

# HISTORY AND THEORIES OF FEMINISM

Professor Jennifer Brier | Taft Hall 216 |

Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30 to 1:45pm

## How and when to find Prof. Brier

My office is 1204 University Hall. I will have office hours 2-3 T and Th and by appointment. Please email me at [jbrier@uic.edu](mailto:jbrier@uic.edu) to make an appointment.

## Books to buy

1. Sara Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life* (Duke, 2017). (LFL on schedule)
2. Estelle Freedman, *The Essential Feminist Reader* (Modern Library, 2007). (EFR on schedule)
3. Norah Bowman and Meg Braem, *Amplify* (U Toronto, 2019)
4. Additional readings on BLACKBOARD (BB). Please annotate them and bring either printed version or e-marked-up version to class.

I strongly recommend purchasing both books. I ordered them at the UIC bookstore. Please let me know as soon as possible if you are not able to purchase these books and we can arrange alternatives.

## Welcome to History and Theories of Feminism

This class introduces you to the evolution of feminist thought since the eighteenth century. We will also ask questions of our present moment and imagine new futures, while staying attend to feminism. We will analyze examples of theory and activism organized around women's rights and gender justice in a variety of geographic contexts. We will consider questions of power and difference, paying special attention to how the intersections of race, class and sexuality have animated feminist thought and practice. While the texts we will read share a commitment to interrogating these questions, they differ in terms of how to define the problem and solutions.

Our job in this class is not to agree or disagree with any one position, but rather to assess, critically, how feminism, as a political ideology, has emerged and what the consequences of that emergence have been.





## FAQ: Class Participation

### Is showing up enough?

It is the first step. Being present, arriving on time and staying for the whole class is important, but not sufficient to get an A for that portion of the final grade. Also, staying awake is pretty important.

### How do I get an A for class participation?

Showing up ready to talk about and ask questions of the assigned reading for the day; listening to your fellow classmates and sustaining a conversation with one another over the course of the semester. You can earn an A for class participation if you help make the class a place where you and your peers discuss, learn and think together.

### What about using a computer and/or phone during class?

I have spent a lot of time thinking about this. I ask that for the 2.5 hours we are together each week no one in the class, including me, look at/read email, facebook, twitter, snapchat, instagram or any social media. Some people use computers/phones/tablets to do their reading, and that is fine, but the social media and email needs to be shut down so we can actually learn from one another.

## How do I get graded?

1. Practice *Academic Integrity*: Please read the University policy on academic integrity at [www.uic.edu/depts/sja/integrit.htm](http://www.uic.edu/depts/sja/integrit.htm). If you have any questions about this policy or about proper citations, please ask me in class. Beyond plagiarism, I believe academic integrity requires us to have a shared understanding of our roles in this academic community. First and foremost, everybody needs to respect our classmates' ideas by not belittling positions we disagree with in class discussion, attending class regularly and on time, and following the semester long conversation by carefully doing the reading. When writing, you cannot take someone else's idea as your own without proper credit, nor can you be careless about editing your work. In practice this means, in addition to submitting papers on time, you must carefully read and edit your papers before handing them in to me. In return, I will give you constructive criticism and return them to you within two weeks of receiving them. Throughout the semester, we will talk more about academic integrity, and its role in making a better university.

2. Participate in class as described over there. This will account for 20% of your grade.



3. Write (and revise if you get lower than a C) all the papers described at the end of the syllabus, turn them in on time, and think of them as places where you and I can be in conversation about the course materials.



All daily reading assignments are listed on blackboard. Come to class having read the assigned materials for that day. I recommend starting an annotation process.

#### PART I LIVING A FEMINIST LIFE (THEORIES/PRESENTS)

August 27: INTRODUCTIONS and CLASS AGREEMENTS

August 29: What is Feminist Theory and Why Study it?

hooks, "Theory as Liberatory Practice" (BB)

Ahmed, "Introduction: Bringing Feminist Theory Home" (LFL)

FREE WRITE IN CLASS: STRATEGIES TO READ AHMED. We will write this at the end of class, please be prepared to hand it in.

September 3: How Feminism Feels

Ahmed, "Feminism is Sensational" and "On Being Directed"(LFL)

September 5: Willfulness

Ahmed, "Willfulness and Feminist Subjectivity" (LFL)

September 10: Transformations

Ahmed, "Trying to Transform" and "Being in Question" (LFL)

September 12: Transforming GWS@UIC

Ahmed, "Brick Walls" (LFL)

Discussion of what feminism at UIC should look and feel like

September 17: Feminist SNAP!

Ahmed, "Fragile Connections" and "Feminist Snap"(LFL)

September 19: Feminist Imagination I (Paper 1 due)

SCREEN IN CLASS: BORN IN FLAMES

#### PART II MOVING BACK IN TIME (HISTORIES/PASTS)

September 24: The Woman Question in Early Modern Thought

Documents 1-4, EFR

September 26: Feminism in the Age of Revolution

Introduction to "From Wollstonecraft to Mill,"

through footnote 11 and documents 1, 8 and 19 (BB)

de Gouge, Declaration of the Rights of Women (BB)



October 1: Utopianism

Introduction to "From Wollstonecraft to Mill,"

through reference to document 6 and documents 2-6 (BB)

October 3: Abolition

Grimké, EFR, document 7  
Truth, EFR, document 10  
Maria Stewart, Lecture Delivered at Franklin Hall (BB)

October 8: Transnational Circuits of Reform

How Did American and Japanese Gender Hierarchies Shape Japanese Women's Participation in the Transnational WCTU Movement in the 1880s? (BB)

October 10: Anti Lynching (Paper 2A due)

SCREEN IN CLASS: Ida B. Wells: A Passion for Justice

Please consider attending the Chicana Movidas event GWS is sponsoring. It will be in the late afternoon in Pilsen. Details are forthcoming.

