

English 280

Major Texts of the

Feminist Tradition in the West

Spring 2001 TTh1-2:30 English House I

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Ofc. English House 205

*“I invited them to dinner, so to speak—
in order that we might hear what they have to say.”*

Judy Chicago. The Dinner Party:

A Symbol of our Heritage.

Garden City, New Jersey: Anchor/Doubleday, 1979. 52.

*“Though at some point the performance will end,
what is suggested is shuddering without end:
permanent catharsis.” Elin Diamond. “The
Shudder of Catharsis in Twentieth-Century
Performance.” Performativity and Performance.
Ed. Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.
New York: Routledge, 1995. 165-166*

*... it is ... urgent that we shift from this intense concentration on
... textual representation ... to an analysis of the ... material
conditions that shape our collective ... existence ...*

I ... invoke Antonio Gramsci's warning: ...

*‘The problem was not one of model curricula but of ... the
entire social complex which they express.’” Hazel Carby,*

*“Can the Tactics of Cultural Integration Counter the
Persistence of Political Apartheid? Or, The Multicultural
Wars, Part Two.” Race, Law, and Culture: Reflections
on Brown vs. Board of Education. Ed. Austin Sarat.
New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. 222-223.*

In this course, we will attempt to re-construct a literary history of the American feminist movement, by studying together selected primary texts from the late seventeenth century to the 1940's. We will consider their literary dimensions, but also philosophical, scientific, religious, political and historical questions. What forms did women's dreams of integrity and selfhood take? What modes of resistance did they fashion? We will be seeking, in this process, a feminist inheritance that is powerful, complex and troubling, asking whether it is one we can claim, and at what cost. Built into the structure of our discussions will be a search for models and theories capacious and flexible enough to illustrate how elements of nationalism, class, race, religion and sexuality have functioned together, or in opposition, in the history of women's struggles and engagements with the world. Built also into the structure of the course, as a way of ensuring that we consider the cultural and political work these texts might do, will be a commitment to four hours a week of praxis work in the field.

2001: Major Texts of the Feminist Tradition
Required Reading

*Titles with single asterisks are available at Bryn Mawr Bookshop.

**Those with double asterisks are included in

***The Feminist Papers: From Adams to de Beauvoir*. Ed. Alice Rossi . 1973; rpt.
 Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1988 (also available @ Bookshop).

Those without asterisks are included in the course packet.

Day 1: Tues, Jan. 23

For getting us started...

Invitation to a Dinner Party
 & Declaration of Sentiments. Seneca Falls Convention. 1848.

Day 2: Thurs, Jan. 25 ...and setting up the classroom

[Nell Anderson, Praxis Field Placement Coordinator, will meet w/ the class today]

McIntosh, Peggy. "Interactive Phases of Curricular Re-Vision: A Feminist Perspective."
 Working Paper No. 124. Wellesley College Center for Research on Women.
 1983. 1-33.

Dalke, Anne and Abby Reed. "'Shuddering Without End': The Classroom as Dinner
 Party." Mss. submitted for publication in *Harvard Educational Review*. 35 pp.

hooks, bell. "when I was a young soldier for the revolution:" coming to voice. *Talking
 Back: Thinking Feminist, Thinking Black*. Boston: South End Press, 1989. 10-18.

Days 3-4: Tues, Jan. 30 & Thurs, Feb. 1

*de la Cruz, Sor Juana Inez. *La Respuesta*. 1690; rpt. *A Woman of Genius: The
 Intellectual Autobiography*. Trans. Margaret Sayers Peden. Salisbury,
 Connecticut: Lime Rock Press, 1982.

Day 5: Tues, Feb. 6

Rousseau, Jean-Jacques. Book V. *Emile*. 1762; rpt. and trans. Barbara Foxley. New
 York: Dutton, 1974. 321-334.

**Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*. 1792; rpt. *The Feminist
 Papers*, 40-85.

Day 6: Thurs, Feb. 8

**Rossi, Alice. "From Abolition to Sex Equality: Sarah Grimke and Angelina Grimke," 1973.

**Grimke, Angelina. "Appeal to the Christian Women of the South," 1836.

**Grimke, Sarah. *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes and the Condition of Women*, 1838.

**Grimke, Angelina. Letters to Catherine Beecher, 1838.

All rpt. *The Feminist Papers*, 282-322.

Day 7: Tues, Feb. 13

** Fuller, Margaret. "The Great Lawsuit. Man versus Men. Woman versus Women." 1843; rpt. *The Feminist Papers*, 158-182.

Day 8: Thurs, Feb. 15

Truth, Sojourner. "Aren't I a Woman?" 1851; "Snakes and Geese." 1853; "Equal Rights for All: Three Speeches." 1867; "Then I Began to Live." 1871; rpt. *Lift Every Voice: African American Oratory, 1787-1900*. Ed. Philip Foner and Robert James Branham. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1998. 226-229, 269-271, 463-466, 503-506.

Day 9: Tues, Feb. 20

Mill, John Stuart and Harriet Taylor. Early Essays on Marriage and Divorce. 1832. Enfranchisement of Women. 1851. Rpt. *Letters on the Equality of the Sexes*. Ed. Alice Rossi. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970. 67-8, 84-7, 91-93.

**Mill, John Stuart. *The Subjection of Women*. 1869; rpt. *The Feminist Papers*, 196-238.

Day 10: Thurs, Feb. 22

Davis, Rebecca Harding. *Life in the Iron Mills, or The Kork Woman*. 1861; rpt. and ed. Tillie Olsen. New York: The Feminist Press, 1972. 11-65.

Day 11 & Day 12: Tues, Feb. 27 & Thurs, Mar. 1

*Brent, Linda. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Ed. L. Maria Child. 1861; rpt. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973.

Days 13 & 14: Tues, Mar. 6 & Thurs, Mar. 8

Concurrent panels on how you understand your field placement work, seen through the lens of one of these texts

Mar. 13-15: Spring Vacation

Day 15: Tues, Mar. 20

Rossetti, Christina. "Goblin Market." 1862; rpt. *A Choice of Christina Rossetti's Verse*. Ed. Elizabeth Jennings. Boston: Faber and Faber, 1970. 13-28.

Day 16: Thurs, Mar. 22

**Engels, Friedrich. *The Origins of the Family, Private Property and the State*. 1884; rpt. *The Feminist Papers*, 480-495.

Allen, Paula Gunn. "Who Is Your Mother? Red Roots of White Feminism." *The Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions*. Boston: Beacon, 1986. 209-221.

Day 17: Tues, Mar. 27

Cooper, Anna. "Womanhood: A Vital Element in the Regeneration and Progress of a Race" (1886); "The Higher Education of Women" (1890-1891); "Woman versus the Indian" (1891-1892); rpt. *The Voice of Anna Julia Cooper: Including A Voice from the South and Other Important Essays, Papers, and Letters*. Ed. Charles Lemert and Esme Bhan. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998. 53-108.

Day 18: Thurs, Mar. 29

*Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. "The Yellow Wallpaper." 1892; rpt. in *Herland and Selected Stories*. Ed. Barbara Solomon. New York: Signet, 1992.

**---. *Woman and Economics*, 1898; rpt. *The Feminist Papers*, 572-598.

Days 19 & 20: Tues, Apr. 3 & Thurs, Apr. 5

*Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *Herland*. 1915. Rpt. in *Herland and Selected Stories*. 3-146.

Day 21: Tues, Apr. 10

**Rossi, Alice. "A Feminist Friendship: Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony."

**Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. "Motherhood" and Introduction to *The Woman's Bible*. 1895; rpt. in *The Feminist Papers*, 378-406.

---. "The Solitude of Self." 1892; rpt. *Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony: Correspondence, Writing, Speeches*. Ed. Ellen Carol Dubois. New York: Schocken, 1981. 245-254.

