

**CMN 5180**  
**Seminar in Rhetoric: *Feminist Theories of Rhetoric, Race, Ethnicity, and Nation***  
**Spring 2013**  
**CH 1781, Tuesday 7 – 9:30 pm (CRN#36172)**

**Instructor:** Dr. T. M. Linda Scholz

**Office:** Coleman Hall 2030

**Email:** [tscholz@eiu.edu](mailto:tscholz@eiu.edu) (**Note:** I frequently check my Panther e-mail account, therefore, this is the best way to reach me. I DO NOT frequently check the D2L e-mail. To insure delivery, please use your EIU e-mail to contact me.)

**Office Hours:** Tuesday and Thursday 12:15 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.; Tuesday 5:00 – 7 pm; and by appointment.

### **Course Description and Objectives**

**Description:** A seminar in rhetoric is a course devoted to evolving theories, issues and foci within the interdisciplinary field of rhetoric. In this semester's seminar, *Feminist Theories of Rhetoric, Race, Ethnicity, and Nation*, you will be exposed to theories that have influenced scholarship in communication studies broadly, and in rhetorical studies specifically. Students will read theoretical work that accounts for discourses about and by women in Western and Non-Western cultural contexts developed by Black/Womanist feminists, Latina/Chicana feminists, Postcolonial feminists, and Transnational feminists. Topic areas include whiteness, and the intersection of gender, race, ethnicity, and nation, and their connection to structures of socio-economic class within global contexts. Key constructs include power, patriarchy, capitalism, imperialism, and neo-colonialism.

The following broad questions will guide the semester's discussions:

- ☞ What is feminism and feminist research?
- ☞ What constitutes a feminist subject?
- ☞ What constitutes a "third world female subject"?
- ☞ How do varying feminist approaches inform understandings of race, ethnicity, and nation, and vice versa?
- ☞ How do theories in feminism, race, ethnicity, and nation inform research in rhetoric and vice versa?

As you answer these questions, and others that build on them, you will meet the following objectives.

### **Objectives**

- ☞ Define feminism/s and feminist theories
- ☞ Identify and understand theoretical constructs relevant to each of the feminist theories studied in the course
- ☞ Explain the differences between what are considered Western and non-Western feminist theories
- ☞ Explore the connections between feminist theories and theories in rhetoric
- ☞ Interrogating how power differentials influence and impact different discourses about gender, race, ethnicity, and nation
- ☞ Apply feminist theories as frameworks in case studies
- ☞ Equip yourself to enter public and academic dialogues as scholars and/or public intellectuals

### **Required Texts**

- ☞ All required reading will be uploaded onto D2L.

## **Accommodations**

It is imperative that you are getting the most out of your educational experience. If you have a special need that qualifies for accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (217-581-6583) to arrange support services. Please also inform the instructor by providing the necessary documentation specifying the accommodations needed for the class within the first week of class.

## **Seminar Environment**

### **Format**

You will be reading intellectually as well as emotionally charged material during the course of the semester. My intent is to establish an environment where you are able to have open and respectful discussions. Given the emotional power of some of the material that you will read, it is imperative that you not lose sight of the academic power inherent in this material as well. After reading the assigned material, please formulate carefully constructed arguments and questions that may enhance our scholarly understanding of the subject matter. Please use electronic devices only when appropriate to the seminar discussion (e.g., a quick internet reference related to the reading, use of technology during your class facilitation, etc.). This is a seminar, and therefore, I will minimally lecture if at all. I am here to guide our journey toward learning about and exploring how to understand/analyze/examine/ and investigate academic scholarship and culturally nuanced texts.

### **Attendance**

We are fortunate to be part of an intimate seminar that will afford us the opportunity to delve deeply into discussions about the academic arguments you formulate. In other words, your input and focus will be invaluable. Given the intimacy of the seminar, it is essential that you attend every class. In the event that something unforeseen occurs and you cannot attend class, please let me know at your earliest convenience so that I can be aware of your situation and offer appropriate assistance if needed. As graduate students, I assume that you know what constitutes an acceptable absence.

### **Cell Phones**

I will not tolerate texting from anyone during our seminar.

### **Late Work:**

I will not accept late work, e-mailed assignments, any assignments turned into my mailbox, or assignments turned in on flash drive, etc. (unless you have made prior special arrangements directly with me). Assignments are DUE IN CLASS AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS. Any papers turned in to me in class after class has commenced can result in a grade reduction. If you know that you are going to be absent on a day on which an assignment is due, make arrangements to turn in the assignment in advance, directly to me. Always have a backup of your work.

