

Women's Studies 604
GENDER, CULTURE, AND REPRESENTATION
Professor Bonnie Zimmerman

Fall 2000
Wed 4:00-6:40
AH 4157

Email: bonnie.zimmerman@sdsu.edu Office Hours: M & F 9:00-10:00
Office: AH 3175 Wed 3:00-4:00
Phone: 594-5749

This seminar addresses the questions of how "woman" and "the feminine" have been represented in various cultural systems, and how actual women have functioned as creators of literature, art, music, film, and other cultural products. Throughout this course, we will "read" gender across interrelated systems of representation including those of race, ethnicity, nationality, class, age, and sexuality.

Our theoretical discussions may center around the (presumed) oppositions between absence and presence, silence and speech, representation and self-presentation. We will interrogate feminist theories about, among other things, spectatorship, subjectivity, silence, voice, interpretation, and ideology.

The course will be multi-disciplinary, conducted as a seminar, and emphasize student interests.

COURSE TEXTS

Anzaldúa, Gloria, ed.	<i>Making Face, Making Soul: Haciendo Caras</i>
Hart, Lynda	<i>Fatal Women: Lesbian Sexuality and the Mark of Aggression</i>
hooks, bell	<i>Black Looks: Race and Representation</i>
Leonardi, Susan & Rebecca Pope	<i>The Diva's Mouth: Body, Voice, Prima Donna Politics</i>
Trinh T. Minh-ha	<i>When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender and Cultural Politics</i>
<i>Signs</i> Vol. 23, No. 3	<i>Feminisms and Youth Cultures</i>

All books and a reader (R) with additional articles are available at KB Books

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. This class meets once a week. Attendance and participation are essential to the success of the course. Anyone who misses more than two classes cannot expect to receive full credit for the course.
2. Reflection papers due each week (no more than 500 words). These papers should present your thoughts and opinions on the main arguments of the assigned readings.

You will be asked to prepare the readings and facilitate the discussion for one class. At least two students will be assigned to each class period. Part of your responsibility is to prepare collaboratively one set of analytical questions (in lieu of your reflection paper) which must be posted on email no later than Monday noon prior to class. All students are expected to access these questions before class. In addition, you are to think of one feminist cultural product that illustrates any of the issues raised by the readings, and present information about it to the class. You are welcome to bring any supporting materials to class, if relevant and practical. This presentation should take no more than 10 minutes.

3. An academic quality review of any book (other than those assigned for the course) whose content is related to the subject of the seminar. Use the reviews in the *Signs* special issue, or any other feminist journal, as a model. Note that the *Signs* reviews deal with several books related by theme; I am asking you to concentrate on one book only. An academic book review should present enough information about the text that the reader can understand what it is about, but not summarize it excessively. It should evaluate the book's strengths and weaknesses, analyze it in relation to its historical, political, and/or social context, and relate it to current issues in the field of women's studies or feminist scholarship. Finally, it should assess its overall importance to the field. All this in 750-1000 words! You will workshop your drafts in class September 20. Final draft is due September 27.
3. A substantial (20-25 page) seminar paper developing and applying the ideas of the seminar to some aspect of cultural representations and self-presentations of women and/or gender. You are encouraged to think of this as a way to develop ideas or chapters for your graduate thesis (if you are at this stage). Alternately, you may wish to pursue some idea or content matter that particularly intrigues you.

A two-page prospectus and preliminary bibliography are due October 11. You may not change your topic after October 25. The paper is due December 6.

Each student will also present aspects of her/his research to the class. This can be in the form of a conference paper, class

lecture, audiovisual presentation, dramatic reading, structured dialogue or debate, or any other model that is relevant to the work and to the academic goals of the course. Students will be grouped together based upon the content and methodology of their work, or you may construct your own group of 3 or 4 students. Each group will be responsible for organizing their presentations into a coherent 2 1/2 hour class session. Preliminary group assignments will be made October 18; final assignments will be confirmed November 1.

COURSE OUTLINE

Introduction: What is a "Woman"?

Aug 30 Films: *One Fine Day*, *Take the Power*, *Secrets*

Feminism and Cultural Theory

Sept 6 Walters, "From Images of Women to Woman as Image" (R)
Barrett, "Feminism and Cultural Politics" (R)
Anzaldúa, "Haciendo Caras, una Entrada (MF)
de Lauretis, "The Technology of Gender" (R)
Hall, "Encoding, Decoding" (R)

Sept 13 Trinh, *When the Moon Waxes Red*

Sept 20 Workshop Book Reviews

Representing Gender in Multiple Context(s)

Sept 27 Chow, "The Dream of a Butterfly" (R)
Goldsby, "Queen for 307 Days" (R)
Alarcón, "Traductora, Traditora: A Paradigmatic Figure
of Chicana Feminism" (R)
Zook, "Light Skinned-ded Naps" (MF)
Waters, "Journeys of the Mind" (MF)
Omosupe, "In Magazines" (MF)

Oct 4 hooks, *Black Looks*

Oct 11 Hart, *Fatal Women*

Silences: When Women do not "Speak"

- Oct 18 Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, excerpt (R)
Nochlin, "Why Are There No Great Women Artists?" (R)
Walker, "In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens" (R)
Anzaldúa, "Speaking in Tongues" (R)
Anu, "Response to 'Room of One's Own'" (R)
- Oct 25 Lorde, "The Transformation of Silence" (R)
hooks, "Talking Back" (MF)
Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (R)
Ebert, "Woman and/as the Subaltern" (R)
Harjo, "For Alva Benson" (MF)
Mirikitani, "Prisons of Silence" (MF)
Quan, "The Girl Who Wouldn't Sing" (MF)

Creativity, Politics, and Everyday Life

- Nov 1 Rich, "Blood, Bread, and Poetry" (R)
Pershing, "Peace Work out of Piecework" (R)
Graulich, "A Conversation with Faith Ringgold" (R)
Trinh, "Commitment from the Mirror-Writing Box" (MF)
Neumaier, "Judy Baca" (MF)
Cliff, "Object into Subject" (MF)
Viramontes, "'Nopalitos': The Making of Fiction" (MF)
Wong, "For an Asian Woman Who Says My Poetry Gives Her
a Stomachache" (R)
Rose, "Naming Power" (R)

Finding/Creating Voice

- Nov 8 Leonard & Pope, *The Diva's Mouth*
- Nov 15 *Signs, Feminisms and Youth Cultures*

Presentations and Evaluations

- Nov 22 No class: prepare seminar papers and presentations
- Nov 29 Student Presentations
- Dec 6 " "
- Dec 13 " "