

Feminist Epistemologies

Spring 2008 WS 5363-01; Wednesdays 2:30 to 5:20 p.m.; HDB 209

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HDB Office Hours: Wednesdays 1 to 2:30 p.m.; Saturdays (1/19, 2/9, 3/8, 4/5, & 5/3): 12 to 1 & 4 to 5 p.m.

The unleashed power of the atom has changed everything but our way of thinking; and so we are headed for an unparalleled catastrophe. . . . A new type of thinking is indispensable if [hu]mankind is to survive and develop further.

Albert Einstein

If it is a question of fragmenting so as to decentralize instead of dividing so as to conquer, then what is needed is perhaps not a clean erasure but rather a constant displacement of the two-by-two system of division to which analytical thinking is often subjected. In many cases emphasis is necessarily placed upon a reversal of the hierarchy implied in the opposition between mind and body, spiritual and material, thinking and feeling, abstract and concrete, theory and [39] practice. However, to prevent this counter-practice from freezing into a dogma (in which the dominance-submission pattern remains unchanged) the strategy of mere reversal needs to be displaced further, that is to say, neither simply renounced nor accepted as an end in itself.

Trinh T. Minh-ha

In trying to become "objective," Western culture made "objects" of things and people when it distanced itself from them, thereby losing "touch" with them. This dichotomy is the root of all violence. Not only was the brain split into two functions but so was reality. Thus people who inhabit both realities are forced to live in the interface between the two, forced to become adept at switching modes.

Gloria E. Anzaldúa

Feminist epistemology suggests that integrating women's contributions into the domain of science and knowledge will not constitute a mere adding of details; it will not merely widen the canvas but result in a shift of perspective enabling us to see a very different picture. The inclusion of women's perspectives will not merely amount to women participating in greater numbers in the existing practice of science and knowledge, but it will change the very nature of these activities and their self-understanding.

Uma Narayan

The greatest revolution of our time is in the way we see the world. The mechanistic paradigm underlying the Industrial Growth Society gives way to the realization that we belong to a living, self-organizing cosmos. General systems theory, emerging from the life sciences, brings fresh evidence to confirm ancient, indigenous teachings: the Earth is alive, mind is pervasive, all beings are our relations. This realization changes everything. It changes our perceptions of who we are and what we need, and how we can trustfully act together for a decent, noble future.

Joanna Macy

Course Description: Employing feminist/womanist and indigenous critiques of Enlightenment-based epistemologies, this course explores dominant and subjugated knowledge systems. We examine issues such as the following: Is reason gendered and/or 'raced'? In what ways, if any, do social, geographical, historical, and bodily location affect knowledge production and consumption? How are knowledge, perception, belief, action, and power inter-related? What "counts" as knowledge, as fact/fiction, as truth/story? What are the justifications for these

different designations, and when are such distinctions useful? How do feminist/womanist/indigenous knowledges alter or subvert research materials and methodologies in conventional academic disciplines? Do these challenges affect how you think of research materials and methodologies in your own field(s)? What kinds of knowledge are transformative and for whom? Should knowledge, necessarily, have transformative potential--in other words, whose interests are/should be/could be served by diversifying what 'counts' as knowledge and truth?

Course Goals/Student Learning Outcomes: Students who successfully complete this course will obtain an increased understanding of the following: feminist/womanist/indigenous epistemologies and interventions into dominant knowledge systems; the relationship between power and knowledge; and epistemological debates, variations, and controversies within feminist theory. Students will also be able to: 1) evaluate discipline-specific epistemological framework(s); 2) understand, evaluate, and appreciate a diverse range of representations or understandings of knowledge claims and knowledge formations; and 3) articulate a definition of feminist epistemology as an area of study within Women's Studies and relative to their own disciplinary field(s). Students will obtain an increasingly complex ability to think relationally and an increasingly nuanced understanding of the ways commonalities, similarities, and differences work together; improved writing skills; and enhanced critical thinking skills.

Required Texts:

Patricia Hill Collins: Black Feminist Thought (2nd edition)

Gloria E. Anzaldúa: Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza (2nd edition)

Anna Lee Walters: Ghost Singer

Barbara Neely: Blanche on the Lam

Linda Alcoff & Elizabeth Potter, eds: Feminist Epistemologies* (FE)

Andermahr, Lovell, Wolkowitz: A Glossary of Feminist Theory

Michelle Le Doeuff: The Sex of Knowing

M. Jacqui Alexander: Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*

Shannon Sullivan & Nancy Tuana, eds: Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance (REI)

Recommended Texts:

Joanna Macy: Mutual Causality in Buddhism and General Systems Theory: The Dharma of Natural Systems

George Sefa Dei et. al., ed: Indigenous Knowledges in Global Contexts: Multiple Readings of Our World* (IK)

Anzaldúa and Keating, ed.: this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation

*On reserve at the Blagg-Huey Library; Mutual Causality and Black Feminist Thought are available via the library's electronic books net library.

