

Feminist Theory and Practice (16:988:515:01)

Professor Mary Hawkesworth

Fall 2016, W 9:15 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.

Feminist theory is a vibrant intellectual practice that raises new questions, brings new evidence, and poses significant challenges to academic disciplines spanning the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Theory* (Disch and Hawkesworth 2016) provides a rich overview of the analytical frameworks and theoretical concepts that feminist theorists have developed to explicate the known world. Featuring leading feminist theorists from diverse regions of the globe, this collection delves into forty-nine subject areas, demonstrating the complexity of feminist challenges to established knowledge, while also engaging areas of contestation within feminist theory. The chapters illuminate dimensions of social, cultural, political, economic, scientific, national, and transnational life that go undetected in mainstream discourses. They create ways of comprehending the politics of difference, which refuses essentialism, while also resisting the temptation to reduce processes of racialization and gendering to questions of embodiment. They document the manifold ways in which hierarchies of difference are produced, sustained, challenged, and transformed through knowledge production and regimes of visibility and through economic restructuring, the practices of international governmental and financial institutions, and the laws, norms, and policies of nation-states, communities, workplaces, and households.

The chapters in the *Handbook* encompass topics that bridge academic terrains that are often treated in isolation from one another, covering:

- Standard topics of social and political science (e.g., civilization, development, divisions of labor, economies, institutions, markets, migration, militarization, prisons, policy, politics, representation, state/nation, the transnational, violence);
- Terms of art in cultural studies and humanities (e.g., affect, agency, experience, identities, intersectionality, jurisprudence, narrative, performativity, popular culture, posthumanism, religion, representation, standpoint, temporality, visual culture);
- Discourses associated with medicine and science (e.g., cyborgs, health, intersexuality, nature, pregnancy, reproduction, science studies, sex/gender, sexuality, transsexuality);
- Topics of contemporary critical theory that have been transformed through feminist theorization (e.g., biopolitics, coloniality, diaspora, microphysics of power, norms/normalization, postcoloniality, race/racialization, subjectivity/subjectivation).

Using the *Handbook* (which will be available on SAKAI) as our point of departure, this graduate colloquium will explore how feminist theory engages and transforms contemporary practices across these diverse domains.