

Course Design

Expanding Perspectives of Feminism in the Composition Classroom

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Course Description

English 3060J: Women and Writing, is designed as a junior-level composition course for both majors and non-majors and is one of four courses from which students may choose to fulfill their junior composition requirement at a medium-sized liberal arts public university with approximately 16,700 undergraduates. The course catalog describes English 3060J as a course that “deals with works about, written, or read by women” and as one that is open to myriad approaches by different instructors. My course uses as a central theme the question “Is feminism dead?” to explore what feminism looks like for women writers across various social, cultural, geographic, and political landscapes and to interrupt U.S. and Eurocentric narratives of feminist epistemology.

Institutional Context

The design of my course arose out of an awareness of the ways that nonwhite and non-Western women writers were often discussed when taught in the first-year composition curriculum that all first-year graduate instructors have previously been required to use. I noticed that, often, these writers were used primarily as “alternative voices” to Western narratives and epistemologies, emphasizing difference and encouraging tokenization. Wendy S. Hesford and Eileen E. Schell have pointed out that postcolonial and transnational women writers have often been deployed to “signify ‘diversity’ and disciplined in rhetoric and writing studies as an ‘alternative voice’ and as a purveyor of an alternative or ‘hybrid’ writing style” (462). Such an approach does nothing to decenter Western perspectives in scholarship and in the classroom and makes U.S. frameworks the standard against which these writers are set. I have seen traces of this approach in my teaching of the previously required first-year composition curriculum; writers like Gloria Anzaldúa and Victor Villanueva were often used to bring “diversity” into an otherwise (mostly white) curriculum dominated by U.S. writers and scholars. Without careful contextualization, for which, unfortunately, first-year graduate instructors often lack the tools or the time to negotiate, there is risk these writers will be tokenized as Hesford and Schell urge teachers and scholars to avoid.

I saw this danger of tokenization, as well as the failure to situate these writers in their particular social, cultural, and geographic locations, as related to another problem I have experienced in the classroom, particularly when teaching writing by women and minorities: the struggle of students to truly engage with diverse perspectives and to understand the intersections between gender, race, class, and nation. My university has a relative lack of diversity in terms of its student population, especially among undergraduates. In addition, while the university has a reputation for being a relatively liberal, politically engaged campus, that engagement is limited to a fairly narrow population of students. I have seen these two problems reflected in my own classrooms, where only one or two students out of a class may be willing and able to talk frankly about issues of gender, race, and sexuality. And even those students who can discuss gender and feminism specifically often tend to frame that discussion using a primarily U.S.-centered, white, middle-class perspective. Witnessing this reticence to engage with issues of diversity, especially across feminisms, heavily influenced my course design in terms of the readings I chose and the concepts with which I wanted my students to engage. I want my course to help expand my students' perspectives of feminism and of gender more generally (including and especially intersectionality), as well as to equip them both to engage more fully with diverse perspectives and experiences and to speak and write confidently about those issues.

Thus, my purpose in designing my Women and Writing course was two-fold: first, to help students to better see, understand, and communicate about diversity and the intersections among gender, race, sexuality, and nation; and, second, to avoid the appropriation and tokenization of non-Western women writers that parts of the mainstream curriculum sometimes risks. However, I also recognize the challenges in achieving these outcomes. It is my hope that by continually evaluating and reevaluating my own methodologies and my students' responses I can strive toward fully reaching these goals.

Theoretical Rationale

More and more English departments have become interested in and committed to issues of diversity, and an increasing number of classes are being offered that engage with such issues. Some recent critical discussions have also reflected an interest in feminist pedagogy, both in and out of the composition classroom; however, a brief look at the major composition journals shows this discussion to be relatively scant. Julie M. Barst has written about approaches to teaching global feminist writers in the literature classroom in order to “encourage students to understand and consider the position of peoples within their own communities and around the world who are different from them, not only in terms of gender, race, and sexual orientation

