



DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE  
FACULTY OF ARTS

POLI 417 L01  
Feminist Political Theory  
Fall 2018

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Regina Cochrane  
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OFFICE HOURS: Wednesdays, 12:30-13:30; Thursdays, 13:30-14:30; and by appointment  
COURSE DAY/TIME: Thursdays, 16:00-18:45  
COURSE LOCATION: SA 147  
COURSE PRE-REQUISITES: POLI 310 or 453

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

One of the most significant and innovative trends in recent political thought has been the rise and rapid development of the new subfield of feminist political theory. Inspired by the second-wave women's movement, which burst onto the worldwide political stage in the 1960s, and the challenge launched by this movement to mainstream, "male-stream" notions of the political via its key claim that the personal is political, feminist political theory calls into question the gendered subtext of both classical and contemporary political theory. In so doing, it widens the purview of what has conventionally been considered to be political by taking strong issue with the sharp public/private divide characteristic of both classical and contemporary of political thought.

This course will encompass a comparative and critical survey of feminist political theory, beginning with its origins in second-wave feminism and continuing up to present-day developments and debates. Although feminist political theory today includes a wide spectrum of orientations, for most practical purposes contemporary feminist political theories can be grouped into the following major categories: liberal, radical/cultural, Marxist/socialist, and postmodern/postcolonial feminist political theories. In order to facilitate this comparative analysis, the reading and discussion of political theory/political philosophy – plus a few key feminist theory – texts from each of these categories will be supplemented by in-class group assignments involving the analysis of documentary films exploring women's reality worldwide through the lenses of liberal, cultural, socialist, and postmodern feminisms.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES & LEARNING OUTCOMES:**

1. To become familiar with the basic terminology, the main theoretical assumptions, and the characteristic political stances associated with contemporary liberal, radical/cultural, Marxist/socialist, and postmodern/postcolonial feminist political theories.
2. To evaluate the tenability of some of the central claims made by these contemporary feminist political theories by examining the mutual critiques that they offer of each other.
3. To compare the stances taken by liberal, cultural, socialist, and postmodern feminists on central issues in contemporary feminist political practice associated with family life, paid/unpaid work, and political participation. .

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK(S):** None

Course readings will be taken from selected book chapters and journal articles available in e-books and e-journals held by the Taylor Family Digital Library and from (single) book chapters and journal articles that have been scanned and posted in the “course readings” file on d2l.

**COURSE COMPONENT WEIGHTS AND DUE DATES:**

COMPONENT	WEIGHTING	DUE DATES
Class participation	5%	term
Group assignments: 4 X 5%	20%	Sept. 20, Oct. 11, Nov. 1, and Nov. 22
m/c quizzes: 4 X 10%	40%	Sept. 27, Oct. 18, Nov.8, and Dec. 6
Takehome essay exam	35%	Dec. 11
Total	100%	

**COURSE SCHEDULE & TOPICS:** The schedule is tentative and may change as the need arises.

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS*
Sept. 6	Introduction and Liberal Feminist Political Theory I	- E. Frazer, “Feminist Political Theory,” 12 pp. - V. Bryson, “Liberalism and Beyond: Feminism and Equal Rights from the 1960s,” 24 pp.
Sept. 13	Liberal Feminist Political Theory II	- S. Moller Okin, “Justice, Gender, and the Family,” 19 pp. - M. A. Warren, “The Moral Significance of Birth,” 16 pp.

Sept. 20	Liberal Feminist Political Theory III	- M. Nussbaum, "Women and Cultural Universals," 23 pp. - film: <i>1970, Half the People</i> - in-class group assignment #1
Sept. 27	Radical/Cultural Feminist Political Theory I	- <b>quiz #1</b> - J. Evans, <i>Feminist Theory Today</i> , chapters 5-7, 46 pp.
Oct. 4	Radical/Cultural Feminist Political Theory II	- S. Firestone, "The Dialectic of Sex," 12 pp. - A. Thiam, <i>Black Sisters, Speak Out</i> , 16 pp. - S. Ruddick, "Maternal Thinking as a Feminist Standpoint," 9 pp. - A Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," 9 pp.
Oct. 11	Radical/Cultural Feminist Political Theory III	- J. Donovan, "Twentieth Century Cultural Feminism," 16 pp. - film: <i>You Can't Beat a Woman</i> - in-class group assignment #2
Oct. 18	Socialist/Marxist Feminist Political Theory I	- <b>quiz #2</b> - V. Bryson, "Marxist and Socialist Feminism from the 1960s," 23 pp.
Oct. 25	Socialist/Marxist Feminist Political Theory II	- E. Meiksins Wood, "Capitalism and Human Emancipation: Race, Gender, and Democracy," 15 pp. - A. Ferguson, "Is There a Lesbian Culture?" 26 pp. - A. Jaggar, "Transnational Cycles of Gendered Vulnerability: A Prologue to a Theory of Global Gender Justice," 23 pp.
Nov. 1	Socialist/Marxist Feminist Political Theory III	- L. Gordon "'Intersectionality,' Socialist Feminism, and Contemporary Activism: Musings by a Second-Wave Socialist Feminist," 18 pp. - film: <i>Senorita Extraviada</i> - in-class group assignment #3
Nov. 8	Postmodern/Postcolonial Feminist Political Theory I	- <b>quiz #3</b> - R. Putnam Tong, "Postmodern Feminism," 18 pp. - J. Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," 9 pp.
Nov. 11-17	Fall Reading Week	No classes
Nov. 22	Postmodern/Postcolonial Feminist Political Theory II	- S. Hekman, "From Difference to Differences: Postmodernism, Race, Ethnicity, and Intersectionality," 10 pp. - film: <i>Gender Line Extended</i> - in-class group assignment #4

