WS 102 – Introduction to Western Feminism

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This course will examine the history of feminist consciousness and feminist resistance in Western cultures from prehistoric times to the early twentieth century. Topics that will be covered include definitions of feminisms, theories of the origins of patriarchies, women’s place and feminine symbolism in major western religions (Judaism, Christianity, Muslim, and Native American spiritualities); women’s struggle for formal education; women’s resistance of traditional gender roles; the development of equal rights and maternal feminisms, and suffrage movements in Europe and North America, and the interaction of gender with other oppressions. The emphasis will be on developing conceptions of feminisms that are inclusive of women’s resistance in many different contexts.

Required readings:
ISBN 0-415-9930987


Assignments and Grading:
20% - Tutorial participation
10% - Document analysis (2pp)
20% - Mid-term exam (in class, closed book, short answers)
25% - Short paper (5 - 7 pages) on a pre 1970 feminist
25% - Final exam (scheduled exam, closed book)

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.