but also in terms of religion, class, cultural beliefs and practices, ethnicity, and in many other realms” (149). Similarly, Julie Prebel has discussed negotiating student resistance in a first-year composition course that used a feminist-centered pedagogy to explore and interrogate masculinity. Each article (both of which appeared in the journal *Pedagogy*) offers both theorizations of and practical suggestions for incorporating feminist pedagogy into the classroom. Merry G. Perry has also discussed using a “feminist cultural studies approach” to teaching composition in order to move students toward a recognition of the “political effects of *location* on one’s life and access to resources” (2, emphasis in original). Her main goal, however, is to persuade readers to use such an approach in their own classrooms, rather than to focus on implementing that approach, although she does offer some brief suggestions for doing so. Although the work of these scholars and others has been of critical importance to discussions of feminist pedagogy in the composition classroom, more work needs to be done on practical strategies for incorporating this framework—a transnational feminist framework in particular—into the composition classroom.

Theorizations of feminist pedagogical practices that do accommodate a transnational feminist approach are more often derived instead from women’s and gender studies disciplines, rather than composition. For example, in their volume *Twenty-First-Century Feminist Classrooms: Pedagogies of Identity and Difference*, Amie A. MacDonald and Susan Sánchez-Casal describe feminist pedagogy’s ability to “democratize the classroom by drawing upon the full range of student and faculty subject positions in the production of knowledge” (2) and by focusing on mutuality, conversation, and activism. The two scholars emphasize the crucial importance of realist identity theory in building feminist pedagogical frameworks in order to both provide students with a way to recognize the “real, social, political, and epistemic consequences of identity” and to avoid essentialist theories of those identities as being solely determinate of what we can know (3). Thus, MacDonald and Sánchez-Casal advocate “taking seriously the implications for pedagogy of the multiply-situated and historical nature of identities” so that teachers can “authorize the marginal experiences of our students without either exotifying their subject positions or excluding and/or silencing dominant students” (9). In the same volume, Margaret Hunter calls for challenging courses that are “created from epistemologies of whiteness and maleness,” encouraging teachers to recognize the “subjugated knowledge systems of people of color” and to create courses that build off these knowledge systems in order to “[decenter] the traditional white and male standpoint in our current curricula” (252). Bringing these feminist pedagogical frameworks to bear in the composition classroom can help both to bridge the gap between

feminist pedagogy and composition theories and to avoid tokenizing and appropriating the voices of marginalized writers and students alike.

The efforts of these scholars have begun to transform the classroom into a space that challenges traditionally masculine pedagogies and ways of knowing. However, despite composition studies' acceptance (for the most part) of feminist rhetorics and pedagogies, Hesford and Schell argue in a special issue of *College English* on transnational feminist rhetorics that composition still "operates as an 'isolationist' discipline, where U.S. teachers of writing are focused on composition only within a nationalist paradigm . . . and writing and rhetoric curricula are centered on U.S. popular culture and history" (464). In other words, despite attempts to bring feminist pedagogies and theoretical approaches to bear on composition and rhetoric, the composition classroom tends to problematically prioritize U.S.-centered narratives of nation and feminism. As Hesford and Schell point out, the field's embrace of postcolonial writers like Gloria Anzaldúa risks "institutionalizing certain forms of resistance, romanticizing mobility and hybrid identities, and tokenizing individual writers over and above a contextual and geopolitical analysis of alternative rhetorical practices" (462). Such writers are thus appropriated into the discourse of composition studies without sufficient attention to the social, geographic, and political locations in which they are situated.

Hesford and Schell instead advocate for a "transnational rhetorical perspective," which "strives to address how rhetorical concepts are shaped by cultural, social, and economic interconnectivities and interrelations and cross-border and cross-cultural mobilizations of power, language, resources, and people" (465). This attention to interconnectedness, situatedness, and difference is crucial to transnational feminist pedagogies, particularly in the composition classroom, to avoid tokenizing postcolonial and Third World women writers (and Third World women more generally). Hesford and Schell (and others) have also cautioned against applying Western feminist frameworks to non-Western women and their experiences. In their attempts to represent or understand the experiences of Third World women, scholars, teachers, and students alike often engage in a "reductive and predictable sort of essentialism" (Bahri 524) in their views of and writing about such women. Our scholarship about and pedagogies that involve Third World women writers must situate such discussions in these women's daily, material lives and their social and geographic realities in order to avoid homogenization and appropriation; otherwise, we risk reducing them to "objects of consumption for a developed world that can implicitly and complacently reaffirm its superiority to the rest as the 'norm or referent'" (523). Similarly, Chandra Talpade Mohanty has argued that, too often, "the production of the 'Third World woman' [is] as a singular, monolithic subject" (17) and that Western feminist scholarship—and, I would add, pedagogy—

“cannot avoid the challenge of situating itself and examining its role in . . . a global economic and political framework” (20).

