In this course, we will study concepts, controversies and processes of feminist theory by focussing on feminist thinking about interacting sources of oppression and privilege, including gender, class, race, sexual identity, (dis)ability, and age. Lecture topics will include: how oppressions and privileges are interactive; standpoint epistemologies; conflicting and changing identities; the social construction of social identities (such as race or gender) which are often claimed to be biological; creation and abuse of the ‘Other’; how culture and language made people and power disappear; feminist theories of internalized oppression; the politics of similarity and difference; and competing conceptions of equality.

To understand better how theory is created, we will trace the development of one feminist’s ideas from her memories, her reading, her community activism, her teaching, and her friendships by reading a collection of Alice Walker’s essays. And we will explore a feminist perspective on multiple, interacting oppressions expressed in fiction by reading Zora Neale Hurston’s novel of the adventures of an African American woman, Their Eyes Were Watching God.

Required Reading
4. Additional articles of assigned reading will be placed on reserve in the library.

Course Requirements
10% - Paper Proposal (500 words, approximately 2 pages)
30% - Paper Based on Choice of Assigned Topics (2500 words, approx. 10 pages)
25% - Mid-term Exam in Class on Pre-Announced Essay Questions (700-800 words, approx. 3 pages)
25% - Final Exam During Exam Period on Pre-Announced Essay Questions (700-800 words, approx. 3 pages)
10% - Class Attendance and Participation

Prerequisites:
WS 101 or WS 102. May be taken concurrently.