GSWS 822-5: Feminist Theory

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Office hours: TBA
Lecture: Fridays 10:30 – 15:20; Surrey 2980

Course Description:
The feminist activity and theory of the late twentieth century is often referred to as the ‘second wave’ and developed and co-existed with other social movements agitating for socialist goals, racial equality, gay liberation and anti-war amongst others. This was a historical period rich in discussions of a range of oppressions and the interconnections between sex, class, race and sexuality.
We will study a number of feminist theorists who constitute a selection of work from the tradition of western feminisms. This is not a complete representation nor is it intended to be so; it is a collection of some major writings from a variety of traditions (usually) identified as Liberal; Radical; Black; Materialist and Revolutionary feminisms. Each reading will be discussed in the context of the society and time in which it was originally published; as such we will also examine the history of the US in the 1950s and 1960s; Canada in the 1960s; the UK in the 1970s and 1980s and France in the late 1960s and 1970s. We will understand the formal political context; the legal position of women; the co-existence of other political movements and the state of feminist debates surrounding each of the works we will read. We will also discuss the political and social actions related to each of these strands of feminist thought, such as Reclaim the Night marches; campaigns for reproductive rights; educational and employment opportunities for women; anti-violence and pornography campaigns; Wages for Housework amongst others.
The course has a heavy reading list of complex, theoretical readings. You will find it challenging but we will work together to examine and analyze each of them to the best of our abilities. This course will help you develop a solid historical background, whilst providing the opportunity for you to develop your own personal research interests.

Course Evaluation and Assignments:
Attendance and Participation 20%
Seminar Presentations 20%
Essay Proposal with Annotated Bibliography 20% due mid term
Final Paper 40% due one week after last class

THE DEPARTMENT OF GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND WOMEN’S STUDIES ENCOURAGES CLARITY OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION AND GOOD WRITING. STUDENTS WILL BE EVALUATED ON THESE SKILLS IN ALL COURSES GIVEN BY THE DEPARTMENT. IN ADDITION, THE DEPARTMENT WILL FOLLOW POLICY T10.02 WITH RESPECT TO “INTELLECTUAL HONESTY,” AND “ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE” (WWW.SFU.CA/POLICIES/TEACHING)
Course Texts and Courseware:

- Betty Friedan 1963 – *The Feminine Mystique*
- bell hooks 1981 – *Ain’t I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism*
- Shulamith Firestone 1970 – *The Dialectic of Sex*
- Christine Delphy 1984 – *Close to Home*
- Margaret Benston 1969 – ‘The Political Economy of Women’s Liberation’ (supplied)
- Betsy Warrior 1969 – ‘Housework: Slavery or a Labour of Love’ (supplied)
- *Feminist Review, 1984 No 17, Many Voices, One Chant: Black Feminist Perspectives* (available via Library’s electronic journals)
- *Feminism and Psychology, 1992 Special Edition on Heterosexuality*, vol 2, no 3 (available via Library’s electronic journals)
- Two sessions are available for other readings as determined by class members.