The fact that composition classrooms in particular have not had the benefit of accommodating the decentering of the Western perspective, both in terms of male-dominated epistemologies and of U.S.-centered feminist frameworks, illustrates the need for this work. Through this perspective, students would become better able to recognize their rhetorical situatedness in various cultural, geographic, and political locations, as well as be more equipped to negotiate that situatedness in various writing contexts. In addition, by studying the perspectives of both Western and non-Western women alike, and by examining both the interconnectedness and differences between them, students are provided with an opportunity to recognize their own areas of privilege and engage with issues to which they might not otherwise have access. In the process, this work offers an opportunity for solidarity, with an emphasis on “relations of mutuality, co-responsibility, and common interests” (Mohanty 242).

So the question remains, how do feminist teachers answer the challenge of decentering not only male but also Western feminist frameworks and epistemologies in the composition classroom and at the same time avoid appropriation and homogenization of the women whose voices we wish our students to hear? Mohanty advocates for a “feminist solidarity” or “comparative feminist studies model” of pedagogy as the “most useful and productive pedagogical strategy for feminist cross-cultural work,” as it “provides a way to theorize a complex relational understanding of experience, location, and history such that feminist cross-cultural work moves through the specific context to construct a real notion of universal and of democratization rather than colonization” (238). Instead of an “add Third World women or women of color and stir” pedagogical model, in which non-Western perspectives and cultures are added to an otherwise Western/Eurocentric approach, a comparative feminist studies model is, according to Mohanty, “based on the premise that the local and the global are not defined in terms of physical geography or territory but exist simultaneously and constitute each other” (242). In other words, the experiences and daily material lives of Third World women and women of color are not approached through a Western lens, but are instead viewed *relationally*, and the “conceptual, material, temporal, contextual” links between the local and the global are foregrounded (242).

With this strategy in mind, I conceptualized my Women and Writing course as attempting to bring Mohanty’s comparative feminist studies model to bear on the composition classroom and as answering the call of Hesford and Schell, Hunter, Bahri, and others who emphasize the need for unsettling Western frameworks in our pedagogy. I attempted to set the Western feminisms with which my students were likely most familiar alongside global, transna-

tional feminisms to explore how they interact with and are transformed by each other. My goal in doing so was to encourage students to recognize the ways in which their subject-positions and their writing are rhetorically situated in certain forms of power, privilege, and politics. I also hoped for students to leave my class with better ideas of how to work toward strategies for negotiating solidarity and commonality across difference and to recognize how and why writing can help to accomplish this, thus fostering a sense of social justice that they could carry with them outside the classroom.

Critical Reflection

Because the course centered on the question “Is feminism dead?” and used that question as a springboard for the exploration of non-Western feminisms, when designing the course I began by giving students a brief review of the history of U.S. feminisms. Giving students this reference point from the beginning was not to provide students with the assumption that U.S. feminism is *the* feminism from which all other feminisms (including transnational feminisms) arose and to which they must be compared, but rather to set this history up as a dominant narrative that needs to be challenged and decentered. In addition, students came to the course with varying levels of knowledge about feminism more generally; therefore, I wanted to be sure that we had a set of working definitions to carry through the rest of the semester. The introductory chapter to Rosemary Tong’s *Introduction to Feminist Thought*, as well as the first two episodes of the PBS documentary *Makers: Women Who Make America*, provided good overviews of the history of various U.S. feminisms, offering both descriptions of and challenges to how feminism has been transmitted and transformed over the past 50 years. In large-group discussions of the documentary and in informal course evaluations at the end of the semester, most students valued this overview of feminism, and the documentary itself, as a foundation for subsequent assignments and discussions. This history also helped to dispel some of the negative stereotypes that many students described as associated with feminism in their minds and therefore was useful as a building block for students’ learning to define their relationship with feminism.