Required Readings: Paula Gunn Allen: "The Sacred Hoop;" Arleen Dallery: "The Politics of Writing (the) Body: *Ecriture Feminine*;" Cynthia B. Dillard: "The Substance of Things Hoped For, The Evidence of Things Not Seen: Examining an Endarkened Feminist Epistemology in Educational Research and Leadership;" Owen J. Dwyer & John Paul Jones III: "White Socio-Spatial Epistemology;" Marilyn Frye: "White Woman Feminist; 1983-1992;" Elizabeth Grosz: "The In(ter)vention of Feminist Knowledges;" Inés Hernández-Ávila: "Mediations of the Spirit: Native American Religious Traditions and the Ethics of Representation;" Mary E. Hess: "White Religious Educators and Unlearning Racism;" Aída Hurtado: "Theory in the Flesh: Toward an Endarkened Epistemology;" Genevieve Lloyd: "Reason as Attainment" and "Reason as

Progress;" Joanna Macy: "The Great Turning;" Madigan, Johnson, & Linton: "The Language of Psychology: APA Style as Epistemology;" Uma Narayan: "The Project of Feminist Epistemology: Perspectives from a Nonwestern Feminist;" James J. Scheurich & Michelle D. Young: "Coloring Epistemologies: Are Our Research Epistemologies Racially Biased?;" Linda Tuhiwai Smith: "Colonizing Knowledges;" Shari Stone-Mediatore: "Challenging Academic Norms: An Epistemology for Feminist and Multicultural Classrooms." **Please note: These readings can be found on our Blackboard website, under "Course Documents," in a file called "Required Readings." It is your responsibility to retrieve these handouts.**

Recommended Readings: Mary Ballou: "Women and Spirit: Two Nonprofits in Psychology;" Hélène Cixous: "The Laugh of the Medusa;" Melissa J. Fiesta: "Solving Mysteries of Culture and Self;" Ann Rosalind Jones: "Writing the Body: "Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of Ecriture feminine;" Caroline New: "Realism, Deconstruction, and the Feminist Standpoint;" Nancy Pineda-Madrid: "Notes Toward a Chicanafeminist Epistemology;" Kathryn Shanley: "Time and Time-Again: Notes Toward an Understanding of Radical Elements in American Indian Fiction;" Marilyn Frye: "On Being White... **Please note: These readings can be found on our Blackboard website, under "Course Documents," in a file called "Recommended Readings." I hope that you will retrieve and read these handouts.**

As You Read: WS 5363 is a graduate-level course, and I expect all students to follow graduate-level academic practices: 1) I expect you to complete all readings by the date listed in the syllabus; 2) I expect you to read the material thoughtfully and in an engaged manner (take notes, reflect on the material, etc.); 3) I expect you to read all endnotes and footnotes; 4) I expect you to read (not skim) all of the required readings--even those you find "boring" or difficult; 5) I expect you to reread those texts which you have previously read; 6) I expect you to seek out definitions for words and terminology you don't know: Start with A Glossary of Feminist Theory; if the words don't appear in the Glossary, try the following websites:

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophia: <http://plato.stanford.edu/contents.html>

Theory. Org. UK: <http://www.theory.org.uk/>

Popcultures.com <http://www.popcultures.com/>

Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy <http://www.iep.utm.edu/>

If the terms do not appear in any of these sites, email our class listserv.

This reading-intensive course takes a nonlinear, comparative, dialogic approach. Throughout the course we will be asking the questions listed above under "Course Description," so please think about them as you read. Please read all poems several times.

Grades: Grades will be awarded on a point system. It is your responsibility to keep track of your number of points.

1. Attendance: Each class is worth 15 points. (Points will be deducted for late arrivals and early departures. The specific number of points deducted will depend on how late you arrive and/or how early you leave.) A significant portion of your grade is based on attendance. You are allowed two absences (although you will still lose attendance points for these absences). If you miss three or four classes, you will be unable to receive any grade higher than a B. If you miss more than four classes, you will be unable to receive any grade higher than a C.

2. Participation: Participation entails both engaged, respectful listening and informed discussion. Personal opinions play a role in class dialogues but do not substitute for a concerted effort to grasp the scholarly material in the course. Because it's important that we all respect each other's needs, values, and views, our conversations will be guided by open-minded listening to divergent opinions. As June Jordan states: "*Agreement is not the point. Mutual respect that can accommodate genuine disagreement is the civilized point of intellectual exchange, particularly in a political context.*" (For more on this topic, see pages 9 to 10 in the

syllabus.) Discussion takes two forms: in-class dialogue and electronic dialogue on Blackboard. I have set up, on the Discussion Board, a Forum called *EXPRESS YOURSELF!* I hope that you will use this forum to share your ideas, thoughts, reflections, and so on about the issues raised in this course. Occasionally I might suggest topics for discussion. (Participation is worth up to 50 points. If you don't share your ideas regularly in class, you should do so on Blackboard.)

