

FYSM 1611C

Feminism is for Everybody: Understanding Feminism in Contemporary Politics

Thursdays 2:35-5:25; Tory Building Room 204
(Check Location on Carleton Central)

Professor: Dr. Fiona Robinson (she/her)

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Office: Loeb 663

Office Hours: Wednesdays: 1:30-2:30 (in person) and
Mondays: 12:00-1:00 (on Zoom). Please use link below:

<https://carleton.ca.zoom.us/my/prof.robinson?pwd=U0ISZnNVMUJ3Zkl1M3cxNEVXTWNkZz09>

Course Description and Objectives:

These days we hear a lot about ‘feminism’ and ‘feminists’, but what do these labels really mean? This course seeks to go beyond stereotypes and common misconceptions to allow students to gain a better understanding of what feminism is really all about, and what role it has to play in contemporary politics. The title of the course is taken from a book by well-known feminist theorist bell hooks and is inspired by her belief that everyone stands to benefit from, and has a place in, the struggle to end sexist oppression. In the course, we will examine key concepts in feminist thought — including gender, masculinity, race and intersectionality — through reading the work of feminist theorists and exploring issues in feminist politics, such as gender-based violence, reproductive rights and the sexual division of labour. The course explores a diverse range of thinkers and approaches, including black feminisms, Indigenous feminisms, postcolonial feminism and queer and trans-feminisms, and will consider feminist politics both within Canada, and internationally.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, students should:

1. Know the meaning and relevance of these **key concepts** related to feminist theory and practice: *gender, patriarchy, social construction, performative, ‘public-private’, intersectionality, hegemonic masculinity, social reproduction, and gender-based violence.*
2. Be able to relate these terms/ideas to **practical issues in feminism**, including *women’s care work/unpaid labour, gender-based violence, reproductive rights and women in electoral politics.*
3. Know how to find, **read and cite scholarly texts effectively** and **reflect critically** on ideas in the light of their own experiences.
4. Communicate your informed ideas clearly and effectively both verbally, in small and large groups, and in writing, in academic writing.

Course Structure:

Unlike many other first-year courses, this course is a seminar. This means that the instructor will not ‘lecture’ to the class, but rather will facilitate discussion, dialogue and debate. The seminar is thus student led and requires deep engagement on the part of students with readings, assignments, ideas and each other.

Requirements and Assessment (at a glance):

1. Attendance and Participation (including weekly quotes and questions)	25%
2. Feminist Campaign Infographic (Oct. 19)	20%
3. In-class quizzes 2 x 10% (Oct. 12 and Nov. 23)	20%
4. Short Research Paper (Dec. 7)	30%
5. “Two things I Learned ...” (Dec. 7)	5%
	100%

1. Attendance and Participation

This is a seminar course and relies on the active participation of students. Your participation grade will be based on your attendance at these meetings throughout the term, as well as the quality and quantity of your participation in small-group and full-class discussions. Students are expected to have completed the required reading before the seminar and to be prepared to discuss that week’s material.

The seminar will be structured around **QUOTES and QUESTIONS**. Each week, students will choose a meaningful quotation (at least two sentences but no more than a single paragraph) from one of the readings that addresses a key idea, and which they find interesting, thought-provoking or which they feel is contentious or problematic. Students should copy the quotation into the weekly class Google Doc (with full reference, including page number) and be prepared to read the quote aloud in class, and share their thoughts on why it is important and interesting for feminist theory/practice. They will also prepare a question **RELATED TO THE QUOTATION** that arises from it and will generate meaningful class discussion. This should also be posted on the class Google Doc before class. Quotes and questions will be read aloud and posted on the class Google Doc for breakout group and full class discussion.

Marking Rubric:

- Regular attendance in seminars
- Carefully-chosen quotation and thoughtful question are prepared and shared each week (see instructions above).
- Regular and informed contributions (based on the readings) to full-class and breakout group discussions
- Demonstrated knowledge and understanding of readings
- Active/engaged listening to others and respectful engagement with others’ comments

2. Feminist Campaign Infographic (due October 19th)

For this assignment, you will choose a feminist issue and create a campaign infographic poster for it. The issue must be related to feminism/women's rights but must be specific. (So instead of 'women's rights', choose '**women's reproductive rights in Latin America**'). You can choose to address the issue in a global or development context (**maternal and child health in sub-Saharan Africa**, for example) or local (Canadian) context (such as **violence against Indigenous women and girls in Canada, or the right to/need for affordable childcare**). You may take an intersectional approach (eg. **women of colour in political leadership; access to shelters for trans-women**, etc.)

