

Feminist Epistemologies

We stand at a major threshold in the extension of consciousness, caught in the remolinos (vortices) of systemic change across all fields of knowledge. . . . Many are witnessing a major cultural shift in their understanding of what knowledge consists of and how we come to know, a shift from the kinds of knowledge valued now to the kinds that will be desired in the 21st Century.

---Gloria E. Anzaldúa

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 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

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: What is the relationship between knowledge, action, and social change? In what ways, if any, do social, geographical, historical, and bodily location affect knowledge production and consumption? Is reason gendered and/or 'raced'? 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? Whose interests are/should be/could be served by diversifying what 'counts' as knowledge and truth? **Prerequisites:** WS 5463 (U.S. Women of Colors) & 3 additional graduate credit hours in Women's Studies or instructor's approval.

Texts include (but are not necessarily limited to): Patricia Hill Collins: *Black Feminist Thought* (2nd edition); Gloria E. Anzaldúa: *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (2nd or 3rd edition); M. Jacqui Alexander: *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*; Anna Lee Walters: *Ghost Singer*; Barbara Neely: *Blanche on the Lam*; Linda Alcoff & Elizabeth Potter, eds: *Feminist Epistemologies*; Andermahr, Lovell, Wolkowitz: *A Glossary of Feminist Theory*; Michelle Le Doeuff: *The Sex of Knowing*; Stacy Alaimo and Susan Hekman, eds: *Material Feminisms*

WS 5363.01: Tuesdays, 2:30 p.m. - 5:20 p.m. (Course Code: 36950)

WS 5363.50: Internet with face-to-face meetings on the following Saturdays: 1/30, 3/6, and 5/1, 1:00 p.m. - 3:50 p.m. (Course Code: 36951)

For further information please contact:

Dr. AnaLouise Keating, Professor of Women's Studies, akeating@twu.edu