3. Discussion Questions: For our classes on 1/23, 1/30, 2/6, 2/13, 2/20, 2/27, 3/5, 3/12, 4/2, 4/9, 4/16, & 4/23 you will design a discussion question (questions you have about the readings that you'd like us to explore in class). A discussion question can deal specifically with one of the assigned readings or it can be a bit broader and engage several readings. Your discussion questions will significantly guide our class conversations and serve at least three additional purposes: 1) They offer opportunities for students to reflect more deeply on the assigned readings and, through this reflection, to deepen their learning. 2) They enhance student accountability and give students more control over our time together. 3) They allow me to assess student interests and learning. **Question format instructions:** If you ask a question about a specific passage, please provide the quotation and page number(s); if you ask a question about an issue found on specific pages, please include the page numbers. (There is no need to provide full bibliographical information for these questions.) Mark with an asterisk (*) those questions that you really hope we'll have time to discuss. Email your questions to me in two formats: 1) pasted into the body of the email and 2) saved in Wordperfect or Word and sent as an attachment. (Just send one email; include both formats in a single email.) Do not ask definition-based or other easily researched questions (for instance: "What does 'episteme' mean?" or "What is Gender Studies?"). Each week's discussion question is worth up to 5 points, based on both content (50%) and form (50%), and will be due on or before Tuesdays at 9 a.m. (I'll give you an extra 3 points if I receive your questions by Sunday at 9 p.m.) Please do not wait until the last minute to send your question; I will not give credit for late questions even if their tardiness is due to technical difficulties.

4. Talking Notes Handout: For our classes on 4/23 and 4/30, you will be asked to read a book chapter, prepare a handout, bring copies of your handout for the entire class, and lead a short (five- to ten-minute) discussion on it. Your handout may be no longer than four pages, or points will be deducted. (If you want to include the maximum amount of material, your handout may be single-spaced in 11-inch Arial font.) At the top of the page, include your text's title, author, and full page numbers for the essay. Do not try to write a brief essay. Instead, please follow this format:

Summary: Succinctly summarize the text, focusing especially on the main argument. Your summary should be only five to seven sentences. Don't just give details; interpret the text. Please be sure to explain why you did or did not find the argument persuasive.

Outline: Outline the essay structure (include page numbers for each section). Do not rely primarily on quotations. Whenever possible, paraphrase and put the ideas in your own words. If you use the author's section titles as part of your outline, be sure to put these titles in quotation marks.

Quotations: Select two key quotations that best illustrate the text. Briefly explain why you find them so effective.

Connections: List other course authors/readings/epistemologies which your selected text resembles. Briefly explain why you see this resemblance.

These handouts serve several purposes, including: 1) they allow us, as a class, to cover more material; 2) they enable students to work on holistic-critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. Each handout will be worth up to 20 points (based on both content and form). In order to receive full credit for these assignments, you must be in class on the day they are due. You will select your text for Talking Notes #1 in class on 2/13.

5. Disciplinary Research Paper: This assignment requires you to research your discipline's conventional/traditional epistemological framework. (If you are a graduate student in women's

studies, I recommend that you select either your undergraduate discipline or a discipline you're interested in entering for your doctorate. If you are a graduate student in another discipline, you should analyze that discipline's epistemology.) As part of this assignment, you will submit an annotated bibliography consisting of 10 texts. By the time you write your research paper, you should be able to answer the following questions: 1) How does the discipline define knowledge? 2) What methodologies (logic? analysis? reason? previous authorities? intuition? etc.) do members of your discipline use and value most highly as they attempt to arrive at knowledge & truth? 3) What types of information do they most value (facts, experience-based narratives, poetry, previous research, etc.)? Write a seven- to ten-page (typed, double-spaced) paper summarizing what you have learned. In addition to this discussion, please also include a list of Works Consulted containing at least 10 references to outside sources. To ensure success on this assignment, I recommend the following: 1) Start early and spend a substantial amount of time writing and revising your analysis. 2) Extensively research your discipline's (or, more generally, western education's) epistemology. 3) Do not focus on the discipline per se (that is, do not provide a history or extensive definition of the discipline itself); rather, focus specifically on the discipline's epistemology. 4) Explore, in detail, the epistemological implications of your statements. 5) Do not defend your discipline; analyze its epistemology. Please see our Blackboard site for a sample student paper. (The annotated bibliography, due 3/5, is worth up to 50 points. The research paper is worth up to 100 points. Papers will be scored according to the rubric filed in "Course Documents." Late papers will be marked down, 10 points per day.)