**Academic Honesty:** It is imperative that you understand that when you are an EIU student you are bound to the Student Conduct Standards. **If you are caught cheating and/or plagiarizing, you will fail this course.** If you are confused about what constitutes cheating and/or plagiarism, please ask.

### **Assistance Outside of Class**

If you ever feel that you need additional time to talk through the class material, or to discuss the progress on your paper, I am happy to do so. You can stop by my office during my regularly scheduled office hours. You are also welcome to stop by outside of my regularly scheduled office hours, and if I am there, I will be happy to talk. Finally, you can set up an appointment.

## Course Assignments

**Discussion Prompts/Participation (10 points each; Total 100 points).** To assist with class discussion and participation, starting on week three (with the exception of when you are the facilitator, and the last two weeks of our class meeting), you will need to bring a type-written argument, no more than one page, with 2-3 explanation points for the day's reading (single spaced is fine). Also include a carefully constructed and contextually based question that you would like to pose to the class for discussion—regarding the reading and anything that can be related to the reading! As you prepare your discussion prompts, keep in mind the following:

- ☞ Develop an argument (YOUR argument) that emerges from your synthesis of the reading. Consider the following:
  - what do the readings have in common?
  - how might the readings build on one another, challenge each other, or ignore elements of each other (this is particularly important when key scholars might be left out of the discussion).
- ☞ Also consider areas of the reading that may not have been explained enough. Always, always, think about the connection to rhetoric.
- ☞ To assist you in explaining your argument, create 2-3 talking points (again, that are related to your argument)
- ☞ By using the above process, build to your discussion question.
  - In that question, consider the implications for understanding feminist theories, rhetoric, and related constructs (how theory informs practice, how practice informs criticism, how criticism informs theory, and on and on)—which should connect back to your argument.

**NOTE:** You will develop discussion prompts for weeks 1 and 2, but they will not be officially graded so that you can get feedback from me before they count toward your grade.

**Class Facilitation (100 points).** You will choose a class meeting for which you will be the facilitator (see the tentative schedule for dates—the word “facilitator” will appear on that day). You will spend the first hour of class providing a summary of each of the assigned readings, and present a carefully constructed argument about the reading as a whole (provide a brief handout for the class—not more than a page). To assist you in your explanation of the readings, and your argument, you will want to be as creative as possible: show video clips, images, or discourse types that are addressed in the reading. OR show clips, images or discourse types that were NOT clearly addressed in the reading, but could illustrate the theoretical concepts discussed in the reading. During the second half of class, you will facilitate the discussion that ensues from the discussion prompts offered by your colleagues. As always, during class facilitation prompt your colleagues to make connections to the theoretical constructs addressed in the reading.

**Research Paper:** You will write a 20-25 page paper that will draw on one of the theories as a framework to analyze a text/artifact of your choosing. I will post a more detailed description of the assignment guidelines on D2L, but for now, the assignment includes three components:

- a. **Paper Proposal (25 points):** You will write a 3 – 5 page paper describing your artifact, providing a justification for analysis, and a bibliography of at least 6-8 sources.
- b. **Theoretical Frame (25 points):** You will write a 3 - 5 page paper discussing the theoretical frame that you will use to analyze the artifact that you have chosen. Your bibliography should consist of at least 6 additional sources that help you to explain the theoretical framework.
- c. **First draft and Workshop (50 points):** You will have an opportunity to workshop the first draft of your paper in class. You will work with a partner, and will be asked to send your partner a copy of the draft prior to the in-class workshop.

- d. **Final draft (150 points):** All papers are due on the date specified on the course schedule. At this point, you will also have a complete bibliography of sources (no less than 20 sources).
- e. **Final presentation (50 points):** prepare an oral presentation of your final paper. Specific time limits will be determined by class size. These presentations will occur during the last week of class and during our scheduled final time.

**Total points for the class: 500.**

**Grading Scale**

500-450 = A  
449-400 = B  
399-350 = C  
349-300 = D  
299 and below = F

**CMN 5180**  
**Seminar in Rhetoric and Public Address**  
***Tentative Schedule***  
*(The instructor reserves the right to modify the schedule if needed)*  
CH 1781, 7 pm – 9: 30 pm

Readings are to be completed for the day on which they are noted.

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Week 1

January 8— **Introduction to the course. Expectations.**

**Unit One: Developing a Foundation of Key Theoretical Constructs**

**Discussion:** What is Feminist scholarship (including assumptions, possible obstacles, and challenges)? What is Rhetoric? What is theory? How do scholars in these areas inform one another and for what purpose/s?