I also wanted to challenge the dominance of U.S. feminisms and Western feminist frameworks early in the semester; however, my challenge was at times met with resistance. My goal was for students to learn to see past the dominant narrative of feminism as a U.S.-centric movement in order to begin to consider how women’s experiences and encounters with feminism must be geographically, historically, and materially situated. The introduction to Mohanty’s *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* and selections from bell hooks’s *Feminism Is for Everybody* in particular

provided students with the concepts and tools to begin to challenge Western and other privileged frameworks for viewing the experiences of Third World women and women of color. These readings proved essential for introducing students to non-Western feminist writers by establishing the necessary theoretical frameworks for understanding these writers early in the semester. Despite reiterating to my students that these more theoretically difficult texts were crucial for introducing them to concepts with which later course readings also engaged—concepts such as positionality, global diversity, and privilege—and with which they were expected to engage in their writing throughout the semester, they were at times resistant to that difficulty as well as to the theoretical concepts themselves. After several instances of this resistance, I realized that I needed to do a lot more foregrounding of these more difficult readings and their core ideas prior to students' readings to give them tools with which to negotiate the texts and to minimize resistance to their relative theoretical and conceptual difficulty.

Throughout the semester students continued to read the work of both U.S. and non-U.S. feminists. Reading the work of U.S. and European women writers such as Roxane Gay, Caitlin Moran, and Elisabeth Badinter alongside that of non-Western women writers and U.S. women of color such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Shirley Geok-lin Lim allowed students to read difference across various geographic and social locations, to explore how these writers and the perspectives they give were interconnected, and to understand how these women's writing was rhetorically situated. My hope was that situating their writing in such contexts would help to avoid conceiving of Third World women and women of color as an "undifferentiated group uncomplicated by the heterogeneity that characterizes their counterpart in the more developed world" and to build "a community in which communication can take place meaningfully without ignoring difference" (Bahri 523-24). Somewhat predictably, this was not always a simple transition for students to make. I found that while students were by and large able to understand and apply U.S. feminist frameworks that centered on issues of race, gender, and sexuality, non-Western perspectives often proved more difficult for them to accommodate, particularly in their writing. For example, discussions of issues like Muslim women's veiling and how best to address gender-based oppression in non-Western cultures tended at times to fall back on understanding such issues through U.S.-centric lenses (e.g., viewing all women who wear hijab as victims of patriarchy, positioning the U.S. as a savior figure that can cure the ills of Third World countries, and so forth). These examples illustrate the difficulty of completely decentering Western perspectives on feminism, especially in the space of a single semester. However, students did show a willingness and a desire to learn about non-Western feminisms and to engage with them

in their writing, an encouraging sign that emphasizes both the need to and reward of bringing such frameworks into the classroom.

The major projects for the course—which included a memoir, a literary or film analysis, and a revision of the initial memoir that incorporated concepts from the course texts and traced students’ intellectual development over the course of the semester—were where I saw students’ writing either take off or fall flat. The first project was a short memoir in which students described a moment (or a collection of moments) in which they either arrived at declaring themselves a feminist (if they identified as such) or became aware of their development as a gendered subject. Students were encouraged to engage with race, class, sexuality, and geography and to reflect on how those elements may have shaped how they or others viewed their conceptualizations of their gender. Through this assignment students became aware of how they conceive of their gender or how their feminism may have been shaped by (or even resists) cultural, social, political, and geographic factors. For this initial memoir, the in-class readings and discussions served more as brainstorming material to get students to begin thinking through how situatedness affects their being as gendered subjects, rather than as theoretical texts that inform an analysis through rigorous engagement, as was required for the revision at the end of the semester. Situating their memoirs in the course concepts, both implicitly and explicitly, helped to avoid mere “confessional” writing (although this was not completely absent) and encouraged them to consider the rhetorical and cultural situations in which they wrote and lived.