6. Final: Drawing on the assigned class readings and your Disciplinary Research Paper, you will write a typed, six- to eleven-page explorative essay describing your personal epistemological perspective as it intersects with and diverges from: 1) the western dominant-culture epistemological system; 2) your discipline's (or undergraduate education's) epistemological framework; and 3) feminist, womanist, and/or indigenous epistemologies. As you develop your essay, I recommend that you look over all of your in-class free writes and the questions included in the "Course Description" (above). Your final should include your definitions/discussions of knowledge, truth, intuition, reason, emotion, and other key epistemological terms (as indicated in the free writes and class discussions). As part of this assignment, you must complete the Final Essay Freewrite (located on our Blackboard site, under Course Documents). ***Failure to turn in this free write stapled to your final essay will result in a reduction of 25 points from your grade!*** Please be sure to underline your thesis statement. You will also present a brief oral report summarizing your epistemology. Worth up to 150 points, based on both content and form. (I reserve the right to award additional points for exceptional work.) Papers will be scored according to the criteria listed above. Due on 5/7. Late essays will be marked down, 10 points per day.

Grade:	A	B	C	D	F
Points:	648 or above	593-647	524-592	483 to 523	482 or below

Calculation of points

Attendance:	16 x 15	240 points
Discussion:		50 points
Discussion Questions:	12 x 5	60 points
Annotated Bibliography for Disciplinary Research Paper		50 points
Disciplinary Research Paper		100 points
Talking Notes #1		20 points
Talking Notes #2		20 points
Final:		150 points
Total points possible:		690 points

Course Expectations & Format*

Written assignments should be typed, double-spaced with 1" margins and 12-point font. (Talking Notes and discussion questions should be single-spaced with 11-inch Arial font.) Indent each paragraph, and do not add extra spaces between paragraphs. Number each page of your writing assignment. For more information see "Guidelines for Written Work" later in this syllabus.

Proofread Carefully: I expect you to revise and carefully proofread all assignments, including Blackboard postings. Your postings should be free of typos and grammatical errors.

Readings: All readings assigned for a specific date must be completed by class time on the date listed in the syllabus. I expect you to read the material thoughtfully and in an engaged manner (take notes, reflect on the material, etc.). Please read all endnotes and footnotes.

Blackboard (BB) Format: If you are registered for this course, you should be enrolled in Blackboard (BB) for this course, as long as you have opened up a Pioneer Portal account. BB is the University's software program for course support and distance learning. Although I will distribute the syllabus and some handouts in class, you will also be able to find most handouts on the BB location for this course. I will also use BB for posting announcements, reminders, useful websites, and/or changes in the schedule. You will be required to submit Talking Notes and engage in discussions with other students in the class via the Discussion Board. You can log into BB through the TWU Portal or at <http://twu6.blackboard.com/>. For information about how to log into and use BB, see the following site: <http://www.twu.edu/dl/orientation/blackboard.htm>. For information about the minimum technical requirements needed to use BB successfully, see http://www.twu.edu/dl/orientation/what_you_need.htm. For technical assistance, contact the TWU Helpdesk (940-898-3971) or helpdesk@twu.edu. You can also go to the Mega Lab on the 2nd floor of the MCL. Make sure that the email address listed for you in BB (in Personal Information) is the email address that you use and check regularly. Your Pioneer Portal email account is the default email address in Blackboard. You may forward Portal to another account, if you wish. You will be responsible for checking and reading emails sent to you through Blackboard and to your Pioneer Portal Account. Please check Blackboard regularly (3-4 times per week or more) for updates or additional information and to post or read messages on the Discussion Board. Please read and follow the ADo's" and ADon'ts" of ANetiquette" on the following site: <http://www.twu.edu/dl/orientation/netiquette.htm>.

Guidelines for Written Work

1. Essays should have a well-developed introduction (i.e, more than 2 or 3 sentences) containing a clearly stated thesis (the main point[s] you wish to make); the entire paper should be related to this thesis. Your thesis must be a statement containing an argument, not a question.
2. Your introduction should set up the issue and lead into your thesis statement.
3. Underline your thesis statement.
4. Avoid short paragraphs. Generally, a well-developed paragraph will have more than six sentences.
5. Avoid the "five-paragraph essay." Graduate-level writing has moved far beyond this simplistic format. Your essays must have more than five paragraphs.

*Thanks to Dr. Claire Sahlin for allowing me to borrow from and modify portions of the following information from her WS 5663-01 Summer 2005 syllabus.