**D2L reading:** Foss, Foss, and Griffin, Chapter 1: “Introduction (read through theory)” and Chapter 2.

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Week 2

January 15— **Unit One, cont’d**

**D2L:** hooks, from *Feminism is for Everybody*; Valdivia, “Building a Feminist Trajectory”; Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses”

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Week 3

January 22— **Unit One, cont’d**

**D2L reading:** Smith, from *Decolonizing Methodologies*, “Introduction – Chapter 2”; and Mohanty, from *Feminism without Borders*, “Introduction”

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Week 4

January 29— **Unit One, cont’d**

**D2L reading:** Alcoff, “The Problem of Speaking for Others”; Shome, “Outing Whiteness”; Rowe and Malhotra, “(Un)hinging Whiteness”

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Week 5

**Facilitator:** \_\_\_\_\_

February 5— **Unit Two: Theories of Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Nation in a U.S. (and yet not just U.S.) contexts**

**D2L Reading:** hooks (including introductory information), “Back to the Avant-Garde”; The Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement”; Collins, “Black Feminist Thought and the Matrix of Domination” and “Black Feminist Epistemology”; Hamlet, “Assessing Womanist Thought”

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Week 6

**Facilitator:** \_\_\_\_\_

February 12— **Unit Two, cont'd**

**D2L reading:** Crenshaw, “Beyond Racism and Misogyny,” Yamada, “Invisibility Is an Unnatural Disaster,” Marie-Aimée Hélie-Lucas, “The Preferential Symbol for Islamic Identity,” Dutt, “Some Reflections on U.S. Women of Color and the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women and NGO Forum in Beijing, China”; Al-Mahadin, “Arab Feminist Media Studies”

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Week 7

**Facilitator:** \_\_\_\_\_

February 19— **Unit Two, cont'd**

**D2L reading:** Anzaldúa and Moraga, “Theory in the Flesh,” Anzaldúa (including introductory information), “Speaking in Tongues,” “La Conciencia de la Mestiza,” “Del Otro Lado,” “Beyond Traditional Notions of Identity,” Alcoff, “Mestizo Identity,” Alarcón, “The Theoretical Subject(s) of *This Bridge Called my Back* and Anglo-American Feminism”

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Week 8

**Facilitator:** \_\_\_\_\_

February 26— **Unit Two, cont'd**

**D2L reading:** Flores, “Creating a Discursive Space through a Rhetoric of Difference,” Calafell, “(Pro)reclaiming Loss”; Sowards, “Rhetorical Agency as *Haciendo Caras* and Differential Consciousness Through Lens of Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Class”

**DUE: PAPER PROPOSAL**

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Week 9

**Facilitator:** \_\_\_\_\_

March 5— **Unit Three: Theories of Gender, Race, Ethnicity, and Nation in Non-US/Non-Western contexts**

**D2L reading:** Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?”; Shome and Hegde “Postcolonial Scholarship—Productions and Directions: An Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak”; Shome, “Postcolonial Interventions in the Rhetorical Canon”

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**March 11-15 SPRING BREAK. NO CLASS.**

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Week 10

**Facilitator:** \_\_\_\_\_

March 19—

**Unit Three, cont'd**

**D2L reading:** Shome & Hegde, “Postcolonial Approaches to Communication”; Diaz, “Postcolonial Theory and the Third Wave Agenda”; Mohanty, “‘Under Western Eyes’ Revisited”

**DUE: THEORETICAL FRAMING FOR PAPER**

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Week 11

**Facilitator:** \_\_\_\_\_

March 26—

**Unit Three, cont'd**

**D2L reading:** Grewal and Kaplan, “Transnational Feminist Practices and Questions of Postmodernity”; Hegde, “A View from Elsewhere”; Shome, “Transnational Feminism and Communication Studies

**Helpful url:** <http://english.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/v5i1/grewal.htm>

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Week 12

April 2—

**Unit Three, cont'd**

**D2L reading:** Grewal, “Transnational America”; Grewal, “‘Women’s Rights as Human Rights’ The Transnational Production of Global Feminist Subjects”; Alarcón, “Traddutora, Traditora”

**Preliminary paper workshop.**

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Week 13

April 9—

**Unit Four: Politics of Location**

**D2L reading:** Rich, “Notes Towards a Politics of Location,” Gregg, “Politics of Identity/Politics of Location”; Kaplan, “The Politics of Location as Transnational Feminist Practice”; Rowe, “(Be)longing”

**IN-CLASS FINAL PAPER WORKSHOP.**

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Week 14

April 16—

**BEGIN FINAL PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

**DUE: FINAL PAPER**

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Week 15

April 23—

**BEGIN FINAL PAPER PRESENTATIONS**

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**Final Exam: Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup>, 7:30-9:30 p.m. COURSE WRAP -UP.**