WS 207 – Introduction to Feminist Theory

Marni Westerman
Burnaby campus
Monday: 1:30 – 4:20

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to feminist forms of theorizing by exploring many feminisms. Students will consider how feminist thought differs from and critiques traditional thought. Students will be introduced to “mainstream” second wave feminisms and the critiques brought to bear upon these perspectives by anti-racist, postcolonial, queer and postmodern/post-structuralist feminisms. The course will also explore issues such as the place of men in feminism, the issue of identity politics, and the connection between feminist theory and feminist activism.

Required Reading
Reserve readings in the University library. List will be provided

Course Evaluation and Assignments
Participation: 10% Participation will be measured by asking students to answer questions on some of the required reserve readings. These questions will be used as the basis of class discussion
Examinations: 50% (Midterm - 25%, Final - 25% [to be scheduled by the registrar’s office])
Written Assignments: 40% (2 X 20% each) Students will be required to read articles and write 2 short essays (7-8 pages).

Topics
Introduction:
- differences between feminist theory and traditional thought

Mainstream Feminisms:
- Liberal Feminism
- Marxist/Socialist Feminism
- Radical Feminism
- Psychoanalytic Feminism

Newer Perspectives, Critiques, and Debates:
- Feminism and Postmodernism/Post-Structuralism
- Lesbian Feminism
- Race and Gender
- Feminism and Postcolonialism
- Men and Feminism
- Identity Politics
- Theory and Activism

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.