October 15: Feminist Imaginations II

Gilman, EFR, document 20  
Hossain, EFR, document 22  
Woolf, EFR, document 33

October 17: Free Love

Goldman, EFR, document 24  
Capetillo, EFR, document 27

October 22: Feminism, Art and Social Change

Three Poems, EFR, document 26  
SCREEN IN CLASS: Lorraine Hansberry

October 24: Feminist Critiques of Colonialism

Amin, EFR, document 21  
Ali, EFR, document 32  
Shaarwi, EFR, document 36  
Ransome-Kuti, EFR, document 37

October 29: What did "Second Wave" feminist do?

Friedan, EFR, document 40  
Murray, EFR, document 41  
Mainardi, EFR document 42  
BWHBC, EFR, document 43  
Ahmed, Chapter 9 (LFL)

October 31: Origins of Intersectionality

Combahee River Collective, EFR, document 48  
Lorde, EFR, document 49  
Anzaldua, EFR, document 56

November 5: Feminist Resistance I (Paper 2B due)

Bowman and Braem, Amplify, Chapters 1-3 (19-74)

November 7: Feminist Resistance I  
Bowman and Braem, Amplify, Chapters 4-8 (75-156)

Part III BECOMING FEMINIST KILLJOYS (FUTURES)

November 12: Building a Feminist Killjoy Tool kit and users guide  
Ahmed, Conclusion 1 (LFL)  
Create groups for toolkits (up to 6)

November 19 and 21: FEMINIST RESEARCH DAYS

Work in groups in class. Since you will be on a team, you must be present in class on these two days. You are accountable to one another and so attendance is critical. (I encourage each group to have at least one laptop in class these two days).

Each team member should bring at least 5 items (or descriptions of items) to class on the 19th. You will spend this class sharing items among your group. What are the potential links you see among the dozens of items? Do any of the class readings or films we have watched belong in the mix? Why and how? What is missing? If you want/need to add items, make a plan for who will do what for the 21st. By the end of class on the 21st, your group needs to have identified and come to consensus on the 8 items you plan to include in your toolkit (2 of them can be from class readings, and you must have at least 4 different categories: films, songs, poems, scholarly writing, works of fiction, things, feelings). What can you do with the items? How do they hold together as a toolkit? What would you need to include in a user's guide so that a friend / family member/future student in 292 could use the toolkit? The other way to approach the user's guide is to think of it as the basis of your presentation of the toolkit to the class. How will you structure that presentation for one of the next two classes? Please build a visual representation of your group's toolkit in goggle slides and post to blackboard. You will share the slides as part of your presentation to the class in one of the next two sessions.

November 26/December 3: Presenting Feminist Killjoy Toolkit

3 groups present their toolkits using google slides and a script developed collectively. Every team member should plan to speak during the presentation. The presentations will be no more than 15 minutes, with 5 additional minutes for questions.

NOVEMBER 28 -- no class -- Thankstaking

December 3: Look above

December 5: WRITING WORKSHOP

Work on your user's guide to your final 8 item feminist killjoy toolkit.  
FINAL Paper due: Friday, December 13, 10am.

# WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

All of the work we do together is organized around two GWS's learning outcomes:

- 1) Demonstrate a conceptual knowledge of feminist and gender theories; 2) demonstrate an understanding of the contexts of feminist efforts for social change over time and across geographical boundaries.

Written work and participation will be assessed in relation to how well you can show me you can do these things. This semester, each assignment builds toward a larger goal of creating a feminist toolkit that speaks to our time.

Paper 1 (due Sept. 19, 11pm on Blackboard)

Pick a source cited by Ahmed that interests you and locate it. Read it/watch it/listen to it. Summarize it in no more than 250 words; then write a short (1-2 page) essay where you connect it, and the feminist theories/principles/practices it represents, to your life. Grading rubric, with more details, appears on Blackboard. (15% of final grade)

Paper 2A (due Oct. 10, 11pm), 2B (due Nov. 5, 11pm)

2A Select one primary source from any we read Sept 24 to Oct 3 that would fit in a feminist toolkit\* you will build/stock at the end of term. Write a paper in which explain why it belongs there and what purpose it serves for you. If none of the sources I've assigned appeal to you, find your own from the before 1900 and write about that. (15% of final grade). 2B is the same as 2A, just select an assigned source from between Oct 18 and November 6. If you want to find your own document from the past, please focus on post-1900. Grading rubric,\*with more details on the toolkit, appears on Blackboard. (15% of final grade)

Toolkit Development and Presentation: (due Nov 26 or Dec 3) See syllabus description. (15% of final grade)

Final (due Dec. 13, 10am, on blackboard) Toolkit User's guide (4-5 pages). You have access to all six toolkits. Select your personal 8 items (this could be the same as what your group made, but you also can addend it) Write a user's guide for it geared toward a student in this class next semester. (20% of final grade)

## Services for Students at UIC

Any student who has difficulty affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or who lacks a safe and stable place to live, and believes this may affect their performance in the course, is urged to contact Student Advocacy Services in the Dean of Students Office <https://dos.uic.edu/studentadvocacyservices.shtml> for support. If you are comfortable doing so, please also let me know. This will enable me to provide resources, if I can.

Students with disabilities who require accommodations for access and participation in this course should register with the Disability Resource Center and determine what services are available to them. <https://drc.uic.edu>

Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change  
A collaborative group of seven centers with distinct histories, missions, and locations that promote the well being of and cultural awareness about underrepresented and underserved groups at UIC. <https://diversity.uic.edu/who-we-are/centers-for-cultural-understanding-and-social-change>

Undocumented Students, please visit: <https://dream.uic.edu/> to learn about resources on campus