6. You should have a conclusion that both summarizes & extends what you've said.
7. Give examples from the assigned reading(s) to illustrate and support your assertions.
8. Use quotations effectively:
 - Do not fill your paper with quotations.
 - Do not use quotations to make points for you. Instead, use quotations to support points that you have already made in your own words.
9. Introduce your quotations. That is, lead into your quotations by indicating whom you are quoting and why. Here are some possible ways to introduce your quotes: Josephine Smith makes a similar point, arguing that "XXXXXX" (78). As Margot Smith asserts, "xxxxx" (39). According to Patricia Hill Collins, "xxxxxxx" (56).
10. Discuss all quotations in detail. Be sure that you have adequately demonstrated why the material is worth quoting.
11. Quote accurately.
12. If you borrow specific words or phrases from a text, they must be put in quotation marks.
13. Give page numbers for all quotations or other references.
14. Use MLA format for documentation. In brief, it uses parenthetical references for page numbers: Not (page 39) or even (p. 39). Just (39).
15. Also, please note that if a parenthetical page reference occurs at the end of your sentence, your sentence period follows the parenthesis:
 - Right: As Smith notes, "the losing party cheated in the election" (39).
 - Wrong: As Smith notes, "the losing party cheated in the election." (39).
 - Wrong: As Smith notes, "the losing party cheated in the election." (39)
 - Right: The book was "divinely inspired" (Smith 23).
 - Wrong: The book was "divinely inspired," (Smith 23).
16. Punctuate titles correctly: Use "quotation marks" for poems, essays, & short stories; underline or *italicize* films, novels, or other book-length works. (Be consistent: either underline or italicize; don't do both.)
17. Do not use "man," "mankind," etc. when referring to "human beings."
18. The first time you refer to a writer, use her/his full name. Then, use only the last name. For example: in your first reference you would write "Gloria Anzaldúa;" in later references, you would write "Anzaldúa," but you should never refer to Anzaldúa as "Gloria" (unless you know her personally).
19. When using *however*, *consequently*, *therefore*, or *thus* to join two independent clauses, you need a semi-colon and a comma.
 - Right: I'm pleased to work with you; however, I insist on proper punctuation.
 - Wrong: I'm pleased to work with you, however, I insist on proper punctuation.
20. When listing a series of items, put a comma between each item--including the final two items.
 - Right: like dogs, cats, mice, and other animals.
 - Wrong: I like dogs, cats, mice and other animals.
21. Proofread carefully; typographical, grammatical, and spelling errors will affect your grade. (For further information on writing errors, see below.)
22. Be consistent: Use the same font (both type and size) for your text, your page numbers, and your notes.
23. Unless otherwise indicated, all papers must be typed, double-spaced, in 12-inch font, with one inch margins.

Common Writing Errors to Avoid

Below are descriptions of common writing errors, along with the abbreviations I use when marking student papers and email correspondence.

V or Vague: “Vague Reference.” Using “This,” “It,” “That,” “She,” or other pronouns as the subject of a sentence. For instance: “This is a confusing way to write a sentence.”

A “That doesn’t really make sense.” “Due to this, I’m confused.”

RO: “Run-on.” Run on sentences are sentences that actually contain two or more sentences--due to incorrect punctuation. For instance: “The books were very enjoyable, the majority of the students enjoyed them quite a bit.” Here’s a really popular RO: “Learning grammar is boring, however, it’s important to know how to punctuate properly.” (Here is the properly punctuated, non-run-on version: “Learning grammar is boring; however, it’s important to know how to punctuate properly.”)

Frag: “Fragment.” Sentence fragment: part of a sentence masquerading as a complete sentence. For instance: “Which meant that the categories were eroding.”

Awk: “Awkward phrasing.” In my experience, awkward phrasing often occurs when writers try to sound like academics--using lots of prepositional phrases, multi-syllable words, passive sentence construction, etc. Unfortunately, many academics don’t write well. Here’s an example: “Although problematic, many of the topics covered in this course have much relevance to the complexity of issues investigated, interrogated, and deconstructed in the readings currently under discussion in the fields of feminist theory and philosophy.”

WC: “Word Choice.” The word or phrase you’ve used doesn’t work well in the way you’ve tried to use it. There could be a variety of reasons for this mis-fit: Perhaps the word/phrase has several meanings, some of which are very jarring (or amusing) when applied to the sentence’s specific context. Or maybe the word/phrase just plain doesn’t fit & you need to make sure you’re aware of the definition. Or perhaps you’ve used the same word or close variations in previous sentences. (I find that one helpful way to avoid WC problems is to read written work out loud.)

AGR: “Agreement.” It’s important that your subjects, verbs, and pronouns “agree” in terms of number. If your subject is single, your verb form must also be single. Here’s an example of subject-verb agreement: *The girl has a dog.* (In this example, “girl” and “has” are both singular.). Here’s an example where subject and verb do not agree: *The girl have a dog.* (In this example, “girl” is single, but the verb “have” is used with a plural subject.) Here’s an example where the subject and pronoun agree: *The girl gave her dog a bath.* (In this example, “girl” and “her” are both singular.) Here’s an example where the subject and pronoun do not agree: *The girl gave their dog a bath.* (In this example, “girl” is single, but the pronoun “their” is plural.) Of course, AGR errors usually arise in long sentences where the subject is separated from the verb or the pronoun.