Nov. 29	Postmodern/Postcolonial Feminist Political TheoryIII	- C. Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," 26 pp. - U. Narayan, "Essence of Culture and a Sense of History: A Feminist Critique of Cultural Essentialism," 21 pp.
Dec. 6	Recent Developments in Feminist Political Theory	- <b>quiz #4</b> - S. Hekman, "Constructing the Ballast: An Ontology for Feminism," 35 pp.

\*Full bibliographic information and links to e-books/e-journals/posted articles provided on "Schedule of Topics and Readings" posted in "course information" file on d2l.

### ASSIGNMENT(S)

In-class Group Assignments: Students will be randomly divided into groups of three to five for each of these exercises. The groups will be given a question – or two, short, interconnected questions – relating class readings and lectures to a documentary film shown in class. Group members will discuss the question(s) and, as a group, formulate an answer. These assignments will be "open book" – i.e., students will be permitted to use course texts and notes and allowed access to the internet. At the end of each these exercises – which will take 30-40 minutes and which will be completed in class – each group will submit ONE, 2-3 page answer (written in point form) to the question(s) given. Students who miss a group assignment will not be permitted a rewrite. Instead, their mark will be pro-rated on the basis of their other assignments, provided that they present appropriate documentation.

### TAKEHOME ESSAY EXAM

The final exam in this course will be a (open-book) take-home essay exam consisting of 2 short essay questions (5-6 pages – double-spaced, 12-point font, 1" margins – including citations). These questions will be posted on d2l (in the "Course Assignments" file) by November 8. This exam will be based on course readings, lectures, and films. No outside research will be required. It should be submitted via the d2l drop-box or during office hours (15:00-16:00, SS 706) on Dec. 11 or before. Students who have some serious reason for submitting this exam late should consult with the instructor about this before the exams are due and be prepared to supply appropriate documentation. No exams will be accepted by email (except in extenuating circumstances). Students are advised to keep a copy of their exam on file until their final course grade has been released.

### PARTICIPATION

Participation requires, before anything else, actually being present in class. Given that many of the readings we will discuss in this class are complex and controversial, discussions are particularly important and attending class is therefore essential. Consequently, class attendance will be taken and counted for 2.5% of the course grade. Participation also entails reading the assigned chapters/articles and preparing for class discussions. The rest of the participation mark

will be based on the overall *quality* rather than the quantity of a student’s contribution to class discussion (2.5%). Good participation also requires treating other students and the instructor with respect – i.e., not interrupting or attempting to dominate class discussions – as well as asking questions and engaging in dialogue and debate with classmates and the instructor. It entails, as well, using your laptops and ipads, if and when you choose to bring them to class, for taking notes and for accessing relevant documents and information on the internet rather than for texting, email, and surfing the web. Please note that important updates and announcements will be regularly posted on d2l and/or sent out via email. *Therefore it is the students’ responsibility to regularly check both the d2l site for the course and their University of Calgary email accounts.*

**MID-TERM EXAMINATION**

Instead of a midterm exam, this course will have four in-class, multiple-choice quizzes on September 27, October 18, November 8, and December 6. Each multiple choice quiz will consist of 25 questions and the time allotted for completion of the quiz will be approximately 30-40 minutes. The quizzes will be based on course readings, lectures reviewing these readings, course films, and discussions. No access to course texts, notes, or internet will be permitted during the writing of these quizzes.

**GRADE SCALE:** The following grading scale will be used:

A+ (96-100)	B+ (80-84.9)	C+ (65-69.9)	D+ (53-54.9)
A (90-95.9)	B (75-79.9)	C (60-64.9)	D (50-52.9)
A- (85-89.9)	B- (70-74.9)	C- (55-59.9)	F (0-49.9)

**WRITING STATEMENT**

Written assignments are often required in Political Science courses, including this one, and the quality of writing skills, including but not limited to such elements as grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, clarity, citation, and organization, will be taken into account in the determination of grades. Students are encouraged to make use of the services offered through Writing Support Services in the Student Success Centre (3rd floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library) or at <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>.

