Course Goals
This course will begin with an initial brief exploration of what it means to “write women into the history of rhetoric.” What is at issue in this discussion is whether, and to what extent, creating a “history of women” merely perpetuates the status quo or provides the means for changing women's condition. Should we “write women into history” or simply “write the history of women?” What is the difference between these expressions? This examination will provide a backdrop for a more focused examination of various approaches to feminist rhetoric. While this is not a “feminist theory” course, it also is not a traditional “rhetorical history” course. Rather, it seeks to ground an examination of contemporary feminist rhetorical theories in an appreciation of the changing condition of women's rhetorical history.

The seminar will be conducted as an exercise in mutual learning. I am not the “repository of ready-made knowledge or history.” I hope to raise questions, and challenge my own understanding of issues in a climate that fosters critical inquiry. We will attempt to arrive at some conclusions about the nature of feminist rhetorical theory, and what it offers as a counterpoint to traditional “accepted theory.” Thus, I will be asking each of us to assume responsibility for the conduct of the course and for the contributions to learning that can occur. The obligation this places on each of us is to arrive at each class having thought about (means more than “reading”) the materials assigned.

The readings that we will undertake provide a starting point for discussion. I will be asking each of you to contribute your own readings, from your own knowledge and research, to augment what is presented in this syllabus. To facilitate this, we will be focusing specific attention on “new theorists/ideas” sessions as part of specific evenings – these will be an opportunity (assigned in advance) to introduce the group to alternative readings—from theorists and/or texts/essays that are not part of the list. These may further specific readings—as adjuncts or additions to specific theoretical positions, or even move us in completely new directions.

The penultimate goal for the course is to produce, through single and collaborative efforts, new insights, new interpretations, new understandings relative to the role women’s rhetoric plays or can play in contemporary society.

Written Assignments

1. **Letters:**
   3 short “letters” will be written at specific points during the term. These letters – designed to be understood by a close friend, partner, relative – will have as their purpose the explanation of specific issues. The goal is to
explain what you are reading, and your reaction to ideas, in a manner that a
person unfamiliar with the issues would find provocative and meaningful in
their own lives. You can be as creative as you’d like in representing ideas in
ways a friend might understand and find interesting to read. These should
run 750-1000 words or so—as a rough estimate.

2. **Book Review:**
   As an alternative to the “Letters” – you may choose to write a book review
suitable for submission to a journal. The review must be of a text that has
not yet been reviewed by a journal (to the best of your knowledge), and
must be written with a specific journal in mind. The length should be 2000-
3000 words (roughly equivalent to the “Letters” assignment above). You will
need to decide on this choice by the time the first “Letters” assignment is
due.

3. **Research Paper:**
   What I envision, at the very least, is a paper suitable for convention
submission. The paper may focus on a specific theme or issue, a theorist or
genre. The goal will be to emulate the various essays examined and thereby
to contribute to the on-going task of advancing theoretical and/or critical
studies of women’s rhetoric. The paper may extol or critique feminist
assumptions or examine shortcomings in particular theoretical positions
assumed by one or more feminist theorists/theories. The paper may also
utilize a specific theory or theorist as the framework of a critical assessment
of a rhetoric (conceived in broad terms as a text that influences social reality
in some identifiable manner). The paper should run 15-18 pages of text at a
minimum.

4. **Creative Project:**
   I am open to your suggesting an alternative to the research paper (e.g., a
collaborative project); it must translate into approx. the same degree of
difficulty and work as that associated with a research paper. The decision to
move in this direction should be made (as with the research paper, by the 4
the class session. A written proposal should accompany this request (long
enough to clearly set forth the nature of the proposal and why it is not
possible to achieve in a “traditional” format.

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**Oral Assignments**

1. **Facilitation:**
   I am asking that specific individuals come prepared to ask questions related
to the reading for that evening. This does not lessen the responsibility of
others to join in the conversation, but does provide a “starting point” for 2-3
issues that might be raised regarding the reading.

2. **Reports:**
   When assigned, I will be asking for a 1-2 page handout that outlines the
issues or themes represented in the work in question. These may be based
on materials you bring into the discussion, or on materials assigned to
augment or explore topics. The assumption is that we can’t all read
everything, but we can gain a better understanding of the available
literature and issues through reports.
Grades

1. Participation: 20% (based on overall rather than graded each time)
2. Reflection Papers: 40%
3. Research Paper: 40%

Texts
Foss, Foss and Griffin, Feminist Rhetorical Theories, Sage, 1999. (available at Little Professor)

Tentative Class Schedule
Session Date Topic/Reading (see list-copied and available at Alden Reference)

4/1 Orientation Session—Getting Organized
   note: I may not be here—a colleague will meet and distribute materials.
4/8 Historical Context (FFG1, 2; Readings - 1, 2, 3, 4)
4/15 FFG 3-Kramer (24)
4/22 FFG 4 – Hooks (26, 27, 30, 32)
   note: also ECA week—I may have to leave Tues for conference; if so, we will merge this session w/ 4/29 session
4/29 Alternative Theories/theorists/reports (8, 62)
5/6 FFG 5, 6 - Anzaldúa (33, 34); Alternatives (60, 63, 64)
5/13 Daly/Alternative Theories/theorists/reports (38, 41, 43)
5/20 FFG 7, 8 Starhawk/Allen (44-45)
5/27 FFG 9 - Minh-ha – Alternative Theories/theorists (47)
6/3 FFG 10, 11 - Gearhart/Johnson (52, 54, 59)
6/9 As a possible make-up class day—we might decide to meet a final time during exam week???

Readings: Historical Issues (*-copied-check at Alden Reference)

* Ballif, M. “ReDressing Histories: or, On Re/Covering Figures who have been laid bare by Our Gaze.” Rhetoric Society Quarterly, 22, 1992, 91-98.
* Biesecker, B. “Coming to Terms with Recent Attempts to Write Women into the History of Rhetoric.” Philosophy and Rhetoric, 25, 1992, 140-61;
* Ede, L., Glenn, C. & Lundsford, A. “Border Crossings: Intersections of
Rhetoric and Feminism,“ Rhetorica , 13, 1995, 401-443.
* Dow, B. J. “Feminism, Difference(s), and Rhetorical Studies,“ Communication Studies, 46, 1995, 106-117.
* Hooks, B. “Neo-Colonial Fantasies of Conquest: Hoop Dreams.” In Hooks, B., Reel to Reel: Race, Sex, and Class at the Movies. (pp. 77-82).
* Daly, M. “Re-awakening the X-Factor/Faculty and Creating the Archaic Future.” In Daly, M. Quintessence: Realizing the Archaic Future. (pp. 110-147). Boston: Beacon, 1998.
* Minh-ha, T. T. “Surname Viet Given Name Nam.” In Minh-ha, T. T., Framer
* Johnson, S. "Ship Ahoy; Meet my Needs, Make me Happy; The Bears and Anarchy." In Johnson, S. The Ship that Sailed into the Living Room. (pp. 1-3; 153-166; 263-275) Estancia, NM: Wildfire, 1991.