Additional Course Policies

Disability Support Services: “If you anticipate the need for reasonable accommodations to meet the requirements of this course, you must register with the office of Disability Support Services (CFO 106, 940-898-3835, dss@twu.edu) in order to obtain the required official notification of your accommodation needs. Please plan to meet with me by appointment or during office hours to discuss approved accommodations and how my course requirements and activities may impact your ability to fully participate.”

Academic Dishonesty: “Honesty in completing assignments is essential to the mission of the university and to the development of the personal integrity of the student. Cheating, plagiarism, or other kinds of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and will result in appropriate sanctions that may include failing an assignment, failing the class, or being suspended or expelled. Suspected cases in this course may be reported to Student Life. The specific

disciplinary process for academic dishonesty is found in the TWU Student Handbook. Tools to help you avoid plagiarism are available through the TWU Libraries at http://www.twu.edu/library/res/res_plagiarism.htm.” Plagiarism is a serious offense and could result in a failing grade for the assignment and the course. In brief, plagiarism is a combination of lying and theft! It involves presenting ideas or words from other sources (including the Internet, other students’ papers, books, journals, etc.) as your own. To ensure that you do not plagiarize, you must always indicate when you have borrowed words and/or ideas from other sources. Generally, you will indicate this borrowing through the use of quotation marks, block quotes, and/or by acknowledging your sources with proper citations (parenthetical notes), even when you are summarizing someone else’s ideas in your own words. For all writing assignments, be careful to properly document quotations and paraphrases from other sources. If you aren’t sure what constitutes plagiarism, you may find the following websites to be helpful:

<http://www.lib.duke.edu/libguide/plagiarism.htm>

<http://www.twu.edu/as/engspfl/Plagiarism.ppt>

Please feel free to consult with me as well.

Class Visitors: I welcome visitors to our class. However, please contact me and receive permission at least twenty-four hours in advance.

Incompletes: I do not give incompletes except for dire and unusual circumstances.

Freewriting Activities: Throughout the semester we will (probably) engage in a series of freewriting exercises. During these activities, which will generally last for five or ten minutes, you should write for the entire time. (Keep the pen moving even if you feel that your logical mind has nothing to say!) Please save all of your freewriting exercises. They should be useful as you write your essay(s). Here’s are some of the things you’ll write about during your first freewrite:

How would you define knowledge & truth? What roles do logic, reason, analysis, intuition, and imagination play in what you consider knowledge to be? Is knowledge created? Is truth created? Are there universal truths? If so, who decides what these truths are and how do they know these truths? Are there objective truths? What roles, if any, does our subjectivity (our individual consciousness/identity/etc.) play in knowing? How is knowledge proved: through sense experience? through external validation by authorities (scientists, religious leaders, history, angels, etc.)? by appeal to one’s own consciousness (an inner voice? a hunch? etc.). How does knowledge influence daily lifeBon individual and social levels?

Cell phones: Cell phones should be turned off during our class sessions. Please remind me to turn off my cell phone!!!

Dialogue: Some of My Presuppositions (January 2008)

Here are some of the presuppositions for our class discussions:

1. Social injustice exists. People are not treated equitably. We live in an unjust society and an unfair world; the remarkable promises of democracy have yet to be fulfilled. Oppression (racism, classism, sexism, abelism, homophobia, etc.) exists on multiple seen and unseen levels.
2. Our educations have been biased. The eurocentric educational systems, media outlets, and other institutions omit and distort information about our own groups and others. These hidden mechanisms sustain oppression, including an often invisible and normative ‘white’ supremacy. This ‘white’ supremacist thinking has affected all of us in various ways; we all have “blank spots,” desconocimientos (Anzaldúa), and so forth.
3. Blame is not useful, but accountability is. It is nonproductive to blame ourselves and/or others for the misinformation we have learned in the past or for ways we have benefitted and continue benefitting from these unjust social systems. However, once we have been exposed to more accurate information, we are accountable! We should work to do something with this information--perhaps by working towards a more just future.

4. "We are related to all that lives". We are interconnected and interdependent in multiple ways, including economically, ecologically, linguistically, socially, spiritually.
5. Categories and labels shape our perception. Categories and labels, although often necessary and sometimes useful, can prevent us from recognizing our interconnectedness with others. Categories can (a) distort our perceptions; (b) create arbitrary divisions among us; (c) support an oppositional "us-against-them" mentality that prevents us from recognizing potential commonalities; and (d) reinforce the unjust status quo. Relatedly, identity categories based on inflexible labels establish and police boundaries--boundaries that shut us in with those we've deemed "like" "us" and boundaries that shut us out from those whom we assume to be different.
6. People have a basic goodness. People (both the groups we study and class members) generally endeavor to do the best they can. We will all make mistakes, despite our best intentions. The point is to learn from our errors. In order to learn from our errors, we must be willing to listen and to speak (preferably, in this order!).

