WS 207-3  Introduction to Feminist Theory  

Miriam Eguchi

Women's Studies is becoming more interdisciplinary day by date, as feminist theory is applied to every imaginable field of study. But what is “feminist theory”? This course aims to provide a theoretical foundation for applied studies by considering the various approaches that have contributed to the ongoing vitality of feminist scholarship and activism. Becoming familiar with the breadth and diversity of feminist thought also enables us to pursue our own thoughts on gender-related issues with a more informed and balanced perspective.

The course will begin with a historical overview of feminism and feminist theory, followed by a closer look at some of the major streams and topics. We will note the criticisms that spurred Western Feminists to give greater consideration to factors of race and economic class, and to move towards a multicultural awareness.

Finally, we will see how criticism based on feminist theory has brought about important changes in areas such as language, education, sexuality, and religion.

Required readings:

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Course requirements and Grading Structure:
Attendance and participation 15%
Short written assignments (3 times, 2 pages each) 15%
Midterm test (in class) 20%
Research paper (10-12 pages), & short oral presentation of approximately 5 minutes on the same topic 30%
Final Exam (take-home – short essay questions) 30%

Prerequisites:
WS 101 or WS 102 (may be taken concurrently)

THE DEPARTMENT OF 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.