Day 22: Thurs, Apr. 12

**Goldman, Emma. "The Tragedy of Women's Emancipation." 1911; rpt. *The Feminist Papers*, 508-516.

---. "Was My Life Worth Living?" *Red Emma Speaks: Selected Writings and Speeches by Emma Goldman*. Ed. Alix Kates Shulman. New York: Vintage, 1972. 386-398.

Kollantai, Alexandra. From "The Social Basis of the Woman Question," 1909. "The Labour of Women in the Evolution of the Economy," 1923. "Sexual Relations and the Class Struggle." "Communism and the Family," 1920. "Prostitution and Ways of Fighting It," 1921. "Make Way for Winged Eros," 1923. *Selected Writings*. Westport, Connecticut: Lawrence Hill, 1977. 58-73, 144-149, 240-241, 50-260, 261, 266-269, 274-275, 288- 292.

Days 23 & 24: Tues, Apr. 17 & Thurs, Apr. 19

*Hall, Radclyffe. Book One, Book Five. *The Well of Loneliness*. 1928; rpt. New York: Doubleday, 1990. 11-118, 321-437.

Days 25 & 26: Tues, Apr. 24 & Thurs, Apr. 26

*Larsen, Nella. *Passing*. 1929. Rpt. *Quicksand and Passing*. Ed. Deborah E. McDowell. Piscataway, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1986. 143-242.

Day 27: Tues, May 1

Woolf, Virginia. *Three Guineas*. 1939; rpt. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1966. 3, 6-21, 30-40, 60-63, 65-72, 74-75, 79-80, 82-84, 100-114, 142-144.

Day 28: Thurs, May 3

**de Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex*. 1949; rpt. *The Feminist Papers*, 672-705.

Monday, May 7, 6 p.m.**A REAL Dinner Party @ my house....**

...to present your final projects, and celebrate the end of the course

Course Requirements

1/3 Feminist Acts

For 8 weeks of the semester, you will work @ your assigned field placement. You will need to keep some form of weekly account of both what happens during the 4 hours you spend in the field, and what-you-think-about-what-you-are-seeing-and-doing. This might take the form of a journal, tape-recordings, photographs, sketches, a scrapbook...

Just before spring break, we will convene a series of concurrent panels, in which each of you will use an assigned text as a “lens” to begin reading-and-explaining to the rest of us what you are learning about feminism in your field placement.

By semester’s end, you will prepare a 10-pp. paper (or equivalent; the scrapbook, etc. above may form a portion of this account) summarizing your reflections on your field experience.

1/3 Feminist Performances

After the semester ends, we will convene @ my house for a celebration, where you will present your final project to the whole group. This project (15 written pp. or equivalent) could take one of several forms (or, hey: suggest another!):

--you can prepare a creative project which figures the canon as a whole:

what are the relationships you now see about the various texts we’ve read, or should have read? (what image, for instance, might you substitute for that of guests at a dinner party?)

--you can “write the feminist text” that is Bryn Mawr College (i.e. research the feminist origins of the college, and locate its history within the canon we’ve constructed)

--you can prepare a “minor text of the tradition” of your own, based on interviews you conduct,

--or an imaginative construction of your own;

--you can argue for the inclusion of other texts in the canon

(this would involve researching and presenting it within the context of the course—or perhaps revising the context altogether?)

--you can perform a comparative literary analysis of several assigned texts.

I expect you to make two appointments w/ me to discuss your written work. Our first meeting should take place by February 1, at which point we’ll figure out together both what sorts of projects you’ll be doing, and what pacing will work best for you this semester: do you want to submit a 5-pp. paper to me for grading every 3 weeks during the semester? A 10-p. paper before break, and 15-pp. @ semester’s end? All 25-pp. after the semester ends?

Our second meeting should occur @ whatever point in this process seems to you most fruitful for gathering feedback from me: in brainstorming your projects, reviewing your proposals, guiding your research, responding to your first draft, or after the work is submitted

1/3: [Those ever-ongoing...] Feminist Conversations

Read the assigned texts.