Listening

Listening is a crucial yet too often overlooked element in effective class discussions and other forms of dialogue. Below are some suggestions which, if we all practice, will enhance class discussions. I describe this process as deep listening, or "listening with raw openness."

* Deep listening entails respect for each speaker's "complex personhood" (Cervenak et. al.). As we listen, we remind ourselves that each individual we encounter has a specific, highly intricate history, an upbringing and life experiences which we cannot fully know. We don't know the forces that shaped her and, at best, we can only partially ascertain her intentions and desires. Our understanding is always partial and incomplete.

* Deep listening entails vulnerability and flexibility. When we're vulnerable, we can be open to others' perspectives and willing to acknowledge the possibility of error. Vulnerability can facilitate transformation. As Paula Gunn Allen suggests, such vulnerability can be an important part of growth: "And what is vulnerability? Just this: the ability to be wrong, to be foolish, to be weak and silly, to be an idiot. It is the ability to accept one's unworthiness, to accept one's vanity for what it is. It's the ability to be whatever and whoever you are. Recognizing that you, like the world, like the earth, are fragile, and that in your fragility lies all possibility of growth and of death, and that the two are one and the same" (65).

* Deep listening entails asking for clarification. Before we respond, we should clarify the speaker's message, to make sure that we've understood as fully as possible what s/he's saying.

* Deep listening entails frequent pauses and the ability to remain silent. Sometimes it's best simply to listen, and not respond verbally (especially if those responses would involve offering solutions, drawing analogies with our own experiences or those of others, or speaking without first self-reflecting).

* Deep listening enables us to challenge the ideas, not the speakers: We can respectfully, but forthrightly, challenge desconocimientos, misunderstandings, and expressions of falsehoods and stereotypes about our own groups and other groups. When doing so, it is vital that we challenge the stereotypes/racism/ideologies/etc. Not the speaker herself.

Sources

Allen, Paula Gunn. Off the Reservation: Reflections on Boundary-Busting, Border-Crossing Loose Canons. Boston: Beacon P, 1998.

- Anzaldúa, Gloria E. "now let us shift....the path of conocimiento....inner work, public acts" this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation. Eds. Gloria E. Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating. New York: Routledge, 2002. 540-78.
- Cervenak, Sarah J., Karina L. Cespedes, Caridad Souza, Andrea Straub. "Imagining Differently: The Politics of Listening in a Feminist Classroom." this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation. Eds. Gloria E. Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating. New York: Routledge, 2002. 341-56.
- Hogue, Cynthia; Parker, Kim Miller, Meredith. "Talking the Talk and Walking the Walk: Ethical Pedagogy in the Multicultural Classroom." Feminist Teacher 12 (1998): 89-
- Keating, AnaLouise. "Women of Color and Feminism: Twenty Years after This Bridge Called My Back." Paper presented at New York University. Fall 2002.
- WS/SOCI 5463. Fall 2002.

Schedule of Class Meetings

(NOTE: The following is a *tentative* schedule. I might change readings, due dates, or assignments. Please check BB regularly, and email me if you miss class.)

- 1/16 Introduction (syllabus, background information on western epistemologies, self-reflection exercise)
- 1/23 * **Read:** Alcoff and Potter: "Introduction" (FE 1-14); Grosz: "The In(ter)vention of Feminist Knowledges;" Lloyd: "Reason as Attainment;" Collins: "Preface to 1st Edition;" "Preface to 2nd Edition;" "The Politics of Black Feminist Thought" (1-20); "Distinguishing Features of Black Feminist Thought" (21-43); "Work, Family, and Black Women's Oppression" (45-68); "Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images" (69-96); "The Power of Self-Definition" (97-122)
Recommended: Macy: "Preface" (xi-xviii); "Introduction" (1-3); "Considering Causality" (7-21)
- 1/30 ***Read:** Collins: "The Sexual Politics of Black Womanhood" (123-148); "Black Women's Love Relationships" (149-172); "Black Women and Motherhood" (173-200); "Rethinking Black Women's Activism" (201-25); "US Black Feminism in Transnational Context" (227-250); "Black Feminist Epistemology" (251-272); "Toward a Politics of Empowerment" (273-290); Cornell University Library: "How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography," found at <http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill28.htm>
Recommended: New: "Realism, Deconstruction, and the Feminist Standpoint;" Harding: "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology" (FE 49-82); Frye: "On Being White..."
- 2/6 ***Read:** Narayan: "The Project of Feminist Epistemology: Perspectives from a Nonwestern Feminist;" Dillard: "The Substance of Things Hoped For, The Evidence of Things Not Seen: Examining an Endarkened Feminist Epistemology in Educational Research and Leadership;" Hurtado: "Theory in the Flesh: Toward an Endarkened Epistemology;" Frye: "White Woman Feminist; 1983-1992"
Note: I strongly recommend that you read Dillard's essay before Hurtado's.

