Overview/Objectives

The course is an introduction and survey of “French Feminism,” particularly the psychoanalytically influenced work of Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixious and Julia Kristeva. The phrase “French Feminism” is to be used carefully. Although it has become shorthand for these three writers, each bears a complicated relationship to the French identity and to feminist movements. Moreover, like other countries, feminism in France is more diverse than could be captured by a trio. Keeping this in mind, the writings of Irigaray, Cixious and Kristeva have become central to the work of many Anglo-American feminists. In this course, we will become familiar with some of their most influential ideas including phallogocentrism, hom(m)osexuality, *écriture feminine*, the semiotic and abjection. Following their inheritance and critiques of Beauvoir, Freud and Lacan, we will evaluate the resources that Irigaray, Cixious and Kristeva provide to feminist theoretical practice.

Course Materials

- Beauvoir, The Second Sex
- Freud, Sexuality and the Psychology of Love
- Irigaray, This Sex Which is Not One
- Cixious, The Newly Born Women
- Oliver, French Feminism Reader
- Oliver, The Portable Kristeva
- +additional articles gathered in coursepack or e-reserve

Grade Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper #1 [+ revision] (5pgs)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper #2 (5 pgs.)</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper #3 (6-8 pgs)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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Major Assignments

*Writing Assignments*—There are three major papers (and one revision) for this class. Students are encouraged to meet with me for assistance at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming a thesis to reflecting on your grade/final product. Additionally students are required to meet with me at some point after the second paper is returned and prior to the final paper deadline. In this meeting we will discuss the development of your writing over the course of the semester and work on ways to make your final paper your best paper.

*Presentation Assignment*—Once a week you or one of your classmates will lead class discussion by giving a short presentation on the day’s reading. Each student will give one presentation over the course of the semester. This presentation will constitute 10% of your final grade. The purpose of these presentations is to help us begin our discussion in a focused manner and to ensure that discussions center on your interests/concerns/confusions/etc with respect to the
readings. More information on the presentation requirement and my grading criteria for presentations will be provided in the first two weeks of the semester.

**Reading Schedule**

**Introduction and Context**

1: Introduction

2: Marks and de Courtivron, Introduction to *New French Feminisms*; Moi, “Feminist Readings; French Texts/American Contexts”

**Becoming Woman and Philosophy**

3: Beauvoir, Intro to the *Second Sex*

4: Beauvoir, “Dreams, Fears, Idols”; Sartre, “Existentialism is a Humanism” and “Bad Faith”

5: Beauvoir, “The Psychoanalytic Point of View”

6: le Doeuff, “Beauvoir and Feminism”

7: le Doeuff, “Red Ink in the Margins,” “Long Hair, Short Ideas”

**Psychoanalysis and Difference**

8: Freud, “Psychogenesis of a Case of Homosexuality in a Woman,” “Some Psychological Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction between the Sexes.” Recommended: Freud, “Fetishism.”


10: Lacan, “The Signification of the Phallus”

11: Irigaray, “A Personal Note: Equal or Different?” and “Any Theory of the Subject Has Always Been Appropriated by the Masculine.”

12: Irigaray “This Sex Which is Not One” and “When Our Lips Speak Together”

13: Irigaray, “Women on the Market,” “Sexes and Genealogies: Each Sex Must Have its Own Rights”

14: Wittig, selection from *The Straight Mind* and “The Category of Sex”

15: Guillaumin, “Race and Nature: The System of Marks”

16: Butler and Cornell, “The Future of Sexual Difference”

**Writing Mystics and Mothers**

17: Cixious, “The Laugh of Medusa”

18: Cixious, “Castration or Decapitiation?”


21: Kristeva, “Freud and Love” and “Approaching Abjection”

22: Kristeva, “Interview with Elaine Hoffman on Feminism in the United States and France”


24: Spivak, “French Feminism in an International Frame”