Attend class regularly (I don't expect you to miss more than two sessions).

Bi-weekly: contribute thoughtfully to class discussion (this *doesn't* mean dominating discussion w/ your thoroughly-thought-through ideas; it means facilitating the learning of us *all*: stimulating our thinking by asking questions, responding kindly-but-critically to what others' say, etc. etc. etc.). If you find it difficult to speak regularly in class, you should send @ least one e-mail message to the whole class each week, recording your on-going reflections.

Twice during the semester, you will work with another student to "set the table" for our class discussion. This includes

- "setting the tone" (appropriately serious-yet-light-hearted) for this discussion:
 - how can you help us gather ourselves into this space of reflection?
 - can you make the text "memorable" w/ some *non*-textual device (think multiple ways of knowing; think varieties of sensual experience: a song? a picture? a fabric? a food?) What object can invite us to consider the affective dimension this text might have in our lives?
- providing historical and biographical context for the text
- relating the text to current news-or-your field placement
- providing a range of contemporary theoretical lenses for reading the text:
 - what scholarly work is currently being done on it?
 - how is it now being discussed in feminist & literary journals?
 - what of that conversation interests you?
 - what aspects of the text seem *not* attended to, in current conversations?
- provoking class discussion by offering 3 questions about the text you'd like us to "chew" on together for the next hour....

For the theoretical portion of this assignment, I want you to become conversant w/ the current scholarly work being done in the field of feminist studies. Your review of current scholarship should feature the most interesting-and-relevant material you've discovered by searching a range of sources, including articles in scholarly periodicals, books, and internet resources. All the material you present to us should be relatively new (published within the past five years), and should be more substantial than that represented by notes or dissertation abstracts. In your summaries, also consider what methodologies are being applied to your assigned text: are they psychoanalytic, historical, literary? How do they present themselves as being corrective of earlier approaches?

Part of the fun-and-frustration of this exploration will be figuring out which of the discipline-or-subject-specific sources best apply to your particular stake in this interdisciplinary conversation. (I prepared the following advice on this process in consultation w/ Andrew Patterson, Reference Librarian.)

ARTICLES IN SCHOLARLY PERIODICALS

I'd like you to explore the premier journals in feminist studies (such as *Differences*, *Feminist Studies*, *Hypatia*, *Off Our Backs*, *Signs*, *Sojourner*, and *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*) that are included in our library's holdings. To do this, you'll need to use databases that index the contents of that journal (different databases have different subject slants and different ways to search, so you'll need to employ more than one). The databases mentioned below are all online and available through the **Research Databases and Websites** link on the Library home page.

Contemporary Women's Issues and *GenderWatch* are two full-text online databases that focus on women's studies. *Project Muse* is also a full-text online database that covers journals in the arts, humanities, and social sciences. *Wilson Index* and *Expanded Academic ASAP* also cover most of the feminist studies journals listed above. *Expanded Academic ASAP* has a feature allowing you to limit your search to only refereed journals (which means that the articles have been reviewed by experts before publication. You can also identify a refereed journal by checking its masthead or its guidelines for submission, or by asking a reference librarian for assistance).

The feminist journals may also be covered by other subject-oriented databases like *ATLA Religion Database*, *MLA International Bibliography*, *PsycInfo*, and *Sociological Abstracts*, which can lead you to scholarly work of interest being done in related fields. Ask a reference librarian how you can determine which indexes and databases are appropriate for your author and approach.

BOOKS

Search Tripod for your author as both an author and a subject; also search under broader, related subject headings such as "Harlem Renaissance" or "women economists." You can also do these searches in *Books in Print* or other library catalogs, to find books not owned by Bryn Mawr, Haverford, or Swarthmore.

The bibliography or footnotes of articles and books on your author can also serve as rich resources for references to other books or articles of interest.

ON-LINE SOURCES

Many of the databases you will use to find journal articles and books are available online. Other valuable and interesting internet resources on the web will contain information on your author and text. *Evaluating Information Found on the Internet* (Johns Hopkins; <http://milton.mse.jhu.edu:8001/research/education/net.html>) is a reliable guide to the process of searching and selecting those that are informative, reliable and reputable.

