

WS 386: Race/Gender: Genealogies, Formations, Politics

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Office hours 3:30-4:30

Tues./Thurs. 2:00-3:15
Social Science 118

A persistent critique of feminism is that its notion of "gender" privileges white women to the exclusion of non-white women. At the same time, policy debates about race in the United States return relentlessly to center on women and reproduction—from the "welfare queen" stereotype that destroyed AFDC (the largest government program in history to serve women and children) to "affirmative action" arguments that suggest that the presence of non-whites in higher education and "good" jobs is illegitimate (a belief that turns ultimately on the assumption of inherited racial differences in IQ, rather than, say, vicious racial differences in opportunities in public school or a racially segmented labor market). Furthermore, while the conventional account of what ails feminism with respect to race is the relative absence of women of color, either in the contemporary period or historically, it is not all clear from either the historical record or current opinion surveys that women of color are not or have not been well-represented among those who call themselves "feminists."

This course explores these paradoxes and the responses to them by examining what might be called "race/gender," or the gendered constitution of race in the U.S. It begins in the twenty-first century and works backward through the twentieth and nineteenth. The course starts by asking how we might fashion the analytical tools to examine this thing we are calling "race/gender," and then looks at how race/gender has been productive of public policy, feminist activism, theory, and literary texts.

Grading and structure of assignments

10--class discussion
15--1st 2 pp. paper
15--2nd 2 pp. paper
20--1st 5 pp. paper
20--2nd 5 pp. paper
20--final exam

Day-to-day business of the course

Students are expected to come to class with the reading done. The course will be run largely as a discussion, with some lecture. Everyone is expected to talk and think out loud. In order to facilitate this, we need to have the highest level of respect for each other. Your class participation grade will rest on how successfully you exhibit both engagement with the material and with your fellow classmates.

This course is not a competition over who has "good" or "bad" politics (whatever we may consider those to be), it is an honest exploration of various kinds of political and intellectual positions, and the ways these have been historically constituted. Students are encouraged to bring questions, change their minds, make counter-arguments, and voice politically unpopular positions in class. While intellectual and moral passion, as well as lively disagreement (including with the instructor) are valued, *ad hominem* and *ad feminam* attacks will not be tolerated, nor will racial slurs or disparagement of any group.

Office hours and email

As your mother would say: you never visit! You never write!

Come to office hours—the TA's, the professor's—use the Women's Studies Writing Center, and write email. It improves your grades, connects you to the university, improves learning outcomes and retention rates, and lowers your resting heart rate. OK, maybe not that last, but it's good for everything else. Drop by and talk about the class, talk about whether you want to go to graduate school or work at an AIDS service organization—we're here to be your teachers and advisors. If you have a simple question that can be answered in two sentences or less (and does not include the phrase, "did we do anything in class today" or request information that is on your syllabus), email one of us. Send compliments, concerns, a cool story from your volunteer work. We like you and never get to know you as well as we would like.

Three possible problems. One, the overall speed-up of life in the university in the last decade means I have less time to meet with students than I would like. Work with me, be flexible, we'll figure it out. Two, a related problem is that my email inbox is overflowing. I will get back to you, but it may not be instantaneous. If you don't hear from me in a reasonable period of time (1-2 days), email again. Three, my office is on a second floor without an elevator. If you have a mobility impairment (use a wheelchair, have a serious illness, sprained your ankle), there is a first floor office that we can meet in; just email ahead or come over and have the staff on the first floor call upstairs. The Department of Women's Studies does not consider this a good or fair accommodation, but it's the best the university has been willing to do so far. We are working to make it better.

