feminist Knowledge Production:

- bell hooks, "Theory as Liberatory Practice" (12 pages)
 - Mel Michelle Lewis "A Bridge Across Our Fears" (6 pages)
- Gloria Anzaldua, "Conciencia de la Mestiza" (15 pages)

Week Three: Feminist Knowledge Production and Feminist Writing

- TV Reed, "The Poetical is Personal" from *The Art of Protest* (31 pages)
- Audre Lorde, *Poetry is Not a Luxury* (3 pages)
 - [Audre Lorde, "Litany For Survival"](#) (poem)
- Natalie Goldberg, "Free Write" from *Writing Down the Bones* (2 pages)

Week Four: Black Feminist Thought and Intersectionality:

- Combahee River Collective Statement (7 pages)
- Elsa Barkley Brown "What Has Happened Here" (14 pages)
 - Radical Sisters excerpt?

Week Five: Thinking about Sex/Gender

- Kath Weston, "Unsexed" from *Gender in Real Time* (2002)
- Alex Iantaffi and Meg-John Barker, "Genders" from *Life Isn't Binary* (2019)
- "The Education of Little Cis" by A. Finne Enke

Week Six: Inclusions/Exclusions: Racism, Lesbian Separatism, Trans Feminism

- Sara Ahmed, "Speaking About Racism" from *On Being Included* (32 pages)
- 1970s and Collective Memory by A. Finn Enke
- Chapter from *Excluded* by Julia Serano

Week Seven: The Care We Dream Of: Disability Justice:

- Eli Clare, "Moving Through Cure" from *Brilliant Imperfection* (16 pages)
- Zena Sharman, "Queer Alchemy: Perverting the Health System, Fighting to Win" from *The Care We Dream Of* (20 pages)

- Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, ["Nobody Left Behind But Wanting to Run Like Hell. \(8 pages\)"](#)

Week Eight: Spring Break

Week Nine: Feminist Affect Theory

- Ann Cvetkovich, Intro to Depression: A Public Feeling (26 pages)
- Interview with Mimi Khuc (4 pages)
- Asian-American Tarot Deck (we will look at this in class--I also have a link to digital copies if you want to take a look before class)
- Sara Ahmed, "Feminist Killjoy Toolkit" Living a Feminist Life (15 pages)

Week 10: The Politics of Desire:

- Jane Ward, Intro of The Tragedy of Heterosexuality (32 pages)
- Angela Chen, "Compulsory Sexuality and (Male) Asexual Existence" from Ace: What Asexuality Reveals about Desire, Society and the Meaning of Sex (14 pages)

Week Eleven: Reproductive Justice–Adoption

- Introduction to Somebodies Children by Laura Briggs (24 pages)
- *This Land* podcast Season 2, episode 1 ["Solomon's Sword"](#) (47 minutes)
- the lost baby poem by Lucille Clifton (in class on Wednesday)

Week Twelve: Indigenous Feminisms

- Haunani-Kay Trask, Feminism and Indigenous Hawaiian Nationalism (12 pages)
- Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "Nishnaabeg Internationalism" (16 pages)

Week Thirteen: Art as Theory

- [!Women, Art, Revolution movie](#) (hour and 22 minutes)

WEEK Fourteen: Queer Ecologies and project time

- Donna Haraway, "Making Kin Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene" (5 pages)

Week Fifteen: Class Wrap-Up

No reading