***An exemplar infographic (from a previous student, used with permission) will be posted on Brightspace. I will discuss the assignment, and the exemplar, in class).

*** I recommend using **Canva** (canva.com) for this assignment. Canva is a free web tool and app for creating infographics and digital poster projects. However, you may use other applications (see slide deck on Brightspace).

Please see the links below for examples of recent feminist campaigns:

<https://www.unwomen.org/en/get-involved>

<https://itsmeana.medium.com/5-inspiring-feminist-campaigns-you-should-know-7c94dc5f972a>

Components/Marking Rubric:

1. Include the Title of the Campaign and the associated Hashtag (make it catchy!)
2. Communicate the issue, and why it is a problem/why it matters (200-300 words)
3. Include at least three recent, relevant statistics related to the issue (with sources clearly cited).
4. Communicate actions that should/will be taken by your organization (made-up or real), by governments or by the public (200 words)
5. Include eye-catching images or graphics that help to illustrate your points.
6. All information taken from external sources must be cited using ENDNOTES. Endnotes should be listed in a separate document, submitted with the infographic poster.
7. In addition to the poster and the endnotes, you must submit a SEPARATE bibliography (Word document) that lists all the references you used to make your infographic. Your poster will be marked on how well you execute each of these components, focusing on **research, communication and creativity**.

3. Online Quizzes (October 12th and November 23rd)

All students will write two online quizzes. These quizzes will be written in-class under 'test' conditions. The quizzes will be timed (30 minutes) and will consist of multiple choice questions based on readings and points/ideas emphasized by the professor during seminars.

4. Short Research Paper (due December 7th)

All students will write a short paper (1200-1500 words) based on one chapter from **bell hooks (2000) *Feminism is for Everybody*. London: Pluto Press.**
https://excoradfeminisms.files.wordpress.com/2010/03/bell_hooks-feminism_is_for_everybody.pdf

Choose **one** of the following chapters as the basis for your research paper:

Chapter 5: Our Bodies, Ourselves: Reproductive Rights

Chapter 7: Feminist Class Struggle

Chapter 8: Global Feminism

Chapter 9: Women at Work

Chapter 10: Race and Gender

Chapter 11: Ending Violence

Your research paper should also **answer the following questions:**

1. What is the issue under discussion in your chosen chapter? What is bell hooks' view on the issue? Why is it important for feminist theory and the feminist movement? (if relevant, consider its importance both historically and currently, and in different geographical and cultural contexts)
2. Based on your research, what are the key debates or tensions surrounding this issue? **What is your position on the issue?*** **How would you defend this position?*** (*answers to these questions should form the central argument of the paper and should be articulated in your essay's 'thesis statement').
3. What concepts, ideas, or theories can we use to help us understand this issue? Is it an issue that must be understood intersectionally?
4. How could feminist thinking on this issue be transformative for societies? What kind of changes to our institutions, laws or policies might come from this thinking?

Your essay should rely on both hooks' chapter as well as a minimum of four (4) other peer-reviewed scholarly sources (books, journal articles, book chapters, etc.). All ideas in your essay that are not your own **MUST** be cited. This is very important. **If your work does not include citations I will have assume it is plagiarized or AI-generated.** Furthermore, all citations must follow a recognized format. I strongly suggest the APA citation format. Please consult this guide for further information: <https://library.carleton.ca/guides/help/apa>

Marking Rubric:

- Ability to state, build and support a central argument
- Comprehension of the feminist issue as discussed by hooks and other authors
- Quality of the Discussion and Analysis
- Organization, Structure, Writing Style
- Evidence of Research with relevant sources in Bibliography, used effectively in your analysis
- **Correct, Complete and Consistent** referencing style (APA is highly recommended).

5. 'Two Things I Learned' (Dec. 7)

For our final class, each student will share two things they learned about feminism this term that they found most interesting. To receive a 4/5 or above for this, students must: i) attend the seminar; ii) share a clear and well-prepared statement of the two things they learned and iii) listen attentively to others in the class as they present. Marks will be reduced if any of these components are missing/not fulfilled adequately.