**LATE PENALTIES**

Students who, for some serious reason, will be late in handing in their take-home essay exam should consult with the instructor about this before these assignments are due. Essays submitted after the deadline, without prior consultation and/or documentation, may be penalized with the loss of 5% in the assignment grade for each day late (not including weekends).

## INSTRUCTOR GUIDELINES

Students requiring assistance are encouraged to speak to the instructor during class or their office hours. Should you wish to meet outside of office hours, please telephone or email to make an appointment. It is to the student's advantage to keep such appointments.

Email is a common form of communication but it is not always the most effective way of answering student questions. If you cannot make office hours, please request a one on one meeting outside of these hours.

Students are welcome to use laptops and other electronic note-taking devices to take notes (but not to take photos or audio recordings) in this course. Please be considerate of others and switch off all cellphones when you enter the classroom. Sending/receiving texts and browsing the Web is extremely disruptive to others and will not be tolerated.

## IMPORTANT POLICIES AND INFORMATION

### Absence From a Quiz:

Students who are absent from a scheduled quiz for legitimate reasons (e.g. illness, with the appropriate documentation) are responsible for contacting the instructor via email within 48 hours of the missed test to discuss alternative arrangements. A copy of this email may be requested as proof of the attempt to contact the instructor. Any student who fails to do so forfeits the right to a makeup test.

### Deferral of a Final Examination:

Deferral of a final examination can be granted for reasons of illness, domestic affliction, and unforeseen circumstances, as well as to those with three (3) final exams scheduled within a 24-hour period. Deferred final exams will not be granted to those who sit the exam, who have made travel arrangements that conflict with their exam, or who have misread the examination timetable. The decision to allow a deferred final exam rests not with the instructor but with Enrolment Services. Instructors should, however, be notified if you will be absent during the examination. The Application for Deferred Final Exam, deadlines, requirements and submission instructions can be found on the Enrolment Services website at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-exams>.

### Appeals:

If a student has a concern about the course or a grade they have been assigned, they must first discuss their concerns with the instructor. If this does not resolve the matter, the student can then proceed with an academic appeal. The first step in an academic appeal is to set up a meeting with the Department Head. Appeals must be requested within 15 days of receipt of the graded assignment.

University Regulations:

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the University policies found in the Academic Regulations sections of the Calendar at

[www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html](http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-regs.html).

Student Accommodations:

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit [www.ucalgary.ca/access/](http://www.ucalgary.ca/access/).

Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor.

The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/student-accommodation-policy.pdf>.

Plagiarism And Other Forms Of Academic Misconduct:

Academic misconduct in any form (e.g. cheating, plagiarism) is a serious academic offence that can lead to disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the University. Students are expected to be familiar with the standards surrounding academic honesty; these can be found in the University of Calgary calendar at [www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html](http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-5.html).

Such offences will be taken seriously and reported immediately, as required by Faculty of Arts policy.

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP):

FOIP legislation requires that instructors maintain the confidentiality of student information. In practice, this means that student assignment and tests cannot be left for collection in any public place without the consent of the student. It also means that grades cannot be distributed via email. Final exams are kept by instructors but can be viewed by contacting them or the main office in the Department of Political Science. Any uncollected assignments and tests meant to be returned will be destroyed after six months from the end of term; final examinations are destroyed after one year.

Evacuation Assembly Points:

In the event of an emergency evacuation from class, students are required to gather in designated assembly points. Please check the list found at [www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints](http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints) and note the assembly point nearest to your classroom.

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

For program planning and advice, visit the Arts Students' Centre in Social Sciences 102, call 403-220-3580 or email [artsads@ucalgary.ca](mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca). You can also visit [arts.ucalgary.ca/advising](http://arts.ucalgary.ca/advising) for program assistance.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit their office in the MacKimmie Library Block.

Important Contact Information:

Campus Security and Safewalk (24 hours a day/7 days a week/365 days a year)  
Phone: 403-220-5333

Faculty of Arts Undergraduate Students' Union Representatives  
Phone: 403-220-6551  
Email: [arts1@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts2@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts3@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts3@su.ucalgary.ca),  
[arts4@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts4@su.ucalgary.ca)  
Students' Union URL: [www.su.ucalgary.ca](http://www.su.ucalgary.ca)

Graduate Students' Association  
Phone: 403-220-5997  
Email: [ask@gsa.ucalgary.ca](mailto:ask@gsa.ucalgary.ca)  
URL: [www.ucalgary.ca/gsa](http://www.ucalgary.ca/gsa)

Student Ombudsman  
Phone: 403-220-6420  
Email: [ombuds@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ombuds@ucalgary.ca)

Campus Mental Health Resources  
SU Wellness Centre: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/wellnesscentre>  
Campus Mental Health Strategy: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/mentalhealth>