The revision of the memoir at the end of the semester helped students reflect on their growth over the course of the semester. While some students struggled to fully draw out the connections between their personal experience and how their positionality affected that experience, I was largely impressed by their ability to engage with the course concepts on a personal level and to acknowledge how their subject-positions informed their experiences as feminists and as gendered subjects. In future classes, however, more time will need to be spent in class providing students with strategies for articulating these connections more explicitly in their writing. Students tended to place the events of their original memoir and ideas from the course readings side-by-side in their final essays, without fully bridging the gap between the two and thus leaving connections tenuous at best. As stated above, students also struggled to incorporate the transnational feminist approach that was central to the course into these critical memoirs. Many students chose course readings primarily written by and engaging with Western writers, falling short of taking a wider view of their personal experience that might situate it within non-U.S.- or Euro-centric frameworks. This was likely just as much my own failing to lay sufficient groundwork for, and give students the necessary tools

to negotiate the desired outcomes of, the project, a failure that illustrates the work that needs to go into decentering Western perspectives—both on my part and on the part of my students.

One of the most successful elements of the course, especially considering the small class size, was collaboration—success that was most apparent in an assignment that required a presentation on and discussion of one of the course texts. Each student was responsible for choosing a text from the course schedule on which to give a brief presentation and to pose two to three questions to help direct class discussion. This assignment gave students the opportunity to delve deeply into a text, extract what they considered to be the main or most important points, distill that information into a summary for the class, and place it in conversation with other class readings and concepts, thus fostering close reading, summary, and synthesis skills. It proved to be one of the most valuable assignments of the course, both in terms of honing the above skills and of encouraging the mutual production of knowledge in the classroom. In course reflections, many students identified the discussion assignment as one of the most beneficial for helping them to think through complex and sometimes difficult ideas and for generating open discussions that included diverse perspectives. While they were not required to actually facilitate discussion, the vast majority of students ended up taking responsibility for facilitation and the direction of discussion while at the same time earnestly soliciting insight from others—and often quite skillfully. Students were thus able to take charge of their own learning and, by the end of the semester, were truly able to facilitate discussion for themselves, with minimal intervention from me.

If I were to revise this course, I would make several changes not only to give students a more comprehensive view of transnational feminisms and allow them to compose in a greater variety of genres but also to make space for more disruptive forms of writing—forms that are central to feminist principles—in the major assignments of the course. For example, the memoir assignment could be transformed and made potentially more subversive by employing counterstory, a methodology used by critical race theory that Aja Y. Martinez has argued has important “applications for both scholarly publication and craft in the composition classroom” (37). Martinez describes counterstory as “a method of telling stories by people whose experiences are not often told” that “serves to expose, analyze, and challenge stock stories of racial privilege and can help to strengthen traditions of social, political, and cultural survival and resistance” (38). Martinez and others conceptualize and use this method of storytelling to give voice and authority to the experiences of people of color and to challenge racism and “institutionalized prejudices against racial minorities” (37); however, counterstory can have valuable applications in a composition classroom focused on feminism, as well. Counterstory may offer

a way for students not only to understand and relate personal experiences but also to challenge dominant narratives of sex and gender, thus providing a space for marginalized voices and viewpoints to be heard and allowing for a critique of those dominant narratives.

Additionally, two other possible assignments—the interruptive essay and the manifesto—would better employ feminist practices to encourage students to engage with more disruptive forms of composition. The interruptive essay, described by Laura R. Micciche in “Writing as Feminist Rhetorical Theory,” is somewhat similar to a research-based assignment like a “dialogue of sources” assignment (186); however, the interruptive essay does not merely put sources in conversation with each other to characterize a debate around a certain issue but brings them together “in order to interrupt them, moving tangential ideas to the center, if warranted, in order to put pressure on the center of debate or discussion” (186). Similar to the counterstory, the interruptive essay allows for disruptions of “normative claims and common sense associations” (187) and allows for students not just to enter but to change the conversation surrounding an issue altogether. The interruptive essay would be a worthwhile replacement to a more traditional source-based argument essay, which I have assigned in the past, in that it provides the opportunity for students to engage with an issue on a deeper level and to understand writing as not only agential but also simultaneously performative and counterperformative (187). In addition, transforming the final project of the course into a manifesto, rather than a revised version of students’ original memoirs, would help to further extend and develop these ideas of agency and counternarrative and underscore the politicized nature of writing. As the course ends with J. Jack Halberstam’s *Gaga Feminism: Sex, Gender, and the End of Normal* (a book in which the final chapter is also a manifesto), asking students to compose their own manifestos (perhaps multimodally) in the fashion of Halberstam and other writers would allow for, as Jacqueline Rhodes has pointed out in *Radical Feminism, Writing, and Critical Agency: From Manifesto to Modern*, an “(almost explicit) critique of ‘illegitimate hierarchies of power’” (2).

