

UNIVERSIDAD DE COSTA RICA
SISTEMA DE ESTUDIOS DE POSGRADO
PROGRAMA DE POSGRADO EN LITERATURA
Maestría académica en Literatura Inglesa
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SP-7723: Gender and Knowledge (Género y Conocimiento)

I. Description:

This graduate seminar explores a range of feminist theory and literary texts focusing on how we understand and construct our physical and societal reality through the technology of gender in postmodern times. In this course, we will critically analyze the “sticky threads” between topics like religion, the environment, science, genes, reproduction, colonization, technology, science and the body and explore how these affect current configurations of gender, race, class, ability status, and sexuality. In the course, students will investigate classic and contemporary feminist science fiction novels through the lens of ecofeminism, feminist science studies, cyber-feminism, the cyborg, post-humanism, and queer ecologies. Through this process, students will deconstruct the concept of “knowledge”, monolithic truths, linear time, and the divisions between “human/animal/machine”. Classes will be developed 100% virtually. Virtual platforms will be used as the main online resources to develop the content of the course in accordance with the institutional normative regarding the pandemic COVID 19.

II. Course Objectives:

1. General Objectives:

Students will

- A: Analyze classic feminist texts to develop a strong understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of ecofeminism, cyber-feminism, feminist studies, post-humanism and queer ecologies.
- B. Deconstruct and destabilize concepts of universal truth, objective science, and linear history through feminist theory and feminist science fiction.
- C. Apply advanced feminist theory to an understanding of transgressive works of feminist science literature.
- D. Explore the intersections between race, social class, ability status, and sexualities in contemporary society by applying the theories of hybridity.
- E. Interrogate the existence of oppressive realities in regard to science, religion, reproduction, racism, gene fetishism, colonization, and environmental destruction through feminist science fiction and theory.

2. Specific Objectives:

Students will:

- A. Investigate the fields of feminist theory that question science and the production of universal knowledge, including ecofeminism, feminist science studies, cyber-feminism, the cyborg, and queer ecologies.
- B. Respectfully and intelligently question and / or challenge each other's interpretations of feminist theory and feminist science fiction and its applications in contemporary society.
- C. Analyze advanced feminist theory and apply it efficiently to works of feminist science fiction.
- D. Write concise, specific, and intelligent response papers at an advanced level.
- E. Efficiently and proficiently run an advanced graduate class, with adequate presentation materials, proper time management and appropriate encouragement of class participation.
- F. Write an excellently written, thoroughly researched, theoretically and analytically sound, publishable final paper.

III. Methodology:

The assigned readings for this course will challenge students. Of course, the instructor will lecture and offer guidance during class discussions and presentations; nevertheless, students are expected to lead discussions and bring their own observations, experiences, and intellectual concerns with the readings to the virtual class. In virtual class discussions, we will consider the assigned readings in relation to the contemporary and historical intellectual and political movements in which they figure and their meanings for our political reality today. Class discussions will draw from various academic disciplines including philosophy, political theory, history, cultural studies, and literary theory and from a variety of cultural forms including literature, film, television, the media, the visual and plastic arts and music. In addition to class participation, each student will write two 4-5 page response papers on his/her theories of choice throughout the semester and give one presentation/discussion leading. For their final paper, students will select a novel to apply the theories discussed in class and write a 12-15-page formal, academic essay, with a minimum 12-source bibliography. Class time includes asynchronous as well as synchronous activities.