Seminar Conduct: We are here to learn, and to engage in open, constructive dialogue in an atmosphere of inclusion and respect for diversity. Many of the topics covered in this course are of a particular sensitive and potentially inflammatory nature. As a result, you may not always feel comfortable with the discussion. Often, this is okay, since feeling uncomfortable is often a sign that learning is taking place. If, however, you find a particular topic or discussion triggers feelings of anxiety and trauma, please feel free to leave the class at that time and take a break. While we may sometimes feel uncomfortable in our discussions, we should never feel unsafe. Derogatory, hateful speech or personal attacks will NOT be tolerated. Acting in accordance with the following principles will help to ensure that we can all learn in an atmosphere that is safe, open and accepting:

- **respect diversity**
- **equal voice**
- **informed judgement**
- **attentive listening**
- **inclusiveness**

***All readings** are available through the library's **ARES system of online reserves**. No textbooks are required for this course.

***All assignments** (except for weekly response posts) must be submitted via the **Brightspace portal** in advance of the deadline. All assignments are due at 11:59pm on the due date.

Late Policy: Assignments can be submitted without penalty up to 24 hours after the due date. If you predict that your assignment will be late (you have been sick or your ability to work has been disrupted in some way) please approach me about this as soon as possible (either before or as soon after the deadline as possible). If I don't hear from you and don't receive your assignment, there will be a penalty of 1% of your final grade in the course per day. Assignments will not be accepted more than 7 days after the due date in the absence of documented extenuating circumstances.

Support: Life at university can be difficult for many reasons. There are many services at the university to assist and support you in all aspects of your life at Carleton. Please find some of the main links below (find the rest in the appendix at the end of this syllabus). If you are unsure about where to turn, please feel free to contact me and I will do my best to assist.

Wellness Support: Please visit <https://students.carleton.ca/wellness/>

Academic Support: Centre for Student Academic Support: <https://carleton.ca/csas/>

Indigenous Student Support: Centre for Indigenous Support and Community Engagement: <https://carleton.ca/indigenous/cisce/>

WEEKLY TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1 September 7

Introduction and Welcome!

'Is Feminism no Longer the F-word'? Podcast, *Canadian Women's Foundation*. Jan.12, 2022. (listen to podcast (about 17 minutes) or read transcript.

Fletcher, Harriet (2023) 'Greta Gerwig's Barbie movie is a 'feminist bimbo' classic – and no, that's not an oxymoron'. *The Conversation*. July 19.

Week 2 Sept 14

Feminism is for Everybody

hooks, bell, 'Feminism is for Everybody', Introduction ('Come Closer to Feminism') and Chapter 1 ('Feminist Politics: Where we Stand').

hooks, bell Chapter 2: 'Feminism: a movement to end sexist oppression' in *Feminist Theory: from Margin to Center*. [pp. 30-33 only; begin reading at 'Focusing on feminism as political commitment ...']

Sara Ahmed (2017) *Living a Feminist Life*. Duke University Press. Introduction, pp. 1-7 only.

Week 3 Sept 21

Understanding Gender

Simone de Beauvoir (1949/2012) *The Second Sex*. New York: Knopf Doubleday). Introduction (to Volume I, pages 27-30); and Part II, Chapter I, 'Childhood' (first 5 pages only).

Judith Butler (2011) *Gender Trouble*. 'The Compulsory Order of Sex/Gender/Desire' pp. 9-13.

Corey Mintz, 'Here's a tip: Let's not dress up service droids as women' *The Globe and Mail*.

Week 4 Sept 28

Black Feminism and Intersectionality

Combahee River Collective. 1979. 'A Black Feminist Statement'. *Off Our Backs*. pp. 6-8.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum*: Vol. 1989: Iss. 1, Article 8, [pp. 139-150 only].

(* we will watch in class):

Crenshaw, Kimberle, (2016) 'The Urgency of Intersectionality', TED Talk.

Week 5 Oct 5

Sex, Sexuality and Gender Identity

Liskova, Katerina (2009) 'Feminist Sex Wars', in Jodi O'Brien, ed., *Encyclopedia of Gender and Society*. London: Sage.

Thompson, M. E. (1981). Comment on Rich's "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence". *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 6(4), 790-794.