* Discussion Question due this week.

- 2/13 ***Read:** Dwyer & Jones III: "White Socio-Spatial Epistemology;" Scheurich & Young: "Coloring Epistemologies: Are Our Research Epistemologies Racially Biased?;" Madigan, Johnson, & Linton: "The Language of Psychology: APA Style as Epistemology;" Sullivan and Tuana: "Introduction" (REI 1-10)
Note: Before today's class please look through Part I of Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance and select one or two essays that you would most like to use for your Talking Notes Handout, which will be due on 4/23.
- 2/20 ***Read:** Allen: "The Sacred Hoop;" Smith "Colonizing Knowledges;" Macy: "The Great Turning;" Walters: Ghost Singer (xi-79)
Recommended: Dei, Hall, Rosenberg: "Preface" (IK xi-xvi) & "Introduction" (IK 3-17); Shiva: "Foreword" (IK vii-x); Macy: "The Buddhist Teaching of Dependent Co-Arising" (25-43)
- 2/27 ***Read:** Walters: Ghost Singer (finish reading the novel for today's class); Hernández-Ávila: "Mediations of the Spirit: Native American Religious Traditions and the Ethics of Representation"
Recommended: Fiesta: "Solving Mysteries of Culture and Self;" Wangoola: "Mpambo, the African Multiversity: A Philosophy to Rekindle the African Spirit" (IK 265-77).
- 3/5 ***Read:** Anzaldúa: Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza: "Preface" and Chapters One through Four (19-73); Poems in Sections I (123-35), II (137-60), & III (161-74); Mary E. Hess: "White Religious Educators and Unlearning Racism"
Recommended: Macy: "General Systems Theory" (69-89)
Due: Annotated bibliography for Disciplinary Research Paper
- 3/12 ***Read:** Anzaldúa: Borderlands/La Frontera, Chapters Five through Seven (75-113); Poems in Sections IV (175-95), V (197-211), and VI (213-25); Stone-Mediatore: "Challenging Academic Norms: An Epistemology for Feminist and Multicultural Classrooms"
Recommended: Macy: "Mutual Causality in General Systems Theory" (91-104); Nancy Pineda-Madrid: "Notes Toward a Chicanafeminist Epistemology;" Mary Ballou: "Women and Spirit: Two Nonprofits in Psychology" (CP 97-103)
- 3/19 No Class (Spring Break)
- 3/26 **Due:** Disciplinary Research Paper.
Note: We are not meeting in person this week. Instead, you will submit your research papers electronically and will complete a Blackboard assignment.
- 4/2 ***Read:** Neely: Blanche on the Lam; Cixous: "Laugh of the Medusa"
Recommended: Dalmiya and Alcoff: "Are 'Old Wives' Tales' Justified?" (FE 217-44)
- 4/2 ***Read:** Le Deouff: The Sex of Knowing (ix-68); Arleen Dallery: "The Politics of Writing (the) Body: Ecriture Feminine;" Moya: "Postmodernism, 'Realism,' and the Politics of Identity: Cherríe Moraga and Chicana Feminism" (CP 128-46); Harding: "Rethinking Standpoint Epistemology: "What Is Strong Objectivity"?" (FE 49-82)
Recommended: Lloyd: "Reason as Progress;" Jones: "Writing the Body: Toward an Understanding of L'écriture feminine;" Grosz: "Bodies and Knowledges: Feminism and the Crisis of Reason" (FE 187-215)

- 4/16 ***Read:** LeDeouff: The Sex of Knowing (143-220); Bar On: "Marginality and Epistemic Privilege" (FE 83-100)
- 4/23 ***Read:** M. Jacqui Alexander: "Pedagogies of the Sacred: Making the Invisible Tangible" (Pedagogies of Crossing 287-332).
Recommended: Alexander: "Introduction" (Pedagogies 1-18)
Due: Talking Notes #1: Handout & presentation based on your selected essay from Race and Epistemologies of Ignorance. (Please bring copies for the whole class.)
- 4/30 **Read:** Gloria E. Anzaldúa: "now let us shift...the path of conocimiento...inner work, public acts" (this bridge we call home 540-78)
Recommended: Macy: "Self as Process" (107-116); "Mutual Morality" (193-213)
Due: Talking Notes #2: Analysis of Anzaldúa's essay
- 5/7 **Due:** Final Paper. Platica
Recommended: Joseph Couture: "Native Studies and the Academy" (IK 157-67); Roxana Ng: "Toward an Embodied Pedagogy: Exploring Health and the Body through Chinese Medicine" (IK 168-83).