Required texts

Course pack (available through e-reserves)

SYLLABUS

The recent past: Activist and policy issues of race/gender since 1970

Jan. 12—course overview

1. Reframing the History of Feminism: The Seventies and Eighties

Jan. 17—Barbara Smith, "Introduction," in Smith, ed., *Home Girls: A Black Feminist Anthology*; Jennifer Nelson, "'Abortions Under Community Control': Feminism, Nationalism, and the Politics of Reproduction Among New York City's Young Lords," *Journal of Women's History* (Spring 2001)

Jan. 19-- Alma Garcia, "Introduction," *Chicana Feminist Thought: The Basic Historical Writings* (Routledge, 1997): 1-16, and Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987), pp. 1-13.

Jan. 24—Two page paper due: Drawing on the reading for class, make an argument for or against the following proposition: Women of color were involved in constructing an activist politics of gender, even in the 1970s and eighties, the period some have suggested feminism was an all-white movement. (film: *The Young Lords*)

2. Welfare and Adoption Reform

Jan. 26—Gwendolyn Mink, "Welfare as a Condition of Women's Equality," in *Welfare's End* (Ithaca: Cornell, 1998): 1-32. Sandra Patton, "Il/Legitimate Citizens: Transracial Adoption and Welfare Reform," in *Birth Marks* (NYU, 2000), pp. 130-167.

Jan. 31—Rickie Solinger, "Choice is a Moving Target," *Beggars and Choosers* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001), 3-35.

Feb. 2— Charles Murray, "The Coming White Underclass," *Wall Street Journal* (October 29, 1993), A14. And Briggs, "Putting the Children of Welfare Mothers in Orphanages: 'Crack Babies,' Race, and Adoption Reform," in Jane Jeong Trenka, Chinyere Oparah, and Sun Yung Shin, *Outsiders Within: Racial Crossings and Adoption Politics* (South End Press, 2006).

3. Affirmative Action

Feb. 7— Leon Kamin, "Lies, Damned Lies, and Statistics," (originally from *Scientific American*), in Russell Jacoby and Naomi Glauberman, eds. *The Bell Curve Debate: History, Documents, Opinions* (New York: Random House, 81-105).

Feb. 9— Richard Herrnstein and Charles Murray, "Affirmative Action in Higher Education" and "Affirmative Action in the Workplace," in *The Bell Curve: Intelligence and Class Structure in American Life* (New York: Free Press, 1994), 447-508. Second two page paper due: Make an argument for or against the following: Policy debates around adoption and welfare reform suggest that in the United States, race and gender are inextricably entwined. Give evidence.

4. Bad Mothers: Sterilization Struggles and the Moynihan Report

Feb. 14—Dorothy Roberts, "Making Reproduction a Crime," *Killing the Black Body* (Random House, 1997), 150-201.

Feb. 16—Patricia Hill Collins, "Will the 'Real' Mother Please Stand Up; Eugenics and American Family Planning," in Adele Clarke and Virginia Olsen, *Revisioning Women, Health, and Healing* (Routledge, 1999), 266-82.

Feb. 21—Robin D. G. Kelley, "Introduction," *Yo Mama's DisFUNKtional: Fighting the Culture Wars in Urban America* (Boston: Beacon, 1997), 1-13;

Interlude: How do we think about the politics of protest movements?

Feb. 23— Chela Sandoval, "U.S. Third World Feminism: The Theory and Method of Oppositional Consciousness in the Postmodern World," *Genders* 10 (Spring 1991): 1-24.

The first half of the 20th century

5. Suffrage

Feb. 28—Paula Giddings, "The Quest for Woman Suffrage (Before World War I)" ch. 7 of *When and Where I Enter* (New York: Bantam, 1984), 119-134.

March 2—Roslyn Terborg Penn, "Discont ed Black Feminists: Prelude and Postscript to the Passage of the Nineteenth Amendment," in Kathryn Kish Sklar and Thomas Dublin, *Women and Power in American History* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1991), pp. 132-145.

6. Birth Control

March 7-- Jesse Rodrique, "Black Women and the Birth Control Movement" in Kathy Peiss and Christina Simmons, eds. *Passion and Power: Sexuality in History* (Philadelphia: Temple UP, 1989), pp. 138-154.

