

Women's Studies 575
Issues in Contemporary Theory

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Hours: Tuesday 3:30-5:30
and by appointment

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Feminist theorists analyze and critique social and political arguments and practices whose consequences they understand to disadvantage individuals because of their gender, race, class, or sexuality. One kind of feminist theory inquires into the intellectual, moral, and emotional investments of non- and anti-feminists in an attempt to clarify the stakes of political thought and action in the contemporary United States. In this course, we will examine a variety of feminist arguments about conservative philosophies, policies, motivations, justifications, and investments. We will give some attention to the phenomenon of social and economic conservatives who are identified with historically marginalized groups.

Required Texts

Amy E. Ansell, editor, *Unraveling the Right: The New Conservatism in American Thought and Politics* (Westview Press)
Cynthia Burack and Jyl J. Josephson, *Fundamental Differences: Feminists Talk Back to Social Conservatives* (Rowman and Littlefield)
Angela Dillard, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner Now? Multicultural Conservatism in America* (New York University Press)
Bob Altemeyer, *The Authoritarians*
(<http://members.shaw.ca/jeanaltemeyer/drbob/TheAuthoritarians.pdf>)

Course Requirements

You must complete all readings by the dates indicated on the schedule below. I expect you to attend all class meetings, and I will keep track of attendance through the distribution of a role sheet at the beginning of every class period. You may miss 2 classes without penalty; for every absence after the 2nd, 3 points will be subtracted from the highest possible grade for the Final Paper Project. Students with problems that require long absences from class during the quarter must speak to me. Late arrival at class should only occur in the event of an emergency. If you consistently arrive late or leave class early you will be counted absent for those days. In the absence of special circumstances you should be prepared to begin class on time with the necessary materials.

The class will be conducted in a mixed lecture/discussion format; I will use lectures to deliver background and explanatory information. I expect that all students will participate in class discussions in a candid, thoughtful, and respectful manner. Please feel

free to ask questions at any time. You should plan to take notes during lectures and discussions in order to enhance your understanding and retention of information.

The Office for Disability Services (ODS) offers a variety of services and auxiliary aids for students with documented disabilities. To access services, students must provide ODS with documentation of the disability. ODS is located in 150 Pomerene Hall; you can contact them at 292-3307.

The OSU Writing Center, which offers free tutoring to students, is located at 475 Mendenhall Lab. You can obtain more information about the Center at http://cstw.ohio-state.edu/writing_center/index.htm, and you may contact them at 688-4291.

Plagiarism Policy

As defined by University Rule 3335-31-02, plagiarism is “the representation of another’s works or ideas as one’s own; it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person’s work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas.” Plagiarism is one of the most serious offenses that can be committed in an academic community; as such, it is the obligation of this department and its instructors to report all cases of suspected plagiarism to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. After the report is filed, a hearing takes place and if the student is found guilty, the possible punishment ranges from failing the class to suspension or expulsion from the university. Although the existence of the Internet makes it relatively easy to plagiarize, it also makes it even easier for instructors to find evidence of plagiarism. It is obvious to most teachers when a student turns in work that is not his or her own and plagiarism search engines make documenting the offense very simple. Always cite your sources. Always ask questions before you turn in an assignment if you are uncertain about what constitutes plagiarism. Always see your TA or professor if you are having difficulty with an assignment.

Examinations

There will be two regular examinations in this course. The exams will be structured exclusively as essays. Approximately two weeks before each exam I will distribute a study sheet with questions for which you should prepare responses. These questions will require synthesis and analysis of material from readings and class discussions. For each exam, I will select one question, and this question will constitute the exam. You may not use notes or texts in the exams. If you miss the mid-term exam for any reason you will make up that exam during the second hour of the class final examination period.

Final Paper

Women’s Studies 575 requires completion of a final writing project. The final paper is due on Wednesday, December 5th at the final exam. We will discuss the paper in depth in class, but basic guidelines for this final paper project appear below:

1. You should choose a topic for this paper from a list of topics to be distributed in class.
2. Each paper should be no briefer than 8 full pages of text and no longer than 10 full pages of text in 12-point font (excluding bibliography).

