GEND3XXX Feminist Thought

Please note that this unit is not yet approved.

Unit Information

Title: Feminist Thought
Level: 3
Type: Undergraduate as unattached elective in 1
Faculty: Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
Contact: Assist/Prof Chantal Bourgault (Chantal.Bourgault@uwa.edu.au)
Proposed: 26/03/2012
Code alpha prefix: GEND
First year of offer: 2013
Credit points: 6
Workload hours: 150

Academic information

Unit Content: Feminist Thought comprehensively examines the history and philosophy of thinking about gender as it emerges from eighteenth century liberal humanism to current neoliberalism. It is thematically developed around the ways in which both gender and feminism have been central to the construction and articulation of modernity. Students will read key texts by Western theorists such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Mary Wollstonecraft, Sigmund Freud and Virginia Woolf, as they chart the emergence and diversification of modern feminist philosophy, with reference to eminent thinkers such as Simone de Beauvoir, the French Feminists, bell hooks, Donna Haraway, Gloria Anzaldúa, Rosi Braidotti and Elizabeth Grosz. In this way, students will study and critically evaluate the multiple strands of feminist thought, including liberal, socialist, psychoanalytic, radical, ecological, postcolonial, postmodern and posthuman.

This third level unit thus extends students’ engagement with gender studies into a specialised philosophical field, advancing students’ critical analysis practice and disciplinary knowledge to a sophisticated level. There is more independent guided research, and also provision for creative and collective forms of knowledge production and assessment through an innovative group work project. Students are expected to demonstrate self-reflexivity in their research and high-level critical engagement with primary and secondary material, in both oral and written forms.

Outcomes:

1. a sophisticated understanding of the major political, social and philosophical issues analysed by feminists
2. a historised understanding of practices and theorisations of gender
3. comprehensive knowledge of a range of feminist positions (e.g. liberal, radical, socialist, psychoanalytic, ecofeminist, postmodern) and their associated readings of gender and sexual difference
4. an ability to critically evaluate theories and representations of gender
5. an understanding of feminist practices and methodologies in the contexts of education, research, creative production and activism
6. a capacity for active and reflective contribution to a collectively completed task
7. a capacity to articulate critical ideas in both oral and written form

Assessment items:

1. Tutorial participation
2. 2000 word research essay
3. Group task
4. 1000 word reflection on group task

Assessments tied to outcomes:

1. Tutorial participation (10%)
2. 2000 word research essay (40%)
3. Group task (30%)
4. 1000 word reflection on group task (20%)
N.B. The group task requires students to work in groups of 4 or 5. They are required to prepare a presentation focused on some aspect of feminist theorising or practice since c.1750 in one of the following fields: visual arts, literature, music, performing arts or cinema. Suggested forms for the presentation include:

• a collaborative art project, accompanied by catalogue notes on the project and its rationale/objectives
• an exhibit for a museum, accompanied by curator’s notes notes/information for the public, as well as a ‘policy rationale’ for the importance/value of the exhibit
• a performance (together with program notes)
• an application for funding from an Australian organisation dedicated to supporting culture and the arts (e.g. Department of Culture and the Arts or The Film and Television Institute), accompanied by a powerpoint presentation summarising the main points made
• a blog
• a script or screenplay, accompanied by director’s notes (on strategies for staging or filming) and producer’s notes (on the importance/value of the project)
• a policy recommendation report prepared for an Australian organisation, accompanied by a powerpoint presentation summarising the main points
• a zine

The group task is supported by a workbook designed to assist students in navigating and reflecting upon the challenges and benefits of working in a team.

Teaching and Learning Practices:

Students’ learning will take place through:

• A weekly lecture
• A weekly tutorial of two hours’ duration.

Technologies:

Moodle, Lectopia.

Curriculum from existing units

Unit codes

This unit will incorporate material previously covered in WOMN2200: Text and Gender.