Scott-Dixon, Krista (2006). 'Introduction: Trans/forming Feminisms', in Krista Scott-Dixon, ed., *Trans/forming Feminisms: Trans-Voices Speak Out*. Toronto: Sumach Press. pp. 11-20 only.

Week 6 Oct 12 (In-class, online Quiz today)

Global Feminisms and Cultural Imperialism

Abu-Lughod, L. (2016). The Muslim woman: The power of images and the danger of pity. In *Everyday Women's and Gender Studies* (pp. 46-54). Routledge.

Serene Khader (2019) Why are Poor Women Poor? *New York Times*, September 11, 2019.

Peter Beinart, 'The New Authoritarians are Waging War on Women', *The Atlantic*, January-February, 2019.

Week 7 Oct 19 (Infographic posters due today at 11:59pm)

Men, Masculinities and Feminism

R.W. Connell (2005) 'The Social Organization of Masculinity' in Carole R. McCann and Seungkyung Kim, eds., (2010), *Feminist Theory Reader*, 2nd edition. London: Routledge. (Chapter 22, pp. 232-244).

Harrington, C. (2021). What is "toxic masculinity" and why does it matter? *Men and Masculinities*, 24(2), 345-352.

Topping, Alexandra, Kate Lyons and Matthew Weaver (2019) 'Gillette #MeToo razor ad on 'toxic masculinity' get praise – and abuse', *Guardian*, January 15.

'We Believe: The Best a Man Can Be', Gillette Commercial, 2019.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koPmuEyP3a0>

***NO CLASS OCTOBER 25; FALL TERM READING WEEK**

Week 8 Nov 2

Women's Work?

Waring, Marilyn. (1999) *Counting for Nothing: What Men Value and What Women are Worth*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. Chapter 1, pp. 12-17.

Bahn, Kate, Jennifer Cohen, and Yana van der Meulen Rodgers. 2020. "A Feminist Perspective on COVID-19 and the Value of Care Work Globally." *Gender, Work & Organization* 27(5): 695–9.

Parkes, Amber (2021) 'From Burden to Benefit: Reframing the Conversation on Care', Oxfam Blog.

Wezerek, Gus and Ghodsee, Kristin R. (2020) 'Women's Unpaid Labor is Worth \$10,900,000,000,000', *New York Times*, March 5

Week 9 Nov 9

Gender-based Violence

True, Jacqui (2020). *Violence Against Women: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 1-10.

Dlamini, N. J. (2021). Gender-based violence, twin pandemic to COVID-19. *Critical Sociology*, 47(4-5), pp. 583-590.

Zarkov, D., & Davis, K. (2018) 'Ambiguities and dilemmas around# Me too:# for how long and# where to?' *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 25(1): 3-9.

Week 10 Nov 16

Reproductive Justice and Feminism

Price, K. (2020). What is reproductive justice? How women of color activists are redefining the pro-choice paradigm. *Meridians*, 19(S1), 340-362.

Malvern, C., & Macleod, C. (2018). Cultural De-colonization versus Liberal approaches to abortion in Africa: The politics of representation and voice. *African journal of reproductive health*, 22(2), 49-59.

Via, Cynthia (2022) 'Intersectional Activism in a Post-Roe World', *YES*, October 12, 2022.

Week 11 Nov 23

Online Quiz

(no seminar or readings today; work on essays after quiz is complete).

Week 12 November 30

Indigenous Feminisms

St. Denis, Verna (2017) 'Feminism is for Everybody: Aboriginal Women, Feminism and Diversity' in Joyce Green, ed., *Making Space for Indigenous Feminism*, 2nd edition.

Arvin, M., Tuck, E., & Morrill, A. (2013). Decolonizing feminism: Challenging connections between settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy. *Feminist formations*, [pp. 8-21 only].