If teaching this course taught me anything, it is that living up to Mohanty’s model for a comparative feminist studies pedagogy is no easy task, but that the attempt still yields richly rewarding results. Even if I did not fully succeed in *decentering* Western feminist and pedagogical frameworks, I believe that the course did successfully offer *alternative* perspectives, ones that I hope my students took with them even after they left my class. Despite experiencing moments of clumsiness, resistance, and even failure, I was continually impressed by the insights my students brought to discussion and to their writing, as well as by their ability and willingness to engage with issues as wide-ranging as beauty norms, Beyoncé, and same-sex marriage. In addition, the experience of seeing

students develop in their relationship to feminism and to women's issues more generally was incredibly rewarding; by the end of the course, they were better able to articulate verbally and in writing their own relationship to feminism and to situate their own experiences within the larger theoretical frameworks established over the course of the semester. Examining both the successes and the not-quite-successes of the course illustrates the importance of continual revision and exploration in my pedagogical approaches to the course. It is my hope that I, along with my students, will continue to work toward strategies for understanding difference in a feminist framework and that we will foster solidarity with our writing and our daily interactions with others.

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Syllabus

ENG 3060J: Women and Writing
Summer 2014-2015

Course Description

In this course we will consider French feminist Elisabeth Badinter's assessment of the state of feminism since the 1990s as "dead-end feminism," and explore what feminism looks like and means for women (and men) in 2015. Is feminism, indeed, dead? If not, what does it look like now? With these questions in mind, we will look to a variety of media, including television, blogs, documentaries, memoirs, fiction, and more to investigate the ways in which feminism is talked about, contended with, and experienced in contemporary contexts by women across various social, cultural, and geographic locations. We will also compose in a variety of genres, including personal writing and visual and textual analysis, using our writing to engage with and contribute to these conversations.

What You'll Need

- One notebook for notes, free writes, and in-class writing assignments
- Folders for all coursework and handouts and for handing in projects
- Microsoft Word for all writing assignments
- Flash drives for saving and backing up your work

Required Texts

- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. "We Should All Be Feminists." Online video lecture. *TED*. TED Conf., Apr. 2013. Web. 25 Apr. 2015. <<http://tedx-talks.ted.com/video/We-should-all-be-feminists-Chim>>.
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Assignments

- Formal Papers:
 - o Project 1: Memoir
 - o Project 2: Film or Literary Analysis
 - o Project 3: Revised Memoir
- Group Discussion Facilitation
- Other writing exercises (as assigned)

Formal Papers: For Projects 1, 2, and 3, you will engage in extended processes of writing.

As part of this process, you will:

- Produce a complete and polished paper for your peer reviewers.
- Respond to one of your peers' papers. I will assess these peer reviews as part of your daily writing grade. They will also go into the portfolio that you will submit for each project.
- Produce a new paper that you will turn in to me as a part of a larger portfolio for assessment.
- Your portfolio for each project must include (unless otherwise specified):
 - o Your rough draft that you turned in for peer review
 - o Your peer's feedback on your rough draft
 - o Your final draft submitted for assessment
 - o Any brainstorming/prewriting material that went into composing your paper

Group Discussion Facilitation: In order to facilitate discussion and help you and the class work through a particular reading, you will choose one text (including any visual texts) from the course schedule on which to give a brief (8-10 minute) presentation and facilitate class discussion by posing several questions to get discussion going. While what you do with this presentation is relatively open, it is usually useful to summarize the reading, offering what you think are the author's main or most important points, and describe how the reading engages with feminism or feminist thinking more generally. You should also pose 2 to 3 questions to the class that you think we should talk about further. If you'd like, you may incorporate multimedia into your presentation. You may also think about one or all of the following while considering your presentation:

