

Students frequently express an academic interest in feminist issues, but do not always have time in their schedules to take courses in the Program in Feminist Studies. What is offered here are two reading lists for do it yourself introductions to women's issues. The first is a general introduction to how feminism has evolved over time as well as current issues in feminist theory. The second list provides texts focused on representations of women and men in the media and offers insight into the implications of these images in our lives. It was difficult to distill whole bodies of feminist literature down to a few pieces, but these selections were chosen based on their appeal to students and ability to get at the heart of issues that continue to confront all of us in the 21st century. The amount of reading is designed to correspond roughly to a 10-week quarter in which a student would read on average about ½ a book per week. All texts are available in the WCC library.

Introduction to Feminist Theory Reading List

Anzaldua, G. & Keating, A. (2002) *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*. Routledge: New York.

This anthology provides essays by a diversity of women, whose writings focus on the intersections of gender, race, class, and other markers of identity in the form of personal narrative. It is a sequel of sorts to *This Bridge Called my Back*, a seminal work in the development of third wave feminism by Gloria Anzaldua and Cherrie Moraga published in 1981.

Freedman, E. (2007). *The Essential Feminist Reader*. Random House: New York.

This collection of historical documents traces the development of feminist thinking and influence in world history. It fills the gaps that exist in most of our historical education and illuminates how activists throughout history have moved forward agendas of gender equality.

hooks, b. (2000). *Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics*. South End Press: Cambridge, MA.

This slim book provides a great “101” into how sexism and racism have worked in the past, continue to pervade the present, and can be confronted for a better future. This is a very accessible read that can also serve as a great gift for all the “I’m not a feminist, but...” friends and relatives in your life.

Mohanty, C. (2006) *Feminism Without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Duke University Press: Durham.

This text tackles some of the more complex issues in feminist theory, including questions of a universal female experience, postcolonial feminism, links between theory and practice, and feminist pedagogy. This is suitable for those seeking something beyond the “101”, who want to delve into the larger questions guiding contemporary, transnational feminist thought.

Roth, B. (2004). *Separate Roads to Feminism: Black, Chicana, and White Feminist Movements in America's Second Wave*. Cambridge University Press: New York.

This text offers an analysis of the second wave feminist movement, challenging the notions that it was largely a white, middle class phenomenon. This book offers a great description of the African American, Chicana, and white feminist movements as simultaneous events working synergistically to affect change.

Representations of Gender in the Media Reading List

Faludi, S. (2006). *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*. Doubleday: New York.

This text offers a disturbing picture of the 1980's and early 1990's, describing the media reaction, or backlash to second wave feminism by creating scare campaigns around fabricated "trends" like the man shortage and infertility epidemic. These campaigns were targeted to single career women, and aimed to question women's legitimacy in the workplace and as wage earners. This book expertly explains why things are the way they are for women today, by using hard facts to expose the emotional appeals of feminisms opponents.

Kilbourne, J. (1999). *Can't Buy My Love: How Advertising Changes the Way We Think and Feel*. Touchstone: New York.

This book exposes the hidden link between sexism and consumerism in our society. It examines how advertisements are constructed to provoke feeling of inadequacy that can only be mitigated by purchasing commodified "happiness". By colonize our collective minds to turn a profit, advertisers exploit our deepest hopes, fears, and desires to lock consumers into perpetuated cycles of self-loathing and buying.

Jensen, R. (2007). *Getting Off: Pornography and the End of Masculinity*. South End Press: Cambridge, MA.

This book offers a powerful critique of pornography as media, arguing skillfully for the violence against women it promotes, and rejecting arguments that purport pornography as sex-positive or feminist in any way. This book is an excellent read for unpacking the complexities involved with objectification and offers fresh insight into a problem that has a long history, but is almost invisible as a social justice issue in our current society.

Pascoe, C.J. (2007). *Dude, You're a Fag: Masculinity and Sexuality in High School*. University of California Press: Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA.

This book provides the details and results of an ethnographic study conducted in a California high school around the ways in which masculinity and femininity are constructed by school institutions during the adolescent years. By defamiliarizing the reader with rites of passage that are widely accepted as the norm, it shows how these rituals reinforce notions of sexism and heteronormativity.

Wolf, N. (2002). *The Beauty Myth: How Images of Beauty Are Used Against Women*. HarperCollins Publishers, Inc: New York.

A classic in the feminist canon, this book offers a critique of the ways in which women are pressured to expend endless time and energy to achieve impossible standards of beauty. With the prevalence of eating disorders today, this book offers an important contextual analysis of the cultural myths surrounding beauty, and debunks the widely accepted conventional wisdom surrounding objective standards of beauty.