I'm also asking that, at least once during the semester, you bring it into our class conversation, over e-mail, an account of some off-campus feminist performance you'd-probably-attend anyway. Let us know both what you learned from this event, and what its relationship is to our in-class discussions. Random possibilities include . . .

Alice in Bed, Dir. Ivo van Hove.

Alice in Bed is Susan Sontag's riff on Alice James, the brilliant, depressed sister of the novelist Henry James and the psychologist William James. New York Theater Workshop, East Village.

Sharon Welch, Professor of Women and Religion, Multiculture and Ethics,
University of Missouri, Columbia

"Truth, Justice and Jazz: Aesthetics, Ethics and Social Change"

Tuesday, February 20, 3 p.m. Haub Conference Center, St. Joseph's University
Dr. Welch is a graduate of Vanderbilt Divinity School and taught at Harvard Divinity School, before coming to the University of Missouri at Columbia. She is the author of numerous books and articles including *Sweet Dreams in America: Making Ethics and Spirituality Work*, *A Feminist Ethic of Risk*, and *Communities of Resistance and Solidarity*. Her remarks will be of interest to faculty, staff and students across the University who are concerned with practical approaches to diversity education and practice.

Tonya Thames Leonard (doctoral student @ University of Mississippi)

Thursday, February 22, 12:30 p.m.

"Dynamics of Race in the Suffrage Movement,"

Sykes Student Union, West Chester University

Thursday, February 22, 7:30 p.m.

"Intersections in the Careers of Ida B. Wells and Frederick Douglass"

Sykes Student Union, West Chester University

"Gender and Disability." A Conference.

Sponsored by the Greater Philadelphia Women's Studies Consortium.

Temple University. March 22-23.

How about considering a visit to the Suffrage Statute (last seen in the basement of the Capitol, Washington, D.C.)? Or to the Women's Rights National Historical Park, in Seneca Falls, New York? Or some other "feminist site"?

I'll let you know of other opportunities as I hear (or think) of them.

I hope you'll let the rest of us know about
those you hear-or-think of first....



Feminist Finale

By 5 p.m. Tuesday, May 8, collect and reflect on the work you have done throughout the semester, and present it in a portfolio. This collection should express your evolution, during the course of the semester, as a student of feminism. In order to demonstrate both what have you done, and what you have learned from doing it, the portfolio should include three artifacts you've created, as well as your reflections on the process. The required artifacts are listed below; they should be introduced by a focused, substantive reflection that includes a thoughtful, critical analysis of the significance of your work.

Introduction: This introductory entry should orient your reader to the scope, content and organization of your portfolio. It might reflect both on the process of composing the portfolio (is there, for example, an organizing theme or dominant question present throughout?). It might entail an account of your important moments of learning in the course, or what you think you came to understand overall. Where were the facets of meaning located for you this semester?

1. An account of your participation in our ongoing “feminist conversation”: what was your role in our class discussion? in our class e-conversation? what outside lectures/performances did you attend and report back on? (Include all relevant e-records in this account.)

2. Your 10 pp. (or equivalent) account and interpretation of your fieldwork experience.

3. Your 15 pp. (or equivalent) final project.

Assessment of Portfolios

My evaluative criteria for the portfolio include

--the quality of your reflection and analysis:

To what extent does the portfolio as a whole demonstrate a thoughtful re-examination of the semester's work, and capture your developing insights into the connections between feminist texts and praxis? How well does the introductory essay use evidence to support the claims made about the learning that has taken place here?

--your understanding and application of concepts taught in the course:

To what extent does the portfolio reflect your serious grappling with the central concepts in the course? How well does your portfolio make connections across texts, discussions and field experiences?

--your range and variation:

Is your portfolio representative of a breadth of learning experiences? In other words, does the portfolio draw on a span of texts, field experiences and other relevant learning opportunities (such as outside talks)?