Text and Gender was the first undergraduate unit offered at UWA in the early 1990s. It has been offered as a key Women’s Studies unit ever since.

Details

This unit is not retained.

Shared units

Offerings

Quota: No quota proposed.

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<th>Teaching Period</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Estimated enrolment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Semester 1 (2013)</td>
<td>Crawley</td>
<td>FACE2FACE</td>
<td>35: Based on previous enrolments halved (as it was previously taught every second year)</td>
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Unit rules

Prerequisites: Any level 2 unit in Gender Studies

Corequisites: Nil.

Incompatibilities: WOMN2200 Text and Gender

Teaching Responsibilities

Accommodation requirements

Summary: Lecture theatre and tutorial rooms required.

Types: Spaces currently controlled by the Faculty/School;

Further details:

Funding

Source: Faculty/School funds

Details: All administrative costs met by the School and Faculty.
**Additional information**

When offered in 2011 to a cohort of 55 students. SPOT feedback for this unit indicated a student satisfaction rating that averaged 4.7 out of a possible 5 across 12 assessment criteria. This feedback was drawn from the 20 students who attended the final lecture.

SURF feedback on the same unit (drawn from 25 students) also indicated satisfaction ratings equal to or well above the average ratings of other units at UWA. Particularly notable was the rating of 3.6 (as compared with a university average of 3.1 and school/faculty averages of 3.3) for the item “Overall, this unit was a good educational experience”.

SPOT comments from students included the following statements (some of which reflect students’ consciousness that the unit

“Overall, this has been my favourite unit at university. Keep offering it.”

“Great unit overall, very beneficial and would recommend it highly.”

“Class discussions made you want to read and read more.”

“I have found this unit to be so enlightening of gender and women’s issues. It has allowed me to not only view issues in a different light but to bring new understandings to other aspects of my study ... I feel it is a very valuable unit.”

**Consultations**

This unit has been taught since the early 1990s as a keystone to Women’s Studies. Resources in the library continue to meet the needs for this unit.

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<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Faculty/School</td>
<td>Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences</td>
<td>We have consulted with colleagues in English and Cultural Studies, History, Anthropology, Asian Studies and MEMS, as well as the Head of Social and Cultural Studies.</td>
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<td>Faculty/School</td>
<td>Architecture, Landscape and Visual Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>University (WA)</td>
<td>Murdoch, ECU</td>
<td>Consultations with Murdoch and Edith Cowan academics rue the lack of such a unit at other universities, and have been encouraging in pursuing the maintenance of Gender Studies at UWA so that this significant area of social relations is available to the Western Australian community at tertiary level. Curtin and Notre Dame do not offer units in these areas.</td>
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<td>University (Other)</td>
<td>University of Sydney</td>
<td>Consultation with Dr Catherine Driscoll regarding the Gender Studies major found that Feminist Thought is immersed throughout the major but concentrated in second year in The Body: Theories and Practices. A comprehensive chronological account of the way gender is theorised from the Enlightenment is not offered.</td>
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<td>University (Other)</td>
<td>Monash</td>
<td>Monash has a very strong Centre for Women’s Studies and Gender Research, and consultation with the Director Assoc Prof Jane Maree Maher found a comparable third year unit named Theorising Sexed Bodies: Contemporary Feminist Thought. Our proposed unit does similar work to this and also contextualises thinking about gender from Rousseau onward.</td>
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<td>University (Other)</td>
<td>UNSW</td>
<td>UNSW offers a second level comparable unit titled Feminism: a transnational history which is a modern history of feminist movements, issues and ideas across the globe. This is offered through History as a Women’s Studies major option, so its focus is historical rather than the specific focus on thinking about gender over western philosophical thought that we propose.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internal</td>
<td>CATL</td>
<td>Moodle, CMO and Lecture Capture are routinely available and used.</td>
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**Committee endorsements and approvals**

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<td>Academic Council</td>
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