- How the readings relate to earlier material from this class
- What you find most/least useful in the piece—intellectually, politically, or personally
- Why you agree/disagree with an author's approach, argumentation, or evidence
- How the text may shed light on a current issue involving gender, sexuality, or feminism

My Responses to Your Work

I will assess each assignment for completeness and thoughtfulness based on the criteria laid out in the assignment sheet. In addition, I will provide comments for most assignments, both in the form of marginal comments and, for each of the major assignments, in a letter-type document at the end of your assignment. My comments will be formative; in other words, I will ask questions, identify areas for further development, and attempt to provoke your thinking regarding the major elements and issues of the text. I will also pay attention to the surface features of the text (grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.); however, these sentence-level concerns will not be my primary focus. Overall, I aim to point out (1) problems where the text isn't working for the current writing situation and (2) general problems and patterns that require your attention. I do expect that as you continue to receive my feedback throughout the semester, your self-editing skills will improve as you comb your texts with these problems and patterns in mind.

Course Schedule

Listed under each day are the readings that we will discuss that day and, if any, the assignment that is due for that day. Read the text(s) before coming to class, unless there is an asterisk (*) by it; those we will be reviewing in class.

Abbreviation: TSIS = *They Say, I Say*

Week 1: What is Feminism?

Day 1

Introductions to class and to each other; brief overview of history of feminism(s)

Tong, chapter 1

Badinter

Day 2

History of feminism(s) continued

NO CLASS: TSIS, "Entering Class Discussions" (163-6)

View *Makers: Women Who Make America*, episodes 1 and 2

Writing assignment: 1.5-2 page response on *Makers* (due Week 1, Day 3)

Day 3

History and introduction to memoir assignment

Mohanty, "Introduction"

hooks, "Black Women and Feminism," "Coming to Voice," and "Writing Autobiography"

TSIS, "The Art of Summarizing" (30-41)

Week 2: Personal Narrative/Coming to Voice

Day 1

Lim

Nestle

Caitlin Moran, "I Am a Feminist!"

Day 2

Martin

Gay, "Introduction," "Bad Feminist: Take One" and "Bad Feminist: Take Two"

Adichie*

Day 3

hooks, "Beauty Within and Without"

Caitlin Moran, "I Am Fat!"

Makkai*

Week 3: Intersectionality and Positionality

Day 1

hooks, "Global Feminism" and "Race and Gender"

Gay, "Peculiar Benefits"

TSIS, "Ain't So/Is Not" (121-8)

Lyiscott*

Day 2

Straub
Peer review (draft of memoir due)
Day 3
Memoir due
Introduction to literary/film analysis assignment
View *Miss Representation**

Week 4: Representation

Day 1
TSIS, “Entering Conversations about Literature” (184-201)
Chopin
Day 2
Gay, “Girls, Girls, Girls”
Bell
View episode of *Girls**
Day 3
Mohanty, “Under Western Eyes”
Lahiri

Week 5: Gender, Sexuality, and Codes of Social Behavior

Day 1
Ahmed
Friedan, from *The Feminine Mystique*
View *The Hours**
Day 2
Sullivan
View episode of *The Fall**
Peer review (draft of literary/film analysis due)
Day 3
Literary/film analysis due
Introduce revised memoir assignment
View *Half the Sky**

Week 6: Reactions against Feminism

Day 1
Half the Sky discussion (continued)
Bhatia
Day 2
Valenti
TSIS, “Yes/No/Okay/But: Three Ways to Respond” (55-67)
Day 3

Douglas

“Glamorous Housewife” blog

TSIS, “‘Skeptics May Object’: Planting a Naysayer in Your Text”
(78-91)

Week 7: Sexuality and Pop Culture/Class Wrap-up

Day 1

Halberstam, “Going Gaga” and “Gaga Manifesto”

TSIS, “‘As He Himself Puts It’: The Art of Quoting” (42-51)

Day 2

Bornstein

Day 3

Class wrap-up

Revised Memoir due