Week 13 Dec 7 (Research Paper due today)

Final Discussion: "Two Things I Learned about Feminism"

Appendix

Student Mental Health

As a university student, you may experience a range of mental health challenges that significantly impact your academic success and overall well-being. If you need help, please speak to someone. There are numerous resources available both on- and off-campus to support you. Here is a list that may be helpful:

Emergency Resources (on and off campus): <https://carleton.ca/health/emergencies-and-crisis/emergency-numbers/>

- **Carleton Resources:**

- Mental Health and Wellbeing: <https://carleton.ca/wellness/>
 - Health & Counselling Services: <https://carleton.ca/health/>
 - Paul Menton Centre: <https://carleton.ca/pmc/>
 - Academic Advising Centre (AAC): <https://carleton.ca/academicadvising/>
 - Centre for Student Academic Support (CSAS): <https://carleton.ca/csas/>
 - Equity & Inclusivity Communities: <https://carleton.ca/equity/>
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- **Off Campus Resources:**

- Distress Centre of Ottawa and Region: (613) 238-3311 or TEXT: 343-306-5550, <https://www.dcottawa.on.ca/>
 - Mental Health Crisis Service: (613) 722-6914, 1-866-996-0991, <http://www.crisisline.ca/>
 - Empower Me: 1-844-741-6389, <https://students.carleton.ca/services/empower-me-counselling-services/>
 - Good2Talk: 1-866-925-5454, <https://good2talk.ca/>
 - The Walk-In Counselling Clinic: <https://walkincounselling.com>
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Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy accommodation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the Pregnancy Accommodation Form ([click here](#)).

Religious accommodation: Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details [click here](#).

Accommodations for students with disabilities: If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation, or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later

than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, reach out to your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, [click here](#).

Accommodation for student activities: Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and to the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom. Reasonable accommodation will be provided to students who engage in student activities at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more information, please [click here](#).

For more information on academic accommodation, please contact the departmental administrator or visit: students.carleton.ca/course-outline.

Sexual Violence Policy

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated. Survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is an essential element of a productive and successful career as a student. Carleton's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) addresses academic integrity violations, including plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, misrepresentation, impersonation, withholding of records, obstruction/interference, disruption of instruction or examinations, improper access to and/or dissemination of information, or violation of test and examination rules. Students are required to familiarize themselves with the university's academic integrity rules.

Plagiarism

The Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This includes reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include, but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, websites, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, art works, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

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- Any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;

- Using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
 - Using another's data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgement;
 - Submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one's own; and
 - failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's work and/or failing to use quotations marks.
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Use of Artificial Intelligence

Unless explicitly permitted by the instructor in a particular course, any use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools to produce assessed content (e.g., text, code, equations, image, summary, video, etc.) is considered a violation of academic integrity standards.

Procedures in Cases of Suspected Violations

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy are serious offences which cannot be resolved directly with the course's instructor. When an instructor suspects a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student. Penalties are not trivial. They may include a mark of zero for the assignment/exam in question or a final grade of "F" for the course. More information on the University's Academic Integrity Policy can be found at: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>.

Intellectual property

Student or professor materials created for this course (including presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the author(s). They are intended for personal use and may not be reproduced or redistributed without prior written consent of the author(s).

Submission and Return of Term Work

Papers must be submitted directly to the instructor according to the instructions in the course outline. The departmental office will not accept assignments submitted in hard copy.

Grading

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor, subject to the approval of the faculty Dean. Final standing in courses will be shown by alphabetical grades. The system of grades used, with corresponding grade points is:

Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale	Percentage	Letter grade	12-point scale
90-100	A+	12	67-69	C+	6
85-89	A	11	63-66	C	5
80-84	A-	10	60-62	C-	4
77-79	B+	9	57-59	D+	3

73-76	B	8	53-56	D	2
70-72	B-	7	50-52	D-	1

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by an instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

Carleton E-mail Accounts

All email communication to students from the Department of Political Science will be via official Carleton University e-mail accounts and/or Brightspace. As important course and university information is distributed this way, it is the student's responsibility to monitor their Carleton University email accounts and Brightspace.

Carleton Political Science Society

The Carleton Political Science Society (CPSS) has made its mission to provide a social environment for politically inclined students and faculty. By hosting social events, including Model Parliament, debates, professional development sessions and more, CPSS aims to involve all political science students at Carleton University. Our mandate is to arrange social and academic activities in order to instill a sense of belonging within the Department and the larger University community. Members can benefit through our networking opportunities, academic engagement initiatives and numerous events which aim to complement both academic and social life at Carleton University. To find out more, visit us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/CarletonPoliticalScienceSociety/>.

Official Course Outline

The course outline posted to the Political Science website is the official course outline.