IV. Evaluation:

- Blog (20%)
- Response Papers, 2 (4-5 pages) (10% each, 20%)

- 1 Class Presentations/Discussion Leading (20%)
- Final Paper (Analysis of a Literary Text) (12-15 pages) (40%)

V. Proposed Calendar of Readings, Evaluation, and Assignments:

Eco-Feminism and the Cyborg

Week 1: Course Introduction

Read In Class: 21 Questions

Week 2:

Readings: 1) Theoretical work: Women who run with the Wolves 1-73
2) Literary work: The Left Hand of Darkness

Week 3:

Readings: 1) Theoretical work: “A Cyborg Manifesto”
2) Literary work: The Left Hand of Darkness

Week 4:

Readings: 2) Literary work: The Left Hand of Darkness
Assignments: Response Paper option #1 Due

Feminist Science Studies: Androcentric, Colonial Science

Week 5:

Readings: 1) Theoretical work: “Domination over Nature”
“Secrets of God, Nature and Life”
2) Literary work: The Handmaid’s Tale

Week 6:

Readings: 1) Theoretical work: “Gender, Race, and Nation”
“Democratizing Biology”
2) Literary work: The Handmaid’s Tale

Week 7:

Readings: 1) Literary work: The Handmaid’s Tale
Assignments: Response Paper #2 Due

Feminist Science Studies: New World Order

Week 8:

Readings: 1) Theoretical work: Modest_Witness (49-101)
2) Literary work: The Female Man

Week 9:

Readings: 1) Theoretical work: Modest_Witness (173-265)
2) Literary work: The Female Man

Week 10:

Readings: "1) Literary work: The Female Man
Assignments: Response Paper #3 Due

Cyber-feminism and Post-Humanism

Week 11:

Readings: 1) Theoretical work: Domain Errors (9-28, 123-148, 165-186)
Part of "Molecular Feminisms"
2) Literary work: Oryx and Crake

Week 12:

Readings: 1) Theoretical work: "Illustrations and (L)imitations"
"Intro to Post-human Bodies"
2) Literary work: Oryx and Crake

Week 13:

Readings: 1) Literary work: Orynx and Crake
Assignments: Response Paper #4 Due
Final paper proposal with annotated bibliography

Queer Ecologies

Week 14:

Readings: 1) Theoretical work: "Queer Ecologies"
2) Literary work: Parable of the Sower

Week 15:

Readings: 1) Literary work: Parable of the Sower
Assignments: Response Paper #5 Due

Week 16: Final Paper and Blog Due

Presentations and discussion of Final Paper and Blogs

*Blog entries will be spread out over different reading and topics throughout the course. The professor may give a prompt for reflection, or they may be open to the students' creation.

**Presentation dates and topics will be decided during the first week of class.

VI. Bibliography (Theory and Literature):

Atwood, Margaret. *The Handmaidens Tale*. Houghton & Mifflin, 1986.

Atwood, Margaret. *Oryx and Crake: a Novel*. Anchor Books, a Division of Random House Inc.,
2017.

- Bartsch, Ingrid, and Muriel Lederman. *The Gender and Science Reader*. Routledge, 2003.
- Butler, Octavia E. *Parable of the Sower*. Seven Stories Press, 2016.
- Estés, Clarissa Pinkola. *Women Who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetype*. Ballantine Books, 2003.
- Fernandez, Maria, et al. *Domain Errors!: Cyberfeminist Practices*. Autonomedia, 2002.
- Halberstam, Judith. *Posthuman Bodies*. Indiana Univ. Press, 1995.
- Haraway, Donna J. *Modest Witness Second Millennium: Femaleman Meets Oncomouse: Feminism and Technoscience*. Routledge, 1997.
- Jones, Amelia. *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*. Routledge, 2010.
- K., Le Guin, Ursula. *Left Hand of Darkness*. Gollanz, 2018.
- Rodríguez, Adriana Jiménez. “‘Strange Coupling’: Vegan Ecofeminism and Queer Ecologies in Theory and in Practice CHAPTER 1: A Brief Survey of the Field of Ecofeminism.” *Revista De Lenguas Modernas*, no. 25, 2017, doi:10.15517/rlm.v0i25.27713.
- Roy, Deboleena. *Molecular Feminisms: Biology, Becomings, and Life in the Lab*. University of Washington Press, 2018.
- Russ, Joanna. *The Female Man*. Gollancz, 2010.
- Terry, Jennifer, and Melodie Calvert. *Processed Lives: Gender and Technology in Everyday Life*. Routledge, 1997.