DPLS 774 Leadership & Feminist Theory

Spring 2010 3 Credits

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Office hours: Thursdays & Fridays on weeks that class meets from 4:00-5:00 pm.
Other times by appointment.

Class Dates: January 14, January 28, February 4, February 18, March 4, March 18, March 25, April 8

Course Description
This course will engage participants to think with feminist theory toward new and perhaps more productive understandings of leadership. Borrowing from Judith Butler's project in the book *Undoing Gender*, this course will engage the notion of "undoing leadership" by identifying what we mean by leadership, and then to examine the ways in which our expectations are dependent on gendered norms and cultural expectations. In other words, to question where our notions of leadership come from and/or how they are informed.

Specific objectives include:
- To think an undoing of leadership that invokes a deconstruction of leadership.
- To engage in an identification and examination of the remains, traces, or "baggage" if you will, of our ideals of leadership that serve to frame and limit what "counts" as leadership as informed by gender stereotypes.
- To interrogate the vestiges of our "normative understandings of leadership" as determined by gender and gendered stereotypes.
- To examine the restrictive notions of leadership and of leaders as we impose restrictive conceptions determined by gender, race, age, position, etc.

Required Texts

Additional Readings as posted on Blackboard

**Assignments and Grading**

**Class Participation (10%)**
Attend and participate actively in class discussions. Students must inform the instructor in advance if they are unable to attend a class session. In accordance with departmental policy, students must repeat the course if they miss more than 2 class sessions.

**Blackboard Postings (10%)**
Respond to queries on blackboard based on readings for each class.

**Group Project (20%)**
Each group will lead a discussion on a designated section of the book, *Women on Power*. You may choose to begin with an overview of the key themes in the section and how it relates to our readings and discussions, focusing on the implications for leadership. A compilation of discussion questions and/or an activity that engages our thinking around the themes are other possible suggestions.

**Mid-Term Assignment (20%)**
Response paper to Chris Weedon's, *Feminist Practice & Poststructuralist Theory*. Write a five-page paper that addresses the question of both how and why language matter for feminist theorists and what is to be learned from your reading of this text as it informs a critique of the "doing" of leadership. What is meant by leadership and what are the assumptions inherent in the language (signs) that we use to describe that which is (i.e., signified). **Paper Due Date:** February 18

**Final Paper (40%)**
Choose a book, film, case study, or leader. Craft a 15-20 page scholarly paper using the example of your choice to illustrate your key points. Use the course objectives to help you frame your paper in terms of how this example illustrates an undoing of gender and a rethinking of leadership. Mobilize class readings and/or other scholarly books and articles to support your claims. For instance, how does your person/book/film, etc. challenge gendered norms? How is leadership being deconstructed? How does language function to constrain or open up new imaginings? What is opened up in terms of a thinking differently about leadership and leadership studies? **Paper Due Date:** April 8

Late work will not be accepted unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor.
Point/Grade correspondence for Grades:

95-100%   = A
90-94.99% = A-
85-90%     = B
80-84.99% = B-

Grading Criteria for Written Work (Adapted from the DPLS Academic Papers Rubric)

Content Criteria:
The content of papers should reflect the level and style of content in readings and discussions. There is an expectation that doctoral students will reach outside of their comfort zone in terms of appropriation of ideas, concepts, and frameworks. The substance of papers and other writings will be weighed against the general level of discourse in class meetings and the style and density of expression of the readings.

Thought and Expression Criteria
Student writing should raise vital questions or issues, formulating them clearly and precisely. I will be looking for evidence of breadth and depth and the insightful, in-depth analysis of complex ideas. Main points should be developed and supported with relevant information and references that are appropriately incorporated.

The organization and logic of your writing is critical. The expectation is for well focused, well organized, and well reasoned conclusions. The writing should flow with the reader not getting lost or having to work to determine what you are saying.

There is also an expectation that your writing/thinking has an open and inclusive character when exploring alternative systems of thought, recognizing and assessing, as appropriate, their assumptions, implications, and/or practical consequences.

Technical Criteria
Your writing should be clear and demonstrate a high level of vocabulary through careful word choice. Sentences should be constructed skillfully and purposefully. Transitions between paragraphs and sections are important and will be evaluated for their efficacy in weaving your concepts, themes, and purposes together. Summaries and conclusions are also vital elements of good writing and will be evaluated based on their appropriateness and effectiveness.

Grammar, punctuation, and spelling are expected to be flawless. Careful proof reading of your paper is a basic expectation.

Papers, unless otherwise noted are to be completed in APA style. References should be cited properly within the text and a complete reference list must be provided. Appropriate use of headings will also be noted. Refer to the template for academic course papers for further guidance.
Course Schedule

Week 1 (Jan 14) Feminism(s) and Poststructural Theory
Readings
  • Weedon, Chapters 1-3
Course Overview
Escaping Gender

Week 2 (Jan 28) Language and Subjectivity
Readings
  • Alcoff (PDF file on blackboard)
  • Butler, Introduction
  • Weedon, Chapter 4
  • Collins, Part I
  • St. Pierre Poststructural Feminism (PDF file on blackboard)

Week 3 (Feb 4) Historical Construction of Gender
Readings
  • Butler, Chapters 1-2
  • Collins, Chapters 4-5
  • Freeman, et al., Foreword & Chapter 1
  • Weedon, Chapters 5-6

Week 4 (Feb 18) Discourse Power Resistance
Readings
  • Butler, Chapters 3-4
  • Collins, Chapters 6-8
Women on Power Part I
Group I Presentation

Week 5 (March 4) Desire for Recognition
Readings
  • Butler, Chapters 5-6
  • Collins, Chapters 9-10
Women on Power Part II
Group II Presentation

Week 6 (March 18) Essentializing Gender
Readings
  • Butler, Chapters 8-9
  • Collins, Chapters 11-12
Women on Power Part III
Group III Presentation
Week 7 (March 25)    Undoing Leadership
Readings
- Butler, Chapters 10-11
- Collins, Chapter 13
- Skrla (PDF on Blackboard)
Women on Power Part IV
Group IV Presentation

Week 8 (April 8)    Openings
Readings
- Collins, Chapters 14-15, epilogue
Presentations
Wrap-Up