March 9--Annette Ramírez de Arellano and Conrad Seipp, "Meddling Experiments and the New Deal," *Colonialism, Catholicism, and Contraception* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1983), 30-44.

Spring Break!

7. Eugenics

March 21-- Wendy Kline, "'Sterilization without Unsexing: Eugenics and the Politics of Reproduction," *Building a Better Race: Gender, Sexuality, and Eugenics from the Turn of the Century to the Baby Boom* (Berkeley: U of California P, 2001), pp. 61-94; Johanna Schoen, "Between Choice and Coercion: Women and the Politics of Sterilization in North Carolina, 1929-1975," *Journal of Women's History* 13:1 (Spring 2001): 132-57.

March 23— Nayan Shah, "Healthy Spaces, Healthy Conduct," *Contagious Divides: Epidemics and Race in San Francisco's Chinatown* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), pp. 204-224.

March 28-- Alexandra Stern, "Contesting Hereditarianism: Reassessing the Sixties" in *Eugenic Nation: Faults and Frontiers of Better Breeding in America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 182-210

March 30—5 pp. paper due. What changed between the first half and the second half of the 20th century in how race/gender were organized? Use specific issues/examples.

Some 18th and 19th Century Problems

8. Abolitionism, Reconstruction, and Lynching

April 4--"The Abolitionist Emblem," ch. 1 of Jean Fagin Yellin, *Women and Sisters: The Anti-Slavery Feminists in American Culture* (New Haven: Yale 1989), pp. 3-26.

"Slave and Mistress: Ideologies of Womanhood Under Slavery," ch. 2 of Hazel Carby, *Reconstructing Womanhood* (New York: Oxford, 1987), pp. 20-39.

April 6--"Politics: Racial Hierarchy and Illicit Sex," ch. 7 of Martha Hodes, *White Women, Black Men: Illicit Sex in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale, 1997), pp. 147-175.

"A Movement of Southern White Women," ch. 6 of Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, *Revolt Against Chivalry: Jessie Daniel Ames and the Women's Campaign Against Lynching* Rev. ed. (New York: Columbia, 1993), pp. 159-92.

Ida B. Wells-Barnett, "Southern Horrors," in Trudier Harris, ed. *Selected Works of Ida B. Wells-Barnett* (New York: Oxford, 1991), pp. 14-45.

9. Indian Reform

April 11--Mary Hershberg, "Mobilizing Women, Anticipating Abolition: The Mobilization Against Indian Removal" *Journal of American History* 86:1 (June 1999): 15-40.

April 13--Helen Rountree, "Pocahontas," in Theda Purdue, *Sifters: Native American Women's Lives* (2001)

Margaret Jacobs, "White Women, Pueblo Indians, and Federal Indian Policy," *Engendered Encounters: Feminism and Pueblo Cultures, 1879-1934* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999), 1-23.

Interlude: How should we think about race/gender?

April 18--Evelyn Brooks Higgenbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race" *Signs* 17:2 (Winter 1992): 251-75.

April 20--no class, but 5 pp. paper due in my box: Evelyn Brooks Higgenbotham makes the argument to historians of women that race is a "metalanguage," that it is always everywhere present in the history of women. Argue that Higgenbotham is either right or wrong, drawing on other examples than the ones she uses,

10. Borders, Colonization, and the "frontier"

April 25--Vicki Ruiz, "Border Journeys," *Out of the Shadows: Mexican Women in Twentieth-Century America* (New York: Oxford, 1998), pp. 3-32.

April 27--Albert Hurtado, "Sexuality in California's Franciscan Missions" *Intimate Frontiers: Sex, Gender, and Culture in Old California* (University of NM Press, 1999): 1-20.

Antonia Castañeda, "History and the Politics of Violence Against Women," in Carla Trujillo, *Living Chicana Theory* (Berkeley: Third World Woman Press, 1998) pp. 310-319.

May 2—in-class final exam