3. Papers must be clearly written with attention to content, organization, style, and mechanics. The grade for this project will reflect all these dimensions of writing (I will provide a handout with some guidelines for paper writing).
4. Be aware of the University's plagiarism policy. Papers must include a brief honors statement on the cover page that pledges all contents to be the work of the author (with appropriate citations to texts you use in the process of research and writing).
5. The paper must include a bibliography of no fewer than 6 items (books, journal articles or essays/chapters). You may use sources from our class readings, but at least two sources must be materials outside our reading list. These outside sources must be relevant pieces of literature on the topic of your paper, and they must be appropriately integrated into your paper (in other words, brief quotations from these sources embedded in your paper will not fulfill this requirement).

Grading

Midterm exam	1/3
Final exam	1/3
Final Paper Project	<u>1/3</u>
	100%

Schedule of Readings and Examinations

This schedule is subject to change. Changes announced in class will be understood to have been added to the course syllabus.

Thu Sep 20 Introductions, Introduction to the Course, and Pre-“Test”

Political Challenge

Tue Sep 25 **Berlet**, “Following the Threads” in Ansell (pps 17-40). Read carefully and bring questions to class

Thu Sep 27 **Burack and Josephson**, “Introduction” in Burack and Josephson (pps 1-8); **Campbell**, “Reading the Rhetoric of ‘Compassionate Conservatism’” in Burack and Josephson (pps 113-126)
Attendance policy takes effect

Antifeminism in Theory and Practice

- Tue Oct 2 **Diamond**, “The Personal is Political: The Role of Cultural Projects in the Mobilization of the Christian Right” in Ansell (pps 41-55); **Hardesty**, “Kitchen Table Backlash: The Anti-Feminist Women’s Movement” in Ansell (pps 105-125)

Race and Racialization

- Thu Oct 4 **Ansell**, “The Color of America’s Culture Wars” in Ansell (pps 173-191); **Fitzgerald**, “A Liberal Dose of Conservatism: The ‘New Consensus’ on Welfare and Other Strange Synergies” in Burack and Josephson (pps 95-110)
- Tue Oct 9 **Withorn**, “Fulfilling Fears and Fantasies: The Role of Welfare in Right-Wing Social Thought and Strategy” in Ansell (pps 126-147). *Mid-Term Questions Distributed*
- Thu Oct 11 **Dillard**, *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner Now?*, “Introduction” (pps 1-23); Chapter 1: “Malcolm X’s Words in Clarence Thomas’s Mouth” (24-54)
- Tue Oct 16 **Dillard**, *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner Now?*, Chapter 2: “Toward a Politics of Assimilation” (pps 56-98)
- Thu Oct 18 **Dillard**, *Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner Now?*, Chapter 3: “I Write Myself, Therefore I Am” (pps 99-136). *In-Class Film (take notes—the film will be included in the mid-term and/or final exam).*

- Tue Oct 23 *Mid-Term Exam*

Organizing Around Sexuality

- Thu Oct 25 **Snyder**, “Neopatriarchy and the Antihomosexual Agenda” in Burack and Josephson (pps 157-171); **Josephson**, “The Missing Children: Safe Schools for Some” (pps 173-187). *Turn in one page statement of intent for final paper project that includes topic and a bibliography (note: outside sources must be included)*

Tue Oct 30	Stacey and Biblarz , “(How) Does the Sexual Orientation of Parents Matter?” in Burack and Josephson (pps 27-64)
Thu Nov 1	Mink , “From Welfare to Wedlock: Marriage Promotion and Poor Mothers’ Inequality” in Burack and Josephson (pps 207-218)
Tue Nov 6	Dillard , “Chapter 4: Strange Bedfellows” (pps 137-170); Lehr , “‘Family Values’: Social Conservative Power in Diverse Rhetorics” in Burack and Josephson (pps 127-142)
Thu Nov 8	Burack , “From Doom Town to Sin City: Chick Tracts and Antigay Political Rhetoric,” <i>New Political Science</i>
Tue Nov 13	Smith , “Why Did Arney Apologize? Hegemony, Homophobia, and the Religious Right” in Ansell (148-172)

Synthesis

Thu Nov 15	Altemeyer , <i>The Authoritarians</i> , Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2
Tue Nov 20	Final Exam Questions Distributed. Altemeyer , <i>The Authoritarians</i> , Chapters 3 and 4
Thu Nov 22	No Class—Thanksgiving Break
Tue Nov 27	Final Paper Draft Due—Exchange, read and evaluate in class. Attendance is required.
Thu Nov 29	Last Day of Class. Altemeyer , <i>The Authoritarians</i> , Chapter 5
Wed Dec 5	Final Exam, 11:30-1:18 pm in this room. Final Papers Due